Functions and Functional Preferences of Code Switching: A Case Study at a Private K-8 School in Turkish Context

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ABSTRACT

Due to the changes in the approaches and methods in English language teaching throughout history, the use of mother tongue (L1) has been one of the most important topics discussed in the foreign language teaching field. Although most of the approaches used nowadays do not support the use of mother tongue, there is a change in the perception towards teachers' code-switching in foreign language (L2) learning classrooms. There are various recent studies suggesting that using mother tongue facilitates foreign language learning. In this respect, the purpose of this study was to examine the teachers' and students' perceptions towards L1 use in L2 classrooms and under which circumstances they preferred using mother tongue. In addition, learners' preferences of teachers' code switching were also analyzed. Both teachers' and students' perceptions and beliefs on code switching were investigated using the questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews as data collection tools. There were 2 hour-observation periods (90 minutes) in the classrooms of 2nd grade, 4th grade and 7th grade in which the circumstances of L1 use were analyzed to determine if there were any common characteristics of the L1 use. Findings of the revealed that there were some common circumstances where teachers code-switched to facilitate learning in the classroom and that students had some clear preferences for their teachers to switch to L1.

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language has been an essential need of the global world's citizens. "English language has spread exponentially through Turkey's response to the pressures of globalization and its formal language education policies" (Yal, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, more and more importance is given to English in time and curriculums are aimed to be designed in such a way that English can be accessible by the majority of learners.

Teaching methods and approaches have spread over years and changed in time. The changes "have (also) reflected changes in theories of the nature of language and language learning" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p.1). Each approach or method has its own unique principles in terms of its goals, teacher roles, interaction patterns, role of learners' mother tongue etc. This study aims to analyze the functions of mother tongue (L1) in different teaching environments as well as the teachers' and students' perceptions towards them.

Since English has been gaining quite a lot importance day by day, private schools have already elaborated their marketing strategies with English language teaching techniques. People, especially parents, are attracted by the importance and concentration they give towards English language education. In most of the private schools, native English speaker teachers are the most effective elements of their marketing strategy. In other words, to the parents, they are offering classrooms with no mother tongue suggesting that foreign language is learned best without learners' mother tongue.

One of the reasons, why this topic was taken for investigation, is to have a deeper look at the real reasons why mother tongue is not welcomed in foreign language classes. Researcher's experience as a teacher in different private schools with different levels of students, has helped her realize that school principals and heads of language department are trying to make the teachers use as much L2 as possible. Even yet, in the beginning of the academic year, an oral reminder is given in general meetings to ensure that using mother tongue is completely forbidden in any age and proficiency level.

Moreover, it is quite clear through personal observations of the researcher that this perception has also developed into a way of marketing strategy. As a result of parents' meetings and institutional approaches, parents think that the most efficient and ideal schools are the ones which have many native teachers whose mother tongue is learners' target language. School founders and principals are also proud to announce that English is only or mostly taught by native English speakers. In other words, this study aims to emphasize whether this belief reflects the truth in language teaching both pedagogically, scientifically and practically.

The study focuses on the learners' and teachers' perceptions towards code switching in class and the functions of implementing it in different levels. The study is carried with anticipation of demonstrating and categorizing teachers' code switching functions and their learners' perceptions towards its application. In order to investigate teachers' perceptions and beliefs on code switching in L2 classrooms, interviews and questionnaires were used as a tools of data collection and they were supported by interviewees' classroom observations. Students' perceptions were also evaluated via questionnaires.

As the first purpose of the study, it seeks to investigate learners' perceptions towards code switching in language classrooms through questionnaire which is one of the tools of qualitative research methods. The

questionnaire aimed to see if learners welcomed their mother tongue or not in their English classes, if they did, where exactly do they need assistance of their L1?

Second purpose is to examine teachers' perspectives and opinions about code switching while teaching language. Thus, in order to analyze the reflection of their beliefs into practice, 2 hours of their lessons were observed and audio-recorded. This was in order to investigate the exact circumstances where they were in need of switching to their mother tongue.

