



Investigating University Students' Perceptions About Two Different Cases of Foreign Language Courses

Elif İLHAN¹, Ceyda ZERENAY²

¹Rectorate, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Ankara, Turkey  0000-0002-8536-1571

²School of Foreign Languages, Ahi Evran University, Kırşehir, Turkey  0000-0002-8437-1372

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates university students' perceptions of two different cases of foreign language courses conducted in L1&L2 and in only L2. This qualitative study was conducted as a multiple case study. The data were obtained via a semi structured form and analysed through content analysis. The study mainly revealed the students had overwhelmingly positive feelings about the courses in only L2 as in the second case. They explained some (dis)advantages about both cases of the courses in terms of efficiency, contribution to their vocabulary/grammar knowledge and listening /speaking skills. The frequency levels of both advantages and disadvantages regarding both cases stated by the students were so close. Based on the findings, it can be suggested that a student-teacher driven policy should be implemented to assist the process in using L1 appropriately and necessarily based on the students' perceptions and preferences.

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Keywords:

Foreign language teaching, multiple case study, language teaching in higher education, L1 use, L2 use, target language use.

1. Introduction

Individuals are always expected to communicate efficiently in at least one foreign language in academic, social and professional contexts. The expectation has led to an increasing interest in learning foreign languages. Dating back to the early 20th century, various approaches/methods such as Direct, Grammar Translation, Audiolingual, Desuggestopedia, Communicative Language Learning, and Task-Based Language Teaching build upon each other in the foreign language learning/teaching field. With every new approach/method, the field has shifted, and each new touch highlighted different aspects of learning and teaching. The traditional approaches/methods alternated between dichotomies such as instruction- intervention, theory-practice, competence- performance, form- meaning, accuracy- fluency etc. One of these dichotomies is about target language (L2) versus native language (L1) use, which is also called as intralingual versus cross-lingual use by Stern (1992) in foreign language teaching/learning,

Throughout the time, the approaches and methods like Grammar Translation Method, Audiolingual Method, Desuggestopedia and Communicative Language Learning accept the use of L1 while others such as Direct, Natural or Task-Based Language Teaching do not in favour of using L1 but encourage using only L2. Yet, a third group emphasizes time and amount of L1 use in foreign language courses, namely the post method pedagogy. This pedagogy which discusses the issues in a broader perspective in the field, with its particularity, practicality and possibility parameters, emphasizes teachers' awareness by constructing the principles and procedures of their particular classrooms based on their experiential knowledge rather than prescribed principles and techniques (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). According to these parameters, foreign language

¹Corresponding author's address: Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Rectorate, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: elif.ilhan00@hbv.edu.tr

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education has been affected by political, historical, sociocultural experiences, classroom strategies, objectives and materials. For that reason, it has been suggested that the amount and the best time for using L1 depend on teachers' practices in their particular contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2006).

As the differentiations among the approaches/methods show clearly, the use of L1 in foreign language courses has been (among the) controversial issues in foreign language education. Some researchers promote the extensive use of L2 for different reasons. For instance, students who want to improve L2 proficiency need to encounter as much amount of target language input as possible because L1 usage may retain students of this significant input (Ellis, 2002; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Accordingly, these researchers probably believe that students will never acquire the target language properly if they do not use it in class. Some researchers (e.g., Cianflone, 2009; Gass, 1996; Littlewood & Yu, 2011) believe that using L1 does not enhance learners' cognition but may lead to inappropriate transfer from the first language to the target language. For instance, the students adopt the rules and word order of their native language and transfer them to the new language that they have just learned. Consequently, this leads to a delay in learning the new language (Gass, 1996).

On the other hand, the criticism over L1 use seems to be diminishing and even slowly L1 use in language classes gaining a significant role in the settings of foreign language teaching (Cianflone, 2009; Kim & Elder, 2008; Nation, 2003). Because of its important role in learners' psychological and cultural constructions, it is deduced that L1 should not be subordinated to any other language and should not be completely abandoned (Burden, 2000) and that L1 should be used in situations such as giving instructions, eliciting asking questions about language and teaching grammar, encourage them to use it correctly (Atkinson, 1987). Additionally, Piasecka (1988) proposes other possible uses of L1 in the process of discussion on cross-cultural issues, language analysis, classroom management, explanation of errors, scene-setting. As Cook (2010) asserts, putting a ban on the use of L1 disproves 'the pedagogical principle of moving from known to unknown' (as cited in Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013, p. 5).

