

**LEARNER PERCEPTIONS OF AN INCLUSION
OF BILINGUAL ACTIVITIES TO TEACH
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**İngilizcenin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretiminde Çift Dilli
Etkinliklerin Kullanılmasıyla İlgili Öğrenci Algısı**

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Abstract

Even though there is a body of research on functions of teacher and learner first language (L1) use in foreign language (L2) teaching, studies examining deliberate implementation of activities designed to benefit from the learners' first language are scarce. This paper reports on a case study in which a principle-based implementation of bilingual activities in teaching English as a foreign language to a group of 26 young adult learners at a Turkish state university was examined. The learners' perceptions of first language inclusion were studied through minute papers in which the participants immediately responded to particular bilingual activities and an overall course evaluation at the end of the 14-week course. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview with six participants was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the learner perceptions. The results show that bilingual activities were perceived as conducive to language learning, multifunctional, enjoyable and activating. The participants also expressed concerns indicating that deliberate L1 use should be restricted in order not to lose the focus on the target language. Another concern was directed to the inappropriateness of bilingual activities for exam preparation. The results indicate the potential of bilingual activities but also call for due consideration in implementing them in instructional practice.

Keywords: Bilingual practice, learner perception, EFL, young adult language learners

Özet

Yabancı dil (L2) öğretiminde öğretmen ve öğrencinin ana dilinin (L1) fonksiyonları üzerine yapılmış pek çok araştırma olmasına rağmen, öğrencinin ana dilinden yararlanmak üzere hazırlanmış etkinliklerin kasıtlı olarak kullanıldığı etkinliklerle ilgili çalışmalar oldukça az sayıdadır. Bir devlet üniversitesinde okuyan ve İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen 26 genç yetişkin öğrencinin katıldığı bu durum çalışmasında çift dilli etkinliklerin ilkeye dayalı olarak uygulanması ele alınmıştır. Öğrencilerin ana dil kullanımıyla ilgili algıları derste yapılan çift dilli etkinliklerden hemen sonra yazdıkları dakikalık yazılar (minute papers) ve 14 haftalık ders sonunda doldurdıkları genel bir değerlendirme formu aracılığıyla belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca altı katılımcıyla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği ile veri toplanmıştır. Araştırma bulguları çift dilli etkinliklerin dil öğrenimine yardımcı olduğunu, birden fazla ama hizmet ettiğini ve eğlenceli olduğunu, ve öğrenciyi aktif kaldığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar yabancı dil öğretiminde planlı L1 kullanımıyla ilgili kaygılarını ve bu tür etkinliklerin kısıtlandırılması gerektiğini düşündüklerini belirtmişlerdir. Çift dilli etkinliklerle ilgili olarak belirtilen diğer bir kaygı da bu tür etkinliklerin sınavlara hazırlanmada uygun olmamasıdır. Çalışma bulguları çift dilli etkinliklerin yabancı dil öğrenimiyle ilgili olumlu katkıları yanında bu yöntemin kullanılmasında dikkat edilmesi gereken konulara da dikkat çekmesi açısından önemlidir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Çift dilli uygulama, öğrenen algısı, İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi, genç yetişkin dil öğrencileri.

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Introduction

The question of whether to allow or even systematically use the learners' first language (L1) in the foreign or second language (L2) classroom basically depends on the evaluation of its role in second language acquisition (SLA): it can either be seen as a missed opportunity for exposition to L2 and source for interference or as a facilitator of SLA assuming that L2 learners depart from their native language as the reference system and use it as a communication and learning strategy.

An increasing appreciation of L1 use in L2 teaching and learning (Littlewood, 2014; pp. 258-259) has given rise to suggestions on how to employ L1 in instructional practice (e.g. Kerr, 2014; Hall & Cook, 2012; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Deller & Rinvolutri, 2002). However, the need for further research to evaluate potential benefits of L1 inclusion in L2 classrooms has been emphasized (Scheffler, Horverak, Krzebietke & Askland, 2017; Gallagher & Colohan, 2014; Hall & Cook, 2013; Littlewood & Yu 2011). This paper attempts to contribute to such an evaluation by investigating a systematic L1 inclusion into a university-based English as a foreign language (EFL) course with learners whose L1 (Turkish) is linguistically distant from the target language (English). The inclusion of the bilingual practice was informed by the relevant literature and aimed to contribute to SLA. The study sought to examine the learners' perceptions of this form of instructional practice.

Literature Review

Monolingualism in L2 teaching

Even though the exclusion of L1 from L2 teaching was "clearly a mainstream element in twentieth-century language teaching methodology" (Cook, 2001, p. 405), its theoretical justification is questionable. Monolingualism in L2 teaching has been accounted for as a form of linguistic repression that perpetuates power relations through marginalising languages different from English (Auerbach, 1993), serves as a vehicle to employ native-speaker teachers (Medgyes, 2001) and establishes the dominance of the Anglo-American culture in international communication, education and science (Phillipson, 2006). Monolingualism as the valid paradigm in L2 teaching can be traced in the historical development of SLA methodology. In the Reform Movement of the second half of the 19th century the prevailing translation-based L2 instruction was questioned for not meeting growing demands to prepare speakers for international communication and neglecting insights from psychology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001); this led to the development of the Direct Method as "a valid reaction against pedagogic excesses. There was unquestionably a sterile over-emphasis in secondary schools on grammatically accurate writing and a concomitant neglect of spoken language and fluency" (G. Cook, 2010, p. 5). Since then nearly all approaches in L2 teaching have been in a way direct as they either postulate the exclusion of L1 or ignore its functionality for L2 learning (Littlewood and Yu, 2011) assuming that instructed SLA is effective if it resembles L1 acquisition, is facilitated by native speaker teachers and prepares learners for language use in monolingual settings (G. Cook, 2010). Additionally, Swan (2011) draws the attention to the preference of SLA research for contexts with participants in multilingual classes exposed to rich L2 input outside the classroom, which "may explain a baffling feature of present-day mainstream SLA theory: the almost complete neglect of learners' mother tongues, as if these had no relevance to their learning of new languages" (p. 567).

