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**REASONS FOR AND FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH  
TEACHERS' USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN PRIMARY  
SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Burçak AYKUL**

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**İLKOKUL YABANCI DİL SINIFLARINDA İNGİLİZCE**

**ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ANA DİL KULLANIMININ**

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### İLKOKUL YABANCI DİL SINIFLARINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ANA DİL KULLANIMININ NEDENLERİ VE SIKLIĞI

Yabancı dil öğretilen bir sınıfta öğrenmenin çoğu öğretmen konuşması sayesinde gerçekleştirilir. İlkokulda gerçekleşen bir yabancı dil dersinde öğretmenin konuşmasıyla ilgili önemli faktörlerden biri öğrenciler için uygun olan dili seçmektir. Yabancı dil derslerinde hedef dilin kullanımının önemi ise yıllardır vurgulanmaktadır. Bu yüzden bu çalışma ilkokul İngilizce derslerinde anadilin kullanım sıklığını ve kullanım amaçlarını ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Aynı zamanda, bu çalışmanın dolaylı bir amacı ise ilkokul İngilizce öğretmenlerinin dil seçimleriyle ilgili tercihlerini gözden geçirmelerine ve kendilerini geliştirmek için yardımcı olmaktır. Muş ilindeki ilkokullarda çalışmakta olan beş öğretmen bu çalışmanın katılımcılarını oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplamak amacıyla veri çeşitleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve bu yöntem ders gözlemi, ses kaydı ve öğretmen röportajlarından oluşmuştur. Her bir öğretmen için üç tane ders saati gözlemlenmiş ve ses kaydı yapılmıştır. Ders gözlem



süreci bittikten sonra her bir öğretmenle arařtırmacı tarafından röportaj yapılmıřtır. Veri içerik çözümlemesi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiřtir. Arařtırmanın bulguları İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ilkokul derslerinde ana dili çok fazla kullandığını ve öğrencilerin öğretmenlerden yeterince girdi alamadığını göstermiřtir. Bu durumun sebebi öğretmenlerin çocuklara yabancı dil öğretiminde kullandığı geçersiz öğretim yöntemleri ile ilgili olabilir. Bu yüzden ilkokulda çalışmakta olan İngilizce öğretmenlerine öğretim yöntemlerini gözden geçirmeleri ve sınıfta anadili kullanmaktan olabildiğince kaçınmaları tavsiye edilmektedir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* İlkokulda yabancı dil eğitimi, ana dil kullanımı, öğretmenin sınıf dili, sınıf içi iletişim.

## **ABSTRACT**

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### **REASONS FOR AND FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH TEACHERS' USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS**

Most of the learning in a foreign language classroom occurs via teacher talk. One of the important factors about teacher talk in a primary school language classroom is choosing the appropriate language for young learners. The significance of using the target language in a foreign language classroom has been emphasized over the years. Therefore, the study aimed to find out the frequency and functions of L1 in primary school EFL classrooms. Also, an indirect purpose of this study is to help primary school English teachers review their preferences of language choice and improve themselves. Five teachers who work in primary schools in Muş province were the participants of this study. Data triangulation was used to collect data and it included classroom observation, audio-recordings and teacher interviews. Each teacher was observed and audio recorded for three classroom hours. The teachers were interviewed by the researcher after the classroom observation process. The data was analyzed

by using content analysis method. The results indicated that English teachers use L1 extensively in primary school classrooms and the learners could not get enough L2 input from the teachers. The reason for this situation might be related to teachers' invalid teaching methods in teaching foreign language to young learners. Therefore, English teachers who work in primary schools are advised to review their teaching methods and avoid using L1 in the classroom as much as possible.

*Keywords:* Foreign language education in primary school, use of mother tongue, teacher talk, classroom interaction.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Most of the learning and activities in a classroom take place using teacher talk. For example, classroom management, giving instructions, scaffolding, explanations, motivating students, giving feedback, etc. are given via the language the teacher uses. While all of these learning procedures are happening, teacher talk plays a crucial role in the classroom (Moon, 2005). However, there is one issue that needs to be clarified about teacher talk. Teachers need to determine which language they will use in the classroom as the language choice of teachers affects many things with regards to learning a foreign language.

#### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

According to Coşkun (2016), there is almost a syndrome in Turkish society: Inability to speak English. Accordingly, most of the learners and graduates of high schools and universities fail to speak English despite the English courses they take. To find solutions to this problem, the use of L2 in and outside of the classroom should be examined.

In response to the question of which language to be used inside the classroom, the significance of using L2 can be stated here. The use and amount of L2 used in the classrooms and the significance of it in language acquisition have been emphasized for over many years (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Accordingly, L2 needs to be used as much as possible and maximizing it should be the main goal in a foreign language classroom. However, it is impossible to provide an environment in which only L2 is spoken outside the classroom as this is an EFL context although there are a few ways to improve English skills like playing computers games, watching English films or videos and chatting with foreign friends as stated in the study of Coşkun (2016).

It is discussed that a teacher who speaks in L2 is the only resource as a metalanguage support in a foreign language classroom and lower level students can understand teacher talk

better than the recordings or any other authentic resource (Chambers, 1991). In addition, Voicu (2012) thinks that using L1 might cause problems in the classroom due to the L1 transfer as the language systems differ from each other. He also supports that students will understand the importance of L2 through the continual use of it. Thus a separation and distinction between two languages need to be done for a successful learning environment.

In addition to the discussions that support the use of L2, in the curriculum which was published by Ministry of Education in 2017, it has been emphasized that the communicative approach which is grounded in the use of L2 needs to be used in the classroom. The current curriculum emphasizes the listening and speaking skills over reading and writing which are primarily based on the use of L2 in the classrooms. However, the concern of not being able to learn and speak English still exists in the society according to the study of Coşkun (2016).

An important reason for the so-called "inability to speak English" that exists in society might be due to the limited exposure to L2. Although the learners start to learn English at early ages, half of the English lessons, which are 2-3 hours in primary schools, are reduced in half when the teacher spends her time translating whatever s/he says in English. In this case, it is also important to determine the reasons and the amount of time teachers feel they need to use L1. The current study aimed to reveal the frequency and functions of L1.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study to find out some answers about the use of L2 in primary school language classes:

1. How often do English language teachers use their mother tongue in English lessons in primary schools?
2. What are the reasons for English language teachers to use mother tongue in English lessons in primary schools?

### **1.3.Purpose of the Study**

Based on the mentioned problems, this study aims to reveal the frequency and the purposes of primary school English teachers' use of L1 and also it aims to help primary school teachers to focus on their teacher talk as the study will take a step to guide teachers about their choice of language. As most of the established L2 teaching methods attach importance to the maximum use of L2 (Solhi & Büyükyazı, 2016), this study aims to reveal the answers about teachers' language choice with a sample of participants that consists of five teachers in Turkey. The study will also try to find answers regarding the reasons for teachers to use their L1 and the factors that affect their preference of language in the classrooms.

### **1.4.Significance of the Study**

Many studies have been carried out about the use of L1. However, majority of the studies about this research area have been conducted with the university level students (Afzal, 2013; Fallahpour, 2015; Kashiara, 2012; Nazary, 2008; Tajgozari, 2017; Tang, 2002). Few of the studies have been conducted with secondary level students (Al-balawi, 2016; Demirci & Tolu, 2015; Khati, 2011; Salı, 2014; Yıldırım & Yataganbaba, 2017). On the other hand, the number of studies which focus on primary schools is scarce. With this study, a step will be taken to close the gap in the area, as there is a need to be investigated in detail with the participants of young learners.

In addition to the gap in the grade level of the students, data collection methods are also limited. Most of the studies related to the use of L1 have been conducted via questionnaires and interviews (Alrabah, 2016; Pablo, 2011; Kashiara, 2012; Kayaoğlu, 2012; Mahmutoğlu, 2013; Nazary, 2008; Solhi, 2011; Tajgozari, 2017). However, in order to identify the real classroom implementations rather than the teachers' perceptions it is necessary to collect verbal data via audio recordings and observations to examine the teacher talk. Although there are some studies which used classroom recordings (De La Campa, 2009; Demirci, 2015; Salı,

2014; Yıldırım, 2017), such data collection method was not used in primary schools. Thus, with the use of recordings and classroom observations, the current study will shed some light by investigating teachers' amount of use of L1 as well as the reasons and the situations it is used.

Most of the teachers who work in primary schools in Turkey and other countries are non-native speakers of English. Voicu (2012) states that most of these non-native teachers overuse L1. However, it is not possible to determine the amount of L1 usage without using classroom recordings and observations as a data collection method. With this study, teachers' use of L1 will be revealed. It will also create an opportunity to reconsider the language teaching methods and policies in Turkey.

This study will also guide the teachers of English to notice their actual practices in primary schools. With the results of the study, it is hoped that they will be able to assess themselves in order to achieve balanced use of L1. The documentation of their use of L1 in the classroom will help teachers be aware of their own preferences for L1 use and will create an opportunity for them to reflect and act upon to improve themselves about this issue.

As a conclusion, this study will have great contributions to the field regarding the use of L1 in real classrooms in primary schools in Turkey, as it is one of the scarce studies. In the conclusion of the study, the question about the theory and real language classrooms will also be revealed.

### **1.5. Assumptions**

There are four assumptions in the present study. Firstly, all the teachers who participate in the study are sincere about their opinions and responses. Secondly, teachers are not affected by the audio-recordings while teaching. Thirdly, teachers maintain their regular teaching while they are being observed and their teaching is not affected by the observer. Lastly, students are not affected by the audio-recordings while they are in the lesson.

## 1.6.Limitations

Due to the nature of the study, data was collected from a small sample. Although the permission is taken from the concerned authority, which is Muş Directorate of National Education, some of the teachers were not willing to participate in the study as they will be observed and recorded. Because of this reason, the results of the study are not generalizable to all EFL classrooms in Turkey. Thus, the study can be assumed as a guiding light to understand the nature of L1 use in primary school English lessons.

## 1.7.Definitions

There are two terms which need to be clarified in the study: Mother tongue and target language.

**Mother Tongue:**It is defined as the first and main language which somebody learns when he/she is a child (Mayor, 2009). Mother tongue as stated in this study corresponds to Turkish which children learn when they are born. L1 is another term used for mother tongue.

**Target Language:**It is defined as the language which somebody learns or translates into (Mayor, 2009). Target language stated in this study corresponds to English which is taught as a foreign language in state primary schools in Turkey. L2 is another term used for target language.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

There are seven main titles in this chapter which include use of mother tongue during the history of language teaching, young learners and their characteristics, teacher talk, use of target language, use of mother tongue, international studies and studies in Turkey. First, the history of language teaching and its relation to L1 use will be dealt with. Secondly, young learners and their characteristics will be stated. Later, teacher talk which includes mother tongue and target language will be mentioned. Lastly, international studies and Turkey will be stated in this chapter.

#### **2.1. Use of Mother Tongue during the History of Language Teaching**

The history of foreign language education has included many methods and approaches to teaching English over the decades. The methods and approaches had many different ideas about how to teach a foreign language from various aspects. One of the aspects that have been discussed through the methods and approaches over the years was about whether to use L1 or not. The following titles will guide the issue of use of mother tongue in different methods.

**2.1.1. Grammar translation method (GTM).** During the 1840s the earliest formalized method, GTM, started to gain popularity and became the dominated language teaching method. GTM kept its popularity until the 1880s (Mwanza, 2017). The main concern of GTM was to gain complete command of L2 grammar (Dinçay, 2010). Giving the priority on teaching grammar, one of the ways of teaching language is to use the mother tongue according to the method. To understand L2, the language is translated into students' native language, which is resulted in L1 talk in the classroom the majority of the time (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

According to Mart (2013), the GTM has a supportive role while teaching a foreign language by allowing the students to notice the differences and similarities between the two



languages. However, the method was also criticized for using translation and L1 in the classroom because it does not provide enough opportunity for students to get involved in L2. As it lacks L2 production or spontaneous creative output, learners fail most of the time at speaking and even writing skills in L2 (Abdullah, 2013).

**2.1.2. Direct method.** On the contrary to GTM, direct method is a monolingual approach which represents its name by directly conveying the message in L2 by using demonstration and visuals (Mwanza, 2017). As L2 is used while carrying out the classroom instruction and classroom activities, the students are actively involved in the activities by using L2. The conversational activities also hold a significant place in direct method (Mart, 2013).

However, there was also criticism on the use of L2 in this method. While translation activities are completely forbidden and the activities are done only in L2, there have been some disadvantages using this method in the classroom. For example, it was thought that there are many words that cannot be interpreted directly and it causes waste of time making an attempt for this purpose. Another disadvantage was related to large classes in which the method fails to meet the needs of the students (Abdullah, 2013).

**2.1.3. Audiolingual method.** Similar to the direct method, audiolingual method also supports the idea of gaining oral skills. Developing the communicative competence is the main purpose of audio-lingual method. It is achieved by using dialogues and drills which are repeated by the students in order to form habits in learners which will develop quick and automatic responses (Mart, 2013). In audiolingual method, use of L1 is not advised while explaining new words and grammar points in L2 (Nita & Syafei, 2012). As the main concern of the method, habit formation of L2 is thought to be inhibited by the habits of the students' native language (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Thus, language forms are presented to

the learners in spoken form by only using L2. Learners can develop oral skills more effectively in this method.

**2.1.4. Silent way.** Silent way gives learners' responsibility to control and direct their own learning and the role of teachers is only to give learners the essential structures to help them raise their awareness for learning (Çelik, 2014). In addition, teachers need to focus on what the students are saying and how they are saying it while paying attention to their pronunciation and flow of words (Dinçay, 2010). Although it requires the teachers to remain silent most of the time (Zainuddin, Yahya & Morales, 2011), teachers use L1 to give instructions when necessary and they also use it during the feedback sessions (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013).

**2.1.5. Suggestopedia.** Suggestopedia is a method which focuses not only on language instruction but also the conduct of language through suggestions made by the teacher or the classroom environment (Güçlü & Ayhan, 2015). In the four stages of the method, teacher helps students to develop a positive mind and easy and fun learning (presentation stage), teacher plays some classical music in the background and reads the text (passive concert), teachers tells that they will do an activity like making a film or gaming (elaboration) and finally they carry out the activity to review the learners' understanding (practice) (Kharismawati, 2014). As the primary principle of suggestopedia is to use techniques to make students relaxed, comfortable and interested in language learning, L1 is allowed to be used in the classroom. Teachers apply L1 in necessary conditions like making the meaning of the dialog clear. However, as time goes by and the students proceed in language learning, the teacher applies L1 less and less (Rustipa, 2011).

