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Language choices of language teachers and learners: Meta-synthesis of qualitative research

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Abstract

This study aims at drawing a conclusion about the use of the first language (L1) in language classes on which there is still no consensus among researchers. In line with this aim, the qualitative studies involving participants' views or practices obtained through interviews or observations were analyzed and then synthesized. Firstly, two basic themes were obtained as "Avoidance of L1 in language classes" and "Use of L1 in language classes". Based on the findings of those studies, the factors such as educational context, the language proficiency of teachers and students, the subject to be taught were pointed out to affect their language choices and also the amount of L1 use in L2 classes. Furthermore, the studies revealed that L1 was used or suggested to be used in various functions which were grouped under three themes as academic functions, managerial functions, and socio-cultural functions. Though no distinct decision to be taken according to the studies analyzed, it can be suggested that L1 may be used if necessary, although language instruction should mostly depend on the target language.

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Keywords: Meta-synthesis; L1 use; first language use; L2 classes; language teaching

1. Introduction

The issue of whether or not to use the first language in a language classroom seems to stand as one of the most long-standing controversies. The native languages of learners are still finding a great place in practice compared to counter-views in theory. Although the methods and approaches that aim to enhance learners' communicative competence overemphasize the use of target language (TL) in language classes, both language teachers and students go on using the first language (L1) for different purposes and at a changing amount.

Many researchers like Cook (2001) suggesting that "It is time to open a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over 100 years, namely the systematic use of the first language (L1) in the classroom" (p.403) try to soften reactions against L1 use. However, several researchers advocate that only L2 should be involved in a second/foreign language learning process. Remarkably suggested by the researchers depending on Krashen's monolingual approach, the basic reason why language

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instruction should be based on just L2 is that the more L1 is used by instructors, the fewer opportunity students have to be exposed to L2, which results in detrimental effects on the language learning process (Viakinnou-Brinson, Herron, Cole, & Haight, 2012). Excessive use of L1 in language classes is suggested to have some de-motivating effects on students and minimize their chance of exposure to the target language (Bruen & Kelly, 2017). Furthermore, many language teachers describe the use of "L1 as a hindrance to learning L2, rather than as a resource for making learning easier" (Copland & Neokleous, 2011, p. 278) although their classroom realities showed the opposite (Bilgin, 2016; Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Gaebler, 2014).

The opponents of L1 use are also of opinion that the language teaching process should be similar to the process of a child's language acquisition in which the child learns the language through continuous exposure to the language, and they thus put great emphasis on enhancing opportunities for the immersion of learners in the target language (Jacobs & Kimura, 2013). Besides being inappropriate to be given particularly students who possess a high level of the target language (Debreli, 2016), the excessive use of L1 is believed to lead to laziness or off-task behavior for students (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). Besides, promoting classroom use of L2 forces the students to think in the target language and potentially facilitates language production and comprehension (Lee & Lo, 2017; Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012).

On the other hand, based on many arguments to support their position, a great number of researchers suggest that banning L1 totally from an L2 classroom does not seem realistic (Mayo & Hidalgo, 2017; Zhu & Vanek, 2015). Rather than being an obstacle to language learning, L1 use may take place as a useful cognitive tool that helps to connect the new learning concept with preexisting knowledge and thus facilitates the learning process and promotes linguistic production (Codina Camó & Pladevall Ballester, 2015; Zhu & Vanek, 2015). Besides warning about the domination of L1 in L2 classrooms (Chimbutane, 2013), many researchers claim that playing an essential role in diminishing learning anxiety, the use of L1 may also help to create a more comfortable and effective learning atmosphere, particularly for shy or less-proficient L2 learners to communicate in the classroom (Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Nation, 2003). Furthermore, the students may have trouble understanding and participating when lessons are carried out in only target language medium since their stress ranges up and naturally, they lose their motivation (Fernandez & Korneeva, 2017; Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015; Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012). In this sense, as a pedagogical and instructional tool, the use of L1 is thought to serve many facilitative functions in L2 classrooms (Balam & Perez, 2017; Codina Camó & Pladevall Ballester, 2015; Levine, 2014; Sali, 2014)

It has been observed that most English language classes in Turkey are conducted through the native language of learners, Turkish (Balabakgil & Mede, 2016; Bilgin, 2016; Debreli, 2016; Iyitoglu, 2016; Kocaman &Aslan, 2018; Sali, 2014; Şener & Korkut, 2017), although the curricula developed for primary, secondary, and high schools state the opposite (MNE, 2018a, 2018b). Language learners and teachers are expected to use just English in English classes, but Turkish as the native language of learners has more place in practice for different purposes and reasons. There still seems to be no consensus among researchers, teachers, and students about the use of L1 in L2 classrooms. This study aims to synthesize the findings of qualitative studies examining the language teachers and learners' perceptions about and practices in L1 use. Therefore, it intends to reach a conclusion about this last-standing and significant issue in language teaching through a synthesis grounded on the views and practices of language teachers and learners. Perceptions and practices of learners and teachers, who are the stakeholders of the language teaching process, are to provide valuable insight into the issue about the use of L1 in language classes. In line with this purpose, the qualitative studies investigating the issue of L1 use in language classes were synthesized to reflect the language teachers and learners' views and practices, and thus, responses to the following questions were sought:

1. How do students and teachers react against the use of L1 in L2 classes?
2. Which factors affect the use of L1 in L2 classes?
3. For what purposes do they use/advocate the use of L1 in L2 classes?

2. Method

In this study, it was attempted to summarize and synthesize the findings obtained in qualitative studies that provide insights about perceptions, attitudes, practices, and behaviors regarding the use of the first language in language classes. The synthesis of qualitative studies "can pull together data across different contexts, generate new theoretical or conceptual models, identify research gaps" (Tong, Flemming, McInnes, Oliver, & Craig, 2012, p. 1) and "put research findings into the hands of those who can make use of them" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2010, p. 116) for development of evidence-based practice and policy" (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012, p. 3). In this sense, each research report was treated as an "informant," and the findings in each report were synthesized to draw a conclusion using the similar procedure in qualitative research

Accordingly, this study followed those discrete steps "that enable the researcher to identify a specific research question and then search for, select, appraise, summarize, and combine evidence to address the research question" (Erwin, Brotherson, & Summers, 2011, p. 191) and those steps are illustrated in Figure 1. Accordingly, based on the research problem to be investigated, three primary research questions were constructed. In line with the research questions and the literature reviewed, the key terms to be used in searching for the studies to be involved in this study and databases on which studies were searched were determined. Before searching, the main criteria to be considered in searching and then reading were identified to include or exclude the studies. Based on those criteria, some studies were directly excluded, and some after reading. The selection process of studies was also explained in detail in Figure 2. Following the selection of the studies, they were first analyzed for first-order-themes, then synthesized for second-order-themes, and lastly interpreted for third-order-themes. As a next and final step, the findings were presented and also discussed across the studies.