Towards a bilingual approach

As a response to practices discouraging the use of L1 in L2 teaching, its inclusion has been promoted with reference to the bilingual nature of SLA, the mediating role of L1 in SLA and the significance of bilingual instruction for language learning.

For one thing, L2 learning can hardly be imagined with L1 completely deactivated. Indeed, in learning a new language, L1 is utilised to attach meaning to new information (i.e. L2) through applying available perceptions and conceptualisations of the world (symbolically represented in L1) (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009), employing internalised grammatical concepts to make equivalence assumptions (Swan, 1985) and harnessing native language literacy skills (V. Cook, 2010). The interrelatedness of L2 to L1 is also apparent in code-switching and various traces of transfer in the areas of vocabulary, syntax, phonology and pragmatics (Macaro, 2009; Cook, 2001). Instead of comprehending L2 located separately from L1 in an individual's mind (which would support the idea of learning L2 with L1 somehow switched off), V. Cook (2010) proposes the term *integrative continuum* denoting a continuum from total separation to total integration of the two languages rather than discrete compartments; the point on the continuum varies for individual L2 learners, for different aspects of language and for different situations. That is to say the L1/L2 mental relationship has many variations and cannot be stated in simple terms even for a particular individual, whose L1 and L2 vocabulary may be closely linked, but whose L1 and L2 phonologies may be quite distinct. One doubts whether any L2 learner is actually at the extreme compound and coordinate poles of the continuum, given the persuasive evidence for influence of the second language on the first (V. Cook, 2010, p. 148).

The aim of L2 teaching, then, is to equip learners with the multi-competence of being able to deal with two or more languages rather than achieving native speaker's competence: "Only in a monolingual universe is a multi-competent a failure for not speaking like a monolingual" (V. Cook, 2010, p.154).

A further strand of argument is the mediating role L1 plays in SLA. Numerous studies carried out in the socio-cultural framework attribute L1 use in instructed SLA to a variety of functions such as generating content for language production, negotiating difficult language problems, task management, evaluation of language outcomes, and establishing interpersonal relations during collaborative tasks (DiCamilla & Antón, 2012 for an overview). As such, L1 as a learning tool reduces linguistic and cognitive overload (He, 2012; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Swain & Lapkin, 2000), enables learners to externalise reasoning while working on cognitively challenging tasks (Azkarai & García Mayo, 2015; Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki & Brooks, 2009; Centeno-Cortes & Jimenez-Jimenez, 2004), serves as a mode to express emotions and to establish intersubjectivity (Sampson, 2012; Alegria de la Colina & García Mayo, 2009) or indicates degree of affiliation to the pedagogical focus (Rathert, 2012; Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005). In sum, "the use of L1 accomplishes beneficial cognitive, social, and affective functions for learners attempting to become bilingual" (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012, p. 168).

Pointing to L1 as an instructional tool, Littlewood and Yu (2011) propose a framework for a principled bilingual approach suggesting that L1 can be employed in form of planned learning activities or compensatory ad hoc aid to generate learning opportunities. Addressing this strategic L1 use, Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009, p. 16) promote "sophisticated and powerful bilingual techniques necessary to harness the linguistic resources of the learners for effective foreign language learning". Intending to enrich and not to replace monolingual practice, bilingual techniques differ from unsystematic L1 use that occurs when L1 is used as mode of instruction to teach *about* L2, as unplanned or incidental resort serving no pedagogical aim or as easily implementable solution to unfavourable teaching situations (Thornbury, 2006, p. 95).

Teachers are now offered a variety of bilingual techniques, some of which require the teacher's command of neither the learners' L1 nor an L1 shared by learners (e.g. Kerr, 2014; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Deller & Rinvulcri, 2002). Given the multifunctional

character of bilingual techniques, a categorisation may be made as follows:

- For grammar teaching, contrastive form-focused instruction, L1 mirroring and translation through idiomatic translation clarify functions through dual comprehension of meaning and form (Butzkamm, 2001), increase learners' production of the target structure (Kupferberg & Olshtain, 1996; Kupferberg, 1999) and raise learner awareness of L1-L2 differences (Salem, 2012; Ammar, Lightbown & Spada, 2010).
- L1-based vocabulary instruction to teach collocations, homonyms and lexical items carrying abstract meaning appears to be a viable alternative to monolingual explanation (Kerr, 2014; Augustyn, 2013; Tian & Macaro, 2012; Macaro, 2009; Laufer & Girsai, 2008).
- To teach receptive skills texts can be given partly in L1 with questions in L2 to be answered in L1 and vice versa, so that learners can read texts above their level; L1 in pre-listening helps learners activate schemata. Bilingual practice in reading and listening aims at clarifying content before analyzing form (Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002).
- In productive skills work, L1 inclusion generates more meaningful outcome than the L2 learners' linguistic restrictions would allow without recourse to L1. This includes, for instance, collecting or brainstorming ideas in L1 (Kim, 2011; Macaro 2005) "to prepar[e] for the less familiar by calling on the support of the familiar" (Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002, p. 64).
- Translation, almost completely neglected in language teaching because of its association with grammar translation (Kelly & Bruen, 2015), proves authenticity due to its frequency in the globalised world, engages learners in simultaneous focus on vocabulary, grammar, language reception and production, and offers opportunities to reflect on the (multiple) translatability or untranslatability of an expression (Corcoll Leonardi, 2010; Mahmoud, 2006). In sum, "the aim is to train plurilingual speakers with plurilingual skills, rather than aiming for the usually unattainable task of training for native-speaker-like language use (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016, p. 76).
- Developed by Dodson (1972) and advanced by Butzkamm (2003) is the drill-like use of L1 to elicit an L2 structure with a focus on fluency and content "compensat[ing] for a weakness of monolingual communicative activities, in which students are rarely compelled to use complex structures because they can use communication strategies to avoid them" (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, p. 71).
- Sandwiching refers to a technique to be applied when a word, phrase or sentence is regarded unknown by learners. The translation is presented in an L2-L1-L2 pattern without distracting learners through lengthy monolingual explanation from the focus of lesson content (Kerr, 2014).