**2.1.6. Communicative language teaching.** In communicative language teaching, there is a set of principles which are related to the goals of language teaching and the kinds of classroom activities which are best for learning and roles of students in a language classroom

(Richards, 2005). As the goal of communicative language teaching is to enable students communicate in L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 2013), the majority of the language used in the classroom should be in L2. Learning tasks, classroom management and instructions needs to be carried out by only using L2 while in necessary times teachers turn to the students' native language only to ensure comprehension (Çelik, 2014). According to Larsen-Freeman (2013), the students also learn from the language that is used for classroom management and it creates awareness that L2 is a vehicle for people to communicate.

**2.1.7. Cooperative learning.** Cooperative language learning is an approach which allows teachers to apply for group work in the classrooms in an effective way (Matthew, 2006). Cooperative learning was proved to be effective in terms of educational values which make it important to be applied in English classrooms (Yaseen, 2014). With carefully structured activities which encourage social interaction among students, cooperative learning makes learners develop critical thinking skills and communicative competence (Basta, 2011).

One of the reasons that make cooperative learning gain broad acceptance in language learning classrooms is primarily because it contributes to productivity and achievement and more importantly it provides opportunities for communication (Zhang, 2010). Cooperative learning supports learning by using L2. It also encourages its use in the classrooms. However, one of the problems encountered in cooperative learning is that learners often tend to use L1 when they start to work with their classmates. To solve this problem, students should be supported with necessary tools like dictionaries and also teachers need to be sure that the task difficulty is appropriate for the level of the students. Additionally, creating heterogeneous groups with at least one proficient student in each group would help learners L2 in groups (Jacobs, 2004).

**2.1.8. Task based approach.** In foreign and second language teaching, task-based language teaching recently has become popular and teachers are becoming more interested in

this approach (Rozati, 2014). According to Izadpanah (2010), tasks are the main component of task-based instruction as they provide a context which helps the learning process and promotes L2 learning. Sanchez (2009) claims that task-based approach includes a sequence of interactive tasks. These tasks are carried out in L2 unlike traditional form-based methods. While Ellis (2009, p.242) supports the idea of providing great exposure to L2, he also puts some advantages of task-based approach as follows:

1. TBLT creates a natural learning environment in the classroom.
2. It lays emphasis on meaning but also cares for learning form.
3. It offers learners a rich input for L2.
4. It is motivating for children.
5. It has a learner-centered philosophy but it also cares for teacher direction.
6. It does not neglect accuracy but it attaches importance to communicative fluency.
7. It can also be used with a traditional approach at the same time.

**2.1.9. Total physical response.** As a method mostly used for young learners, TPR introduces language skills by using actions of teacher and learners. The teacher serves as an order taker, a model provider and an action monitor in this method (Widodo, 2005). Other things teachers need to do in this method are described by Savić (2014), which include giving commands, modeling the behavior, removing the model after repeating it a few times, combining commands in unexpected and creative ways and turning them into stories or games.

According to Sariyati (2013), to motivate children and make them more receptive in L2 learning, a stress-free environment is necessary according to this approach. To create this environment, one of the issues is whether to use L1 while giving the commands. Although the instructions can be introduced in students' L1, it is rarely used after the introduction part. In

TPR, the meaning is mostly conveyed through body movements rather than the L1 (Larsen-Freeman, 2013).

**2.1.10. Action oriented learning.** As one of the other suitable methods for young learners, action-oriented learning offers many opportunities for children to acquire the language. In this approach, language learning is placed within the social context and language students are expected to carry out the communicative tasks while they are employing the strategies and speech acts (Kaliska, 2016). While this approach assimilates the principle of teaching all the skills, language is taught in a context with the exercises which involve action (Günay & Atmaca, 2016). In addition, it is important to create a learning environment with learners' active learning and their ability of reflection in this approach (Yung, Chang & Hsieh, 2017).

According to Kaliska (2016), there is meaningful communication in action-oriented learning, which creates interaction between language learners in different contexts. While doing this, learners are supposed to use L2 actively and they achieve specific objectives. This approach supports the use of L2 as well.

**2.1.11. Activity based learning.** Activity-based learning is an approach which helps learners understand better and achieve learning outcomes and it includes the strategies of classification, participation, critical thinking, analyzing, knowledge sharing, team-work, communication, problem-solving and debating (Biswas, Das & Ganguly, 2018). According to Superfine (2002), this method is suitable for children as children are seen as “doers” and they remember the new language easily as they use it in a realistic situation. An activity in this approach includes the use of four skills while combining them with games, songs, and rhymes.

This approach focuses on the idea that learners engage in the activities through actions and teachers should engage learners directly and make sure that they are actively engaged in

the learning. Thus, learners can easily use L2 in this approach as they become the participants in their own learning.

## **2.2. Young Learners and Their Characteristics**

There is a widespread view around the world that claims the younger is better in foreign language learning according to the observations of teachers and experts (Gawi, 2012). For this reason, the importance given in the English language teaching programs for young learners has been increasing nowadays as the governments popularize these programs earlier in primary schools (Puskás, 2016). In many countries, the amount of lesson time given for early language education has been increasing more and more. Thanks to this new trend, how children acquire foreign languages are becoming an important subject matter to be studied.

Young children do not come to language classrooms with an empty mind. They usually have an already established set of instincts, characteristics, and skills. Those features which young learners have will help them learn a new language (Halliwell, 1992). Besides, in terms of language learning, children have different characteristics when compared to adults.

According to Gürsoy and Korkmaz (2012), children like talking and having fun as they learn visually and kinesthetically by nature. They also claim that children cannot learn any information directly and explicitly and abstract concepts like grammar rules, as they are still developing cognitively. That is why everything about their lessons like words or sentences must be embedded within a meaningful context.

Children need to be engaged in the lesson with movements and different senses. They need rhymes, songs or stories to play with the language. Another important detail is about the selection of language learning activities. Variety in their activities is a necessity for learning since their attention span is short. Classroom routines and familiar activities are also helpful for them as they already know the rules. Additionally, cooperation would help them in the classroom rather than competition because shared experiences are invaluable for young

learners and most of them enjoy belonging to a group. Lastly, teaching grammar rules is not advised for children unless they ask for an explanation in the classroom (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990).

According to Puskás (2016), the characteristics of young learners are various and they help them learn foreign language as they acquired their mother tongue. Halliwell (1992, p.3) summarizes the characteristics of young learners as below:

- They can easily understand the meaning of words and sentences without knowing the individual words.

- They have a great skill to use the language they know creatively.

- They mostly learn indirectly rather than learning in a direct way.

- They are able to create and find fun while they are doing something.

- They can use their imagination.

- They have great desire to talk.

According to Uysal and Yavuz (2015), young learners need hands-on activities rather than completing the pen and paper activities. There are some fine motor activities like drawing, coloring, painting, cutting, and pasting. These activities help them acquire the language skills. Concrete materials are useful for them to understand and process the meaning due to their limited cognitive abilities.

Piaget identified four stages for children's cognitive development process. Accordingly, children develop cognitively by actively engaging with the environment. The first stage of the cognitive development is the stage of the sensory-motor period (0 to 2 years) in which children do not yet internally represent events as their behavior is mainly motor and they think conceptually. The second stage is the stage of preoperational thought (2 to 7 years) in which children are interested in a single situation at a time. The third stage is the stage of concrete operations (7 to 11 years) in which children develop the ability to think logically. The last

stage is the stage of formal operations (11 to 15 years) in which again the children's cognitive structures are in their highest level and start to apply logical reasoning to abstract situations as well (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004).

Additionally, physical activities like walking, running, jumping, dancing and climbing will be useful when they are coordinated with language learning as they are kinesthetic learners. According to Moon (2005), children like having fun and they get more involved in the learning process when they enjoy the activities. Children can develop positive attitudes towards learning a language as they realize that it is enjoyable and pleasing.

Moreover, as young learners are slow at learning L2, they need a much longer time to do it when compared to the adults as their thinking skills are at the concrete operations stage during which students do not have the ability to think hypothetically according to the cognitive development theory of Piaget (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004).

Children can benefit from meaningful activities more easily. According to Nikolov and Dijiginovic (2006) young learners do not have much understanding of the explicit rules though they can easily use their memory and procedural knowledge. In addition, early start of language teaching also contributes to their attitudes and motivation to learn and be helpful in the long run.

Along with the general characteristics of young learners, young learners and very young learners also differ in terms of what children of five can do and what children often can do. However, it is not easy to point out certain characteristics for each age because some children develop earlier while others develop later (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990).

Although it is difficult to separate children of different age groups in certain categories according to their various features, there are some categories created by researchers. For example, Pinter (2011) divided their periods into three categories which are preschool, primary school, and early adolescence. In the preschool stage, learners are between the ages



from 3 to 6 and they do not have any formal learning experience, literacy skills and they mostly have differences about the issue of readiness for school. The primary school years involve ages from 6 to 12 and they are at primary/elementary school. Lastly, early adolescence years begin from the age of 13 and they change their school to secondary or high schools at this age.

**2.2.1. Teachers of young learners.** It is believed that starting to learn a foreign language before the critical period, which is around 12 or 13 years of age, is important to build proficient speakers of English (Shin, 2006). The differences between adults and children should be paid attention as the teaching methodologies would differ according to their age characteristics. Some of the differences between teaching an adult and a child are quite obvious. For example, children want to please the teacher rather than pleasing their peers. On the other hand, they easily lose their interest and it is hard for them to keep motivated on tasks (Cameron, 2001). As language learning for children is different from adult language learning, it is necessary for teachers to be aware of the similarities and differences of young learners and adults to create an effective language learning environment (Pinter, 2011).

As there are such differences in teaching young learners, Shin (2006, p.3) listed ten beneficial ideas for teachers to make learners more proficient in English:

1. Teachers should supplement activities with visual materials,
2. Teachers should encourage learners by using visuals and realia,
3. Teachers should use various activities,
4. Teachers should use different themes,
5. Teachers should use suitable contexts which are appropriate and familiar to the students,
6. Teachers should include classroom routines in English in the lessons,
7. Teachers should apply L1 when necessary,

8. Teachers should bring in helpers from the community,
9. Teachers should benefit from other teachers,
10. Teachers should get information from other young learner professionals.

Other suggestions made by Cameron (2001) for teachers imply that teachers should be skilled to reach children's worlds and lead them to develop their understanding of different concepts because it is not simple or straightforward to teach young learners although they have a simpler view of the world than adults. Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) also make suggestions for education programs. Accordingly, teacher education programs should include classroom management skills, monitoring, giving feedback, speaking, listening, reading, writing activities and peer teaching.

In terms of language teaching, the learning environment is important for young learners. Thus, teachers of young learners need to create a positive learning environment. Moon (2005, p.10) stated some considerations for teachers to pay attention in order to create this environment. Accordingly, teachers should:

- Provide a real context and desire to use English in the classroom,
- Give enough time for learners
- Make the learners expose to meaningful input
- Create opportunities for students to have experience with the new language
- Create plenty of opportunities for students to use L2 in various contexts
- Create a friendly learning atmosphere to make the children take risks and enjoy the new language
- Give feedback on their learning
- Make children notice the new pattern in the language

**2.2.2. Young Learners in Turkey.** Although teaching a foreign language to young learners is an important issue around the world, there are many problems that brings with it.

In most circumstances, only a small number of teaching hours are given to foreign language teaching in a scheduled timetable, which causes very limited access to the foreign language outside the classroom. In this case, children do not have enough time and the opportunity to get exposed to L2 and to participate in meaningful communication. Young learners acquire the skills in a limited lesson time mostly through songs, rhymes, basic vocabulary and carefully rehearsed dialogues. However, they do not acquire the ability to express themselves spontaneously (Pinter, 2011).

The situation about teaching a foreign language to young learners in Turkey is the same because the lesson hours of primary schools for English is restricted to two-three hours, although it can show differences in private schools. According to the curriculum published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey (2017), the 4+4+4 system in which the first 4 years correspond to the primary year education led to an immediate need for the redesign of current teaching programs for 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades. According to the new curriculum designed by MoNE (2017), the role of English is a means of conveying needs and wants, expressing ideas and beliefs, building relationships and more significantly it focuses on language learning as communication.

As one of the most apparent characteristics of the curriculum, it includes a series of 10 sample units for each grade level structured around interrelated themes. While all of the foreign language skills which are reading, listening, speaking and writing are included in these units and the program, no emphasis is given to the reading and writing skills in the second grade and in the third, fourth and fifth grades there is limited use of these skills. The main emphasis is given to speaking and listening skills (MONE, 2017).

The curriculum provided by MoNE is good in terms of the stress given to communicate in a meaningful context by using L2. It was also prepared considering the developmental levels of children. According to the curriculum, learners are expected to have self confidence

on L2 and proficient users of English while they also develop an appreciation for their own culture and understand and value a broad spectrum of international languages and cultures in accordance with CEFR. However, problems might still occur in practices due to various reasons.

According to Arkan (2015), to reveal the realities of teaching English and other foreign languages in Turkish primary schools a lot of empirical research studies are needed to be carried out. As the theory and practice show differences in teaching a foreign language to young learners, special attention should be paid to teachers and their actual practice in primary school settings. The physical condition of the classroom is one factor that affects the learning environment and outcomes. The use of movable chairs and desks or even carpets on which the young learners could sit could create a flexible environment. However, teacher qualifications also need to be considered to find solutions to problems in real language classrooms. Teachers of young learners should be prepared in terms of linguistic, educational and methodological development as an effective language learning environment depends on the teachers' knowledge and skills (Damar, Gürsoy & Korkmaz, 2013). On the other hand, there are other problems like not using the appropriate method, time limit, lack of materials, not using activities and having an exam-oriented system.

In small language classes with sufficient teaching materials, teachers could focus on positive outcomes of language teaching by adopting the appropriate method, following the materials, applying the activities and focusing on the acquisition of language skills. However, the problems of not applying the positive methods of language teaching lie behind its implementation in the classes. When the specific characteristics of children are considered, the purpose of language teaching needs to be considered and determined in the Turkish context (Arslan, 2012).