As it is widely accepted, sometimes what people theoretically believe does not match with what they do in practice. Hence, a further interview was arranged with the teachers who were observed. Its aims were to compare their beliefs with their own classroom practice and to investigate the functions of L1 use in depth.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Defining Code Switching

There are numerous definitions of code switching (CS) in the literature. However, regarding the language education field, Cook (2008) has a clear definition of code switching by second language users. He puts forward a similar definition of the term and states that code switching is "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same two languages" (p. 174).

In order to explain the process of code switching in time, Duran (1994) states that CS was not considered as a strategy. She states that "traditionally code-switching was seen and still is seen by many as a random process that could be explained by interference" (p. 4). However, recently, it has been regarded as one of the main strategies used in language classrooms (Sert, 2005). As long as learners and the teacher share the same mother tongue, it is difficult to conduct an L1-free lesson; thus, instead of trying to

ban the mother tongue use in classrooms, its functions need to be examined deeper and necessary suggestion for application should be provided.

2.2 Reasons for Code Switching

According to Cook (2008) the reasons for code switching are: "reporting someone else's speech, interjecting , highlighting particular information, switching to a topic more suitable for one language, changing the speaker's role, qualifying the speech, singling out one person to direct speech at, ignorance of a form in one language" (p. 176).

After observing language teachers in England, Macaro (1997) lists the functions of L1 use during the teaching process. He witnessed switching to mother tongue:

a) to give instructions related to activities
b) to translate and check comprehension
c) to give individual comments to students
d) to give feedback
e) to maintain discipline

Ferguson (2009) also lists the functions of code switching:

a) *Constructing and transmitting knowledge:* This function refers to the aim to make sure whether learners got the message or not. It can also be used to clarify the meaning of L2 via L1.

b) *Classroom management:* Teachers express their feelings and ideas better in learners' mother tongue when there is a management problem or praise. Here, the aim is not to assess if the learner can understand L2 or not, but it is to transfer the intended message via L1.

c) *Interpersonal relations:* Language learning is not a formal context as learners need to trust the instructor and feel self-confident in the classroom to be ready to learn. Learners may not have the necessary amount of language to express their ideas and feeling and they should not feel that they are limited with their proficiency level in terms of

building interpersonal relations. When teachers and learners try to build a rapport with each other, it is quite expected that they switch to L1.

In the Chinese context, Jingxia (2010) examined the perceptions of the teachers and the functions and influence of code switching to L1 in language classrooms. Sixty teachers and 261 students from three Chinese universities were involved in the study. Classroom recordings and two questionnaires were used. Some other functions of L1 are translating vocabulary, explaining grammar, managing class and building close relation with learners.

In their study, Villamil and Guerrero (1996) also examined 54 intermediate ESL students. In terms of L1 use, it was suggested that L1 helped students for making meaning of the text, retrieving language from memory, explaining and expanding content, guiding their action through the task, and maintaining dialogue.

Eldridge (1996) studied the functions of code switching in the Turkish context and supported that it is a tool to facilitate language learning when it serves to some pedagogical purposes. According to Eldridge (1996), students code switch due to one or some of the motivations as follows: equivalence, floor-holding, metalanguage, reiteration, group membership, conflict control and alignment and disalignment.

2.3 Significance of this Study

This study is noteworthy both for its pedagogical and theoretical implications. Considering theoretical background of the study, it is necessary to highlight that code switching is mostly studied with high school or university students around the world (Bista, 2010; Bismilla, 2010; Schweers, 1999; Büyükyazı & Solhi, 2011; Alenezi, 2010; Meij & Zhao, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). The focus of mentioned literature was on the perceptions towards L1 use in L2 classrooms of high school and university students. In Turkish context, target groups were secondary schools, which corresponded to high school level when the research was conducted, and university groups (Kayaoğlu, 2012; Moran, 2009; Şevik, 2007). Only when Eldridge (1996) conducted his research on code switching in Turkish context, secondary school consisted of sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Thus, it involves one of the three grades that have been studied with in this article. Overall, this study is significant because of its participants as it focuses on primary school students' perceptions towards use of mother tongue in language classrooms. In terms of its pedagogical implication, this study aims to help language instructors and teacher trainers be aware of the purposes when they switch to learners' mother tongue. Moreover, with the help of this study, teachers will be more conscious about using code switching in their classrooms despite the possible pressure deriving from the school authorities and parents. Such study is critical to enhance their self-confidence as they will be able to find some real life examples and experiences that they can easily relate to their own teaching experiences. Therefore, the study is guided by the following research questions-