Learner perceptions regarding L1 inclusion

Studies on learner perception of L1 inclusion have not been in the focus of SLA research (Scheffler et al, 2017; Hall & Cook, 2013). Questionnaire-based studies indicate that learners regard a reduced L1 for higher proficiency levels appropriate (e.g. Carson & Kashihara, 2012, Norman 2008, Podromou 2002, Schweers 1999). Somehow different, Nazary (2008) reports sceptical views of Iranian university students, and even though 70 percent of the Chinese university students in Tang's (2002) study stated that L1 should be used in class, 69 percent thought that L1 facilitated learning only a little. Notably, a shift to L1 in productive skills was perceived counter-productive by Norwegian and Polish

learners of English (Scheffler et al, 2017).

Podromou (2002) reported that learners mostly favoured L1 use for learning vocabulary and grammar through contrastive analysis, while in other studies L1 was appreciated as a tool to facilitate comprehension and clarification when proficiency in L2 is not sufficient (e.g. Scheffler et al, 2017; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Tang 2002). Learners also report that L1 inclusion makes the learning experience safer by reducing cognitive overload and anxiety (Bruen & Kelly, 2014; Schweers, 1999). In Brooks-Lewis' (2009) in-depth examination of the perceptions of Mexican university students attending an introductory English course, which shifted gradually from Spanish into English, the participants reported that the incorporation of L1 enabled them to participate with more ease in classroom interaction; this was particularly appreciated because the new classroom environment was perceived as likely to generate discomfort and stress. Furthermore, the L1 inclusion increased comprehension and allowed the learners to anchor L2 into existing knowledge (i.e. L1) by noticing differences and similarities between the languages. The study suggests that the ban of the learners' L1 from the L2 classroom is an act of depriving learners of a part of their identity leading to feelings of disorientation, anxiety and alienation while its inclusion is likely to generate a sense of belonging and confidence (cf. Neokleous, 2017; Rolin-Ianzity & Varshney, 2008).

The study

Participants and context

This study took place in a group of 26 EFL learners (15 male and 11 female; mean age: 18,4) in a compulsory English preparatory programme at a Turkish state university. The students attended 28 hours English per week. Of these, 18 hours were the main course, in which the study was carried out. A general English coursebook following a communicative approach was used. The study was conducted in the second term of the academic year, which led the students from Pre-Intermediate to Intermediate according to the course syllabus. In the first term, the learners had a different teacher who reported that she had not employed bilingual techniques but followed an English-only approach with occasional recourse to L1.

The teacher-researcher

The study was designed as a classroom research with a teacher-researcher allowing analysis and interpretation of classroom reality with an insider's view (Hopkins, 2002). The teacher-researcher approach potentially threatens the validity of research because participants may tend to provide responses they believe their teacher expects (Bryman, 2008). To address response biases and context-specific ethical issues, the purpose and procedures of the study were fully explained to the participants, they were encouraged to report their perceptions honestly, and warranted to be able to withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, assessment was undertaken by the assessment unit of the school, so that it was completely separate from the teacher-researcher.

A peculiarity of this study was the fact that the teacher's L1 (German) was neither the learners' L1 nor the target language. Nevertheless this approach seemed justified as the teacher had acquired Turkish in Turkey over a period of 13 years and gained - to use a term by Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002) - a "working knowledge" (*passim*) of the students' L1. Therefore, bilingual activities not requiring the teacher's native-like language proficiency or even any command of the learners' L1 were used but not those requiring the teacher's "full knowledge" (Deller & Rinvoluceri, *passim*). It was also assumed that the students would actually react positively to the foreign teacher's inclusion of their own language in instructional practice as in Brooks-Lewis's (2009) study.

Classroom Procedures

During the 14-week course, there were 32 instances of planned L1 use to achieve core goals (language learning), and other instances of compensatory L1 use (Littlewood and Yu, 2011). A specific bilingual activity was implemented when it satisfied one or more of the following criteria: it contributed to SLA by establishing “cross-linguistic networks” (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 95) to integrate new information (L2) into existing knowledge (L1); it generated “dual comprehension” (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 64) through clarification of meaning and form in case of linguistic dissimilarity; it increased richer language outcome or reduced cognitive overload in skills work; it saved time to be used for monolingual practice; finally it resembled real-world tasks. Appendix A lists the activities included, which were integrated into the coursebook work. References guide readers to detailed information about procedures. Appendix B gives three examples of bilingual activities.