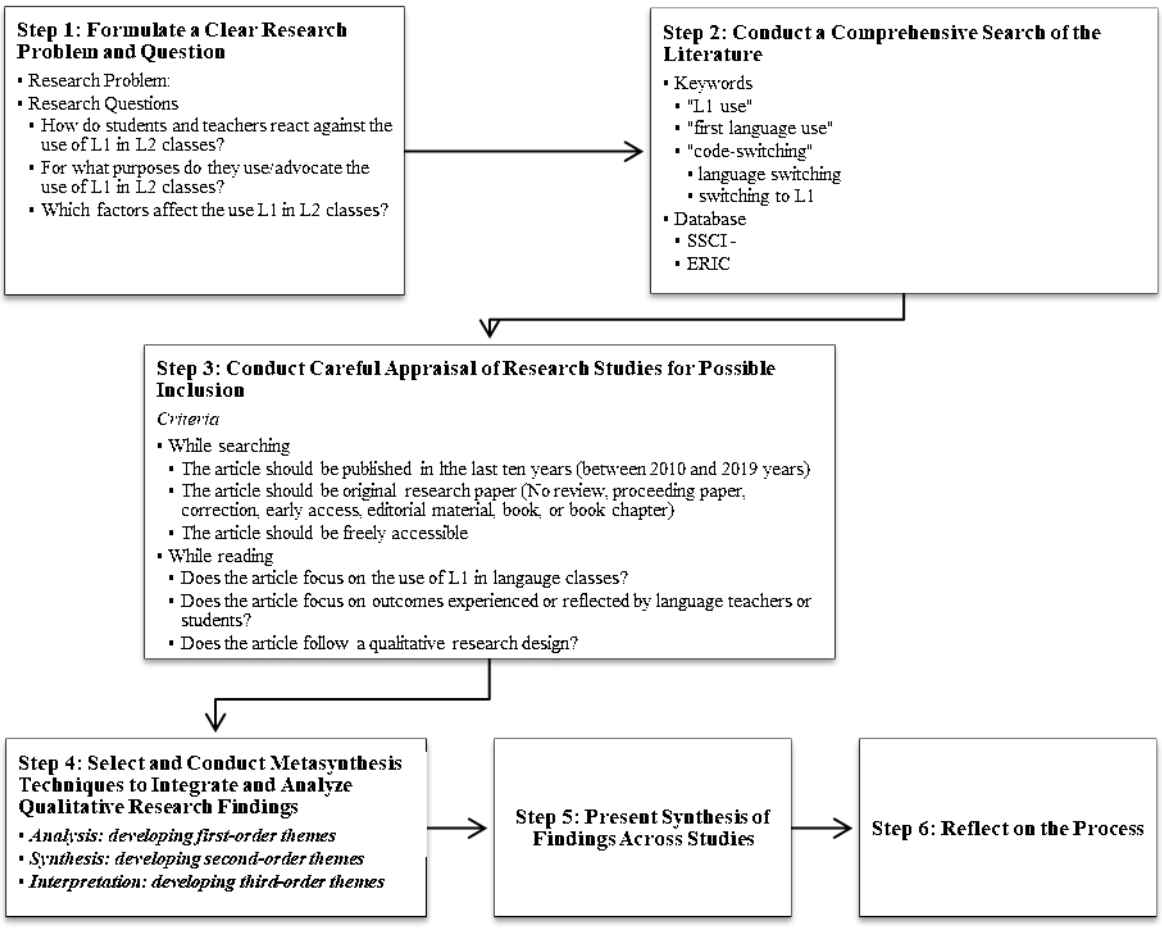

Figure 1. Steps followed in this study to carry out a meta-synthesis of qualitative research

2.1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

While searching, the first criterion was that the articles were published in the last ten years (between 2010-2019 years). Those articles should be original research papers (not a review, proceeding paper, correction, early access, editorial material, book, or book chapter) and should have free access to reach the full-text. Following searching, abstracts of the relevant studies were read to decide whether the study focuses on L1 use in language classes. The next one was that the studies should follow qualitative research methods as a primary research method since it was attempted to synthesize the qualitative studies investigating the issue of L1 use. Although several studies involve qualitative findings besides quantitative findings following a mixed-method research design, they were not included in this study since it remained unclear how to deal with findings obtained through mixed-method (combining qualitative and quantitative data). Another criterion was that the article should focus on the insights experienced or reflected by language teachers or students and the language teaching process.

Accordingly, among 641 articles published between 2010-2019 in the databases ERIC (286) and WoS (355), only 34 studies, the selection process of which was demonstrated in Figure 2, were examined, and their findings were synthesized to draw a conclusion about the use of L1 in L2 classes. The studies included in synthesis and coded as S1, S2 etc., were displayed in a table (see Appendix 1).