1. What are the common functions of teacher's code switching in class?
2. For which functions do students prefer teacher code switching?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

A total number of thirty (30) students and four (4) experienced teachers from a private K-8 school in Turkey participated in this study. In this section, some background and educational information about the teachers and the head of foreign languages department

as well as some details about the participant learners are provided.

3.1.1 The learners

Ten (10) students from each grade (second, fourth and seventh grades) were selected randomly and given the questionnaire. In order to avoid possible gender and age effect, voluntary students were selected accordingly.

3.1.2 The teachers

Three English language teachers of the observed classes and the head of the foreign language department were interviewed for the study. They were the subjects of this study since they were the only non-native English teachers of the grades which I wanted to study with.

The teachers are coded to ensure the confidentiality and the participant teachers were informed about it. All of the teachers in this study could be called "experienced" since the least experienced teacher, coded as T1, has been teaching for 8 years. T2 has been in the field of language teaching for 11 years. T3 is the most experienced teacher in this study with 17 years. The head of the foreign languages department is referred as H1 in the following part of the paper with 13 years of teaching experience.

3.2 Research Design

Merriam (2009) discusses six types of qualitative research: phenomenological study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, critical research and qualitative case study. This study makes use of qualitative case study research method as it fits well to the description of Creswell, Hanson, Plano and Morales (2007), who describe case study as, a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 245)

Regarding their definition of the term, this study involves the characteristics mentioned above. There is a case with a certain institution, its instructors and learners and study takes place there. In addition, data collection is not completed in one attempt, but completed over time with, again, some of the mentioned data collection tools: interviews and observations.

According to Merriam (2009), case studies are characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. This study is more particularistic since it focuses on a particular context, event or phenomenon. The case itself gains the primary concentration of the study.

Another categorization of case studies comes from Stake (2005) as being intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic case study is conducted when a research has an interest on a particular case and motivation is gained intrinsically. The aim is not about building a theory or create phenomenon at the end of the study but is about the specific case itself. Instrumental case study uses the case as a tool to generalize the findings and results of the study. In other words, case has a facilitative role on generalizing the data. Finally, in collective case study, multiple cases are investigated and after collecting data, their similarities and differences are studied.

Considering these definitions, this study falls in first two categories: intrinsic and instrumental case study. It is an intrinsic case study since the researcher was also an instructor in a private school and wanted to investigate deeper how and why mother tongue is used in classrooms. Also, it was instrumental as the findings can affect other teachers and teacher trainers about the use of L1 in classrooms.

Overall, qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate one for having a deeper investigation on theoretical and practical assumptions in classrooms.

According to Brown (2001), credibility means "showing that a qualitative study was conducted in a way that maximizes the accuracy of identifying and describing the object(s) of study" (p. 242). In parallel with this description, this study included methodological triangulation as multiple data collection procedures are followed such as: questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. Furthermore, member checks occurred at some phases in this study as feedback from the participant group.

According to Brown (2001) questionnaires "are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (p. 6). In this study, respondents were interviewed both with Likert-scale and open-ended questions. Some advantages of using questionnaires are also mentioned by Dörnyei (2010). According to him, questionnaires save researchers' time, effort, and financial resources. They also help the researchers when it is almost impossible to collect data from hundreds of people in a short period of time. In other words, researchers can ask a large number of people to fill in the questionnaire as it is almost impossible and requires lots of time to have a face to face interview.

Wray and Bloomer (2006) also mention some advantages of questionnaires and agree to Brown (2001) for being able to reach people from different locations. Also, they state, it is easier to categorize gathered data as the format is the same for all participants. They argue that it is best to accompany questionnaire with other data gathering tools

such as; interviews, tests and observations. In this study, questionnaires were supported with observations and interviews.