Data collection

Data were obtained through minute papers, a course evaluation form and a semi-structured interview. It was intended to gain a holistic picture of the learners’ perceptions through methodological triangulation.

The participants were asked to write minute papers, i.e. immediate evaluations of particular bilingual techniques employed in the last five minutes of lessons at regular intervals. The minute papers contained the question *What are your thoughts on this activity?* The participants were allowed to write in L1 and anonymously. A total of 407 minute papers were collected at twenty instances.

At course end the learners were asked to evaluate the L1 inclusion by responding anonymously to an open-ended question (*Please evaluate the use of Turkish in the activities and exercises done throughout the course.*).

Six participants were invited to a semi-structured interview to get an in-depth view of their perceptions. In the study, a self-efficacy scale was given to the participants before and after the course (results not reported in this paper). To select the interviewees, an extreme sampling strategy was applied (Teddlie & Yu, 2007), i.e. the three learners with the lowest and the three ones with the highest increase in self-efficacy perceptions were invited. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, audio-recorded and transcribed for content analysis.

Data analysis

The data were analysed through initial coding to identify concepts, encoding of concepts to establish categories, and clustering of categories into coding categories. Coding categories were operationally defined and those displaying interrelatedness were allocated to themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldana, 2009). Figure 1 gives an example of the initial steps in the analysis of a minute paper including translation and initial coding.

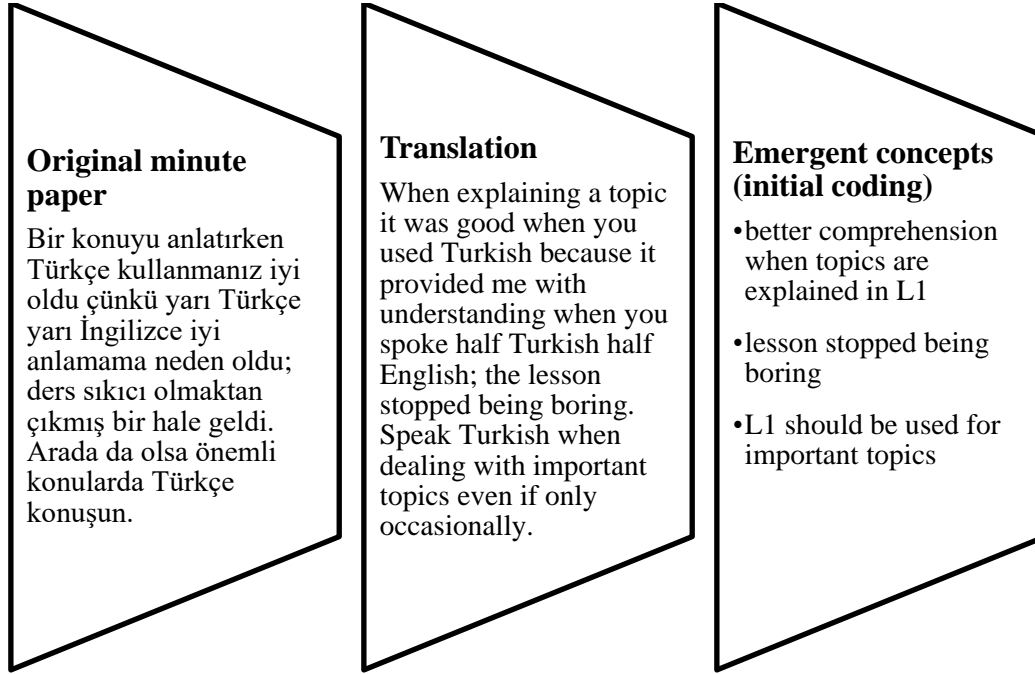


Figure 1. Translation and initial coding in minute papers (example).

The emergent concepts were encoded into coding categories (Figure 2). Although the researcher did not start with categories established beforehand, labels to name categories were taken from the literature (e.g. *competence and control* from Butzkamm & Caldwell 2009, p. 171) when appropriate.

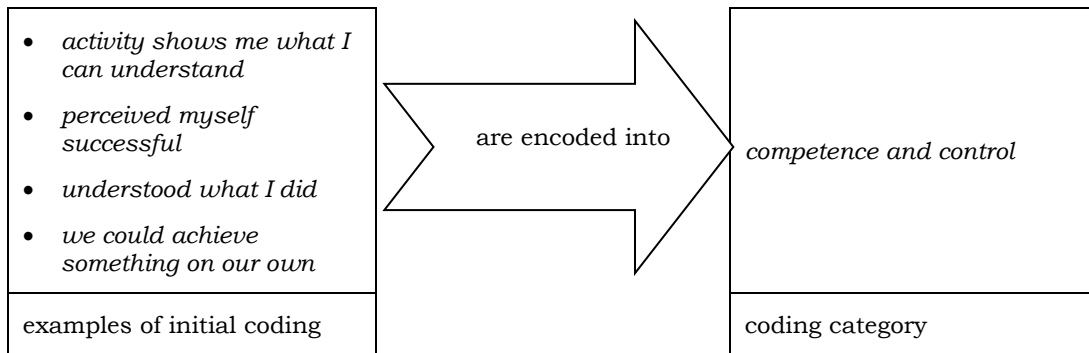


Figure 2. Coding frame for the category 'competence and control'.

Finally, the operationally defined coding categories were examined in terms of interrelatedness to allocate coding categories to themes. Figure 3 illustrates this with an example.