It is evident from all explanations above that L1 has a place in the foreign language learning/teaching process, but the danger of using excessive amounts of L1 should be considered. Atkinson (1993) suggests that it is more convenient or easier to use L1, however, the teachers should know that it can become a routine and for teachers and student L1 can become the main language. Such overuse of L1 in foreign language courses can result in problems such as difficulty in understanding even the simplest subjects without translation and even in communicative tasks feeling the comfort of using L1. Moreover, they may ignore the outstanding role of target language in the activities (Atkinson, 1987). As Turnbull (2001) states maximizing the target language use does not and should not mean that it is detrimental for instructors and learners to use L1. It is crucial that L1 should not be used randomly, especially by the teachers and also, it should not be seen as an excuse for the deficiencies (Franklin, 1990). Moreover, in some situations like trying to explain the meaning of a language item, L1 use can be time-saving (Burden, 2001; Cook, 2010; Levine, 2011; Lo, 2015; Macaro, 2009; Schweers, 1999), can serve as contentment and a tool in order to exhibit linguistic differences between L1 and L2 (Cole, 1998). Moreover, students are able to attend distinctive features of the native language they should be acquainted (Butzkamm, 1998; Cole, 1998). Besides, using both languages help students be aware of the language learning process while they are comparing and contrasting the meaning and forms of these two languages (Butzkamm, 2003; Weschler, 1997).

As Celik (2008) concludes L1 use in FLCs has been traditionally dejected; nevertheless, many teachers/researchers have recognized that to learn a foreign language, using one's own language is reasonably necessary, efficient and natural in practice. The disagreement and inconclusiveness between theory and practice and even between approaches/methods show the need to analyze the practices and come to a conclusion. Moreover, the disagreement about whether to use only L2 or a moderate amount of L1 along with L2, and about how much and when to use L1 in the learning process, has added importance to the research on L1 use in FLCs. In that process, determining learners' views, feelings, and expectations can be a starting point. However, it can be claimed that they are underestimated especially in higher education contexts, while the literature often strongly suggests students' perceptions and expectations should be considered by the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly in touch with them during their education (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, there are some studies on students' and teachers' attitudes towards L1 use in L2 instruction in different language contexts, namely English (Gabrielatos, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994), Spanish (Schweers, 1999),

Arabic (Biçer, 2017; Kurt & Kurt, 2015), Chinese (Littlewood & Yu, 2011), Russian (Oksuz, 2014) and Turkish (Kayaoğlu, 2012; Sariçoban, 2010), but these studies mainly focus on primary and secondary level. However, quite a few studies focus on the issue on higher education level (Al Sharaeai, 2012; Polio & Duff, 1994), especially in Turkish context (Ekmekci, 2018; Oflaz, 2009; Paker & Karaağaç, 2015). Schweers (1999) concludes that the lack of studies conducted in different contexts (i.e., the higher education context in our study) and the consideration of different variables (i.e., students' perceptions in our study) when examining the phenomenon seem to be a weakness in the relevant context in our study) and considering different variables (i.e., undergraduate students' perceptions in our study) when studying the phenomenon seem to be a weakness of the related literature, which needs special attention. Therefore, the present study aiming to investigate university students' perceptions about two different cases of foreign language courses conducted in L1&L2 and in only L2 has great importance in an attempt to get advance research in the field and fill the gap in higher education context in order to dismiss the pre-mentioned disunity and inconclusiveness among the stakeholders. That study also carries importance for the stakeholders as mentioned earlier like curriculum developers, educational administrative staff, instructors at higher education institutions to develop a curriculum of both foreign language courses and other courses at bilingual education institutions.

All in all, this study aims to investigate university students' perceptions about two different cases of foreign language courses conducted in L1&L2 and only L2. To this end, the university students' feelings/views/preferences about both cases of foreign language courses were found out.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study on university students' perceptions about two different cases of foreign language courses conducted in L1&L2 and the only L2 was designed as a case study with a qualitative approach. In case studies, a researcher explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time (Cresswell, 2013, 73). In the present study, there are two cases to be explored: the courses conducted in L1 & L2 (as the first case) and the courses conducted in only L2 (as the second one). Therefore, it is a multiple-case study design, which presents more variability to be discovered, more relationships to be compared, and more opportunities for generalizations and a testable theory to be developed (Eisenhart & Graebner, 2007). The current multiple-case study design allowed comparisons between cases and the researcher to explore existing and new data in the form of interviews (Yin, 2003). As Yin (2003) indicates, comparative case studies are multiple experiments and not instances of multiple subjects across a single experiment. The comparisons are structured between cases to understand the differences and the similarities between the cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995) as in the current study comparing two cases of foreign language courses. The cases may be viewed as a replication of the phenomenon, similar to experiments in quantitative undertaking (Campbell, 2009). In the present study, the cases were selected as a theoretical replication of native language use in foreign language classes, and the cases were designed to cover different theoretical conditions (in the first case, L1 should be used and in the second case, L1 should not be allowed in foreign language classes) (Yin, 2003).