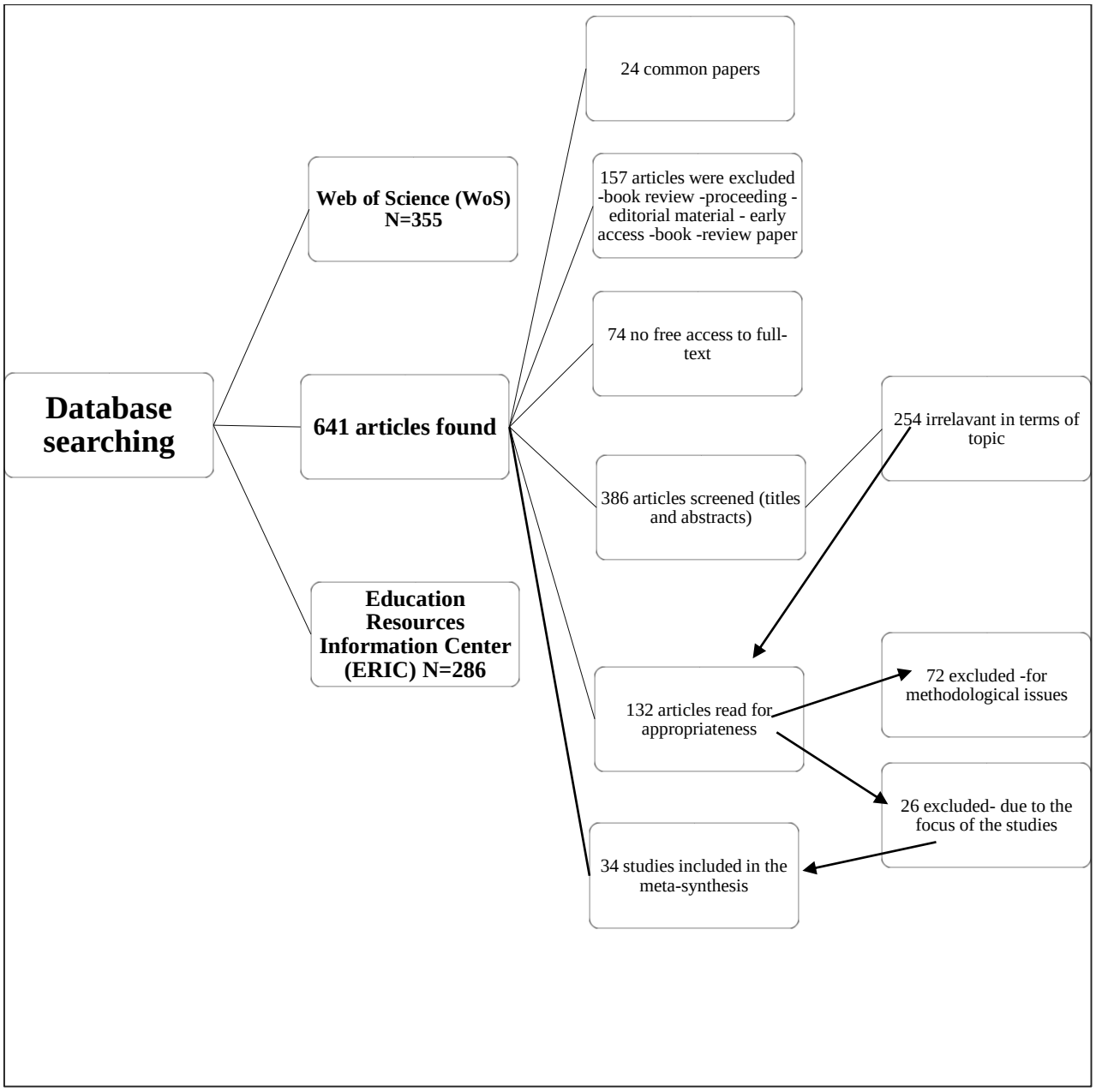

Figure 2. The selection process of articles

2.2. Data Analysis

The full texts included were first entered into NVivo 12.05 software since it would be challenging to deal with so many data sources. Through NVivo 12.05 software, the qualitative data were coded, categorized, and then organized into general themes. The first step was to read and reread each study to interpret, organize, relate, compare, verify, and mainly to synthesize the findings. For data analysis, a three-phase process, analysis (developing first-order themes), synthesis (developing second-order themes), and interpretation (developing third-order themes), was carried out in the current study (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). In the analysis, each study was analyzed separately and broken into essential elements to examine, and thus, first-order themes were developed. Those separate elements were combined into a unified whole and thus reached second-order themes. As the last step, the findings were interpreted through a critical-thinking and inductive analysis process, and thus third-order themes were

developed. The themes, categories, and codes, and the studies from which they were obtained were displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes, categories, and codes for L1 use in L2 classe

Themes	Categories	Codes	Studies
Avoidance of L1 in language classes			S11, S20, S33, S11, S9
	Factors affecting L1 use	Students' proficiency in L2	S29, S10, S34, S21, S22, S25
		Language context	S25, S27
		Content	S4
Use of L1 in language classes		Teachers' proficiency in L2	S19, S27, S29
	Functions of L1 use	Academic functions	S8, S7, S11, S13, S23, S29, S5, S6, S12, S28, S30, S26, S17, S345, S1, S16, S21, S4, S3, S32
		Managerial functions	S5, S18, S24, S30, S33, S1, S8, S11, S13, S26, S7, S17, S19, S23, S15, S14, S16, S31
		Social-cultural functions	S7, S8, S13, S16

2.3. Study Quality

It is crucial to consider the quality of investigations to be involved in research synthesis. Since those studies published in journals with a blind-review process and indexed in ERIC and WoS were selected, it was not taught there would be any quality problems. However, all studies selected were also analyzed by two researchers, one of whom is the author, by using CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Program) Qualitative Checklist (CASP, 2018) on a three-option scale as "totally met" (2), "partially met" (1), or "not met" (0), which was illustrated in Table 2. The two researchers decided that almost all studies partially or totally met each criterion, and but just two studies were excluded due to the quality.

Table 2. Evaluation of the quality of the studies according to the Critical Appraisal Skill Programme (CASP)

Quality Criterion	totally met	partially met	not met
Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	30	6	
Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	32	2	2
Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	32	2	2
Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	32	2	2
Were the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	34		2
Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	29	7	
Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	22	14	
Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	32	2	2
Is there a clear statement of findings?	30	4	2
How valuable is the research?	32	2	2

Two essential considerations as "credibility and trustworthiness" were carefully considered employing some measures such as 'prolonged field engagement' since the author investigated the issue before through a mixed study, 'detailed description' providing samples from studies, and 'peer debriefing' asking another researcher to code the findings of studies and check the themes obtained. Furthermore, credibility was provided through a detailed reflection of each process carried out in this study. It was clearly reported that the data were systematically collected and recorded in the light of identified criteria; the data analysis similarly followed a systematic approach; and the findings were presented and synthesized based on the data collected.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of the studies examined were firstly categorized under the two main themes as "Avoidance of L1 in language classes" and "Use of L1 in language classes". Both teachers' and students' perceptions about and practices in L1 use are discussed in detail under the themes in the light of their responses and performances.

3.1. Avoidance of L1 in language classes

L1 is used in many language classes, especially in foreign language contexts where the learners have no chance to be exposed to the target language. However, both students and teachers have cautioned about the overuse of the first language, which may adversely affect the learning process (Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Karakas, 2016). Students in Neokleous (2017) warned about the potential danger of overreliance on translation since translating each word or explaining every aspect probably diminished the efforts of students to interpret the meaning or understanding, and teachers may turn into "translator robots" as exemplified by an interviewee. For instance, sayings of a student in that study explicitly reflect that situation: "You depend on your teacher's translation and don't even take the trouble to check if this is what it actually means or that you've actually understood .... You consider that you have even if you've no idea what the translation means." (p.331).

Besides, the use of L1 is described as a hindrance to learning a new language since it "decreases the amount of exposure to target language" and thus limits the chance to do practice that will adversely affect speaking performance and may lead students to be lazy (Şener & Korkut, 2017). It is believed that a new language could be learned through "the massive exposure to target language" to get the opportunity to practice and produce the language and thus improve their proficiency in the target language (Debreli, 2016). Similarly, the teachers in Chimbutane (2013) pose negative attitudes towards the use of L1 in bilingual classes despite the educational policy of the country (Mozambique) that officially permits the use of L1 in bilingual classes. On the contrary, English Language Curricula for primary and secondary schools in Turkey strictly focus on the use of L2 in English language classes (MNA, 2018a, 2018b) since language classes are almost the only places where language learners will be exposed to the target language. Therefore, the use of L2 in language classes helps language learners use and be exposed to the target language, thus improving their proficiency in L2.

3.2. Use of L1 in language classes

Despite the opponents of code-switching to students' first language, L1 is used in language classes even for different functions, due to various reasons, and at different amounts. Furthermore, many teachers do that consciously (Bhatti, Shamsudin, & Said, 2018) since they believe judicious and skillful use of L1 can boost the quality of teaching. Besides facilitating comprehension of students, L1 use can increase students' confidence and comfort in the teaching process, reducing students' fear of making mistakes and naturally their stress in producing language (Promnath & Tayjasanant, 2016). Therefore, though suggested to be limited in quantity (Cai & Cook, 2015), first language use was preferred and permitted in language classes.