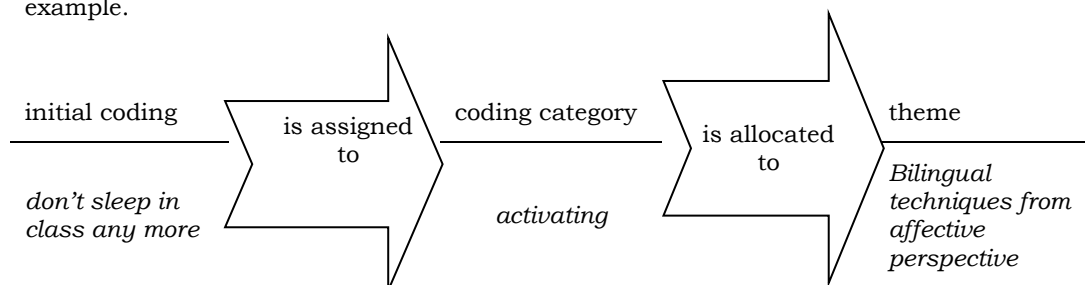


Figure 3. From initial coding to theme (example).

Since the minute papers and the course evaluation form were filled in by all participants, these data were assumed to possess representativeness, so that frequencies were calculated. As the minute papers were related to activities with focus on grammar, vocabulary, translation, receptive or productive skills, it was possible to compare learner perceptions according to these language domains and skills.

Results

Minute Papers

The data analysis revealed four themes: appropriateness of bilingual activities for L2 learning, their functionality and affective value, and suggestions provided by the learners. Table 1 shows that the bilingual practice was evaluated overwhelmingly positively. 80%-90% of the statements approved the implementation of bilingual techniques focusing on grammar, vocabulary, productive skills and translation, while this ratio was lower for receptive skills (about 70%).

Table 1

Perceived appropriateness of bilingual practice for L2 learning (minute papers).

Categories	Grammar (n*=90)		Vocabulary (n*=48)		Productive Skills (n*=99)		Receptive Skills (n*=97)		Translation (n*=73)		Total	
	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%
useful/ bilingual practice preferable	42	91,3	31	96,9	45	93,8	32	68,1	36	85,8	186	86,5
not useful/ monoling. practice preferable	4	8,7	1	3,1	3	6,3	15	31,9	6	14,3	29	13,5
Total	46	100	32	100	48	100	47	100	42	100	215	100

Note: *number of minute papers analysed, **frequency of stating a category in minute papers

In accordance with the overall impression shown in Table 1, the participants indicated that bilingual activities served a variety of functions as tools to learn grammar and vocabulary (Table 2).

Table 2

Perceived functions of bilingual techniques with focus on grammar and vocabulary (minute papers).

Grammar (n*=90)			Vocabulary (n*=48)		
Categories	f**	%	Categories	f**	%
comprehension	27	42,9	noticing gaps of knowledge and mistakes	8	16,7
vocabulary learning	11	17,5	vocabulary learning	7	14,6
language production	9	14,3	language production	6	12,5
learning structures/grammar retention	5	7,9	retention	6	12,5
noticing gaps of knowledge and mistakes	4	6,3	comprehension	4	8,3
integration of L2 into L1	2	3,2	learning structures/grammar	2	4,2
time saving	2	3,2	integration of L2 into L1	2	4,2
translation skills	1	1,6			
Total	58	100	Total	33	100

Note: *number of minute papers analysed, **frequency of stating a category in minute papers

Similarly, bilingual techniques were also perceived as conducive to learning skills contributing particularly to comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Table 3). Notably, functions were less frequently mentioned for receptive skills than for productive skills and translation.

Table 3

Perceived functions of bilingual techniques with focus on productive skills, receptive skills and translation (minute papers).

Productive Skills (n*=99)			Receptive Skills (n*=97)			Translation (n*=73)		
Categories	f**	%	Categories	f**	%	Categories	f**	%
language production	23	39,7	receptive skills	12	36,4	vocabulary learning	5	26,3
comprehension	11	19,0	vocabulary learning	7	21,2	translation skills	4	21,1
retention	8	13,8	comprehension	5	15,2	receptive skills	3	15,8
noticing gaps of knowledge and mistakes	7	12,1	retention	3	9,1	learning structures/grammar	3	15,8
vocabulary learning	6	10,3	language production	2	6,1	language production	2	10,5
integration of L2 into L1	2	3,4	translation skills	2	6,1	integration of L2 into L1	2	10,5
translation skills	1	1,7	time saving	1	6,1			
			noticing gaps of knowledge and mistakes	1	3,0			

Note: *number of minute papers analysed, **frequency of stating a category in minute papers

A learner appreciated bilingual activities concerning speaking and writing for generating a learner-friendly atmosphere claiming that

The use of Turkish is better because (...) we can express ourselves in a more relaxed way. If we didn't speak Turkish I think it wouldn't be good. I think this way is better (minute paper 25/9).

In a similar vein, the potential of L1 inclusion to help learners produce language richer in content along with increased motivation was recognized:

When I write dialogues, I can write longer sentences. With Turkish, I want to participate more (minute paper 28/8).

Addressing bilingual activities with a focus on receptive skills, learners reported that they perceived them as contributing to comprehension because they helped them work out and report the content of a listening or reading text:

The question marks in our mind were removed and things we didn't understand became fully comprehensible (minute paper 16/9).

Additionally, bilingual techniques in which the L1 translation of words or phrases were given to be matched to their equivalents in a reading text, were perceived as conducive to reducing cognitive load and dependence on dictionaries.