2.2. Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Foreign Language Courses (FLCs) - a two-hour course per week in both terms of the 2018-2019 academic year. The courses are included in the curricula of all departments of higher education institutions as must courses and presented in the first academic year of undergraduate education in Turkey. The main aim of these courses is to get basic foreign language skills to undergraduate students so that they can utilize from books, researches, and other developments in their field (Unal & Özdemir, 2008). For that reason, the participants were determined as the first-grade students at three different departments, namely Math, Turkish Language, and Social Sciences Teaching of an educational faculty of a public university in Turkey via convenience sampling method which meets the easy accessibility criteria (Patton, 1999). From these departments, 90 first grade students attended the study voluntarily. There were 52 female and 38 male students. Nearly all of them have started learning foreign language simultaneously and taken nearly the same amount of foreign language courses because of the centred curriculum in the Turkish education system. None of them attended preparatory class education prior to their undergraduate education at the faculty and only five of them indicated they attended private language courses, which all show their educational backgrounds

in terms of foreign language learning are quite similar. The students were also unsuccessful in the proficiency exam made at the beginning of the term, which can be interpreted as having the most A1 level of English proficiency. *The Stance of the Researchers:* The researchers have been working as instructors of English for more than ten years. One of the researchers is carrying out her PhD in English language teaching. The other researcher has a PhD degree in curriculum and instruction.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected via interviewing method using a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. In developing the form, after a literature review process, a preliminary list of questions was prepared. Then the questions were consulted for the views of two academicians who have experience in foreign language teaching and qualitative research. Also, another instructor with twenty-year foreign language teaching experience was also asked to discuss the questions. Based on those interviews, two questions to have a similar focus and cause almost identical answers, were re-expressed as only one question. The order of the questions was also changed based on the suggestions of the expert in the field of qualitative research. All in all, the interview form was created with the impression of these interviews and the support of the literature. The form included five questions related to students' feelings about the two cases of FLCs, advantages and disadvantages of these courses besides demographic questions.

One researcher was the responsible instructor for the courses, so the other researcher conducted the interviews. For the first case, in the fall term, the students had FLCs conducted in L1&L2. Upon the term, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with most of the students studying math and Turkish language teaching departments and got some written responses to the form from the students studying Social Sciences department because of their final exam schedules. The focus group interviews were conducted with a group of five to seven students lasting 30-45 minutes and completed in about 15 days so that the first case was explored in detail.

For the spring term of the same academic year, in the second case of FLCs, structured as the theoretical replication of the case (Yin, 2003), the same researcher was the responsible instructor for the course, and she used only target language in and out of the courses. She asked and answered all the questions, made all explanations in L2, and did not utter one word in the students' native language under any circumstances. When the spring term was over, the other researcher interviewed all the students in groups with the same interview form. The focus group interviews were conducted with a group of five to seven students lasting 30-45 minutes. That process lasting about 20 days enabled the researchers to explore the second case deeply.

After the data collection was completed, each entry was coded by labelling the students with their departments, numbers, and genders as 'M1F' (M stands for mathematics, S for social sciences, and T for Turkish language department, and F for female and M for male students) to keep the identity of the students confidential and stored. The data were analysed through the content analysis method. In this qualitative data analysis process, first, verbatim transcriptions of the interviews were made. Texts were examined in detail and codes and themes were then determined by reading and re-reading the data (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p.258). Codes and themes were pointed out in relation to each other, and results were inferred based on the study's aim and supported with the participants' views via direct quotations.

2.4. The Validity and Reliability of the Research

Applying some strategies in the study, the validity and reliability of the research can be increased (Creswell, 2013). The researchers followed the process closely for two terms; One of the researchers spent a great deal of time during cases with students in courses. The other researcher carried out the interviews to make students feel free and open to share their proper feelings/views to ensure the accuracy of data and findings during the process. All data were recorded and filed on time. In order to ensure the credibility and transferability of the semi-structured interview forms, the opinions of three different experts were obtained - one of them was in the field of English teaching, another was in the field of education, and the last was an experienced language teacher with a master's degree in foreign language teaching. For this study, data collection and analysis processes were given in detail and direct quotations were used while explaining the findings. To ensure confirmability, 20 % of the data were firstly coded by two researchers separately. Then, in a meeting with the focus of inter-coder reliability, it was determined the variation of codes and themes determined by the

researchers was minor and a consensus was reached. After that, the rest of the data were coded by the researchers separately. When the coding process was over, inter-coder reliability was calculated with Miles and Huberman’s (2015) reliability formula ($[\text{number of agreements} / (\text{number of agreements} + \text{disagreements})] \times 100$) comparing researchers' coding keys. The current study calculated as $92 / (92 + 6) \times 100 = 93\%$ thanks to the meeting made after the analysis of 20 % of the data. Additionally, all data was stored to maintain confirmability.

3. Findings

3.1. The feelings of the students about the courses carried out in L1&L2 and only L2

The students' feelings about the courses carried out in L1&L2 and only L2 were presented comparatively in Table 1.