3.3 Setting

The school in which this study was conducted is located in one of the most populated and developed areas of Istanbul. It is a private K-8 school giving importance on foreign language teaching just like many of the private schools do in Turkey. Foreign language teaching, especially English, is one of the most important reasons why parents register their kids to this school. Thus, the outcome of English lessons is quite important for them. The priority of English is highlighted from the very beginning, kindergarten.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures
3.4.1 Sampling

In this study, convenience or opportunity sampling was used since it was easier to interview face to face with the sample group and to follow the procedure of the study and thus, solve any problem related to the data collection process. Also, it was much simpler to have an observation schedule with the relatively accessible subjects as we were in the same institution.

3.4.2 Classroom Observations

Total 90 minutes observation in two 45 minutes-sessions was done and classes were observed while they were audio recorded at the same time. Video recording was not much preferred by the teachers since they said that they would feel uncomfortable while they were being video-recorded. The observed teachers were not informed beforehand about the topic of the study in order not to influence the teachers' behaviors and usual teaching practice. Furthermore, interviews were conducted within two weeks of class observation. The period between the observation and interview was arranged as short as possible so that the instructor could

remember and refer to her observed class easily if needed.

3.4.3 Questionnaire for the teachers

Timor's (2012) questionnaire on "The use of Hebrew as the mother tongue among EFL teachers" was adapted to customize it to this research setting, and some extra parts to the questionnaire were added (see Appendix A).

3.4.4 Questionnaire for the learners

As there is scarcity of research conducted on young learners' perceptions about code switching, it was much harder to come across with a questionnaire in the related literature especially in the Turkish context. However, Şevik (2007) utilized a questionnaire that investigated high school learners' perceptions towards code switching and although it is not particularly designed for young learners, it was adopted for the purpose of present study. The questionnaire (Appendix B) was designed in Turkish so that learners could reflect their ideas and beliefs easily without struggling with some unknown words or structures in the questions. The questionnaire included multiple choice questions, which was more appropriate for the target group.

3.4.5 Teacher interview

Teacher interview was designed based on the questionnaire data. After they completed the questionnaires, a further interviews were carried out to be able to analyze their perceptions and practices deeper.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1.1 The Functions of Teachers' Code Switching in L2 Classrooms

In order to investigate the functions of teachers' code switching, questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 are taken into consideration.

Table 1. Survey Question 4: When Do Teachers Refer Mainly to Turkish in Their English Lessons?

I refer to Turkish mainly when structures in English and Turkish coincide.	T2, T3

I refer to Turkish mainly when structures in English and Turkish do not coincide.	T1, T3, H1

After exploring teachers' beliefs on L1 use with coinciding or non-coinciding grammatical structures of Turkish and English, the questionnaire aimed to identify which grammatical structures required code switching for the teachers.

Table 2. Survey Question 5: Which Grammatical Structures in English Language Require Code switching?

Tenses (Present Perfect Simple, Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect	T1, T2, T3, H1
Future tenses: will vs be going to)	T2
Phrasal Verbs	T1, T3, H1
Conditionals (Type 2 and Type 3)	T1, T2, H1
Relative Clauses (The difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses)	T3
Active and Passive Voice	T3

The following question was about teaching skills and integrating learners' mother tongue investigating if the teachers used L1 for teaching vocabulary, reading comprehension or writing skills. The table 3 displays the data gathered from the teachers.

Table 3. Survey question 6: Using L1 in Teaching Skills

I refer to Turkish when I teach vocabulary	T1, T2, H1
I refer to Turkish when I teach reading comprehension	-
I refer to Turkish when I teach writing skills	T3

The last part of teachers' questionnaire surveys the cases in which the teachers switch to their mother tongue the most and Table 4 presents the related data.