Table 4 reveals that the participants generally perceived bilingual practice as an enjoyable, safe and activating learning experience. However, the perceptions were less positive for activities focusing on reading and listening, and about 20 per cent of the perceptions stated contained negative evaluations.

Table 4

Perceptions of bilingual practice from affective perspective (minute papers).

Categories	Grammar (n*=90)		Vocabulary (n*=48)		Productive Skills (n*=99)		Receptive Skills (n*=97)		Translation (n*=73)		Total	
	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%
enjoyable	21	46,7	17	62,9	23	51,1	14	23,0	24	47,1	99	43,2
competence and control	6	13,3	2	7,4	9	20,0	14	23,0	8	15,7	39	17,0
activating	9	20,0	5	18,5	10	22,2	7	11,5	6	11,8	37	16,2
boring	4	8,9	3	11,1	2	4,4	16	26,2	5	9,8	30	13,1
not activating	5	11,1			1	2,2	10	16,4	1	2,0	17	7,4
challenging									7	13,7	7	3,1
Total	45	100	27	100	45	100	61	100	51	100	229	100

Note: *number of minute papers analysed, **frequency of stating a category in minute papers

Learners emphasised that the challenging nature of translation-based activities made this kind of bilingual practice particularly compelling:

When I translated from English to Turkish, I didn't have difficulties. However, when I translated from Turkish to English, I had difficulties, but I worked willingly (minute paper 23/16).

Few suggestions were made concerning bilingual activities, as Table 5 shows. By far most frequently, the participants suggested repeating an activity. Less often, restriction to linguistically challenging content or more careful answer check was suggested.

Table 5

Learners' suggestions concerning bilingual practice (minute papers).

Categories	Grammar (n*=90)		Vocabulary (n*=48)		Productive Skills (n*=99)		Receptive Skills (n*=97)		Translation (n*=73)		Total	
	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%	f**	%
repetition	9	56,2	6	75,0	14	87,5	12	92,3	13	92,9	54	80,6
restriction	6	37,6									6	9,0
answer check	1	6,3	2	25,0	2	12,5	1	7,7			6	9,0
No repetition									1	7,1	1	1,5
Total	16	100	8	100	16	100	13	100	14	100	67	100

Note: *number of minute papers analysed, **frequency of stating a category in minute papers

Overall course evaluation

Five themes emerged from the analysis of the overall course: appropriateness of bilingual activities for L2 learning, their functionality and affective value, suggestions provided by the learners, and time used for L1 (Table 6). Except for the fifth theme, the themes were identical to those in the minute papers. The first theme indicates that the inclusion of bilingual techniques was perceived beneficial for L2 learning. However, the acceptance was higher in the minute papers as evidenced by the percentages given in Tables 1 and 6. Bilingual activities were clearly perceived as conducive to enhancing comprehension of lesson content and generating feelings of competence and control. The participants also indicated that bilingual practice should be restricted according to the learners' proficiency level. In three statements, the amount of L1 used in class was evaluated as small and suitable.

Table 6

Learner perceptions concerning bilingual practice according to overall course evaluation (N=26).

Themes	Categories	f*	%
Theme 1: Perceived appropriateness of bilingual techniques for L2 learning	useful/bilingual practice preferable	18	69,2
	not useful/monolingual practice preferable	6	30,8
Theme 2: Perceived functions of bilingual techniques	comprehension	11	42,3
	noticing of gaps	3	11,5
	translation skills	2	7,7
	structures/grammar	1	3,8
	retention	1	3,8
Theme 3: Affective perspective	vocabulary	1	3,8
	competence and control	5	19,2
	enjoyable	4	15,2
	activating	1	3,8
Theme 4: Suggestions	not activating	1	3,8
	proficiency level restriction	8	30,8
Theme 5: Amount of Time Used for Bilingual Practice	restriction	6	23,1
	small amount of L1 teacher use of L1 suitable	2	7,7
		1	3,8

Note: *frequency of stating a category in the overall course evaluation

Interviews

Five out of the six interviewees stated that bilingual practice was preferable to monolingual teaching, but concerns were also expressed. Bilingual techniques were perceived as beneficial in bridging the gap between the linguistically distant languages of English and Turkish as shown in the following excerpt:

[The languages] are very distant, but when we see Turkish phrases and translate them into English, we get more self-confident (...). When both of them are next to each other, I think I learn better and more willingly (Interviewee 6).

This quotation indicates that the learner interrelated particular perceptions, i.e. bilingual activities allowed him to contrast languages and, thus, increased his self-confidence and made him more active in class.

Five interviewees stated that the inclusion of L1 enabled them to follow what was happening in the classroom; the same amount of comprehension was not given, when lessons were held entirely in L2:

When you first came to our class, you always spoke English. I definitely understood nothing. (...) I got bored. (...) But then you sometimes added some Turkish. Once you added Turkish I understood better (Interviewee 5).

Another participant emphasised the potential of bilingual practice to create a comfortable atmosphere:

There is Turkish [in the classroom] and in the same way you feel when there is German in a Turkish context, I feel more relaxed when there is Turkish in an English context (Interviewee 3).

This excerpt is insightful insofar as the interviewee appreciated the significance of her own language for her identity by comparing the importance of her L1 for herself with that of the researcher's L1 for him.