Table 1. The Feelings of the Students about the Courses Carried out in L1&L2 and Only L2

| The feelings of the students about the courses carried out in | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| both L1 and L2 | | | only L2 | | |
| Theme | Codes | f | Codes | f | |
| Positive Feelings | Relaxed | 26 | Motivated | 36 | |
| | Motivated | 16 | Enjoyed | 28 | |
| | Satisfied | 9 | Satisfied | 25 | |
| | Enjoyed | 8 | Willing to participate in courses | 17 | |
| | Appealed | 5 | Appealed | 16 | |
| | Being fearless | 4 | Self-confident | 13 | |
| | Willing to participate in courses | 3 | Like | 10 | |
| | Concentrated | 3 | -- | | |
| | Sub-total | 74 | Sub-total | 145 | |
| Negative Feelings | Unwilling to participate in courses | 25 | Anxious | 11 | |
| | Bored | 12 | Distracted | 11 | |
| | Uninterested | 10 | Unwilling to speak in courses | 10 | |
| | Dissatisfied | 6 | Nervous | 10 | |
| | -- | | Bored | 6 | |
| | -- | | Unwilling to participate in courses | 6 | |
| | -- | | Stressed | 4 | |
| | -- | | Worried about being humiliated | 2 | |
| | -- | | Fearful | 2 | |
| | -- | | Feeling insufficient | 2 | |
| | Sub-total | 53 | Sub-total | 65 | |
| Changing Feelings | -- | | Fearful at first | 6 | |
| | -- | | Anxious at first | 5 | |
| | -- | | Confused at first | 5 | |
| | -- | | Stressful at first | 3 | |
| | -- | | Sub-total | 19 | |
| | Total | 127 | Total | 229 | |

Table 1 shows the students indicated a lot more things about the courses conducted in the only L2. The domination of positive feelings is a sign of the students’ interest in only L2 courses. It can be easily seen that the students mostly expressed positive feelings about both versions of the course focusing on mainly similar feelings like *motivated, willing to participate in courses, appealed, satisfied, ... etc.* On the other hand, they explained they felt *relaxed* and *motivated* in the courses carried out in L1 & L2.

“I listened to the lesson without getting bored because I was trying to understand. I had trouble expressing it, but I think this triggers learning more.” M2F

“I listened to the lesson without getting bored because I was trying to understand.” M5F

The students explained many different feelings about the courses conducted in only L2 in terms of negative feelings. In such courses, they felt *anxious, distracted, unwilling to speak in courses and nervous* while in the courses conducted using both L1 & L2, they felt *unwilling to participate in courses, bored and uninterested*. Lastly, the students explained some of their feelings about the courses conducted in only L2 had been changed after the first weeks of their courses. They explained they *first felt fearful, anxious, confused, and stressed*, but these negative feelings were changed into positive ones in time.

“First of all, it frightened me that the lesson was taught in 100% English. I was trying to understand the sentences by inferring from the words. But over time, this fear passed.” S32F

“At first, I felt stressed and anxious because I had not been in the classroom environment where lessons had been taught in such a style before.” S9F

3.2. The views of the students about the courses carried out in only L2 and in L1&L2

When the students were asked about the courses carried out in only L2 and L1&L2, they mentioned their views focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of the courses.

3.2.1. Students' views about the advantages of the courses carried out in only L2

Table 2. *Students' Views about the Advantages of the Courses Carried out in Only L2*

| Theme | Codes | f |
|--|---|-----|
| Effectiveness of the course | Enabling students to learn English | 31 |
| | Enabling permanent learning | 3 |
| | Making learning easier | 3 |
| | Enabling fast learning | 2 |
| | Enabling easy learning | 1 |
| | Sub-total | 40 |
| Contribution to speaking skill | Improving speaking skill | 21 |
| | Improving the ability to make sentences in English orally | 6 |
| | Enabling learning by speaking | 5 |
| | Sub-total | 32 |
| Contribution to vocabulary knowledge | Improving vocabulary knowledge | 16 |
| | Enabling permanent vocabulary learning | 10 |
| | Making it easier to learn vocabulary | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 28 |
| Contribution to listening skill | Improving voice familiarization | 16 |
| | Improving listening skill | 6 |
| | Comprehending easily uttered vocabulary | 3 |
| | Sub-total | 25 |
| Contribution to pronunciation skill | Improving pronunciation skill | 11 |
| | Enabling proper pronunciation of vocabulary | 9 |
| | Sub-total | 20 |
| Increasing students' effort for learning | Enabling students to make a learning effort | 14 |
| | Sub-total | 14 |
| | Total | 159 |

As Table 2 depicts, the students thought that the courses carried out in only L2 had a higher level of effectiveness, contributed especially to their speaking skills, and increased their vocabulary knowledge besides contributing to their listening and pronunciation skills. Lastly and maybe most importantly, they indicated in such courses, they made more effort for learning.