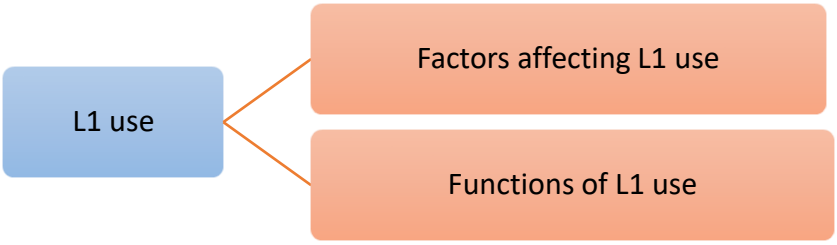

Figure 3. L1 use in L2 classes

3.2.1. Factors affecting L1 use.

Many factors are suggested to affect the choice of language in the teaching process. These factors may be teacher-related or student-related as much as being context-related. Moreover, other external factors such as curriculum, expectations of school or parents, and examination may also affect teachers and learners' language choices in language classes. However, just four main factors illustrated in Figure 5 were observed in the studies analyzed.

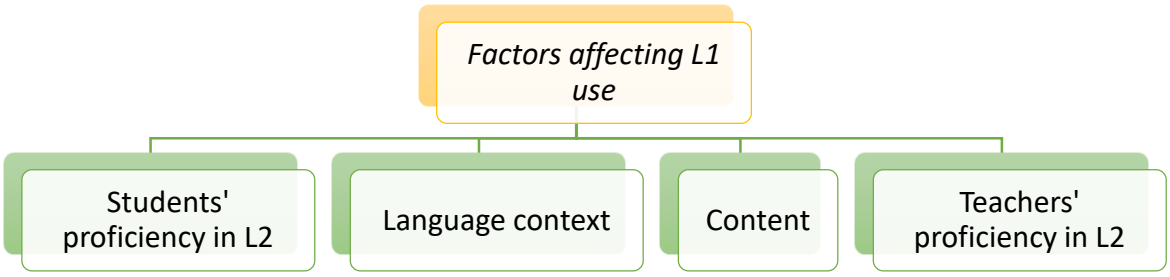

Figure 4. Factors affecting L1 use in L2 classes

The language to be used in the teaching process and how much L1 is used in class seems to depend on students' proficiency in the target language (Cho & Kim, 2016; Kurata, 2014; Moore, 2013; Promnath & Tayjasanant, 2016; Willans, 2011). For instance, a teacher in Promnath and Tayjasanant (2016), Joe, stated

"How much you switch to Thai depends on the students' level of proficiency, which can be seen during teaching - learning process: demotivation (as evidenced by talking with each other regarding the topic), facial expressions showing inability to follow the lesson, and low achievement scores, etc." (p. 120).

Therefore, for low-proficient learners who may have trouble understanding the instructions of their teacher and producing language to respond to those instructions, switching to the first language is considered an excellent strategy to reduce their anxiety and thus provide them a comfortable environment.

Furthermore, the set up where the language is taught also affects both the choice of language and the amount of first language use. For instance, as exemplified by an experienced instructor in Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015):

"Because all the children speak and understand the same Ghanaian language it is easy to use the native language but if they speak different Ghanaian languages which of them will you use. So I think the one language classroom has motivated teachers to use Fante though we are not supposed to do so" (p.79).

If all students share the same L1 in the class, it may be used as an effective instructional and pedagogical tool to promote learning or solve the problems faced in the class. It may be possible for teachers to use

the L1 to scaffold learning of students in a monolingual class, which is exemplified by JHS teacher in Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) as follows: "Because all the children speak and understand the same Ghanaian language it is easy to use the native language but if they speak different Ghanaian languages which of them will you use" (p.79). Besides, the choice of language may also differ according to the content and setup of the class. Whereas speaking classes might be conducted through the target language, linguistic knowledge such as grammar is generally taught in L1, which is also stated by ST1 in Bilgin (2016) as follows: "The lessons I used most [Turkish] are most probably grammar lessons. I can frankly say that I use Turkish most while teaching grammar" (p. 691).

In addition to the students' proficiency in the target language, teacher's proficiency also has a crucial role in teachers' language choice (Kang, 2013; Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). Since many language teachers are not native speakers of the target language, they may rely more on their first language in which they are more proficient and thus feel more self-confident to express themselves. For instance, Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) observed that teachers who were not proficient in English preferred to use Ghanaian language (Fante) as a compensatory strategy.

Although L1 is used in a number of language classes in different language contexts, the reason why it is preferred or allowed is changing according to several factors. However, it seems that it is generally preferred or used by or for low-level students who have difficulty understanding utterances, explanations, and instructions in L2 and thus enable them to perform the tasks or respond to the questions. In such occasions, the mere use of L2 is hence believed to make them feel less confident and be demotivated. Furthermore, language teachers who do not have sufficient L2 proficiency avoid to carry out all lessons in the target language; instead, they switch to the first language even if they know they should. Similarly, monolingual classes, compared to multilingual classes, and grammar lessons also provide more opportunities for the use of L1.

3.2.2. Functions of L1 use.

Based on the studies providing categories and classifications for what purposes L1 is used in language classes by both teachers and students (Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Promnath & Tayjasanant, 2016; Sali, 2014), three main categories as "academic functions", "managerial functions", and "social-cultural functions" were obtained in the light of findings of the studies.