The interviewees' comments about the need to restrict the time to be allocated for L1 or to reserve bilingual practice for difficult lesson content show that they reflected L1 use critically despite their generally positive evaluations. Two of the interviewees pointed to the danger of missing the goal of learning L2 when L1 becomes too dominant. One interviewee held particularly critical views on an inclusion of L1:

We actually don't want Turkish. It is nicer when you teach us like an actor with gestures, only by speaking English. For example, there were times when you made us guess (...) you didn't speak Turkish at all. That was better; we tried to elicit the English meaning directly by guessing (Interviewee 6).

Another problematic aspect mentioned was that L1 inclusion was not perceived beneficial for exam preparation because in exams code-switching was not allowed:

You sometimes employed English-Turkish activities in speaking. I then felt as if I spoke English better. (...) When I got stuck, I inserted Turkish but I saw yesterday [in a speaking exam] that it doesn't work. I have to use English exclusively and, well, it doesn't work because they [the interlocutors] don't allow us to start from Turkish and pass to English (Interviewee 3).

Finally, the participants said they preferred a teacher who shared their L1 but used it judiciously. Notably, the learners reported that the amount of L1 used by the teacher was small.

Discussion

This study explored university students' perceptions of a systematic inclusion of bilingual practice into an EFL course. The results revealed that the inclusion was perceived as contributing to L2 learning. The participants particularly pointed to enhanced comprehension of lesson content that generated a safe learning environment and feelings of competence and control over the learning process. Thus, L1 inclusion was perceived as a way to "deforeignise the foreign" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 92) promoting learner-centeredness because "the incorporation of the L1 implicitly includes the learner" (Brooks-Lewis, 2009, p. 227) and respects "the centrality of their mother tongues to their identities" (Bismilla, 2011, p. 22). Furthermore, bilingual activities were regarded as multi-functional tools in language learning irrespective of their focus on a specific language skill. L1 activities were less appreciated for reading and listening. This might point to the specific appropriateness of bilingual techniques for grammatical analysis and vocabulary acquisition (Nakatsukasa & Loewen, 2015; Augustyn, 2013; Salem, 2012), for generating content ideas (Macaro, 2005) and as a compelling learning activity in form of translation (Kelly & Bruen, 2015). The results of the course evaluation display less positive perceptions towards bilingual practice than those of the minute papers. This difference may be due to the nature of minute papers as immediate responses to particular bilingual activities. The interviews revealed in-depth views of participants complementing the results from the other instruments addressing critical issues, i.e. L1 inclusion must not impede the focus on L2 (Butzkamm & Caldwell 2009), should be restricted to linguistically challenging content and contradicts the requirements of exam preparation (cf. Eldridge 1996). The perceptions reported in this study call for "the

students' ideal classroom as the one (...) [with] clear limits as to when it [the L1] should be employed" (Neokleous, 2017, p. 333). Obviously, such limits vary depending on the needs of learners arising from, for instance, their proficiency level, the linguistic or cognitive difficulty of language learning task and L1 background (Scheffler et al, 2017). Given the diversity of L2 classrooms, attempts to quantify optimal amount of L1 (Macaro, 2005) may not be constructive to arrive to an understanding what judicious L1 use actually is. Instead perceived (by learners or teachers) overuse of L1 may be a better criterion. Interestingly, the inclusion of L1-based activities in this study was not perceived as overuse; this may indicate that systematic L1 inclusion actually prevents teachers from L1 overuse because it is an outcome of reflective decision-making. Finally, the circumstance that the teacher was not a native speaker of the learners' L1 was no obstacle to adopt bilingual practice - neither the learners raised objection nor did the teacher perceive the classroom procedures inappropriate.

Implications and limitations

This study indicates the potential of L1 to improve L2 teaching and learning. L1 inclusion enhances the repertoire of techniques available in the L2 classroom. This opens up a conceptualization of the L2 classroom as a bilingual (or plurilingual) learning environment that utilizes linguistic diversity for language learning without losing sight of using and learning L2 as the overriding aim of L2 instruction (Corcoll Lopez & Gonzales-Davis, 2016; Bruen & Kelly, 2016; Levine, 2013). The learner voices indicate that the benefits and drawbacks of including L1 into the L2 classroom should be discussed to develop classroom conventions collaboratively (Neokleous, 2017; Levine, 2009). Moreover, an inclusion of L1 activities, might lead to the decision to make translation part of formal assessment (Kelly & Bruen, 2015). Finally, second language teacher education should introduce student-teachers to bilingual practice as an additional instrument in classroom teaching (Neokleous, 2017).

This research was a case study with a limited number of participants in a specific context. By nature, results cannot easily be generalised. Also, this study reports on perceived outcomes of bilingual practice, but did not deal with its effectiveness in terms of learning growth. Future research will have to provide a broader base of context-dependent knowledge about the applicability of bilingual practice in different L2 teaching contexts with a focus on its effectiveness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Bilingual activities used during the course

no	week	Bilingual activities: primary focus (skill/language domain); aim	Adapted from
1	1	Semi-communicative drill; grammar; to consolidate <i>can/can't/have to/don't have to</i>	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), pp. 124-130
2	1	Keyword <i>do</i> ; vocabulary; to elicit different meanings of <i>do</i>	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 44
3	2	Bilingual pre-teaching of vocabulary; reading; to prepare students to read a text without dictionary	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 57
4	2	Grammar translation dictation; writing; to use ideas in L1 to generate sentences richer in content; to raise contrastive awareness of differences between L1 and L2	Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 36
5	2	Matching phrases in L1 with equivalents in a text; reading; to work out the meaning of new words/phrases; to lighten the cognitive load of a reading text	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 205
6	3	Keyword 'by'; vocabulary; to elicit different meanings of <i>by</i>	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 44
7	3	Bilingual grammar explanation; grammar; to work out the meanings of present perfect	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), pp. 101-119
8	3	Verbalizing in L1 what is understood from a listening text; listening; to reduce cognitive load	own idea
9	4	Keyword <i>just</i> ; to elicit different meanings of <i>just</i>	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 44
10	4	Contrastive grammar recognition; grammar/vocabulary; to raise awareness of causative structures (<i>make+object+infinitive</i>) in L2 compared to L1	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 29
11	4	Idiomatic translation; grammar; to clarify the function of <i>would</i> to talk about imaginary situations	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), pp. 104-105
12	5	Brainstorming; reading; to brainstorm ideas that cannot be expressed in L2 due to linguistic restriction	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 204