“Although it was quite difficult at the beginning of the term, as I worked overtime, I started to both speak and understand our teacher.” S8F

"We had English lessons every year in high school and elementary school, but there was no progress. When the lesson is taught in 100% English, hearing and understanding words will further contribute to our progress." M3F

Explaining the advantages of such courses under six themes, they most frequently uttered such courses enabling them to learn English by improving their speaking skill, vocabulary knowledge, voice familiarization, and pronunciation skill. A more detailed analysis of Table 2 shows that the students repeatedly explained their views about speaking and listening skills and some related knowledge/skills, one of the *commonly* unreached aims of FLCs.

3.2.2. Students' views about the advantages of the courses carried out in L1&L2

Table 3. Students' Views about the Advantages of the Courses Carried out in L1 and L2

| Theme | Codes | f |
|---|--|-----|
| Comprehensibility of the course | Ensuring comprehensibility of all the courses | 20 |
| | Ensuring clarity of the courses | 17 |
| | Ensuring higher comprehensibility of the courses | 12 |
| | Sub-total | 49 |
| Contribution to active participation in classes | Communicating easily with the instructor | 13 |
| | Enabling students to be active in courses | 12 |
| | Asking questions when it is not understood | 4 |
| | Enabling students to explain themselves | 3 |
| Sub-total | 32 | |
| Effectiveness of the course | Enabling students to learn English | 18 |
| | Enabling students to learn the logic of English | 1 |
| | Enabling permanent learning | 1 |
| | Sub-total | 20 |
| Contribution to vocabulary | Enabling permanent vocabulary learning | 5 |
| | Increasing vocabulary knowledge | 4 |
| | Making it easier to learn new vocabulary | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 11 |
| Contribution to grammar | Increasing grammar knowledge | 11 |
| | Sub-total | 11 |
| Contribution to communication skill | Improving communication skill | 4 |
| | Sub-total | 4 |
| Contribution to speaking skill | Improving speaking skill | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 2 |
| | Total | 129 |

Table 3 shows that the students frequently explaining that the courses carried out in both L1 and L2 were easy to comprehend, to participate in classes, and effective. They also clarified that such courses contributed to their vocabulary and grammar knowledge while less frequently emphasized their contribution to communication and speaking skills.

"The lessons are more efficient in this way. We can ask the subjects we do not understand in Turkish; the instructor should also convey these subjects in Turkish." T3M

"Since Turkish is our native language, of course, I can understand better what is meant to be explained or what is expected of me. As it was understood, my attendance rate for the course was higher." M3F

A closer look at Table 3 indicates the students repeatedly explained such courses as they were comprehensive and clear for them. In such courses, the students could easily communicate with the instructor, which made them more active in the courses and, in turn, enabled them to learn English. Table 3 also displays some controversial findings as the students much less frequently explained such courses contributed to their communication and speaking skills. However, they believed L2 only courses improved, especially their speaking and related skills, as seen in Table 2.

An examination of Table 2 and Table 3 reveals the main differences of students' views regarding the advantages of these two versions. Although the students explained the courses in L1 and L2 were efficient, especially in terms of grammar and vocabulary, they indicated the courses in only L2 were efficient in speaking, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

3.2.3. Students' views about the disadvantages of the courses carried out in only L2

Table 4. Students' Views about the Disadvantages of the Courses Carried out in only L2

| Theme | Codes | f |
|---|--|-----|
| Preventing the active participation in classes | Preventing focusing on courses | 12 |
| | Difficulty in expressing themselves | 11 |
| | Preventing attendance to courses | 8 |
| | The inability for students to express themselves | 7 |
| | Decreasing the will to participate in the course | 5 |
| | Passivation the students in courses | 5 |
| | The inability for students to understand the questions | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 50 |
| Ineffectiveness / inefficiency of the courses | The incomprehensibility of the course | 29 |
| | Having difficulty | 8 |
| | The inefficiency of the course | 5 |
| | Ineffectiveness in grammar teaching | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 44 |
| Preventing teacher-student interaction in classes | Difficulty in asking questions to the instructor | 5 |
| | The inability for students to ask questions | 5 |
| | Difficulty in communication with the instructor | 5 |
| | Difficulty in understanding conversations | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 17 |
| Higher level of difficulty of the courses | Too challenging | 3 |
| | Too challenging at first | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 5 |
| Difficulty in learning new vocabulary | Difficulty in comprehending new vocabulary | 3 |
| | Insufficiency in learning new vocabulary | 2 |
| | Sub-total | 5 |
| | Total | 121 |

In terms of the disadvantages of the courses carried out in the only L2, the students claimed such courses prevented their active participation in classes, and there were hindrances about effectiveness/efficiency of the courses and teacher-student interaction in classes. For instance, one of the students explained a vicious circle in terms of inefficiency of such courses, uttering that *"I could not attend the lesson. Because I did not understand much. Even if I understood something, I could not answer. It was inefficient for me."* S20M. We can conclude such courses prevent students from focusing on courses and cause difficulties in expressing themselves.