To be able to find solutions for the situation in the Turkish context, there should be some regulations. According to Caner, Subaşı, and Kara (2010), Ministry of National Education needs to consider and provide an effective and nurturing environment, developmentally and appropriate instructions for young learners since there are many learners in both preschool and primary school programs. Moreover, this instruction needs to consider the characteristics of children, their cognitive and language developments, their learning conditions and the types of instructions that are suitable for them.

On the other hand, English language teachers in Turkey should also take the responsibility to consider possible ways to build a classroom in which L2 is spoken. According to Arslan (2012), language teachers need to be aware that teaching a language includes teaching the language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation and speaking. Thus, teachers should create more opportunities to practice these language skills through games, plays, stories, role-plays. They should be knowledgeable about how to apply language activities, tasks, materials in the classes and assessment techniques like project work and portfolios. Nevertheless, the suggestions given here might not help avoid the problems in language education in Turkey.

There are many aims of foreign language programs for young learners which include developing basic communication abilities, fostering motivation by making initial language learning experiences fun, encouraging early familiarization with a new culture and developing cognitive, metacognitive and metalinguistic skills through an initial contact with a foreign language system (Pinter, 2011). However, the studies conducted with young learners show that the actual classroom practices do not accomplish the purposes of foreign language programs for young learners. Some of the reasons for this situation arise from crowded classes and insufficient lesson time in the classrooms.

On the other hand, teacher qualifications need to be considered besides physical constraints of the classroom. According to Dickson (1996), a teacher's competence and confidence in the spoken language is an important factor which affects the use of L2. Additionally, a teacher's age, date of entry into teaching and years of service are important factors that might affect teachers' language choice. Moreover, English language teachers should pay attention to process and product outcomes. To create a teaching environment in which L2 is used more often, it is necessary to discuss the teacher talk.

### **2.3. Teacher Talk**

Teacher talk is simply defined as teachers' simplified, but not unnatural, variety of language especially uttered for the younger and newer learners of a second or foreign language (Shinde & Karekatti, 2010, p. 56.) According to İnceçay (2010), without teaching learning does not take place. Therefore, teacher talk has a significant role as it is the major source of input.

Teachers also have a crucial role in creating a happy and secure environment while encouraging learners to speak English. Teacher talk can help to build rapport. In a positive environment students will take risks and not worry about making mistakes (Garton & Copland, 2012). The success of teaching is affected to a large extent on how teachers interact with the learners and this interaction is a result of teacher talk (Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010). Having a crucial role in foreign language classrooms, what teachers say and do in the classrooms needs to be studied to be able to learn about the process of learning and teaching (Pinter, 2011).

For many students around the world, exposure to L2 is provided by the teacher. That is why teachers need to create opportunities to speak English in the classroom. However, the teacher does not have to use L2 all the time as switching between the languages would be natural as it is already common in many everyday contexts (Garton & Copland, 2012).

Teacher talk serves as the source of input and used when giving instructions, modeling, explaining, making jokes, etc. Moreover, it has an important role as an interactive device. Teachers use a lot of interactive devices like repetition, prompting, prodding and expansions (Yanfen & Luqin, 2010). Teachers also do most of the talking in the classroom, they choose the topic of the talk by themselves and they ask most of the questions in the classroom (Santiago i Ribas & Avnitskaya, 2010). This is why teachers should be careful about their choice of language. Teacher talk is the key to increase the proficiency level of learners and participation (İnceçay, 2010).

Due to the important role of teacher talk in provoking interaction, teachers need to find ways to involve learners in the activities. Yanfen and Yuqin (2010) created a framework of teacher talk which involves the interaction types of teachers. While the main heading of the framework included initiation and follow-up, subheadings involved questioning, invitation, direction, informing, prompting, encouragement, criticizing, ignoring, acknowledgement and commenting. These interactions types can help teachers create opportunities to use L2.

Talking in L2 will help children grasp the meanings of words through a context in a purposeful way, speak in richer ways and lead them for a more rapid growth in their language. As benefits of teacher talk with young learners Test, Cunningham and Lee (2010, p.3) propounded four reasons:

1. Young learners enjoy conversations with adults.
2. Words can help young learners to engage in activities.
3. Questions and using new words will extend their thinking and curiosity.
4. Adults can directly answer their questions.

Moreover, according to İnceçay (2010), teacher talk can facilitate learners' participation while creating a potential for learning. Teacher talk also involves error correction in the classroom. However, the appropriate error correction method needs to be considered for

young learners. Immediate error correction is not suitable for young learners. According to Sert (2015), teachers should remember to refrain immediate error corrections in order not to interrupt the flow of communication and they should use embedded correction that may lead to learner uptake.

#### **2.4. Use of Target Language**

Over the years and decades, one of the suggested ideas for an effective language teaching program has been to use only L2 in the classroom. Teachers have been suggested to avoid the use of L1 except as a last solution although the reports show that most of the teachers make extensive use of L1 (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Moreover, for much of the 20th century, professional discussions, debates, and research in the field of ELT supported that English is best learned and taught without using the L1 of the learners while leading to the promotion of monolingual English-only teaching (Hall & Cook, 2012).

One of the claims which support the use of L2 in a foreign language classroom is to increase exposure to L2. Just like learning how to ride a bike or any other skill, it is achieved best by doing it. Language learners need to be exposed to L2 as much as possible for acquisition to occur and they should be actively involved in the process. For most of the circumstances, foreign language classrooms are the only opportunity to have an experience with L2. That is why language teachers need to maximize the exposure by providing a language-rich environment.

Learners in an EFL environment do not have much exposure to L2 and unfortunately L2 is not a part of their daily life. Therefore, it is quite advisable for teachers to provide as much exposure as possible in foreign language classrooms (Tsukamoto, 2012). Using L1 carefully and in limited circumstances is essential as the use of L1 can become a habit of resorting that both teachers and the students use whenever a difficulty happens. Lastly, some errors might



be encountered when teachers use L1 to teach L2 because of L1 transfer. The reasons for these kinds of errors range from vocabulary to grammar (Voicu, 2012).

There are many questions that come to an English teacher's mind about the use of L2. How often can they use L2 in the classroom? Should they be strict or forbid the use of L1? Is it okay to use L1 less? Although it is really difficult to find answers to these questions, there might be some suggestions to find a practical solution. Teachers should always remember that the use of L1 should be selective and purposive, and it should not be seen as an easy way out for potential communication problems that might occur in the classroom. Excessive use of L1 in the activities like speaking, listening and pronunciation needs to be avoided since the use of L1 in these skills is not useful and also it might be harmful for the communicative purpose of foreign language teaching (Çelik, 2008).

Creating a classroom environment, in which only L2 is spoken, is difficult to achieve. There are many factors which affect the use of L2. For instance, educational considerations in a test-focused education system, classroom conditions, the conceptual level of communication, teachers' proficiency, effective learning and teaching, knowledge about the language, social and cultural factors and organizational factors might affect the amount of L2 in foreign language classrooms (Dickson, 1996).

While a well-planned lesson can make the use of L2 easier by the teacher, it is still not easy for children to initiate a conversation in L2 or use it among themselves (Pachler & Field, 1998). Using only L2 is supported by many rationales. For example, Voicu (2012, p.213) summarizes the rationale for the monolingual approach in foreign language education as below:

1. Learning L2 should be similar to learning L1 (through so much natural exposure target language).

2. Proper learning in a foreign language occurs with the distinction of two languages (L1 and L2).
3. Learners need to be aware of the significance of L2 by continuously using it.

According to Pachler and Field (1998), although many teachers aim to make use of L2 for most of the activities, the amount of L2 used by them can be affected by many factors like the ability of the learners and the size of the classroom, motivation to learn, group dynamics, receptiveness of the students, environmental factors, incidents that occurred in the previous lesson or in the break, topic area, discipline problems and interruptions from outside. To be able to create a learning environment in which L2 is used at its maximum, teachers need to consider these factors and find solutions to them. Some of the ways to minimize the problems that occur in the classroom can be establishing some classroom routines, adequate preparation for the lesson, feeling of confidence in L2 and security, using demonstrations when giving instructions, scaffolding, using appropriate teacher talk. Similarly, Littlewood and Yu (2011) suggested strategies to increase the use of L2 in the classrooms. They are summarized as below:

1. Teachers should be determined and confident while using L2,
2. Teachers should apply the communication strategies,
3. Teachers should start simple.

Moeller & Roberts (2013, p.24) on the other hand, suggested other principles which can be applied for the planning of a language lesson by the teachers. Accordingly, teachers should:

1. Build a curriculum which is compatible with theory,
2. Create a respectful environment in the classroom,
3. Use “meta moments” which encourage students to reflect
4. Apply visuals, gestures and previous knowledge of learners

5. Apply concrete strategies which encourage learning
6. Encourage self-correction
7. Show enthusiasm for the learners
8. Use technology to make use of language
9. Use extrinsic motivation strategies
10. Teach grammar inductively
11. Apply to stories and visuals from real life and personalize the lessons
12. Connect the topic to actual lives of learners

**2.4.1. Young learners and use of target language.** There is a common view about the way young learners acquire a second language. Young learners are better and more rapid while learning a foreign language, whereas adults are slower and they spend more effort to acquire it (Qin, 2014). As well as a rich linguistic environment, interaction with other learners is necessary for effective language learning for young learners (Winkel, Zhou, Li, Mei, Peart & Booth, 2016). Although quite challenging, starting at an early age has many benefits for children to acquire a foreign language. Exposing learners to L2 at an early age will have excellent results in proper circumstances. It will result in development of language and also a valuable international outlook (Enever, 2011).

Moon (2005, p.63) specified the advantages of using L2 when teaching a foreign language to the children as below:

1. It maximizes the amount of exposure children get to English.
2. It develops pupils' confidence in the language.
3. It provides opportunities for using L2, eg. in giving instructions, getting answers from the students.
4. It ensures that students learn without being aware that they are learning thanks to the simple language and repetitive patterns used in the classroom.

5. It motivates students to have a desire to learn.
6. It develops greater fluency, as students are encouraged to think in the L2 from the early ages.

For all these reasons, teachers have often been encouraged to teach a foreign language by using it, especially at early ages. Using L1 in the foreign language classroom is an easy way to explain things. Although the teachers usually have a limited period in the classroom and most of this time becomes easier to use L1 to explain a situation, they still need to concentrate on building communicative skills. For this, they can use visuals, realia, and gestures (Shin, 2006).

However, simply placing young learners in a target language environment and staying out of the way to let a miracle happen is not helpful to make him learn the language. Only when the young learners are surrounded by language in a meaningful context, they are open to learning languages. That is why; a teacher who speaks to them in a meaningful and purposeful way will be helpful for them to develop experiences with the language (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004).

## **2.5. Use of Mother Tongue**

The use of L1 as a teaching tool in a foreign language classroom has long been discussed. There are strong and weak views about this issue. The strong view totally forbids the use of L1. Weaker views argue that it should be decreased in the classrooms as much as possible.

There are some other views that support the use of L1 in the classrooms as well. For example, Littlewood and Yu (2011) claim that L1 is a way to clarify the meaning of L2. Learners can progress more quickly and internalize L2 easily by this way.

The Council of Europe (CoE) adapted a language learning framework which involves the understanding of foreign culture as an essential part of language due to the growing

recognition of the importance of incorporating culture into foreign language learning (Çelik, 2015). According to Deneme, Ada and Uzun (2011), an important part of teaching a language and supporting the cognitive and social development of children is closely related to culture. As a part of education, cultural knowledge can be transmitted to young learners continuously depending on their cognitive capacities to develop a multicultural understanding. However, all of these do not mean that teachers should totally stay away from L1. In fact, they should be presenting the material from L2 while relating it to L1, its content and home culture to personalize the lesson and create the learners an opportunity to link the new language and culture to their own lives and experience.

On the other hand, using L1 to teach a foreign language is not a problem according to Voicu (2012). The problem is when and how to make use of it. Teachers need to be selective and cautious when using L1 and they should use it only in necessary and compulsory situations. According to Macaro (2005), even bilinguals use the strategy of code switching as they find it easier. However, he also claims that even if using L1 is accepted as a communication strategy, it has to be a well-planned communication strategy in a lesson.

There are some views about the times and situations to use L1 in the classrooms. If instructors treat L1 as a classroom resource, it will open up several ways to use it like conveying meaning, explaining grammar, encouraging collaborative learning and individual strategy use. Cook (2001) specifies the necessary times to use L1 in the classroom:

- To earn time while giving instructions and explaining something
- To build up interlinked L1 and L2 knowledge for the learners
- To carry out the classroom tasks by using collaboration with the learners
- To create L2 activities like code-switching to be used in later real-life

Similarly, Littlewood and Yu (2011) suggest three compulsory situations that teachers might need to apply L1 in the classrooms:

- To establish a constructive social relationship with the learners
- To communicate the complex meanings of the language to be sure that learners can understand and save time
- To maintain the classroom management

Moreover, Ostovar-Namaghi and Norouzi (2015) regard the use of L1 as advantageous in some circumstances. For example, it arouses the feeling of safety and security among the learners and they can express themselves in this way. It avoids any possible misunderstanding. It raises learners' metacognitive awareness and helps learners when they are at the beginning levels. It is helpful in saving time and solving comprehension problems.

However, Turnbull (2001) and Kavari (2014) object the official permission for using L1 in the classrooms. Accordingly, it will be overused by the teachers and it will have negative consequences because teachers already apply L1 even though they are not allowed to use it in the classrooms. Instead of giving them permission to use it, teachers need to be guided about the judicious use of L1.

Turnbull (2001) claims that teachers can use L1 in the process of language learning, he also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the role of L1 in the classroom. He is against the extensive use of L1 as L2 should be used as much as possible as the teacher is the only source of L2 for most of the circumstances. Thus, he believes that the use of L2 has a positive effect on the proficiency of learners when teachers maximize the use of it in the classrooms.

Similarly, Burzkamm (2003) puts emphasis on the strategic use of the L1 which facilitate L2 learning. It is important to find appropriate ways to use L1 in the classroom. When the strategic use of it is ignored, there is a danger of over using it. Teachers need to consider an effective and balanced L1 and L2 use for effective language teaching.