Table 4. Survey question 7: Cases in Which the Teachers Switch to Their Mother Tongue

The cases (I use Turkish for)	The Teachers
Checking Comprehension	T1, T3
Giving instructions	T1, T3
Classroom management	T1, T2, T3, H1

Students' affective situations	T1, T2, T3, H1
Giving feedback	T1, T3
Comparing L1 and L2 structures	T1, T2, H1
Error correction	T2, T3, H1

4.2 Functions in which Students Prefer Teacher Code Switching

After having analyzed the learners' perceptions, they were asked about the cases in which they needed the assistance of Turkish in English lessons.

Table 5. Survey Question 6: Number of the students who expect their teachers to use code switching in the given cases

In which cases do you think Turkish is necessary in foreign language classrooms?	2nd Graders	4th Graders	7th Graders	Total (out of 30)
a. For definitions of new vocabulary	8	8	8	24
b. *To reinforce some expressions and words	-	1	-	1
c. For the presentation of complicated grammar rules	8	9	9	26
d. For the explanation of different concepts and ideas	-	3	1	4
e. To give classroom instructions	5	3	-	8
f. To give us advice about how we can learn more efficiently	5	8	3	16
g. To summarize the topics presented in the previous lessons	-	2	5	7
h. To use jokes and humor in classrooms	-	-	7	7
i. To compare and contrast Turkish culture with different cultures	3	2	-	5
j. To correct errors and give feedback	3	4	5	12

4.3 Findings of Analysis

4.3.1 Teachers' Perspectives via Survey and Interviews

Before investigating teachers' beliefs in terms of various grammatical structures and L1 use, question 4 aimed to understand if the teachers believed it was useful to switch to Turkish when the structures of the two languages, Turkish and English, coincide or not. As it can be understood from Table 1, T1 and H1 supported that it is more problematic when two different structures do not overlap and in that case they switch to L1. However, T2 stated that it was necessary to code switching when there were overlapping structures in both languages. T3, on the other hand, argued that it is necessary in cases, where two language structures coincide and where they do not.

Table 2 demonstrates with which grammatical structures teachers use code switching the most. Some of the structures that non-native English teachers find difficult to teach are "The Perfect Tenses" including "The Present Perfect Simple Tense, The Present Perfect Progressive, and The Past Perfect Simple". All of the teachers stated that perfect tenses are among the most problematic tenses for Turkish learners. T1 provides some reasons why "perfect tenses" are problematic for Turkish learners.

> Because there is not any tense just like "The Present Perfect Tense" or "The Present Perfect Progressive", learners cannot easily understand which Turkish tense they correspond to. Also, it is not easy for learners to identify actions that happened in the past and still continuing. What is interesting on this topic is that the students can understand what "perfect tenses" refer to when you switch to L1; however, they get confused again when they start to translate sentences into Turkish just because of the first reason I mentioned. (Interview data)

During the interview, T3 summarized her experience about teaching phrasal verbs:

> As there are two types of literal and idiomatic phrasal verbs in terms of their meanings, I observed that learners could easily grasped the meanings of literal phrasal verbs while they had quite a lot difficulty in figuring out idiomatic ones. Since idiomatic phrasal verbs do not always reflect what they meant when you look at them, various and incorrect definitions could form in their minds. In that case, I give them Turkish definitions to guarantee that they do not misunderstand what those phrasal verbs refer to.

Conditionals (Type 2 and Type 3 if clauses) were popular among the teachers in terms of code switching. Three out of four teachers, T1, T2 and H1, advocated that "Conditionals" required L1 support because of the structural and contextual (semantic)

mismatch. H1 shared her experience, which is similar to what the other teachers proposed:

> As "Type 2" looks as if it talks about past experiences, learners usually get confused about its present meaning and just after "Type 3" is presented they need an explicit Turkish explanation, otherwise, they get puzzled and thus, lost. (Interview data)

As it can be seen on Table 3, teaching vocabulary was the most popular response, which meant that the teachers, T1, T2 and H1, made use of Turkish the most when teaching vocabulary. Only T3 stated that she used mother tongue when teaching writing skills. T2 who was one of the teachers using L1 for teaching vocabulary mentioned that:

> "I have some techniques for teaching vocabulary: using visual aids, gestures, body language etc. However, if the vocabulary is abstract and teaching materials are not enough to provide definitions, inevitably, I switch to Turkish avoiding that various incorrect definitions will develop in learners' mind with sole English definitions since not all the learners' language proficiency is the same." (Interview data)

T1 also said that she used English when she was explaining the unknown vocabulary, but she added that "I wait for somebody to utter the Turkish equivalence so that the others learn the correct definition. If nobody tells the correct Turkish equivalence, I give the Turkish definition" (Interview data).