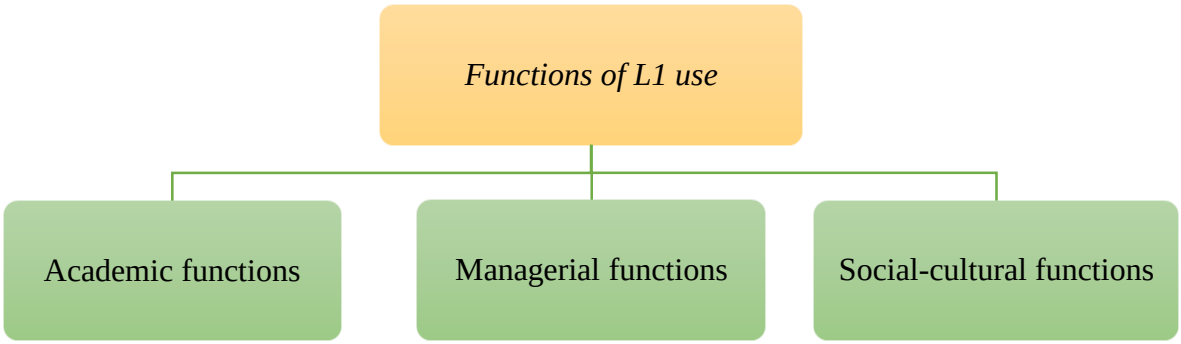

Figure 5. Functions of L1 use in L2 classes

3.2.2.1. Academic functions.

Many studies revealed that L1 is used as an effective instructional tool for academic functions regarding the ways the lesson was carried out (Sali, 2014). In this sense, it was found that both students and teachers mostly use or advocate the use of L1 while explaining some aspects of the target language (Al Masaeed, 2016; Alghasab, 2017; Bilgin, 2016; Cai & Cook, 2015; Gwee & Saravanan, 2018; Khresheh, 2012). The obscurity and unfamiliarity of vocabulary, structures, and phonetic of target language probably lead to switch into L1 in order to avoid confusion, misunderstanding, and mislearning that may lead to fossilization particularly while teaching to low-proficient students (Cahyani, de Courcy, & Barnett, 2018; Cai & Cook, 2015; Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Debreli, 2016; Willans, 2011). For instance, a teacher in Ma (2019) explains the differences in pronunciation of minimal pairs and word stress as follows: "BADminton 重音在前面' [The stress is at the beginning.]" using L1 and also use Chinese words with similar pronunciation to help students remember the pronunciation words they have learned in English such as "(不 明白) for badminton, (開個路) for kangaroo, (離婦) for leave, and (波) for ball". Similarly, the teacher in Promnath and Tayjasanant (2016) switches to Thai (L1) for providing explanations as in the example:

T: See, only just these ones, you can identify the main idea. You can see sugar, diet; sugar in diet, or sugar in diabetic patient. So meaning to say, you cannot get the whole sentence, ach cha mai hen mai chai kankhian copy dai thuk kham nakhrap, khae trong ni ko hen main idea laew nakhrap (you may not see or copy all the words here, just here, you can see the main idea, OK?)

Therefore, the first language is believed to be used particularly in an explanation of complex and abstract things since it will facilitate comprehension of students. Besides helping the students comprehend the intended meaning, L1 use may also serve as scaffolding for language learners especially when their language proficiency is not advanced (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Cahyani et al., 2018; Gierlinger, 2015). The expression by a student in Willans (2011, p. 28) "I use other languages when I am discussing the answers with a partner or when working in groups to find the answers more easy to understand" clearly emphasizes the role of L1 in the language learning/teaching process. Similarly, the teacher named Ruby in de Oliveira, Gilmetdinova, and Pelaez-Morales (2016) is in favor of using students' L1 (Spanish) in class and thus encourages her students to be comfortable using either English or their L1 Spanish. As shown in the excerpt she uses Spanish to provide linguistic support to check and improve her students' understanding (p.34):

R: Would you, is it mordar? Right

Ss: not clear

R: morder, muerde. Queres mordo

S: muerde

R: Queres muerde que, what do you want to bite?

S: not clear

R: Si tienes sharp teeth, si tienes dientes. What could you bite?

In order to be sure whether students have understood what is taught or the instruction they are required to meet, teachers can generally switch to L1 since it facilitates comprehension. For instance, the teacher in Promnath and Tayjasanant (2016), uses L1 to check for comprehension as in the following example:

T: Carbohydrate. So one of the main ideas should be related to sugar, glucose, or carbohydrate. What else? What other words can you see? nokchak nan yang mi kham sup arai ik, thi hen boi boi lae chai boi boi (Any other words that you use often?) (p.113).

Furthermore, the students may also use the L1 to ask their teacher a question or for confirmation (Pavón Vázquez & Ordóñez, 2019). For instance, a student who saw a paw paw (or papaya) on the computer screen asked the teacher in Mandarin. '這是什麼?' [What's this?] and '這是什麼意思?' [What does it mean?] a s/he did not know what it was and could not formulate a question in English (Ma, 2019, p. 397). Similarly, L1 is also used to "prompt and solicit more learner response and thus to increase learner involvement" (Sali, 2014, p. 312). As clearly seen in the excerpt of Ma (2019), when elicitation attempts in the target language fail, the last and certain solution to trigger a response –scaffolding - or to encourage the learner to talk is to codeswitch to the first language (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015).

Excerpt 1: (Track 1, 9:44)

1 T: (X) 我們問她幾點鐘吃早飯, 怎麼問呀? [We ask her what time she has breakfast. How do you ask?] …What time do you…

2 S: do you…

3T: 食早飯 [have breakfast]

4 S: breakfast

5 T: breakfast, 食呢? Eat 或者 have, 怎麼問呀? [breakfast, how about 'eat'? Eat or have. How do you ask?]

6T &Ss: {What time…do…you…have…

7T:br …br…br…BREAKFAST

8Ss: breakfast

9 T: breakfast, breakfast, breakfast…OK 我們整句唸一下。[Let's read out the whole sentence.]

10 T & Ss: {What time do you have breakfast?

11 S: {breakfast (p. 391).

While talking about what and how they learn, switching to L1 as a code shared by the teacher and students in the class may seem more logical since it may raise their awareness (Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Sali, 2014). Besides, students may also switch to their native language in class in answering the questions (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Copland & Neokleous, 2011) to avoid the image of being unresponsive and looking foolish instead to show the evidence of understanding and following the lesson as seen in the following excerpt by Ma (2019, p. 397)

Excerpt 14: (Track 5, 29:15) Dan Wei: I come to the English class at nine o'clock.

T: I come to the English class 英語課 [English class] I come to the English class at…at… What time?

Yue Ming: 九點 [Nine o'clock.]

Besides asking for help from their friends, students also use their first language to offer to help them. For instance, Pavón Vázquez and Ordóñez (2019) reported that students might turn to their L1 when they get the opportunity to talk to one another, particularly in their group or pair works. Furthermore, the students may also switch to L1 to ask their teacher to help them when they cannot state themselves in the target language (Al Masaeed, 2016).