Voicu (2012) suggests foreign language teachers to follow a more complete and proactive strategy. They should be careful about time management and should not waste time to eliminate the use of L1. They should consider the times when L1 might be beneficial.

**2.5.1. Young learners and use of mother tongue.** In a foreign language classroom with young learners, it is possible to teach a whole lesson almost entirely in L2 by using a small number of structures and chunks. However, according to Halliwell (1992), most of the teachers of young learners think that children will not understand and behave badly in the classroom. In this case, teachers do not have to say “what on earth do you think you are doing punching Thomas like that?”. Instead of this, a teacher can easily say “Don’t do that!” in L2 which will be effective. In addition to this, using facial expressions will be helpful as children can respond to facial expressions very well (Halliwell, 1992). Use of L1 should only be applied in obligatory circumstances for young learners. Moon (2005, p.66) summarized this as follows:

- To soothe the child and show closeness.
- To answer the questions.
- To talk about the answer with the teacher.
- To communicate with friends and teacher.
- To develop closeness with teacher and learners.
- To gain time.
- To communicate a message.
- To check comprehension of children
- To help learning when children do not have sufficient levels of L2 language

Especially, at the younger ages, teachers are mostly encouraged to teach in L2 and sometimes they might feel bad when they use L1 as most of the communicative approaches try to enforce the ‘English only’ rule. However, to find a solution for many problems, like saving

the time, teachers should not avoid using L1 for the difficult expressions like ‘Once upon a time’. By this way, learners can recognize this expression whenever they encounter or hear it (Shin, 2006).

In addition, for children, it is easier to share meaning with their friends in their mother tongue and sometimes it might be difficult for them to understand why they have to express themselves in a different language in a classroom setting. Therefore, for most of the teachers, it is difficult to maintain a conversation using L2 in some of the teaching methods like task-based learning as learners tend to slip easily into their mother tongue during the activity (Rosa, 2004). Furthermore, while giving the instructions for many activities using L1 would be inevitable because the teachers want children to understand the rules for the task clearly and they want to spend the class time doing the activity rather than spending it for the explanation (Shin, 2006).

## **2.6. International Studies**

As the debate over whether to use L1 in foreign language classrooms has been going on for years, many studies have been conducted about the use of it. However, the studies have differences regarding the participants, methods and the context. While some of the studies are carried out with ELT teachers, some others are conducted with foreign language learners. Some studies have college, university and/or high school students as participants. However, only a few numbers of studies were conducted in primary schools. Moreover, in some of the studies, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data while other methods like voice recording were rarely used as a data collection method.

In a study conducted in Kuwait, teachers’ use of L1 in college classrooms was investigated. The functions of L1, factors for using it and teachers’ attitudes toward the use of it were investigated in the study. After analyzing the survey and interviews of 60 ELT teachers, it was found out that L1 is used in L2 classrooms as a teaching tool and mostly for



classroom management. Although the teachers indicated that L1 use has contributions for effective, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors, they also exhibited negative attitudes for the use of L1. The study had contradicting results regarding the classroom practice and teacher attitudes about the use of L1 (Arabah, Wu, Alotaibi & Aldaihani, 2016).

In another study conducted with both teachers and students, a mixed method approach was implemented via questionnaires and interviews. After investigating the data from the questionnaires which was applied to the students from different levels, it was found out that students in all language levels have positive perceptions for using L1 in the classes, contrary to the previous study. Teachers, on the other hand, showed negative perceptions on the use of L1 and they did not support the use of it (Tajgozari, 2017).

Similarly, a study carried out with both teachers and students explores the use of L1 in a public educational institution in Mexico. The results from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews showed that both teachers and most of the students have positive perceptions about the use of L1 and accept it as a part of the learning process. However, there are also a few numbers of students who do not support the idea of using L1 and they prefer that the teachers use L2 in the classroom (Pablo, Lengeling, Zenil, Crawford & Goodwin, 2011).

In the study by Al-balawi (2016), the attitudes of EFL teachers on the use of L1 were investigated. A questionnaire and classroom observations were used as data collection tools. Results of the questionnaire and observations of fifty female English language teachers showed that their attitudes towards the use of L1 which is Arabic were positive. The results also indicated that teachers mostly applied L1 to facilitate the teaching process and as a pedagogical tool to enhance the learning experience in the classroom.

Distinctively from the previous one, a study was conducted with only the students in an Iranian university to find out students' attitudes and perceptions about the use of L1. The results from the data gathered via a survey indicated that Iranian university students are

reluctant to use their L1 and supported the use of L2. However, the results had differences between the students having different proficiency levels. While the elementary and advanced level students had positive attitudes, intermediate level students were found to have deeper negative attitudes toward the use of L1 (Nazary, 2008).

In a similar study conducted in Japan, questionnaires were used as a data collection tool to gather information from the students about the use of L1. The results of the questionnaires showed that learners appreciated the use of L2 in the classroom (Tsukamoto, 2012) in accordance with the previous study. However, in another study which was conducted with the voluntary students in a Japanese university, it was found out that students mostly preferred that instructor know L1 and they desired the use of L1 (Carson & Kashihara, 2012).

Besides the studies which investigated the attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students, some of the studies were carried out to investigate the amount and frequency of L1 use in the classroom. For example, Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) conducted research on the amount and purposes of L1 use by teachers and students in language institutes in Iran. Researchers collected data for 12 sessions from various EFL teachers. The study revealed that EFL teachers do not make use of L1 very much in the classrooms although there is still use of it to improve teaching. The study also revealed that using L1 helps learning in EFL classrooms.

In another study, frequency and occasions for using L1 and students' reasons for using it and how they can reduce the use of it were investigated. Classroom observations, group discussions, and interviews were used to collect data. The study indicated mixed results. It was found out that students' inhibition in speaking is the main reason to use L1 in the classroom. However, it was also found out that teachers have mixed views about the use of L1 in the classroom (Khati, 2011).

On the other hand, other studies have different results regarding the frequency of L1 use in the classrooms. Most of the studies show that the L1 is used excessively in the classroom. Tang (2002) aimed to find out how frequently L1, Chinese, is used at the tertiary level English classroom and the purposes of using it. He also investigated the attitudes of learners and teachers about the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. Accordingly, it was found out that L1 is used for the occasions when teachers fail to explain in English and it has a supportive role in the classroom. Moreover, most of the teachers and learners in the study were found to support the use of L1.

In a similar study, which investigated the amount, purpose and reasons for using L1 in the classroom, video, audio recording, interviews, and stimulated recall sessions were used to collect data. The study was carried out at a German university course. The study supported the frequent use of L1 in the classroom while the reasons and purposes of it showed variety. Also, it was found out that the instructors used L1 in the classroom mostly for instructional purposes (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009).

In a study in Iran, use of L1 was investigated at the intermediate level in the language institutions. The study aimed to find out the frequency and purposes of L1 use and the attitudes of both teachers and students toward using it. The classroom observations showed that L1, which is Farsi, was used to explain when teachers fail to do it in English. Moreover, most of the students and teachers indicated that use of L1 is necessary and it makes it easier to understand the difficult concepts. In the interview, teachers also explained that it is helpful to show differences and similarities between the two cultures. In addition, according to the results of the questionnaire, the use of L1 is justified in the reading classes (Afzal, 2013).

## **2.7. Studies in Turkey**

Although the issue of whether to use L1 in foreign language classrooms is an ongoing debate among many practitioners and researchers, the research into the use of L1 in EFL

classrooms in Turkey has only recently gained popularity among the researchers. When the literature is reviewed, it is clearly seen that only a limited number of studies were carried out about this issue in Turkey. Moreover, most of the studies conducted in this area involve the use of questionnaires and interviews while a few of them involve voice recordings, video recordings or classroom observations.

Solhi and Büyükyazı (2011) investigated the non-native speaker teachers' attitudes toward the use of L1 by using a questionnaire. They also, aimed to find out English teachers ideas regarding the use of L1 as a facilitating or a debilitating factor. The results showed that teachers mostly believe that the use of L1 would be beneficial and they allowed the use of it in the classroom. However, there were a few number of other teachers who support that L1 should not be allowed in the classroom as the students can never improve themselves in the L2 if L1 is allowed in the classroom.

In a similar study conducted by Kayaoğlu (2012), theoretical and practical situations of English language teachers in the use of L1 were explored by using a questionnaire. The data was collected from teachers of English at a university. An in-depth interview was also carried out as different from previous research. Similar to the results of the previous study, it was revealed that teachers take a practical and pragmatic position in the use of L1. However, the results also indicated that all of the teachers are strict about the use of L2 in both speaking and listening skills as they believe that learners should be exposed to the L2. They stated in the interview that the more they use L2, the more successful the students are.

Being different from the other studies, Mahmutoğlu and Kıcır (2013) investigated both teachers' and learners' perceptions about the use of L1 in the classroom. A questionnaire was given both to the students and the teachers. Besides the questionnaire, the interview was carried out both with the students and teachers. The study revealed that the L1 has a mediating role in learning. Both the teachers and learners accepted the use of L1 in language classrooms.

They also expressed that it can be used in emergency situations and can be effective in the right situation at the right time.

Besides the studies which investigate the university students and which use questionnaires and interviews as data collection tools, there are some other studies that involved young learners and used recordings and observations for data collection. Demirci and Tolu (2015) aimed to examine the 2nd, 4th and 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students' and their teachers' perceptions about the use of L1 in the classroom and tried to find out under which circumstances they preferred using L1. In addition to the questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews were also used to collect data. After analyzing the data, it was found out that teachers make use of code-switching to facilitate learning. Moreover, students were found out to have some clear preferences for their teachers to use L1 in the classroom.

In another research conducted with adolescents in a secondary school (Salı, 2014), it was investigated how Turkish foreign language teachers use L1 in the classroom. Being different from the other studies, the functions of L1 were examined at a procedural level in the study. On the other hand, at the conceptual level, the researcher explored the teachers' perspectives about the use of L1. After analyzing the classroom observations and teacher interviews, it was revealed that L1 in three teachers' classroom had three major functions. These functions included academic, managerial and social/cultural functions. As such, teachers use L1 to communicate the content of the lesson, regulate the classroom interactions and to change the focus of the lesson to the efforts of rapport construction. Besides the three major factors, multiple interacting factors were found to affect the teachers' decisions to when and why use L1. This study is relevant to the current study as the findings of the study which include three major functions of L1 were used to create the framework of the observation checklist in the current study (Appendix 1).

On the other hand, Yıldırım and Yataganbaba (2017) investigated the code switching attempts of fifth grade EFL learners in two private schools. To conduct the research, video recordings were used and transcribed to be analyzed. When the students attempted to switch codes, what types of code switching took place and what functions they embodied and whether they contribute to the learning was examined. Besides the recordings, the researcher carried out semi-structured interviews with the learners. The study revealed that students use code-switching for various purposes like greeting, doing a warm-up, using student's book, checking homework, announcing exam results, reviewing homework and grammar, playing games, practicing vocabulary and a new topic, working on notebook, doing worksheet activities, assigning homework and closing-up. In addition, interviews of the students showed that students regard code-switching as a useful strategy to learn English. This study indicated that L2 is needed to be encouraged in the language classrooms.

Yavuz (2012) analyzed the attitudes of English teachers and their comments on the findings from the interviews. He found out that foreign language teachers mostly emphasize the use of L1 in times of structural teaching. However, they also prefer teaching in L2 in communicative teaching. The study also revealed that English language teachers prefer using L1 to break psychological barriers before they begin to teach and they think that it provides an atmosphere with low anxiety for teachers and learners.

Lastly, Çelik (2008) provided a brief snapshot of the views about the use of L1 in foreign language classrooms. He argued that L1 is an essential part of language learning and facilitates learning when it is used properly and it should not be treated as a barrier for learning. However, he still defended that English teachers should always remember that L1 needs to be selective and should not be used as an easy way out for the possible communication problems in the classroom.

All in all, there are many ideas and various studies on the use of L1. While most of ideas support that the use of L1 should be limited in the classroom, some of the studies show high results of L1. However, the number of the studies which were carried out with young learners is scarce. With the help of the current study, a new point of view will be enhanced into the use of L1.



## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology

In this part of the research, information on the model of the study, research setting and participants, data collection tools, data collection, and analysis were stated.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research adopted a qualitative design. As one of the common research methods in social sciences and the language education field, it is worth clarifying the qualitative method. The qualitative research methods are described as “data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24). According to Dörnyei, the impact of qualitative study in applied linguistics has been quite profound recently although the number of studies conducted with qualitative method is still low.

The qualitative data in the present research includes the observations, audio-recordings as well as the interviews for data triangulation. According to Golafshani (2003), triangulation is simply a kind of strategy which improves the reliability and the validity of the research and its results.

#### 3.2. Research Setting and Participants

The participants of the study included 5 non-native teachers of English who work in different state schools in Muş province. To conduct this study, seven teachers were asked to participate and five of them accepted to be involved in the study. All of the teachers completed their education in Turkey in different universities. While three of the teachers had experience abroad, the other two teachers did not. All of the teachers graduated from ELT departments in Turkish state universities. All of the participants were female. The ages of the teachers ranged from 25 to 38 years. On the other hand, teaching experiences of the



participants ranged from 3 years to 5 years. Alphanumeric codes like T1, T2,T3, T4, and T5 were used in order to keep the teachers' identity anonymous.

As this is a qualitative research study the purpose is not to generalize the results. As Dörnyei (2007) stated, in a qualitative study there is always a limit to respondents that we can reach and contact or the number of sites we can visit. He also states that individuals who can provide a rich insight into the research should be found as there is a need to maximize what we can get from the participants (Dörnyei, 2007).

The nature of the study makes finding participants a difficult task because the teachers feel nervous under the pressure while being observed and recorded during the lesson. For this reason, voluntary and willing teachers were selected to participate in the study. Other teachers who expressed that they would feel nervous and did not want to be observed or recorded were excluded from the study.

As mentioned above, the results of the study cannot be generalized for the whole primary English teachers in Turkey. The research is restricted to the time and place in which the data were collected. The study was conducted in 5 primary state schools in Muş province.