On one hand, in terms of disadvantages, the students most frequently explained that such courses are incomprehensible (f:29). This overwhelming view about the effectiveness / efficiency of the courses needs a closer look. As one student (M3F) honestly indicated, *"When I do not understand what the teacher expects me to do and she does not recognize me, I wait for remedilessly"* and she added because of her proficiency level, *"I cannot explain myself"*. We can infer that the students have encountered difficulties in participating in the courses due to their lack of proficiency in the target language.

"I did not like 100% English lessons, as I do not like to speak English. I did not like to attend the class. Because I could not speak. Our teacher was very good and motivated. But I was not like that." S15F

"Since there are some points I do not understand in the lesson, I cannot contact the instructor and I cannot answer the questions given in the lesson because I cannot speak English." T17F

3.2.4. Students' views about the disadvantages of the courses carried out in L1& L2

Table 5. Students' views about the disadvantages of the courses carried out in L1& L2

| Theme | Codes | f |
|---|--|-----|
| Ineffectiveness/inefficiency of the courses | Not contributing to the academic development of students | 23 |
| | Being ineffective in learning | 10 |
| | Not enabling permanent learning | 5 |
| | Less contribution to students' academic development | 4 |
| | Ineffective in learning by hearing | 4 |
| | Courses' focusing on memorization | 3 |
| | Causing distractibility | 1 |
| | Sub-total | 50 |
| Students' learning effort | Students' not pushing themselves | 15 |
| | Decreasing students' desire to learn | 11 |
| | Prompting students to be lazy | 6 |
| | Sub-total | 32 |
| Inefficiency in vocabulary teaching | Ineffective in teaching vocabulary | 17 |
| | Sub-total | 17 |
| Inefficiency in speaking skill development | Ineffective in the development of speaking skill | 11 |
| | Sub-total | 11 |
| Inefficiency in grammar teaching | The predominance of grammar teaching | 2 |
| | Ineffectiveness in grammar teaching | 1 |
| | Sub-total | 3 |
| | Total | 113 |

Regarding the disadvantages of the courses carried out in both L1 & L2, the students claimed such courses were generally inefficient, decreasing students' learning efforts, and there were hindrances about increasing students' vocabulary knowledge, speaking skill, and grammar knowledge. Taking a closer look at the table, the students frequently explained such courses did not contribute to their academic development, they were ineffective in learning English, and some other supporting details. They also emphasized such courses did not push students to learn and decreased their desire to learn.

"When Turkish is spoken, I feel comfortable. I am not trying to understand. Because I know the teacher will explain the subject in Turkish." T18F

"I know that the teacher will explain it in Turkish after she finishes speaking in English, so I do not try to understand her while she is speaking in English." S12M

An examination of Table 4 and Table 5 reveals the contradictory findings in terms of the disadvantages of the two cases of FLCs. The students described that the courses in L1 and L2 were not efficient in increasing students' learning effort. The same group of students claimed the courses in only L2 prevented their active participation in classes.

3.3. Students' preferences about L1 use in foreign language courses

Students' preferences about L1 use in FLCs were asked twice in both of the interviews made for the two cases. Students' preferences and the changes can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Students' Preferences about Using L1 in Foreign Language Courses

| Students' preferences | 1st case (n) | 2nd case (n) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| L1 should not be used in the courses | 78 | 49 |
| L1 should be used in the courses | 12 | 41 |
| Total | 90 | 90 |

Nearly all of the students preferred courses conducted in only L2 in the first case where the FLCs were conducted in L1 & L2. However, after the second case where only L2 was used in FLCs, a slightly more than half of them explained L1 should be used in the FLCs. As Table 6 shows nearly 29 students, one-third of the

study group, changed their mind. In the second interviews, the students in favour of L1 use in FLCs made extra explanations about the time when L1 should be used in courses as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. *Students' Preferences about the Time When L1 Should be Used in Foreign Language Courses*

| Students' preferences | f |
|---|----|
| Explaining new words | 29 |
| Making grammatical explanations | 27 |
| Giving instructions | 20 |
| Explaining the questions not understood | 18 |
| Announcing about the exams | 3 |
| Total | 97 |

Table 7 displays the students' preference for their teacher's use of L1 while especially explaining new words and grammatical issues. Their preferences are parallel with their views about the disadvantages of the courses in only L2 such as "difficulty in learning new vocabulary, inefficiency in grammar teaching, inability for students to understand the questions" as seen in the Table 4. On the other hand, although they explained that the courses in L1 and L2 had some drawbacks like inefficiency in vocabulary teaching, speaking skill development, and grammar teaching, they still wanted L1 use in similar courses. It should be added that the students frequently explained the courses in only L2 contributed to their vocabulary knowledge, although they prefer L1 use while explaining new words. Such controversies explained above can be resulted from the different proficiency levels of the students.