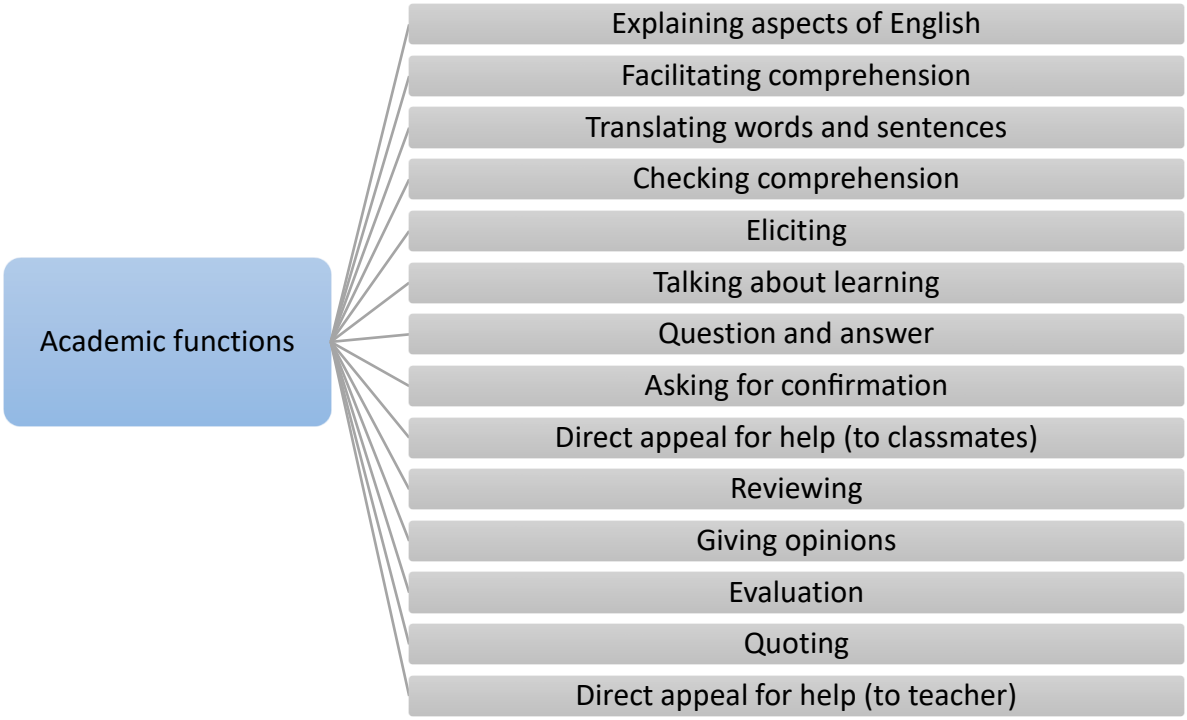

Figure 6. Academic functions of L1 use in L2 classes

It is clear that both teachers and students prefer to use their native language in the teaching of linguistic aspects that will improve their linguistic competence in the target language. Therefore, it is claimed that L1 will help particularly those learners with a low-level proficiency in L2 learn those aspects such as grammatical structures and vocabulary accurately and properly. In addition to explaining some aspects of the language and thus facilitating comprehension of learners, teachers generally switch to the native language to be sure whether the content is learned. L1 is also preferred in questions or responses to the teachers' questions by students as well as asking for help from their classmates or teachers in class. Similarly, L1 is also regarded as a useful communicative vehicle for learners and teachers to express their feelings about or experiences in the learning process.

3.2.2.2. Managerial functions.

Besides academic purposes, L1 is also used in language classes for a variety of managerial purposes (see Figure 8). Giving instructions in L1 is believed to save time in addition to helping students be easily-involved in activities (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Iyitoglu, 2016; Martin-Beltrán, Montoya-Ávila, García, Peercy, & Silverman, 2019; Sali, 2014; Sampson, 2012) As clearly understood from the response of a trainee in Şener and Korkut (2017, p. 47) “We must use L1 while giving instructions because students may not understand the instruction when it is in English”, L1 is commonly used or believed to be used by both the teachers and students in-class activities or tasks to provide clear instructions since misunderstanding of instruction may lead the students to fail (Alghasab, 2017; Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Cai & Cook, 2015; Cho & Kim, 2017; Debreli, 2016; Gaebler, 2014; Iyitoglu, 2016; Martin-Beltrán et al., 2019). This case was also practically illustrated in de Oliveira et al. (2016) in which the teacher combined English and Spanish to give the students instructions on what to do as in the following example (p.29):

R: Close your eyes and get your favorite animal in your head. Piensa en tu animal favorito que vive en los grass land Think about your favorite animal that lives in the grass land. When you have a picture, open your eyes. Cuando est~as [sic] pensando en un animal, mirami [sic].

Furthermore, teachers also use the first language of students to maintain discipline in the class (Cahyani et al., 2018; Inbar-Lourie, 2010; Iyitoglu, 2016; Kang, 2013; Ma, 2019). When they are not satisfied with the performance or behavior of students, they generally switch to L1 for classroom management since admonitions expressed in L1 are believed to be more effective and emphatic (Sali, 2014). Furthermore, as stated by the teachers in Gierlinger (2015), although using L1 for disciplinary purposes seems to be 'more energetic and expressive', TL use may not be so authentic; instead, it may become more artificial.

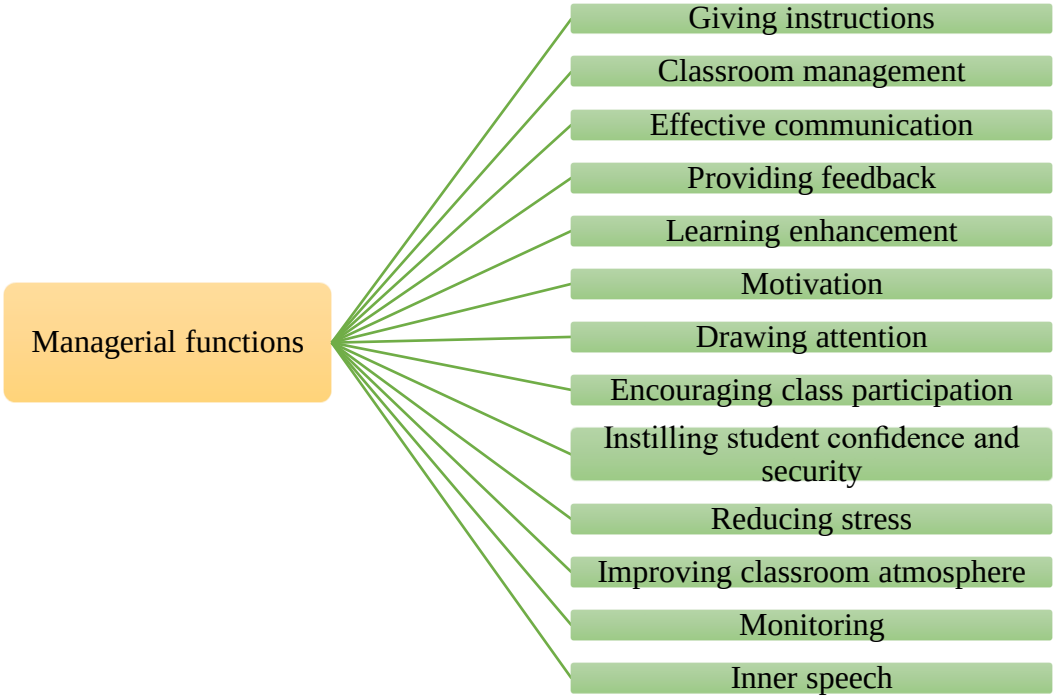

Figure 7. Managerial functions of L1 use in L2 classes

Students and teachers use or prefer the native language of learners to make the instruction clear. If they could not comprehend the instructions, they will have trouble performing the activities and probably feel less confident. On the other hand, the use of L1 will help them get encouraged and motivated to express themselves and conduct the tasks required. Furthermore, L1 is also used as a pedagogical tool to instill student confidence and security and thus dessuggest all kinds of psychological barriers that learners bring with them and may hinder the learning process. The learning atmosphere will be hence improved and designed to attract and sustain the attention of learners. Similarly, the discipline of the class is managed, and the problems related to the classroom management faced in class are generally overcome by the use of L1 since teachers find it more practical.