Table 1

*Participants of the study*

Teacher	Age	Gender	Teaching Experience	Educational Background	Experience Abroad
T1	38	F	5	ELT	None
T2	26	F	3	ELT	5 months
T3	25	F	3	ELT	3 months
T4	26	F	3	ELT	5 months
T5	25	F	3	ELT	None

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, classroom observations, audio recordings and interviews were used as data collection techniques. To carry out the classroom observations, an observation checklist was prepared by the researcher. While preparing the observation checklist the study of Salı (2014) was used to determine the major categories. From this research three major categories were obtained to be used as main functions of L1 use in the checklist. The main categories included academic, managerial and social/cultural functions of L1 use.

To determine the sub-categories of L1 use for each main category, the study of Salı (2014) was again used. However, some necessary changes had to be done as the nature of the study was different from the previous study. As the age range of the students is lower in this study, more sub-categories had to be added for social/cultural functions of L1 use. To determine the social/cultural functions of L1 use for younger learners, reasons for L1 use were considered and added from Moon (2005).

The final version of the observation checklist was created after five experts were consulted. Each expert evaluated each item by indicating whether the item is essential, useful but not essential or not necessary for the construct that is under investigation. Content validity ratio was calculated from the answers given by the experts. One of the items was removed from the checklist after the ratio was calculated as it was under 0.99%. The final version of the checklist included 8 academic functions (*to explain new words, to explain a grammar point, to explain differences between L1 and L2, to check comprehension, to elicit an answer, to explain something about the lesson, to give feedback, to correct errors*), 3 managerial functions (*to give instructions, to draw attention, to manage discipline*) and 5 social/cultural functions (*to praise, to share cultural experiences, to develop rapport, to soothe the child, to communicate a personal problem*) of L1 use. In order for the researcher to take notes of the

examples of teacher's sentences, reasons for the need and frequency sections were included in the observation checklist.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedures**

The audio-recordings of the lessons were taken during the observation process by the researcher. A voice recorder program for mobile phones was used to record the lesson. The program was piloted before the researcher started to collect data. The technical properties of the program were proved to be useful for the purpose of the study.

After the classroom observations and audio-recordings, semi-structured interviews were held with five teachers to find out their perspectives about the use of L1. Interview questions were prepared by the researcher. 6 questions were prepared (Appendix 2) but during the interview, additional questions were asked when necessary. In addition to the 6 questions, each teacher was asked to answer additional questions about their own use of L1 in the classroom. These questions were determined after the audio-recorded data were investigated and analyzed.

Each teacher was interviewed in different periods. The interview was audio-recorded by the same program used in the classroom. The interviews lasted about 30 minutes. They were held in Turkish in order to create a relaxed atmosphere as both the researcher and interviewees shared the same L1 which is Turkish. The researcher took notes during the interview as well.

**3.4.1. Ethical Considerations.** Before the process of observation and recording, ethical approval was taken from Muş Directorate of National Education. In addition, the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures were briefly explained to the school administration and all the teachers. They were explained that the lesson will be observed by the researcher and audio recorded. The aim of the study was not mentioned to the teachers and learners so as to prevent any pressure on the teachers to use English or Turkish during the

lessons. They were also explained that the purpose of the researcher is to examine the general flow of the lesson and she will not be participating in any of the classroom activities. Before the lesson, teachers and students were asked to follow their everyday routine and ignore the researcher's existence in the classroom to create a natural classroom environment. The phone was placed on the teachers' table to make sure that all teacher speech is recorded. Three lessons for each teacher were recorded in this way.

### **3.5. Data Collection and Analysis**

As the first step of the research, the researcher prepared an observation checklist (Appendix 1) to collect data more systematically during classroom observations. The observation checklist was consulted with five experts to ensure validity. Necessary changes were made in the light of experts' advice. With the observation checklist, the researcher participated in the lessons and recorded the lesson while observing it. In addition field notes were taken by the researcher during the observations.

Although the researcher conducted the classroom observation by herself, she did not participate in any of the classroom activities in order not to interfere with the flow of the lesson. The researcher used audio recording while observing the lesson because the video recordings are not allowed to be used in state schools. Although it seems as a disadvantage for not using video recordings, the audio recording had the advantage of not distracting the teacher's and the students' attention. The audio recordings enabled the researcher to listen to the lesson for as many times as she likes and catch the details.

In order to analyze the amount of L1 use in the classrooms, the data obtained from the audio-recordings were transcribed first. Both teacher and student talk were transcribed in order to obtain a clear representation of the lesson. However, a little amount of the speech had to be omitted as there were too many people talking at the same which made a small part of the recordings unclear.

After the transcription of the data, a word by word analysis was used to find out the amount of L1 use in each lesson. This type of analysis has its own disadvantages in determining a clear amount of L1 use because of the differences between two languages in terms of orthographic, morphological and syntactic systems. However other techniques have more disadvantages. For example, counting the number of utterances is more problematic as it does not take into account the length or quality of the utterances (Polio & Duff, 1994). On the other hand, the time-based technique is not suitable for the study because the pace of speech may simply change to a wide extent depending on the teacher (İnan, 2016). Therefore a word by word analysis which was also used by Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie (2002) and Bozorgian & Fallahpour (2015) was considered to be the most useful one for this research.

In order to obtain a clear number of Turkish and English words from the data, the word count feature of MS Word program was used. With the help of the program, L1 words and L2 words were counted for each teacher separately. While counting the numbers some of the words were not included in the count such as proper names. Following the study of Kim & Elder (2005), some mechanical L2 utterances like dictations, repetition drills and songs were excluded from the analysis as well. After word counts of each lesson were determined, the counts were indicated for each teacher in the table. The frequency of L1 and L2 use were calculated for each teacher and again indicated in the table. General results for L1 and L2 use were also counted and calculated and they were indicated in the table.

After determining the amount of L1 used in the classroom, it was also important to determine the functions of it. As stated by Maxwell (2013), the main strategy for categorizing in qualitative research is coding. In order to find out the functions of L1 use, the transcriptions were coded to identify when and for what purpose L1 was used. In order to determine the reliability of the results the data needed to be analyzed at least by two experts. According to Golafshani (2003), the concept of 'reliability' is used in all kinds of research although it is

generally used for testing and evaluating in quantitative studies. However, in order for the dependability of the research, the data was analyzed by two experts in terms of reliability.

As it was carried out in a similar study by Salı (2014), another researcher was asked to analyze a small portion of the transcribed data (one session of a teacher) to identify inter-rater reliability. Out of 48 occurrences of L1 use in the session, only 8 of them were found out to be different by the two researchers. Thus 84% of agreement was achieved between the researcher and the co-rater. On the other hand, to achieve intra-rater reliability, the researcher again selected a small part of the transcribed data (one session of a teacher) and analyzed that data after a certain time. In light of these results, the researcher continued to analyze the whole data.

By coding the occurrences of L1, the purposes of teachers' L1 use were explored by the researcher. According to Maxwell (2013), coding the data and arranging it into categories facilitate comparison between things in the same category and between different categories. While creating the categories from the transcribed data, main and sub-functions of L1 use, as stated in the observation checklist, were used. Frequencies of different functions of L1 use for all teachers were calculated and shown in table 3. The categories were ordered from the highest frequency to the lowest one in table 3.

In order to analyze the results of interviews, the audio-recorded data was transcribed by the researcher first. As stated by Dörnyei (2007), the transcription process gives the researcher the chance to know the data thoroughly. After the transcription of five interviews, again the coding technique was used to analyze the transcriptions. According to Dörnyei (2007), with the help of coding and categorizing, the data can be easily identified, retrieved and grouped. By this way, the most crucial parts of the interviews were obtained and categorized. After categorizing the interview transcriptions, the categories were described in tables.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

The data of the study were analyzed to reveal the frequency of L1 use, functions of L1 use and teachers perspectives about the use of L1. The study revealed important results that are presented in this section. This chapter shows the analyses of the gathered data.

The data analysis was investigated under three headings which are teachers' frequency of L1 use, functions of L1 use and teachers' perspectives on the use of L1. Teachers' frequency of L1 use focuses on the word count of both Turkish and English language. Functions of L1 use focuses on the 3 major and 16 minor functions of L1 use. Lastly, teachers' perspectives on the use of L1 focus on the analysis of teacher interviews about the issue.

#### 4.1. Teachers' Frequency of L1 Use

This study revealed a high amount of L1 use in Turkish primary state schools, each teacher using at different amounts. While some of the teachers have used L1 frequently, some of them used it at lower amounts when compared to others.

Table 2

*Word count of L1 and L2 use for each teacher*

Teacher	Number of L1 Words	Frequency	Number of L2 Words	Frequency	Total Word Count
<b>T1</b>	2960	74,25%	1026	25,74%	3986
<b>T2</b>	1831	59,48%	1247	40,51%	3078
<b>T3</b>	703	30,87%	1574	69,12%	2277
<b>T4</b>	1493	58,50%	1059	41,49%	2552
<b>T5</b>	236	6,87%	3198	93,12%	3434
<b>Total</b>	7223	47,12%	8104	52,87%	15327

The word count of L1 and L2 for each teacher and the total number for L1 and L2 words are shown in Table 2. The frequency of L1 use between the teachers ranged from 6,87% to 74,25%. Among 5 teachers, represented as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5, the lowest

frequency (6,87%) belongs to T5. On the other hand, T1 has the highest rate with 74,25%.

While these two results show the highest and the lowest uses of L1, other teachers' use of L1 can be considered high.

On the other hand, the total word count of teachers from the transcriptions of audio-recordings was 15327 words within 15 lessons. The mean score for all teachers' use of L1 is 47,12% which can be considered as quite high. The figure below shows a clearer picture of L1 and L2 used by the teachers and makes it easier to understand the comparison of teachers in terms of L1 use. When the figure is examined, only T3 and T5 used L2 more than L1. On the other hand, T1, T2, and T4 used L1 more than L2.

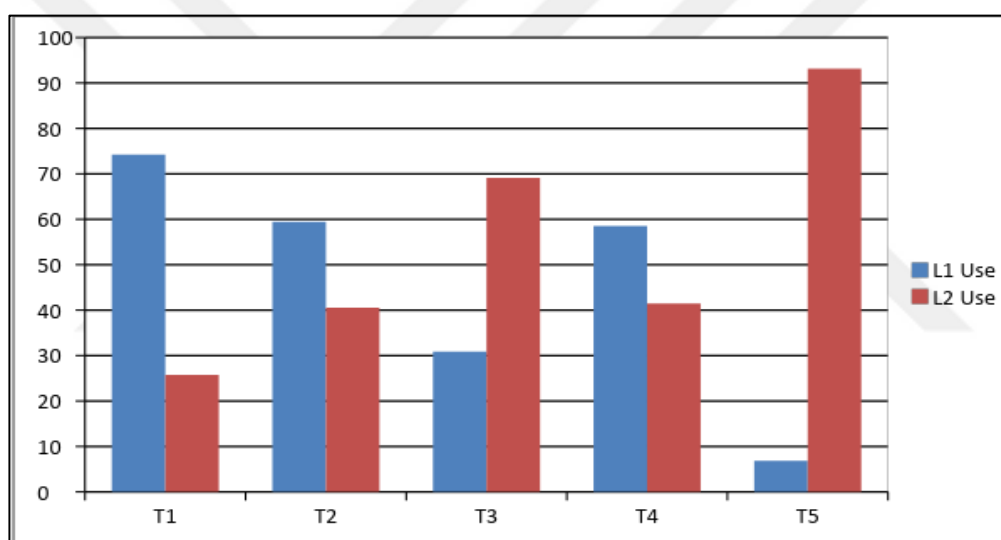


Figure 1

*Teachers' use of L1 and L2*

## 4.2. Functions of L1

**4.2.1. Main categories for functions of L1 use.** The data obtained from the 15 sessions of observations and audio-recordings were investigated to find out the functions of L1. At first, the data from all teachers were gathered and combined to find out the general results for functions of L1. Among the three major categories, academic functions of L1 was found to have the highest frequency with 59,43%. Managerial functions of L1 was revealed to be



36,28%. On the other hand, the social/cultural functions of L1 was found out to have the lowest amount of use with 4,27%. The results of major functions for L1 use can be seen in figure 2.

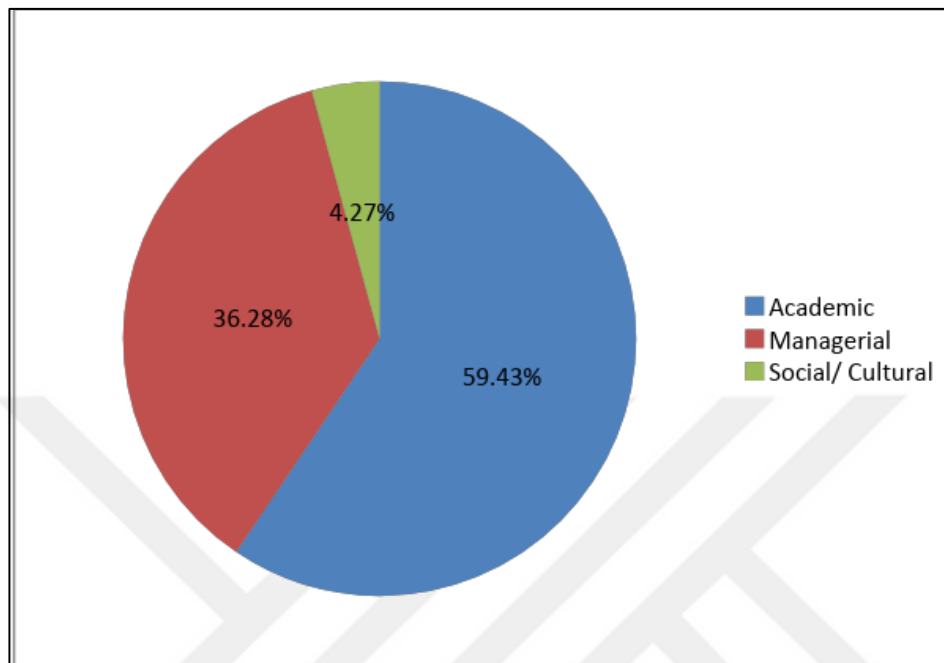


Figure 2

*Main categories for functions of L1 use*

**4.2.2. Sub-categories for functions of L1 use.** Sub-categories for functions of L1 have revealed various results. The results of minor categories change from 0,29% to 32,44%. While the minor categories of academic functions and managerial functions have high and average results, the minor categories for social/cultural functions have lower rates for L1 use (Table 3).