On the other hand, T3 emphasized during the interview that "L1 is necessary when teaching writing.

The last part of teachers' questionnaire surveys the cases in which the teachers switch to their mother tongue the most and Table 4 presents the related data. The most popular two functions were classroom management purposes and students' affective purposes as all the participant teachers stated that they used Turkish in the two cases.

One of the teachers, T1, highlighted the importance of using L1 in classroom management issues:

> "Classroom management is quite important for the quality of your lessons. If there is a problem and you cannot continue your lesson properly, at that moment you need to solve that problem. It should be immediate and clear. In that case I switch to L1 to give the message that I am serious and he/she has to stop that disruptive behavior immediately. Otherwise, he/she will not be able to understand the given message; and will ask what I said to his/her friends and it will take long time to end discussion." (Interview data)

In terms of learners' affective situations, T2 gives an example underlining the importance of using mother tongue:

> "It is a very common problem that learners start complaining and even crying in the beginning grades. At that moment, there is no point in using English anymore since it is not about the language anymore. It is about the humanistic approach and helping the learner overcome the problem immediately. In such cases, I no longer use the target language and switch to Turkish as it helps me to get closer to the learner so that he/she trusts me." (Interview data)

Comparing L1 and L2 structures and error correction were the second popular responses in the questionnaire. All the teachers except T3 agreed on that L1 should be used in the two mentioned cases. H1 stated that:

> "If learners constantly make errors let's say on a specific grammatical use or structure, then, errors become permanent. That's why, we need to take an immediate action and correct their errors. Most of the time they need Turkish explanations about the reasons why it is not correct or appropriate to say in that way." (Interview data)

Giving instructions and checking comprehension were also the cases in which T1 and T3 used Turkish. According to T1, when the instruction is too long, learners get disconnected and need some assistance. She added that she did not use complete Turkish sentences but integrated some Turkish words into the simplified English speech such as:

> "We are going to underline the unknown words, look them up in the dictionary, sonrasında da (and then) use them in your story appropriately, uygun bir şekilde (appropriately). Tamam mı? (Okay?) (Interview data).

In the last example, the teacher gave an example related to both checking

comprehension and giving instructions. As it can be interpreted from the example instruction that she aimed to help learners pay attention and not get lost within a complex instruction.

4.3.2 Classroom Observations
Classroom Observation of T1

T1 used approximately 6 minutes of L1 with fourth graders and there was no difference between what she had answered on the survey and what she practiced in the lesson. She had said in the questionnaire that she would use Turkish in the cases of checking comprehension, giving instructions, classroom management, students' affective situations, giving feedback, and comparing L1 and L2 structures. There was no grammar teaching in the observed lessons, thus, I could only observe the possible cases about the classroom dynamics. In 90 minutes classroom observation, T1 used 8 minutes of Turkish in the following cases: interpersonal relationships, giving instructions and giving feedback to learners.

Classroom Observation of T2

In her two lessons with second graders, T2 used approximately 14 minutes of L1. In the questionnaire, she responded the related question as she would use L1 for classroom management, students' affective situations, comparing L1 and L2 structures, and error correction. How she answered the interview was parallel with what she practiced in two lessons. She used most of the observed mother tongue in dealing with the affective situations of the students and with giving instructions.

Classroom observation of T3

The most experienced teacher, T3 switched to L1 approximately for 10 minutes for three main functions: developing interpersonal relationships with learners, integrating humor, and teaching vocabulary.

In the questionnaire she had chosen more functions than she made use of in two lessons: checking comprehension, giving instructions, classroom management, students' affective situations, giving feedback, and error correction.