3.2.2.3. Socio-cultural functions.

L1 is also used for different socio-cultural functions based on the preferences and needs of teachers and students in language teaching classes. In support of the views of Lozanov, the creator of Suggestology, which is the science of that kind of suggestion liberating students from the previous negative conditioning, students were found to feel more self-confident and comfortable while expressing their feelings in their own language. Furthermore, the use of target language, particularly for low-proficient learners, is likely to increase learners' stress and anxiety level, which adversely affects and even filters the language learning process. In this sense, as seen in Cahyani et al. (2018), teachers switch to L1 "for interpersonal relations to humanize the classroom – such as using humor, lightening the mood to reduce students' anxiety, and giving praise" (p. 472) with the purpose of providing a supportive learning

atmosphere and also showing appreciation for students (Iyitoglu, 2016). Occasional L1 use is also suggested to build rapport with students since a sense of shared linguistic and socio-cultural identity in the classroom will help to create personal warmth in the classroom (Sali, 2014).

Furthermore, both teachers and students are of the opinion that jokes should be made in L1 to be understandable and humorous since translation or statement in the target language is unlikely to make sense due to cultural and terminological differences between L1 and L2. For instance, as a response to the sentence of a student "I have lunch at twelve" produced during talking about daily routines, the teacher made a joke in Mandarin "不是星期六, 星期六 at twelve 我們在上課' [Not Saturdays, we are having lessons on Saturdays at twelve.]" (Ma, 2019, p. 395). Similarly, Debreli (2016) stated that L2 use might hinder "socialization" in the classroom, which is a practical aspect of the teaching and learning process since they are not proficient enough at L2.

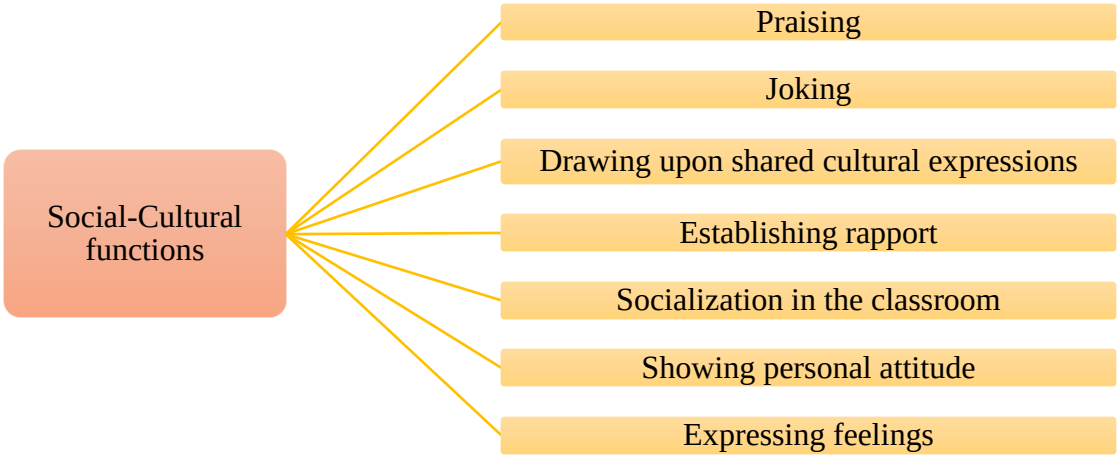

Figure 8. Socio-cultural functions of L1 use in L2 classes

L1 of students also takes place in language classes for various socio-cultural fucntions in addition to some academic and managerial functions. Since all languages are a part of different cultures, it is so challenging to express or feel the same points in a culture through a different language. Therefore, socio-cultural aspects are believed to be effectively expressed in the language of that culture. The jokes or feelings might not be stated appropriately; even if done, they might not make any sense. Furthermore, the mere use of L2 in classes may discourage learners from interacting with one another and thus yields a lack of socialization.

4. Conclusions

This study synthesizes the findings of qualitative studies on L1 use in language classes to give insight into the language choices of language learners and teachers. It is not new, but an unresolved topic whether language education should be carried out in the target language or native language can be utilized in teaching language. Many researchers advocate judicious use of L1 to minimize affective filters that adversely affect the process of language learning and to maximize the active participation of learners who feel relaxed and less nervous thanks to the comfort of L1 use. Nevertheless, the number of researchers rejecting L1 use in language classes with the assertion that it hinders a new language learning process is not less. In contrast to the advocates of the monolingual approach, most of the studies dealt with in this study revealed that both teachers and students support the use of L1 in language classes

for various purposes. For instance, many academic functions such as explaining some aspects of the target language such as vocabulary or grammatical structures of the new language, talking about the learning process, asking or answering a question, asking for confirmation or checking whether students have understood, asking for help from other students of their teacher, and evaluating the performance of students are suggested to be performed in the first language since it facilitates the process and saves the time. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the teachers and students mostly prefer L1 to give instructions for activities or tasks, to manage the classroom, to communicate effectively, to provide feedback for students and thus to encourage and motivate them, to attract and sustain the attention of learners, and also to reduce stress and anxiety level of students instilling confidence and security. Due to the differences between native and target languages, which may even lead to some misunderstanding, many socio-cultural functions such as praising, making jokes, stating cultural expressions, improving socialization in the classroom through different ways, and helping learners express their own feelings and attitudes are believed to be effectively carried out in L1. Although L1 use is mostly supported by the teachers and students, many factors are suggested to have an influence on the choice and amount of its use. L1 can be used for various functions in a monolingual context; nonetheless, it seems obligatory to use the target language in an educational context where students do not share the same native language. Similarly, the proficiency of both teachers and students in the target language also affects to a considerable extent L1 use.

In conclusion, it does not seem possible to draw a conclusion about this ongoing debate based on the findings of this study yet although it was believed to get more concrete and detailed views about language choices of teachers and students and to examine their in-class practices through qualitative data of studies mostly obtained through interviews and observations. Language teachers and students are more likely to go on using their L1 for different purposes or reasons, even if their educational policies or curricula require them to use only the target language in their classes. Therefore, besides language teachers, educational policymakers, or curriculum developers may consider the preferences and experiences of language learners and teachers in the use of L1 in addition to the language theories and approaches.

This study discusses the issue of L1 in the light of qualitative studies investigating the perceptions and practices of language learners and teachers. Therefore, the findings of this study mostly depend on their views on, attitudes towards, and experiences in the use of L1. However, those studies comparing the processes in which L1 is switched and those in which L2 is only used could also be considered to get a clear conclusion about the issue.

5. Ethics Committee Approval

The author(s) confirm(s) that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country (Date of Confirmation: 17/11/2020).