Table 3

*Functions of L1 for 15 sessions of audio-recordings*

Categories for functions of L1	Number of Occurrences (Total: 678)	Frequency
<b>Academic</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>59,43%</b>
To elicit an answer	220	32,44%
To check comprehension	54	7,96%
To give feedback	52	7,66%
To explain new words	50	7,37%
To explain something about the lesson	15	2,21%
To explain a grammar point	8	1,17%
To correct errors	4	0,58%
<b>Managerial</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>36,28%</b>
To give instructions	130	19,17%
To manage discipline	90	13,27%
To draw attention	26	3,83%
<b>Social / Cultural</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4,27%</b>
To develop rapport	18	2,65%
To praise	6	0,88%
To share cultural experiences	3	0,44%
To soothe the child	2	0,29%

As the results of the sub-categories range from 0,29% to 32,44% for the sake of discussion 10% was determined as a reasonable frequency. Thus 10% was used to explain the frequency of sub-categories as low or high.

Among the sub-categories for functions of L1 use, there are three of them which have a higher frequency than 10%. *Eliciting an answer from the learners* is significantly the most preferred function of L1 among the academic category. Two other minor categories from managerial functions of L1 use have an outstanding rate; *giving instructions* (19,17%) and *managing discipline* (13,27%). Extracts of the high frequency functions can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

*Extracts for the sub-categories which have higher frequency than 10%*

---

**To elicit an answer (ACADEMIC)**

**(32,44%)**

T1

*T: ..... How old are you neydi? How old are you neydi?*

*Ss: Kaç yaşındasın.*

*T: Peki kaç yaşındaymış? Kaç tane mum var pastanın üstünde?*

*Ss: Dokuz*

*T: Ne diyeceğiz? I am nine years old.*

---

**To give instructions (MANAGERIAL)**

**(19,17%)**

T2

*T: Kitabın arkasında da var kelimeler oradan da bakabilirsin. En arka sayfalarında.*

*Ver Seyit gösterelim. Bakın isterseniz böyle resimden de bakabilirsiniz.*

*S: Resimli daha iyi oluyor hocam.*

---

**To manage discipline (MANAGERIAL)**

**(13,27%)**

T3

*: Bir dakika, ya ben size ayağa kalkmanız için izin verdim mi?*

*Ss: Hayır.*

*T: Ben sana ayağa kalkman için izin verdim mi? Hayır. Sus artık!*

*Ss: Sus diyor bak.*

*Ss: Gitti gitti...*

*T: Yeter! Ben ne dedim. Bugün hastayım. Eğer beni bağtırsanız beni sevmediğinizi düşünürüm. Okay. Be quiet.*

---

On the other hand, some of the sub-categories for functions of L1 have a 5% and 10% use, which can be regarded as low frequency. Extracts of these functions can be seen in table 5. *Checking comprehension* (7,96%), *giving feedback* (7,66%) and *explaining new words* (7,37%) are the academic functions that teachers use L1 for.

Table 5

*Extracts for the sub-categories which are in the range of 5% to 10%*

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**To check comprehension (ACADEMIC)**

**(7,96%)**

T3

*T: ..... Geçen hafta en son mevsimleri öğrendik mi?*

*Ss: Evet*

*T: Ayları öğrendik mi?*

*Ss: Evet*

*T: Sunny, rainy, cloudy hatırlıyor musunuz?*

*Ss: Evet*

---

**To give feedback (ACADEMIC)**

**(7,66%)**

T4

*S: Ilık*

*T: Ilık afferin.*

...

*T: Hayır o sıcak. Üçü arasında. Evet. Tamam. Gel dinle önce. Hot?*

*Ss: Sıcak*

*T: Afferin.*

---

**To explain new words (ACADEMIC)**

**(7,37%)**

T5

*T: Get up*

*Ss: Get up*

*T: Yes. Uyanmak. Get up. Have breakfast.*

*Ss: Have breakfast.*

*T: Have breakfast. Kahvaltı yapmak. Yes. Brush my teeth.*

*Ss: Brush my teeth.*

*T: Dişleri fırçalamak. Yes.*

---

Among the academic functions *explaining something about the lesson* (2,21%), *explaining a grammar point* (1,17%) and *correcting errors* (0,58%) have the lowest rates. Among the managerial functions, only one of them has a very low rate which is *drawing attention* (3,83%). Finally, among the social/cultural functions of L1 use all of the four minor functions which are *developing rapport* (2,65%), *praising* (0,88%), *sharing cultural experiences* (0,44%) and *soothing the child* (0,29%) indicate very low frequencies. The extracts from minor categories for functions of L1 which indicate low results can be seen in table 6.

Table 6

*Extracts for the sub-categories which indicate lower results than 5%*

---

**To explain something about the lesson (ACADEMIC)**

**(2,21%)**

T2

*S: Ödev var mıydı?*

*T: Hayır sınav olduğunuz için ödev yoktu.*

---

**To explain a grammar point (ACADEMIC)**

**(1,17%)**

T4

*T: Nasıl yapıyorduk? Özneyi başa alıyorduk. Sam. Sonra yardımcı fill geliyordu. Am, is, are'dan biri. Sam is eating a.....*

---

**To correct errors (ACADEMIC)**

**(0,58%)**

T2:

*S: I have got a red car.*

*T: Kırmızı arabam var demişsin de hayatım biz kıyafetlerimizden bahsediyoruz. Yani üstünde olan kıyafetini anlatmanı istedim.*

---

**To draw attention (MANAGERIAL)**

**(3,83%)**

T1

*T: Geçen hafta biz ne yaptık? Şimdi şöyle yapalım. Şimdi bir bak buraya. Bak!*

---

---

**To develop rapport (SOCIAL/CULTURAL)**
**(2,65%)**

T2

*S: Hocam benim dilim dönüyor.*
*T: Bir dakika. Buse'nin dilini döndürelim. Bir dakika. Diğerleri susuyor.*


---

**To praise (SOCIAL/CULTURAL)**
**(0,88%)**

T2

*Ss: I... drink... milk... for... breakfast.*
*T: Harikasınız afferin!*


---

**To share cultural experiences (SOCIAL/CULTURAL)**
**(0,44%)**

T1

*T: Çarşıdan aldım bir tane, eve geldim bin tane.*
*Ss: Öğretmenim nar.*
*T: İngilizcesini söylüyoruz. Neydi? Pomegranate değil mi?*


---

**To soothe the child (SOCIAL/CULTURAL)**
**(0,29%)**

T4

*S: Öğretmenim dişim ağrıyor.*
*T: Yine mi Eylül? Her hafta bir yerin ağrıyor. Tamam birazdan öğle yemeğine gideceğiz. Söylersin.*


---

**4.2.3. Differences between teachers about the functions of L1.** Although most of the functions of L1 use indicate similar results for each teacher, there are some differences in their usage of L1 in terms of the major and minor categories. One of the outstanding differences between the five teachers is related to the major categories. While all of the teachers, except T3, have a similar result for having the highest rate in academic functions, T3 has the highest rate in managerial functions (65,06%) as can be seen in figure 3.

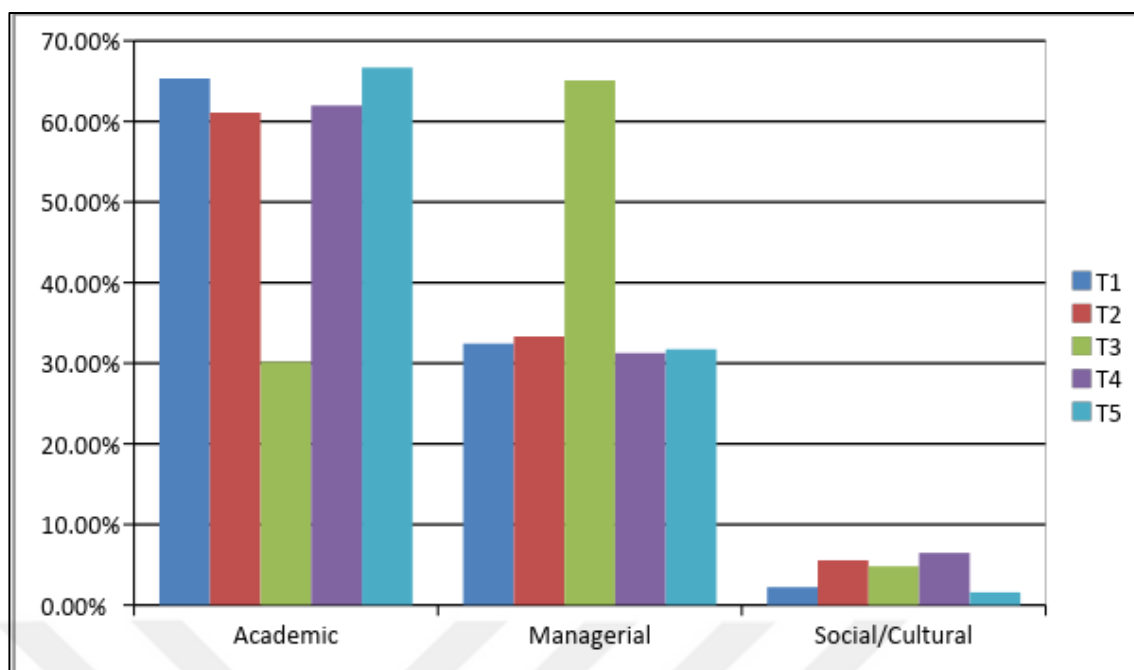


Figure 3

*Main categories for functions of L1 use for all teachers*

On the other hand, teachers have similar results in terms of the sub-categories for L1 use with little differences between them. While all of the teachers have the highest rate for *eliciting an answer*, T5 has the highest frequency to *explain new words* among academic functions of L1 use.

Among the managerial functions of L1 use, there are also some differences between teachers. While all of the teachers, except T3 and T5, have the highest use of L1 when *giving instructions*, T3 and T5 have the highest use of L1 when *managing discipline*. On the other hand, T4 has used L1 at an average level to *give instructions* and to *manage the classroom*. Although all the teachers seem to apply L1 to *draw attention* very rarely, T3 and T4 seem to apply it a little more.

Lastly, all of the teachers have a very low frequency of L1 use for sub-categories of social/cultural functions. As the frequencies are quite low, it is almost impossible to talk about

the differences between five teachers. The only thing that draws the attention here is about T2 and T4 as they both have a higher rate than 5% for this category.

### **4.3. Teachers' Perspectives on the use of L1**

Although the data provided a great deal of information about five teachers' use of L1 in the classroom, the interviews were also carried out to get detailed answers from them and confirm the results of the audio-recordings in accordance with the purpose of this study. Certain categories from the transcriptions were obtained from the interview and the transcriptions were analyzed in lights of these categories. The categories obtained from the transcriptions were determined as follows:

- Benefits of using target language in the classroom
- Obstacles to use target language in the classroom
  - Insufficient time
  - Students' level and background
  - Crowded classrooms
- Most significant skills related to the use of target language
  - Speaking
  - Vocabulary
  - Grammar
- Necessary times to use L1 in the classroom
  - Giving instructions
  - Classroom management

**4.3.1. Benefits of using target language in the classroom.** When the teachers' ideas on the use of L2 were asked, all teachers' answers supported the use of L2 in primary school classrooms. Although all of the five teachers expressed that they are obliged to use L1 in the



classroom as it is beneficial for young learners, they also think that there are many advantages of using L2 in the primary school English lessons.

According to their answers, students can be more motivated to learn English and their learning outcomes will be more permanent, their exposure to L2 would increase if L2 is the main language of communication. Here are some extracts that support the use of L2 in the classroom: (Turkish versions of the extracts can be seen in Appendix 3.)

*“We catch them towards the end of the critical period. And I think they'll never forget what they've learned right now. That's why I think, the more we educate them in English and make them engage in English, the more they can understand and speak English”* (T5)

*“So now I have something like that. Use of English actually makes more sense because the kid's gonna take it directly. So if we use English, they acquire the language”* (T4)

It is seen that teachers are aware of the fact that they need to use L2 in the classroom. They are also aware that they are teaching to young learners and support the idea of direct exposure to L2.

**4.3.2. Obstacles to use target language in the classroom.** Teachers mostly expressed that L2 should be used in primary school English classrooms. However, they are also aware that they do not use it in the classroom most of the time. Teachers asserted some justifications about why they cannot use L2 in their classrooms which include insufficient time, students' level and their background and crowded classrooms. These factors are explained in the sub-sections below.

**4.3.2.1. Insufficient time.** Some of the teachers expressed that 2 hours of English lesson is insufficient to teach English and kids at this age easily forget what they learn in a short time. In addition, they stated that using L2 gets more difficult when the time is inadequate:

*“When I arrive, the child has forgotten the previous week. He is looking at me like he is gonna learn for the first time. Three students in a forty-student classroom remember it. The rest is empty.” (T2)*

*“Two hours a week is a little inadequate. Until the next week, children forget so much that for this reason we use Turkish more and unfortunately we make our work a little easier.”(T3)*

It is clear from the interviews that the time given for English lessons is not enough for teachers. They state that children easily forget what they learn until the next week and only a number of students remember what they learn.

**4.3.2.2. Students’ level and background.** The other obstacle for using L2 is about students’ level and their background according to the teachers. They stated the level of learners makes it difficult to use L2. On the other hand, their family’s indifference to their children’s language education makes things difficult in the classroom too.

*“I have something like that, I have use Turkish as most of the children do not have enough infrastructure. So the intensity is Turkish. They don't even understand in Turkish what I mean most of the time.”(T1)*

*“It is a situation about the level of children and the apathy of families. This is unfortunate because I teach two hours a week. So, I am telling, most of them are unable to do homework, do not bring books.”(T2)*

It seen that teachers see the level of learners low and they cannot understand English. Teachers do not make an effort to advance the level of learners by using L2. They also have a negative attitude towards the families of children as they claim that families do not have enough support for the children’s education.

**4.3.2.3. Crowded classrooms.** Another obstacle for using L2, which is stated by the teachers, is related to the classroom size. Teachers express that some of the classrooms are too crowded to use L2 in the classroom:

*‘‘There are about 38 students in my classrooms. Even more crowded this year. And this is really a great disadvantage. Course time is 40 minutes. From the mathematical point of view, a student does not have even 1 minute in the classroom.’’(T2)*

It is seen that there are about 40 students in most of the classrooms. Teachers state that this is too crowded for language teaching and the number of students needs to be decreased for a more effective language learning environment.