4.3.3 Students' Preferences

Table 5 indicates the learners' expectation and need of teacher's code switching grade by grade. Considering the second grade, most of the learners, 8 students, stated that L1 should be used when the teacher gave definitions of new vocabulary and presentation of complicated grammar rules while 5 of them needed L1 for classroom instructions and some advice for learning strategies. Finally, comparing and contrasting Turkish culture with different cultures and error correction and feedback received were chosen by 3 students.

Fourth graders' responses were not very different from the second graders in terms of giving definitions of new vocabulary and presentation of complicated grammar rules. Those were the most popular cases among the learners. In addition expecting their teacher to give them Turkish advice about how they can learn more efficiently was also quite needed by the learners. Finally Turkish classroom instructions were expected by 3 students from fourth grade.

Final group, seventh grade learners also hoped to be assisted by Turkish for giving definitions of new vocabulary and presentation of complicated grammar rules. After those two cases, using Turkish for jokes and humor in classrooms received 7 responses from the learners. Last two cases that obtained 5 responses from the students were summarizing the topics presented in the previous lessons and error correction as well as giving feedback.

4.4 Discussions of the Findings

The questionnaire showed that the general perception was not positive and teachers stated that they rarely used L1 in their classrooms. On the other hand, teachers benefited from the mother tongue in certain cases. All of the teachers supported the idea that lower grades needed L1 the most because of the affective issues that occur in the classrooms. The teachers agreed that they used L1 when two language structures did not coincide. All of the teachers used Turkish for classroom management and students' affective situations. Comparing L1 and L2 structures and error correction were popular responses. Teachers used L1 in some cases with especially lower grades. Teachers also used L1 to build good and trustworthy relationships with learners.

Learners' views and preferences giving definitions of new vocabulary and presentation of complicated grammar rules and L1 for classroom instructions and some advice for learning strategies were rated the most by the second grade students. Fourth grade students' preferences were not very different from the ones of second graders. Seventh grade learners needed L1 with the most popular response, giving definitions of new vocabulary and presentation of complicated grammar rules, and integrating humor in classes.

As seen in the literature, the functions revealed with this study reflect well the functions demonstrated by Ferguson (2009): constructing and transmitting knowledge, conducting classroom management and maintaining interpersonal relations as well as functions indicated in Polio and Duff's (1994) study. Moreover, although Krashen and Terrell (1988) argued that learners should be exposed to the target language as much as possible so that the language is acquired just like one's mother tongue, Cook (2008) has stated that the learning process of the mother tongue is not identical and thus, it

is not possible to ignore the language system of L1 in learners' mind. This study is in line with these statements and highlights the importance of learners' L1. Considering the data gathered from learners' and teachers' interview, the need of L1 cannot be disregarded

Another extract from this study about the word "contain" and its use in Turkish by the teacher is similar to the example given by Butzkamm (2003). In the example, he provided an example: "Look at the sky, it's going to rain" in which learners defined "sky" as "cloud" as an incorrect association. The same case was about to occur in this study while teaching vocabulary (the word "contain") and when the teacher felt that, she gave the Turkish definition. In this case, the teachers should be aware of the fact that learners may not always clearly understand what we are trying to say. Thus, we need a confirmation so that we can check their understanding and if there is any misunderstanding the teacher can take the necessary action such as: switching to L1.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that upper grade learners need humor and jokes in their mother tongue compared to lower grades. This finding echoes in Low and Lu's (2006) study that code switching could be used for integrating humor and saving embarrassment as a facilitative tool in language classrooms. In this study the most preferred functions by the teachers: translating vocabulary, explaining grammatical structures, managing class, building close relations with learners are also supported by several researches (Macaro, 1997; Levine, 2003; Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005; Cook, 2001).

Atkinson's (1987) explanation of code switching as being a humanistic approach is reflected on the teachers' teaching practice and their beliefs in this study. Hence, we,

teachers, should be aware of learners' emotions and affective situations in classrooms and make use of their mother tongue if it will make the learners more comfortable or self-confident.