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Appendix A. A Table of the studies included in this study

Code	Study
S1	Alghasab, M. (2017). The use of Arabic in Kuwaiti EFL classrooms: An exploratory study on the patterns and functions of language choice. *Cogent Education*, *4*(1), 1411037.
S2	Al Masaeed, K. (2016). Judicious use of L1 in L2 Arabic speaking practice sessions. *Foreign Language Annals*, *49*(4), 716-728.
S3	Bhatti, A., Shamsudin, S., & Said, S. B. M. (2018). Code-Switching: A useful foreign language teaching tool in EFL classrooms. *English Language Teaching, 11*(6), 93-101.
S4	Bilgin, S. S. (2016). Code switching in English language teaching (ELT) teaching practice in Turkey: Student teacher practices, beliefs and identity. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *11*(8), 686-702.
S5	Bozorgian, H., & Fallahpour, S. (2015). Teachers' and students' amount and purpose of l1 use: English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Iran. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *3*(2), 67-81.
S6	Bruen, J., & Kelly, N. (2017). Using a shared L1 to reduce cognitive overload and anxiety levels in the L2 classroom. *The Language Learning Journal*, *45*(3), 368-381.
S7	Cahyani, H., de Courcy, M., & Barnett, J. (2018). Teachers' code-switching in bilingual classrooms: exploring pedagogical and sociocultural functions. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *21*(4), 465-479.
S8	Cai, G., & Cook, G. (2015). Extensive own-language use: A case study of tertiary English language teaching in China. *Classroom Discourse*, *6*(3), 242-266.
S9	Chimbutane, F. (2013). Codeswitching in L1 and L2 learning contexts: Insights from a study of teacher beliefs and practices in Mozambican bilingual education programmes. *Language and Education*, *27*(4), 314-328.
S10	Cho, S., & Kim, S. (2017). L1 Translation as Scaffolding in Tutor Talk: A Case Study of Two Korean Tutors. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies, 17*(2).
S11	Copland, F., & Neokleous, G. (2011). L1 to teach L2: Complexities and contradictions. *ELT journal*, *65*(3), 270-280.
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S16	Gwee, S., & Saravanan, V. (2018). Use of code-switching in multilingual content subject and language classrooms. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *15*(2), 117-134.
S17	Inbar-Lourie, O. (2010). English only? The linguistic choices of teachers of young EFL learners. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *14*(3), 351-367.
S18	Iyitoglu, O. (2016). Code-Switching from L2 to L1 in EFL Classrooms. *Croatian Journal of Education: Hrvatski časopis za odgoj i obrazovanje, 18*(1), 257-289.
S19	Kang, D.-M. (2013). EFL teachers' language use for classroom discipline: A look at complex interplay of variables. *System*, *41*(1), 149-163.
S20	Karakas, A. (2016). Turkish lecturers' views on the place of mother tongue in the teaching of content courses through English medium. *Asian Englishes*, *18*(3), 242-257.

S21	Khresheh, A. (2012). Exploring when and why to use Arabic in the Saudi Arabian EFL classroom: Viewing L1 use as eclectic technique. *English Language Teaching, 5*(6), 78-88.
S22	Kurata, N. (2014). Construction of L1/L2 use in informal social networks: A study of learners of Japanese in Australia. *Linguistics and Education, 27*, 14-29.
S23	Ma, L. P. F. (2019). Examining the functions of L1 use through teacher and student interactions in an adult migrant English classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(4), 386-401.
S24	Martin-Beltrán, M., Montoya-Ávila, A., García, A. A., Peercy, M. M., & Silverman, R. (2019). 'Time for una pregunta': understanding Spanish use and interlocutor response among young English learners in cross-age peer interactions while reading and discussing text. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(1), 17-34.
S25	Moore, P. J. (2013). An emergent perspective on the use of the first language in the English-as-a-foreign-language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal, 97*(1), 239-253.
S26	Neokleous, G. (2017). Closing the gap: Student attitudes toward first language use in monolingual EFL classrooms. *TESOL Journal, 8*(2), 314-341.
S27	Owu-Ewie, C., & Eshun, E. S. (2015). The Use of English as Medium of Instruction at the Upper Basic Level (Primary Four to Junior High School) in Ghana: From Theory to Practice. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(3), 72-82.
S28	Pavón Vázquez, V., & Ramos Ordóñez, M. d. C. (2019). Describing the use of the L1 in CLIL: an analysis of L1 communication strategies in classroom interaction. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(1), 35-48.
S29	Promnath, K., & Tayjasanant, C. (2016). English-Thai Code-Switching of Teachers in ESP Classes. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand, 51*, 97-126.
S30	Sali, P. (2014). An analysis of the teachers' use of L1 in Turkish EFL classrooms. *System, 42*, 308-318.
S31	Sampson, A. (2012). Learner code-switching versus English only. *ELT journal, 66*(3), 293-303.
S32	San Isidro, X., & Lasagabaster, D. (2019). Code-switching in a CLIL multilingual setting: a longitudinal qualitative study. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 16*(3), 336-356.
S33	Şener, S., & Korkut, P. (2017). Teacher trainees' awareness regarding mother tongue use in English as a foreign language classes. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 13*(1), 41-61.
S34	Willans, F. (2011) Classroom code-switching in a Vanuatu secondary school: conflict between policy and practice, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 14:1, 23-38

Yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin ve öğrenenlerin dil seçimleri: Nitel çalışmaların meta-sentezi

Öz

Bu çalışma, araştırmacılar arasında henüz kesin bir sonuca ulaşılamayan bir konu olan dil öğretiminde birinci dilin kullanımı konusunda bir sonuca varmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, katılımcıların görüş ve uygulamalarına gözlem ve görüşmeler aracılığıyla yer veren nitel çalışmalar incelendi ve daha sonar sentezlendi. Öncelikle, "yabancı dil öğretiminde birinci dilin kullanımından kaçınma" ve "yabancı dil öğretiminde birinci dilin kullanımı" olmak üzere iki tema elde edildi. Çalışmalar, eğitim bağlamı, öğretmen ve öğrencilerin yabancı dil yeterlikleri, öğretilen konu gibi etkenlerin dil öğretiminde öğretmen ve öğrencilerin dil tercihlerini ve birinci dil kullanım oranlarını etkilediği göstermektedir. Ayrıca çalışmalar, birinci dilin dil öğretiminde çeşitli amaçlarla kullanıldığını/kullanılması gerektiğini göstermektedir. Bu amaçlar, akademik amaçlar, yönetimsel amaçlar ve sosyo-kültürel amaçlar olarak üç kategoride ele alındı. İncelenen çalışmalar neticesinde kesin bir sonuca varılamamasına rağmen dil öğretiminin genellikle hedef dille sürdürülmesi gerektiğine, ancak ihtiyaç duyulması halinde birinci dilin kullanılabileceği sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Meta-sentez, birinci dil kullanımı, anadil kullanımı, yabancı dil sınıfları, yabancı dil öğretimi

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