**4.3.3. Skills and use of target language.** One of the important categories which is obtained from the teachers’ interviews is about the relationship between the skills they are focusing on and L2. Teachers expressed that they use L2 more often for some of the skills while they use L1 more often for some other skills. The most outstanding answers indicated that teachers tend to use L2 in speaking activities. However, it was also revealed that they tend to use L1 while teaching vocabulary and grammar.

**4.3.3.1. Speaking.** Speaking is a skill that teachers strictly think that English should be used during such activities. Some of the teachers think that they acquire the language in speaking activities if L2 is spoken during the activity.

*‘‘But speaking is a little different. At least, I give a lot of examples, I use English when building sentences, so that children can see it.’’(T1)*

Teachers seem to claim that they are using L2 for speaking activities and try to make students expose to L2.

**4.3.3.2. Vocabulary.** One of the outstanding results is about teaching vocabulary. According to the interview results, teachers need to use L1 while teaching a new word as they

think students do not understand in another way. Even if they use flashcards or visuals, they think that L1 is necessary to explain words.

*“Sometimes, I am hungry, for example. The child sees a child who is sick, ill... They cannot make out that he is hungry from the visual. In this case Turkish is compulsorily.”(T2)*

It is seen that teachers do not use L2 for teaching vocabulary as they find it difficult to explain some of the vocabulary items. They claim that use of L1 is necessary in this case.

**4.3.3.3. Grammar.** Although some of the teachers express that they do not need to teach much grammar in primary schools, they also say that there are some structures like subject, verb and object that need to be taught. In addition, they expressed that it is necessary to explain the structures by using L1 so as to make understanding easier.

*“I can teach the children its English after I teach them Ali is subject in Turkish. Before that, children cannot understand it. You know I, you, we, they... They don't understand while I am teaching them. I have to teach Turkish first.”(T2)*

Teachers claim that it is necessary to teach grammar to children in Turkish. They state that they do not understand L2 if the grammar structures are not explained to the learners.

**4.4.4. Necessary times to use L1 in the classroom.** Along with some of the skills, there are some other situations that teachers need to use L1 according to the interview results. Those situations are giving instructions and managing the classroom.

**4.4.4.1. Giving instructions.** Teachers express that they need to use L1 to explain an activity as the students cannot understand the activity when they are explained in L2.

*“Let me give you an example. Let's say there's a game. He doesn't understand English as he doesn't know the Turkish version. This is something he's never seen in his life before, a concept. He didn't even see the game in Turkish. He doesn't understand its English. That's why I have to explain its Turkish first like this is a game like that, we play it like this.”(T5)*

According to the claims of teachers, some of the activities are needed to be explain in Turkish as sometimes it is very difficult for children to understand some of the activities and games in L2.

**4.4.4.2. Classroom management.** The other time that teachers need to use Turkish is to manage the classroom. They explain that it is almost impossible to manage the discipline by using L2 when there are too much noise and problems in the classroom.

*‘‘When I come to the class, I first need the silence because the classes are bad and children are really spoiled. In other words, it is difficult to manage the classroom. Other than that, I have to say children things like be quite etc.’’(T4)*

Lastly, teachers claim that some of the children are spoiled and there is too much noise in the classroom. For this reason, they need to use L1 to make the classroom quite.

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion and Suggestions

In this chapter, the results of the study are discussed in the light of related literature and the suggestions are given. The chapter consists of two headings which are Discussions of the Findings and Implications for Teaching English to Young Learners in Primary Schools.

#### 5.1. Discussions of the Findings

The results were discussed under the headings of teachers' use of L1 in young learners' EFL classroom, functions of L1 in young learners' EFL classroom and teacher interviews. This section focuses on the high frequency of L1 use in primary school classrooms, the reasons for the use of L1 and teachers' perceptions regarding the issue.

**5.1.1. Teachers' use of L1 in young learners' EFL classroom.** The results in this study provided an overview of what is happening in EFL young learner classrooms in Muş province about the use of L1. It was revealed that L1 was used 47,12% of the time in total by five of the teachers in the primary school classrooms investigated. The result shows a high amount of L1 use by teachers. This result implies the overuse of L1. However, overuse of L1 has many disadvantages in the classroom. According to Voicu (2012), the use of L1 inhibits the provision of comprehensible input when acquiring a foreign language. Sert (2015) also argues that children need an adequate amount of oral input in L2 from the teacher and they need to practice chunks of language.

The results of the study show some differences between teachers. For instance, T1 has the highest frequency for the use of L1 while T5 has the lowest frequency. As the participants of the study have similar demographic features, no relationship was found out between teachers. On the other hand, the reason for this difference might be related to teachers' beliefs on teaching English to young learners and their willingness to teach.

The result of the study contradicts with the curriculum published by the MoNE in 2017 as the new curricular model is focused on language learning as communication to help learners' express their needs and wants, voicing their opinions and beliefs, build relationships, and so on.

On the other hand, after the emergence of the direct method, the emphasis on the use of L2 had started to increase. The direct method had a complete departure from GTM for not allowing the use of L1 in the classroom and developing proficient speakers in L2 (Ariza, 2002). This effect of direct method maintained in other methods too. According to Çelik (2014), in communicative language teaching nearly everything is carried out using L2 as the goal of learning a language in a communicative context is to develop the ability to communicate in L2. However, in the current study, it was revealed that most of the teachers use L1 frequently and they do not follow the current teaching methodologies in the classroom.

The importance of using L2 in young learners' classroom can also be clearly seen in methods which are suitable for young learners. According to Larsen-Freeman (2013), the meaning is conveyed through physical movements to children without using L1 in total physical response. In action-oriented learning, the meaningful communication between the learners is carried out in L2 as well (Kaliska, 2016). Lastly, in activity based learning children are expected to use L2 while engaging in the activities through actions and in realistic situations (Superfine, 2002).

Although the studies conducted on L1 use are various in their methodology, some of the studies still show similarities and differences with the current study. To mention a few of them, in the study of Al-balawi (2016), the use of L1 was found out to be very high although frequency was not given as the study focused on teachers' questionnaires and classroom observations. Similarly, Tang (2002) had found out that teachers use their L1 in their classes and they think that it needs to be used in the classroom. However, Bozorgian and Fallahpour

(2015) revealed a quite different result. In their study, it was found out that the average amount of L1 used in the classes was about 3,14%. Similarly, De la Campa & Nassaji (2009) had also revealed a low amount of L1 use which is 11,3% according to the word counts from the transcriptions.

Among the studies conducted in Turkey, Solhi and Büyükyazı (2011) found out that only 15,2% of the teachers did not allow the use of L1 while the rest of them (84,8%) allowed it. Similarly, it was revealed that 91% of the teachers agreed on the use of Turkish in the study of Kayaoğlu (2012). Moreover, it was stated that most of the teachers prefer using Turkish in their classroom in some situations according to the interview results in the study of Mahmutoğlu and Kıcıır (2013). However, Demirci & Tolu (2015) found out that most of the teachers rarely used L1 in their classrooms according to the questionnaire results. On the other hand, the situation in the current study is similar to the study of İnan (2016) in which the teachers were revealed to be using L1 48,12% of the time, which is very close to the findings of the current study.

**5.1.2. Functions of L1 in young learners' EFL classroom.** The results about the functions of L1 use provided an overview of the most frequent reasons to use L1 in primary school foreign language classrooms. Among the academic, managerial and social/cultural functions of L1 use, academic functions had the highest frequency (59,43%), managerial functions had the average frequency (36,28%) and lastly social/cultural functions had the lowest frequency (4,27%) in the current study. These results are surprising and contradictory to some of the theory of teaching English to children. According to Moon (2005), most of the L1 talk in a young learners' classroom should be carried out for social/cultural functions like soothing the child, demonstrating sympathy/closeness, developing rapport with the pupils and communicating a message. However, these functions of the L1 have the lowest frequency in the current study. The reason for this contradictory situation might be related to the teachers'



limited/lack of concern with the social and affective context and learner needs and characteristics. Another reason might be related to the limited time spared for language lessons. Having only two hours of teaching might have pressure on teachers to cover the syllabus and cause to ignore social and emotional aspects of the classroom.

Among the sub-categories of functions of L1 use, *eliciting an answer* was the most-observed function (32,44%). This result is similar to Salı's (2014) study as it was the second most-observed function (14%) in her study. This result might be related to teachers' desire to involve students in the lesson. However, a solution could have been found to decrease the use of L1 while eliciting an answer. For example, keeping the pace down, uttering each individual word slowly and leaving considerably long silences between utterances make the spoken language more intelligible for learners (Sert, 2015).

*Giving instructions* was the second most-observed function of L1 (19,17%) in the current study. This result is compatible with the study of Kayaoğlu (2012) as the four of the teachers pointed out that L1 should be used to give instructions to the learners in his study. However, the study of Kayaoğlu (2012) was conducted with teachers who work at a university and the situation is different from the current study. In young learner classrooms, teachers could use controlled and guided activities while letting the children enjoy L2. As students have a very little chance to make a mistake in controlled activities, teachers can use pictures, objects or miming to help learners understand the content in guided activities (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990). By using these activities, the instructions can still be given in L2.

Lastly, *managing discipline* was the third most-observed function of L1 (13,27%) in the current study. The reason for this situation might be about teachers' desire to use more traditional classroom management approaches in the classroom. However, in a more contemporary classroom management approach teachers can let the students be more active

and tolerate noise that arises from activities. Moreover, tolerant attitudes of teachers will help learners to display positive behavior in the classroom (Alabay & Zorba, 2015).

**5.1.3. Teacher interviews.** According to the analysis of the interviews, all of the teachers claimed to believe that using L2 is important in primary school classrooms. However, it was also revealed that their actual practice in the classroom is contradictory to their ideas about the issue. The reason for this contradiction might be related to teachers' inefficacy or limited experience in their career. According to Damar, Gürsoy, and Korkmaz (2013), in young learner classrooms, effective language learning is closely related to classroom practitioners' knowledge and linguistic, educational and methodological skills.

On the other hand, there are some obstacles to use L2 like insufficient time, students' level and background and crowded classrooms which are stated by the teachers. These obstacles are similar to the ones which are stated in the study of Yavuz (2012). Accordingly, teachers claim that physical conditions of the classroom (like crowded classes) and the education system which is based on preparing students for the examinations are the reasons for them to use L1. The exam-based system is also observed in the current study according to the researchers' field notes as some of the lessons were observed to be taught by focusing on multiple choice questions. However, the test focused lessons are not suitable for young learners because of their nature and characteristics.

Although crowded classrooms and exam-focused system are more related to Ministry of Education to find solutions, students' level and their background are the factors that teachers need to consider. Teachers should not blame learners' low level to use L1 in the classroom. According to Moon (2005), teachers can build on the skills of children when they take their current level of achievement as a starting point. Accordingly, the raised expectations from the children encourage them to make more effort and this leads them to improve their performance and increase their positive attitudes toward their teachers. Thus, teachers who

teach young learners need to accept the level of learners as a starting point and keep using L2 no matter what their level is.

On the other hand, teachers need to find ways to use the limited classroom time efficiently by creating opportunities for learners to be exposed to L2. As Tsukamoto (2011) claims, teachers should provide as much exposure as possible in L2 as students who learn a foreign language do not have much exposure to L2 outside the classroom.

Another issue revealed in the interviews is about language skills. Most of the teachers claimed that they prefer to use L2 while they are teaching speaking skills and they tend to use L1 while teaching vocabulary and grammar. As the teachers claim, speaking activities and interaction between the teacher and learners are quite important in a foreign language classroom. According to Sert (2015), in spoken interaction, teachers need to pay attention to the pace of the talk and emphasize the new items by using pitch and stress at first. Secondly, they should give enough interactional space through enough wait-time. Lastly, they should keep monitoring children's understanding by asking them questions. By doing so, teachers can also maximize the use of L2 in speaking activities.

The situation for vocabulary and grammar teaching is different as the teachers claim that they need to use L1 while they are teaching these skills most of the time. In the curriculum published by MoNE (2017), up until the seventh-grade little emphasis is given to reading and writing skills. Moreover, there is not an emphasis on grammar teaching in the new curriculum. On the contrary, it is focused on the communicative functions of language like telling people what we know, asking someone's name and giving simple directions. Moreover, young learners are not capable of coping with direct instruction of grammar rules as they are not cognitively fully developed yet. While the rules of a language are abstract for children, memorization of these rules would be quite meaningless for them. Therefore, young learners need a meaningful context where they are exposed to L2 (Döner Yılmaz, 2015).

Moreover, one of the teachers in the interview had stated that she needs to explain the learner that Ali is the subject in Turkish. However, children in primary schools do not learn parts of speech in their L1 yet. According to the Turkish lesson curriculum published by MoNE in 2018, students start to learn these concepts in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade which corresponds to secondary school in the Turkish education system. For all these reasons, teachers of young learners need to reconsider the issue of teaching grammar to the children.

On the other hand, teachers' use of L1 to explain vocabulary items might be resulting from book focused lessons and lack of materials as it was observed by the researcher that most of the teachers don't bring any materials and use the activities in the books during the lessons. According to Yavuz (2012), materials can be any kind of course supplements that facilitate the use of L2. This is also true for vocabulary teaching. For example, charts, pictures, flashcards, boxes, bottles, and scissors are readily accessible objects in the classroom. These kinds of objects are useful to help learners understand the meanings of words (Zorba& Arikan, 2015). Therefore, teachers' claim for the need to use L1 to explain vocabulary might be related to teachers' beliefs as they are not aligned with the curricular goals. This might be because of teachers' pre-service education they had received. It could also be related to their previous teaching experiences. Lastly, another reason for this might be causing from lack of effective in-service training programs focusing on young learners.

## **5.2. Implications for Practice**

The discussions of the findings revealed suggestions for both teachers of young learners to improve themselves and MoNE to improve the education system in primary school classrooms. This section is discussed under the headings of suggestions to improve teacher qualifications and suggestions for MoNE.

**5.2.1. Implications for teacher education.** According to Kola and Sunday (2015), teacher qualifications involve all the language skills a teacher needs to teach effectively.