4. Results and Discussion

The students in the current study explained they felt relaxed, motivated, and satisfied when both L1 and L2 were used in their courses in the first case. The findings support Kahraman's (2009) study to investigate "whether or not using learners' mother tongue judiciously in foreign language classrooms fosters affective factors". He concludes that L1 use has a significant psychological effect and using L1 can lower learners' language anxiety and enhances a more positive and secure environment. Likewise, the students in the study indicated they felt more anxious, nervous and distracted in the courses in only L2 in the second case. These feelings may cause resistance and lack of motivation, which were regarded as the instructors' main problems for learners in higher education (Unal & İlhan, 2017). The findings are supported by some other studies which show that the use of L1 can reduce students' stress in the classroom (Cianflone, 2009; Fernandez-Guerra, 2014; Spahiu, 2013), reduce anxiety in the classroom and help to create a pleasant learning atmosphere (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008), provide a sense of security (Auerbach, 1993), promote students' confidence in the classroom (Brooks-Lewis, 2009), and make the learning environment pleasant (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Furthermore, having a lower level of stress can positively affect students' learning (Azizifar, Faryadian, & Gowhary, 2014). L1 use also plays an important role in making learning meaningful and easier and courses - if conducted communicatively, courses are more effective particularly for shy learners or those who feel less proficient in L2 (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Nation, 2003).

One of the most important findings of our study is that the students expressed their unwillingness to participate in L1& L2 courses while they felt more motivated in the courses in only L2. However, the literature review shows many researchers found out that allowing L1 use can motivate learners and increase their confidence in using L2 (Baily, 2005; Cianflone, 2009; Fernandez-Guerra, 2014). The learners' profiles can be explained with the difference. In our study, the learners are adults who are aware of their needs and they believe the use of L1 is a hindrance to L2 learning (Gaebler, 2014) and are hesitant to use L1 (Nazary, 2008). On the other hand, in Gaebler's (2014) study, the adult learners explained they felt comfortable with the use of L1 as in our study. Since most researchers warn that overuse of the L1 can lead to overdependence on the L1 (Nation, 2003), the students in our study had many experiences of using the L1 in foreign language courses in their educational backgrounds. Thus, it can be concluded that some adult learners are aware of the risk of overdependence and prefer not to use the L1 even if they feel more comfortable in such courses.

The students explained various advantages about the courses carried out in L1& L2 as in the first case. They thought the courses were easy to comprehend to participate in and also were effective. Moreover, they clarified such courses contributed their vocabulary and grammar knowledge while they less frequently emphasized

their contribution to communication and speaking skills. One reason for that view about the easiness of such courses to comprehend can justify some results of other studies. For example, Cook (2010) reached out that the use of students' native language in the class can boost students "focus on form" and it can help them "notice" that L1 use can significantly improve their learning as concluded by Navidinia, Mobaraki, & Malekzadeh (2019). Besides, in his study with university students, Fernandez-Guerra (2014) indicated L1 use can help students to learn the linguistic and cultural issues and improve their comprehension. Similarly, Miles (2004) maintained using L1 can actually help the learning process because students outperformed in the exercises they were allowed to use their L1. The outperformance is also frequently explained by the students in our study. As in this current study, when students use L1 in their learning process, they are encouraged to engage with L2 (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Lo, 2015). Moreover, the advantages the students indicated for learning some grammatical points both in L1&L2 courses are also found out in other studies (Grim, 2010; Macaro, 2001; Williams, 1999).

For the second case, the students asserted the courses in only L2 were more efficient in general, especially in improving their speaking, listening, pronunciation skills, and vocabulary levels. In parallel with the students' views in our study, L1 use in FLCs is seen as inappropriate and unjustifiable in speaking/listening activities (Cole, 1998; Edstrom, 2006). When the concern is especially speaking skills, L1 use is counterproductive, more detrimental than productive (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Mart, 2013; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). But recently, the number of studies reaching out the benefits of L1 use is increasing (Cook, 2001; Galali & Cinkara, 2017; Jafari & Shokrpour, 2013; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Vázquez & Ordóñez, 2019; Yüzlü & Atay, 2020). It can be concluded that the students in our study took place in the first group in these contrasting views concerning the effect of L1 in speaking/listening skills.