Recommendations for Future Research

In further research, a longitudinal study can be designed in order to collect more reliable data about the school administration, teachers and learners by organizing more interviews and longer hours of observations. With the gathered data, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding about code switching in foreign language classrooms.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for the teachers (Adapted from Timor, 2010)

The Use of Turkish as the Mother Tongue among EFL Teachers

Dear Teacher,

The questions below refer to the use of Turkish as a mother tongue in EFL teaching. In question on the scale of 1-5, 1 means *strongly disagree*, whereas 5 means *strongly agree*. Your opinion is highly appreciated.

Name:

Age:

Educational Background

Professional Background:

1. I can see the benefit of using Turkish in EFL teaching 1 2 3   4 5 (circle relevant answer) mainly because
....
2. I'm against using Turkish in EFL teaching   1   2 3 4 5 (circle relevant answer) mainly because
....
3. I refer to Turkish in my EFL teaching   1   2   3   4 5 (1= quite rarely; 5= quite frequently).
4. I refer to Turkish mainly when structures in English and Turkish coincide / do not coincide (please circle relevant answer).
5. I refer to Turkish when I teach (please circle relevant answers and specify):
   Tenses (which ones?) ....
   Relative clauses ....
   Comparative Forms ....
   Reported   Speech   (reported   questions?   negations?   statements?)
   ....
   Phrasal Verbs (e.g., ...)
   Modals (which ones?) ....
   Conditionals ....
   Other ....
6. I refer to Turkish when I teach vocabulary/reading comprehension skills / writing skills / other
.... (circle relevant answers)
7. I use Turkish in the following cases (Circle relevant answers):
   Check comprehension
   Giving instructions
   Classroom management purposes
   Students' affective situations (reward, increasing self-confidence, empathy etc.)
   Giving feedback
   Comparing L1 and L2 culture
   Comparing L1 and L2 structures
   Error correction

   Thanks a lot for your input.

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for the learners (Adopted from Şevik, 2007)

Yabancı Dil Sınıflarında Anadilin Yeri

Sevgili Öğrenci,

Bu anket yabancı dil derslerinde Türkçe'nin kullanımı yolunda sizin görüşlerinizi ölçmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Ankete verecek olduğunuz cevaplar sadece araştırma hedefleri doğrultusunda kullanılacak ve gizli tutulacaktır. Katıldığınız için teşekkürler.

Not: Katıldığınız cevabı daire içine alınız. 3. ve 4. sorularda birden fazla şık işaretleyebilirsiniz.

Yaş: Sınıf:

1. Yabancı dil derslerinde Türkçe kullanılmalı mıdır?
   a) Evet   b) Hayır
2. Yabancı dil dersine gelen öğretmenlerinizin sınıfta Türkçe kullanmaları hoşunuza gidiyor mu?
   a) asla   b) çok az   c) sıklıkla   d) çok
3. Yabancı dil derslerinde Türkçe kullanılmasının hangi alanlarda gerekli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
   a) Yeni kelimelerin anlamlarının tanımlanması için
   b) Bazı ifade ve sözcüklerin pekiştirilmesi için
   c) Karmaşık dil bilgisi kurallarının anlatılması için
   d) Farklı kavram ve fikirlerin anlatılması için
   e) Sınıf içi komutların verilmesi için
   f) Nasıl daha etkili öğrenebileceğimize yönelik önerilerin verilmesi için
   g) Daha önce anlatılan konuların özetlenmesi için
   h) Sınıf içerisinde espri şaka yapmak için
   i) Bunların dışında Belirtmek istediğiniz varsa lütfen yazınız......................
4. Sınıf içinde Türkçe kullanılmasının yabancı dil öğrenmenize ne kadar katkıda bulunduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
   a) hiç   b) az   c) sıklıkla   d) çok fazla
5. Sizce Türkçe ders içerisinde ne sıklıkla kullanılmalıdır?
   a) hiç   b) az   c) sıklıkla   d) çok fazla
6. Sınıf içerisinde okunan parçalar ne sıklıkla Türkçeye çevrilmelidir?
   a) asla   b) ara sıra   c) sık sık   d) her zaman