These skills include teachers' education, knowledge about the field, pedagogical studies, years of experience, duration of education and participation in developmental activities (Zuzovsky, 2009). As the use of L1 revealed to have a high frequency and functions of L1 was also found out to be irrelevant for young learners' needs in foreign language classrooms, it can be discussed that teacher qualifications need to be improved in the present context.

According to Duman and Karagöz (2016), one of the most debated issues in Turkish national education system has been teachers and teachers' education. The quality of the teachers is an important factor to determine the success of an education system as teachers plan and practice the learning process in a classroom. For this reason, more practice-focused lessons can be implemented into the education system of pre-service teachers to increase the use of L2.

One of the ways of improving teacher qualifications lies under teacher education. In order to obtain a university degree and teach in state schools, teachers take a 4-year course of study in Turkey. Moreover, prospective teachers take pedagogical, subject-specific and general cultural courses besides the subject related courses in a language education program (Kandemir & Akar, 2018). However, the program can be supplemented with more applied courses during which teachers practice their teaching in a real classroom environment.

On the other hand, the speaking skills of prospective teachers have importance for young learners' classrooms. According to Gürsoy (2015), the speaking skills of prospective teachers need to be developed as children are talkative and they communicate through oral language. However, the "Public Personnel Selection Examination" which prospective teachers take to teach at state schools is deficient in evaluating the oral skills of teachers as it includes general knowledge, basic mathematical knowledge and field knowledge questions. Thus, the oral aspect of this examination can be developed in order to increase the number of qualified teachers in state schools in Turkey.

According to Al-ahdal and Al-awaid (2014), a teacher needs to be updated and communicative to encourage learners to ask questions and raise queries to clear doubts. Reflective teaching is a way of innovating better learning solutions. To find solutions to the excessive use of the L1 and to increase teachers' efficacy, teachers can be directed to implement reflective teaching. Moreover, supporting teachers for continual professional development for teaching young learners is also important for better teacher qualifications.

Many language teachers organize a lessons plan and they are more interested in completing the lesson according to the plan and they never stop and reflect (Pacheco, 2005). Therefore, teachers need to start evaluating themselves. Reflective teaching can be a way for teachers to do this. While a reflective teacher develops him or herself by identifying the classroom problems and find solutions by personal and peer experience, the learners also get inspired and actively involved in the learning process (Al-ahdal & Al-awaid, 2014). For these reasons, reflective teaching can be used as an effective way to find solutions for the problems of teacher qualifications revealed in this research.

There are several ways to implement reflective teaching for a teacher. In line with the strategies suggested by Mesa and Lissett (2018), teachers can easily use video-recordings, peer observations, portfolios, journals, lesson reports, questionnaires, and case analysis to reflect themselves. These strategies are useful for all teachers in Turkey as they can be implemented easily by the teacher or with the help of colleagues. For example, they can videotape themselves and evaluate it after the class. Moreover, teachers can write their reflections in a journal or on a blog after teaching a class and they can even receive feedback and suggestions from other teachers. Also, it is possible for teachers to observe other teachers who use L2 more often and benefit from their teaching experience.

**5.2.2. Implications for teaching.** As this study revealed that a high amount of L1 is used by language teachers and there are many reasons behind using it in the classroom, there

are some suggestions for MoNE to consider. First of all, the exam-based system needs to be changed as some of the language lessons in primary schools are taught by using test focused methods. As children like having fun and they are kinesthetic, the activities need to be planned depending on their characteristics. However, the exam-based system does not allow teachers to plan these kinds of activities.

Secondly, most of the teachers claim that a crowded classroom is an obstacle to teach in L2. In a classroom full of many children, teachers have difficulty to spare time for each learner. Moreover, children do not have enough opportunity to speak all the time in a crowded classroom. Thus, a solution needs to be found to decrease the number of students in a classroom to give enough opportunity for each learner.

Lastly, the foreign language lesson hours are limited in time as it was claimed by the teachers. There are two hours of English lessons in a week in primary schools in Turkey. As it is claimed by the teachers, learners may forget what they learned in a week. Besides, children have little opportunity for the exposure of L2 in a limited time. Moreover, teachers do not have much opportunity to practice the language with more activities in two hours a week. For these reasons, the foreign language lesson hours can be increased in primary schools by the MoNE. The ideal lesson hours can be organized as 1 hour for each day so that students can be exposed to the target language every day.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

The overview of the research is presented in this chapter by summarizing the scope of the study. The purpose of the study, findings, implications for improving the use of L2 in primary school classrooms and suggestions for further studies are presented here.

Furthermore, the contributions of the study to the field of teaching English in primary school classrooms in Turkey and the limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

The current study attempted to reveal the frequency of the use of L1 and the reasons behind using it in primary schools. The study focused on the teachers' use of L1 and three main functions for the use of it which are academic, managerial and social/cultural functions. Both the frequency and functions of L1 use were analyzed via data triangulation. Data triangulation included classroom observations, audio-recordings and teacher interviews as well as field notes kept during observations and interviews.

The results of the study indicated that a high amount of L1 is used by primary school foreign language teachers. It is obvious from this result that students cannot get enough L2 input in the classroom. The reason for this might be related to teachers' invalid teaching methods regarding the use of L2. Therefore, teachers need to be more careful about using L2 and providing enough L2 input for young learners.

Other findings revealed in this study are about the functions of L1 in primary school classrooms. The results indicated that teachers use L1 for various reasons in the classroom. Academic and managerial functions of L1 were the most frequent functions of L1 while social/cultural functions were found to be the least. These results show that teachers are not aware of the possible reasons to use L1 in young learners' classroom as social/cultural reasons are the most convenient reasons for L1 use.



Another remarkable finding showed that teachers use L1 to teach grammar and vocabulary. This result indicates that teachers are not aware of the characteristics of young learners as children are not cognitively developed enough to understand abstract grammar rules. On the other hand, it was observed that teachers are not using supporting materials to explain the meanings of words in L2 as they mostly stick to the course book content.

The study has implications for both the teachers and MoNE. First of all, teachers should improve themselves to increase the amount of L1 they use. Reflective teaching is one of the ways that they can apply to improve themselves to become better language teachers for young learners. Secondly, MoNE needs to carry out some improvements for primary school language lessons. Increasing the lessons hours, decreasing the number of students in the classroom, and changing the exam-based system are to tell a few.

All in all, this study provided light into the use of L1 and attempted to fill the gap in the field about the use of L1 in primary school classrooms. The number of studies which were carried out in primary schools was few. The study also contributed to the field by using various data collection methods such as classroom observations, audio-recordings, and interviews when compared to other studies.

The study is also a guide for teachers who have a desire to assess themselves and notice their actual practices in the classroom. The suggestions given can be helpful for teachers to create more opportunities to provide enough L2 input for their learners. Other suggestions given for MoNE are also beneficial to improve language education in primary school classrooms.

However, the participants of the study included five teachers and the observations were three lesson hours for each teacher. This situation leads to the fact that the study is limited in the number of participants and the observed lessons. For this reason, the results of this study

cannot be generalized to all ELT classrooms in Turkey. Besides, the study was carried out in Muş Province only which can also be considered as another limitation of the current study.

The findings of the study indicated that the issue of L1 use needs further investigation in young learner EFL classrooms in Turkey. Although this study provided detailed results for L1 use in young learner language classrooms, a large-scale study needs to be designed to better understand the practice of teachers in young learner classrooms. A further study can also be conducted to reveal the use of L1 by the learners as the current study only focused on the teachers. Moreover, a future study can also be designed to reveal teachers' use of L1 in different regions of the country.

Lastly, further studies can be carried out to find out the differences between teachers. A study can be carried out to find out the use of L1 among teachers who have different years of experience in the field as the current study was only carried out with novice teachers whose experiences were between 3 to 5 years. On the other hand, all of the teachers who participated in the current study graduated from ELT departments of different universities and they are all female. Besides, some of the teachers have an experience abroad for a very limited time while others have none. For these reasons, further studies can focus on variables between teachers like gender, teaching experience, educational background and experience abroad.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Observation Checklist

#### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST (USE OF L1)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic of the Lesson:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Details about the Lesson:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

	Examples of Teacher's Sentences	Reason for the need	Frequency
<b>ACADEMIC</b>			
To explain new words			
To explain a grammar point			
To explain differences between L1 and L2			
To check comprehension			
To elicit an answer			
To explain something about the lesson			
To give feedback			
To correct errors			

<b>MANAGERIAL</b>			
To give instructions			
To draw attention			
To manage discipline			
<b>SOCIAL / CULTURAL</b>			
To praise			
To share cultural experiences			
To develop rapport			
To soothe the child			
To communicate a personal problem (not course related)			

**Appendix 2: Interview Questions**

What do you think about L1 and L2 use in primary school classrooms? Please explain it.

Which language do you prefer to use in your classes? Why? In what ways?

In which part of the lesson do you use L1? Why?

In which part of the lesson do you use L2? Why?

For which skills to teach you usually prefer to use L1? Why?

For which skills to teach you usually prefer to use L2? Why?





### Appendix 3: Turkish Versions of Teacher Interviews

“Kritik dönemin sonuna doğru yakalamış oluyoruz biz onları. Ve şu anda öğrendiklerini hani hayatları boyunca unutmayacaklarını düşünüyorum. O yüzden ne kadar onlara hani ne kadar İngilizce eğitim verebilirsek, ne kadar İngilizceyle uğraştırabilirsek hani o kadar daha iyi İngilizce konuşurlar, anlayabilirler diye düşünüyorum.”(T5)

“Yani şimdi şöyle bir şey var. İngilizce kullanımı aslında daha mantıklı. Çünkü çocuk yani direkt onu alsın. Yani dili edinmiş oluyor İngilizce kullanırsak.”(T4)

“Ben geldiğimde çocuk bir önceki haftayı unutmuş oluyor. İlk defa bana yeni öğrenecekmış gibi bakıyor işte. Kırk kişilik sınıfta üç kişi hatırlıyor. Gerisi bomboş bakıyor.”(T2)

“Haftada iki saat birazcık yetersiz bir saat. Bir sonraki haftaya kadar çocuklar o kadar unutuyor ki bu sebepten daha çok Türkçe kullanıp işimizi biraz daha kolaylaştırmış oluyoruz maalesef.”(T3)

“Şimdi şöyle bir şey var yani çocukların çoğunda altyapı olmadığı için mecburen Türkçe kullanmam gerekiyor. Yani yoğunluğu Türkçe. Türkçeyi bile anlamıyorlar çoğu zaman ne demek istediğini.”(T1)

“Çocukların seviyesiyle ilgili durum ve ailelerin ilgisizliğiyle ilgili bir durum maalesef çünkü ben haftada iki saat giriyorum. E, anlatıyorum hop geliyor, yani çoğu ödev yapmaktan aciz, kitap getirmiyor.”(T2)

“Gerçekten benim sınıflarım 38 kişilik falan. Hatta bu sene daha kalabalık. Ve bu gerçekten büyük dezavantaj. Zaten ders süresi 40 dk. 40 öğrenciye 1 dk bile konuşma süresi düşmüyor matematiksel açıdan baktığımızda.”(T2)

“Ama speaking biraz daha farklı. En azından bol bol örnek verirken, cümle kurarken İngilizce kullanıyorum ki çocuklar da az görsün.”(T1)

*‘‘Bazen mesela I am hungry. Çocuk görüyor oradan işte çocuk rahatsız olmuş, hasta... Görselden çocuk aç olduğunu çıkartamıyor böyle. Bu durumda mecbur Türkçe.’’(T2)*

*‘‘Çocuğa işte Ali ’nin Türkçe özne ne onu anlattıktan sonra onun İngilizce ’sini verebiliyorum. Onun öncesinde çocuk onu anlamıyor. Hani var ya şu I, you, we, they, onları verirken çocuk anlamıyor. Onun önce Türkçe ’sini mecbur önce vermem gerekiyor.’’(T2)*

*‘‘Örnek vereyim. Bir tane oyun var diyelim. Ben onu İngilizce anlatırken anlamıyor Türkçesini bilmediği için. Daha önce hayatında hiç görmediği bir şey, bir kavram mesela. O oyunun Türkçesini bile görmemiş. İngilizcesini hiç anlamıyor. O yüzden önce Türkçesini açıklamak zorunda kalıyorum. İşte bu şöyle bir oyun. Biz şöyle şöyle oynuyoruz gibi.’’(T5)*

*‘‘Sınıfa girdiğimde öncelikle girdiğim sınıflar kötü olduğu için ve çocuklar gerçekten çok şımarık çocuklar olduğu için de çocukları susturmam gerekiyor haliyle. Yani hiçbir şekilde sınıf yönetimini de zor sağlıyorum. Onun dışında çocuklara bir susun bilmem ne gibi şeyler yapmak durumunda kalıyorum.’’(T4)*

## Öz Geçmiş

**Doğum Yeri ve Yılı** : Bolu - 1994

Öğr. Gördüğü Kurumlar	Başlama Yılı	Bitirme Yılı	Kurum Adı
Lise	2008	2012	Bolu Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi
Lisans	2012	2016	Hacettepe Üniversitesi
Yüksek Lisans	2016	2019	Uludağ Üniversitesi

**Bildiği Yabancı Diller ve Düzeyi**

- : İngilizce – Advanced
- : İspanyolca – B1

Çalıştığı Kurumlar Tarihleri	Başlama ve Ayrılma	Kurum Adı
	1. 2016-2017	Bursa Özel Çakır İlkokulu
	2. 2017- .....	Muş Prof.Dr. Vahit Özmen İlkokulu

**Kullandığı Burslar** :KYK Bursu (Lisans Eğitimi)

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## ULUDAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

## TEZ ÇOĞALTMA VE ELEKTRONİK YAYIMLAMA İZİN FORMU

Yazar Adı Soyadı	Burçak AYKUL
Tez Adı	İlkokul yabancı dil sınıflarında İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ana dil kullanımının nedenleri ve sıklığı
Enstitü	Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü
Anabilim Dalı	Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
Tez Türü	Yüksek Lisans Tezi
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Hazırlamış olduğum tezimin belirttiğim hususlar dikkate alınarak, fikri mülkiyet haklarım saklı kalmak üzere Uludağ Üniversitesi Kütüphane ve Dokümantasyon Daire Başkanlığı tarafından hizmete sunulmasına izin verdiğimi beyan ederim.

Tarih : 31.05.2019

İmza : *B. Aykul*

Burçak AYKUL