In terms of the courses in the first case, the students frequently indicated these courses were easy to comprehend. For the second case, they most frequently explained the courses in only L2 were incomprehensible for them, which resonate with the results posited by many researchers (Cook, 2010; McMillan and Rivers, 2011; Nation, 2003; Norman, 2008; Park, 2013; Weschler, 1997). Moreover, these findings can affect students' English proficiency level because when L1 is used as a fast tool to dismiss difficulties by both the students and the instructor. Although these studies continuously indicated L1 use brings easiness and enhances L2 learning, the ease was regarded as a drawback by most of the students in our study. The same student group criticized the courses both in L1&L2 for decreasing students' learning effort and not moving them. When all the results come into consideration together, it can be concluded that the students-adult learners in our case- regard only L2 policy as a drive for themselves. The findings support the idea that limited L1 use should be there for adult learners (Atkinson, 1987; Cianflone, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). However, another finding of this study reveals a contradiction among the views of students. Although the students explained the courses in L1& L2 were not efficient in increasing students' effort for learning, the same group of students claimed the courses in only L2 prevented their active participation in classes. This contraction reminds the professionals of the phenomenon's disunity and inconclusiveness (Schweers, 1999), which makes it vital to conduct further research, especially giving special attention to adult learners.

Although the students most frequently explained positive feelings and views in favour of the courses in the second case, they changed their minds when asked about their preferences. The changes can be a sign that students have been aware of the possible benefits of L1 use as pointed out in the studies by Al Sharaeai's (2012), Oflaz (2009), and Paker and Karaağaç (2015). This study also reveals the students want to be free to use the fundamental and strategic application in teaching contexts (Cook, 2001) - L1- whenever they need for specific occasions. The students also listed these specific occasions as explaining new words and grammatical issues, giving instructions, and answering questions. These occasions are called as crucial functions L1 has in foreign language teaching and regarded as the most striking aspects in the studies of Afzal (2013), Auerbach (1993), Burden (2000), Celik (2008), Cook (2001), Debrelı and Oyman (2016), Dujmovic (2007), Edstrom (2006), Ekmekci (2018), Mattioli (2004), Schweers (1999), and Tang (2002). For example, Auerbach (1993) suggests the following uses for learners' first language: language analysis and presenting grammar structures, classroom management, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors, discussing cross-cultural issues, and checking comprehension. Celik (2008) classified the uses into two groups, physical/mechanical factors (e.g., to save time, to help students avoid confusion about complex concepts and ideas in the L2, to be more effective for students, to stimulate memory and semantic processing, to raise students' awareness of language learning processes)

and social/emotional factors (e.g. to help students not to develop negative feelings towards the L2 and its community by banning the L1 because it is their identity). In our study, the students frequently uttered physical/mechanical factors in explaining their preferences.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The debate on L1 use in foreign language teaching is enigmatic, with controversy ebb and flow with varying intensity but never approaching resolution (Auerbach, 1993). The conclusion made about thirty years ago has still survived and made it much more important to suggest criteria for time, way, and amount of L1 use instead of taking strong stances toward its inclusion or exclusion. The International Teacher Training Organization suggested the inclusion of L1. Still, it warned teachers to use it cautiously, otherwise "... you could be creating a crutch, which might be very difficult to fail as the students' improvement" (ITTO, 2007 cited by Brooks-Lewis, 2009). To achieve balanced and alternated on an as-needed basis (Saengboon, 2010) L1 use, agreeing on a policy with the involvement of students – especially adult learners in our case- may be a good way. It is so evident in Brown's (2000, p.14) assumption that there is no easy and quick way guaranteed to provide success and every student, teacher, student-teacher relationship, and every context is unique. In order to use this uniqueness for the benefit of students, such a policy adopted by students and teachers can support the process of appropriate and necessary use of the L1 and eliminate the disadvantages of excessive use of L1 in the foreign language teaching/learning process. Through this study, we hope instructors as decision makers at higher education will be able to better understand the views and preferences of their students about L1 use. This study might effect instructors in terms of questioning their own L1 use and being more aware of their students' views. The results of this study give some insights for decision-makers that use of L1 might also be necessary from time to time, so it should not be forbidden but its frames should be determined with a collaboration of instructors and students. This study might also increase instructors' awareness about time, way, and amount of first language use in their courses.

The results of this study can partly be generalized to various teaching contexts and foreign language learners due to the context-specific factors and uniqueness of each teaching and learning environment. For future studies, it might be fruitful to enhance the practices of instructors by utilizing translanguaging pedagogy which is a purposeful incorporation of native and second or third languages and help them to build bridges between languages and cultures. Besides, students may construct their competence of the weaker language while benefiting from the knowledge of their native language which is the dominant one. In addition, similar studies could be conducted focusing on the effects of L1 use on academic achievement, improvement in various language skills, etc., or examining differences in students' views and preferences regarding L1 use in L2 classrooms in relation to their language level, gender, and university subject areas. Finally, further studies could be conducted to include the views and preferences of lecturers and other decision makers such as administrative staff in higher education.

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