13	5	Matching phrases in L1 with equivalents in a text; reading; to work out the meaning of new words/phrases; to lighten the cognitive load of a reading text	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 205
14	5	Getting info about an unfamiliar topic (Lech Walesa) using sources in L2 or L1; pre-listening; to provide information about a topic students are presumably unfamiliar with; to lighten cognitive load; to raise interest for a topic	own idea
15	6	Grammar Translation Dictation; writing/grammar; to use ideas in L1 to generate sentences richer in content; to raise contrastive awareness of differences between L1 and L2	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p.36
16	7	Mirroring of structure <i>I was on the way to ... when I ...</i> ; grammar; to clarify meaning and form of a sentence structure; to raise awareness of differences between L1 and L2	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), pp. 107-111
17	7	Keyword <i>over</i> ; vocabulary; to elicit different meanings of <i>over</i>	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 44
18	8	Matching Phrases in L1 with equivalents in a text; reading; to work out the meaning of new words/phrases; to lighten cognitive load	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 205
19	8	Back translation; translation; to consolidate three previously covered language areas: past progressive, causative, <i>mean</i> as softener	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 201
20	10	Guess the answers in L1; reading; to predict the content of a text before reading it	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 59
21	10	Collaborative translation of a story; speaking; to use L1 to develop a story rich in content; to translate phrases in L1 into L2 orally	own idea (cf. Deller and Rinvoluceri [2002], p. 65)
22	10	Contrastive grammar recognition; grammar; to raise awareness of causative structure (<i>have/get+noun+past participle</i>) in L2 compared to L1	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 29
23	11	Translation of key sentences in coursebook text; translation; to analyze encapsulated sentences in reading text; to preview syntactical structure	own idea
24	11	Speed translation; translation; to free students from heavy influence of English texts; to provide a freer translation	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 82

25	11	Code-switching; speaking; to develop a dialogue fuller in content by starting from L1; to allow weaker students to participate more fully	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 79
26	12	Code-switching; speaking; to develop a dialogue fuller in content through starting from L1; to allow weaker students to participate more fully	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 79
27	12	Contrasting reported speech in L1 and L2; grammar; to become aware of reported speech constructions in L2 and L1	own idea (cf. Wilberg [1999])
28	12	Code-switching in writing; writing/pre-speaking; to write a dialogue fuller in content starting from L1; to allow weaker students to participate more fully; to speed up writing	own idea (cf. Deller & Rinvoluceri [2002], pp. 66-65)
29	13	Code-switching; speaking; to develop a dialogue fuller in content through starting from L1; to allow weaker students to participate more fully	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 79
30	13	Regular revision drill; grammar; to practice reported questions	Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 132
31	13	Role play (tourist-resident-interpreter); speaking/translation; to get students to translate spontaneously; to practice reported statements and questions	Deller & Rinvoluceri (2002), p. 75
32	14	Translation and comparison; translation; to compare own translation of song lyrics with another translation	own idea; Turkish translation in Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009), p. 233

Appendix B: Bilingual Activities (Samples)

Sample 1 (activity 31 in Appendix A)

Interpreter

Aim: to get students to translate spontaneously; to practice reported statements and questions

Procedure:

- students are put in groups of three (A, B, and C); student A is a foreigner who only speaks L2; student B can speak L2 and L1; student C is a resident who only speaks L1; a worksheet with instructions is given to each student
- student A wants to get information about the city he is currently visiting and asks student B in L2

- student B translates the questions into L1 and asks student C
- student C answers in L1 using the information on the worksheet
- student B translates into L2 using reported speech (*she said that...*)
- students swap roles twice so that each student acts as a foreigner, interpreter and resident

Sample 2 (activity 4 in Appendix A)

Grammar Translation Dictation

Aim: to use ideas in L1 to generate sentences richer in content; to raise contrastive awareness of differences between L2 and L1

Procedure:

- students hear eight sentence beginnings in L2 (real conditionals, e.g. *If you want to find a good job*) and translate them into L1; they cannot write the sentence beginnings in L2
- students complete the L1 sentence beginnings in L1
- students translate their sentences into L2
- students compare their sentences and check for grammatical accuracy

Sample 3 (activity 23 in Appendix A)

Translation of key sentences in a coursebook text

Aim: to analyze encapsulated sentences in a challenging reading text through translation; to preview syntactical structure dealt with later through focus on meaning

Procedure:

- pre- and while-reading activities (provided in the coursebook) for a reading text are carried out
- students close their books
- students work in pairs; 3 pairs constitute a circle (pair A, B, and C)
- each pair is given a paper slip containing an encapsulated sentence from the reading text (for each pair a different sentence)
- pairs translate their sentences into L1
- pair A give their sentence to pair B, pair B to pair C and pair C to pair A
- pairs open their books, identify the L1 sentence in the text, and check for accuracy of the translation
- pairs give feedback to the translators