

Students and Teachers' Points of View on Code-Switching in EFL Classes: A Balance or Imbalance Paradigm?

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Abstract

This study aims to clarify whether the implementation of language alternation in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) has strengths or limitations from both teachers and students' points of view. By making use of both qualitative data which was conducted through structured interviews with 23 teachers in one of the provinces of Turkey as well as applying structured forms to 92 teachers from 34 cities in Turkey and quantitative data containing five-point Likert scale questionnaire collected from 226 students, the current research reports students' stances towards teacher code-switching in EFL classrooms in Turkish secondary and high school context, and teachers' language choice causes with inferable results. The data from the questionnaire were collated, and the SPSS program was used to calculate the descriptive calculations involving percentages and frequencies. The results of the study reveal that students and teachers tend to agree on the majority of questions. While students welcomed the teachers' code-switching efforts in English lessons, the teachers advocated the balanced conduct of language switching, especially in terms of communication skills.

Keywords: Code-switching, Mother Tongue, English Language, EFL Teachers, Learners

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Introduction

From time to time, bilingual or multilingual people switch back and forth between two or more different languages and that is called Code-Switching (CS). Even though there has recently been much attention on the reasons for EFL teachers' code-switching in their lessons there are few studies that shed light upon whether the use of mother tongue or only English in the classroom has facilitating or debilitating effect from the perspective of students' feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. The technical examination of bilingualism with both improved technology and novel approaches on language teaching in educational areas have led to a new perspective towards language learning and teaching phenomenon. When the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was enacted in the 1960s, the term code-switching, shifting between two or more languages in the classroom, appeared as a controversial issue in the United States. While some of the scholars (Akkaya & Aydin, 2019; Auer, 2016; Eldridge, 1995; Rezvani & Rasekh, 2011; Sert, 2005; Yao, 2011) were in the opinion that the use of mother tongue in foreign language teaching classrooms has a facilitating effect on the learning and teaching process, the others (Hua, 2008; Jingxia 2010; Moore, 2002; Sridhar, 1996) asserted the contrary. Krashen's (1987) comprehensible input theory had a significant effect on some researchers, and they argued that total immersion is favorable for language learning and its acquisition. Nurhamidah et al. (2018) concluded that the minimization of the first language from language classrooms may have a hindering outcome and a systematic principle for obtaining mother tongue to ease language learning was proposed by them. When these approaches are taken into account, there are strong views backing up the usage of English as a medium of instruction or both employment of target language and L1 in the EFL context. The findings of most studies that investigate the alternation of language in English teaching classrooms indicate that code-switching is a prevalent circumstance in bilingual and multilingual educational environments (Enama, 2015; Paradowski, 2008; Üstünel, 2016). Not only teachers but students alternate between languages for some reasons as well (Akkaya & Aydin, 2019). Mother tongue's proper use does not disrupt the educational process but, on the contrary, it paves the way for a welcoming environment both for students' language comprehension and teachers' way of conducting their lessons (Miles, 2004). So, the proponents of bilingualism in language teaching agree that code-switching is a natural process for the acquisition of a second language, and it is also a fundamental part of this process for teachers to teach language. (Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986). The bilingual approach also professes that a lot of learners of EFL desire to keep up the linguistic and cultural identities of themselves in using and mastering English.

As Ataş (2012) states, there have been numerous methods and ways handling English, being multinational language, in a broad perspective for its teachable purposes all around the world as well as in Turkey. It is an undeniable fact that the globalization of English in the whole world has aroused the interest of some linguists for its appropriate practices in the classrooms. And the significance of foreign language education in every country has emerged according to the country's own needs.

Lambert (1999) has a classification of countries into three groups: homogeneous countries most citizens of which speak the same language; pairwise ones like Canada, where two or three languages have equal existence; and various ones such as Russia, in which many different groups use a lot of kinds of languages. Turkey is an example of the former mentioned country since Turkey's formal and most used language is only Turkish for many purposes.

Having an intersection location, Turkey holds the role of a bridge between Asia and Europe as well as taking on a considerable presence in the Middle East. It's being a prominent member of NATO and exerting for full membership in European Union (EU) are some other factors that make the country quite essential for some reforms. Along with its geographical importance, in today's world, the cultural aspect of Turkey is certain to be undeniable. Therefore, when these circumstances are taken into consideration it can be pointed out that both to catch up with the developments taking place in the world and to meet the needs of foreign language learning and teaching in the country, Turkey has gone for educational reforms. The enactment of compulsory education, which is completed in 12 years, in 2012 and reducing English teaching level from 4th grade to 2nd grade in 2013 were some of the important steps taken by the government to contribute both learning and teaching of English, which is used as a lingua franca all over the world, in the Turkish state school system (Özen et al., 2013). At all stages of education, it is the only compulsory subject among other languages such as French and German which are given as elective ones. The curriculum of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) specifies English as a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary level of education.

Rather than conducting out of date teaching methods such as Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), the current design adopts a mostly student-centered way of learning along with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which sets interaction as means of learning. That being so, it can be concluded that English is the most in-demand foreign language in the country. In addition to the government's reforms and peoples' intense interest in English learning around the country, there have also been so many methods, principles, and practices tried to be applied in the classrooms not only by teachers but also by researchers.

Conceptual Framework

Code-switching occurs when the speaker and listener converse in more than one language, and this occurs because the speaker feels more comfortable speaking in another language. Across the globe, bilinguals use code-switching to organize their communication, which is a regular occurrence (Narasuman et al.). According to Bullock & Toribio (2009) a bilingual's ability to seamlessly move between two languages is known as code-switching. It can be said that switching codes basically allows people who can speak more than one language to switch in different contexts and adapt to new contexts easily. Azlan & Suthagar (2012) point out that there are certain reasons for switching

between languages in the classroom environment. First, this is due to a lack of vocabulary in the target language among students who are learning the second language. Secondly, code-switching is needed to make communication effective in the classroom and to encourage class participation. On the other hand, Narayan (2019) draws attention to the fact that teachers utilize code-switching in order to bridge the language gap between them and their students. From this point of view, it can be stated that code-switching is a necessity rather than an obstacle for both teachers and students in the classroom context.

Due to the ease of communication and acculturation necessity, it has currently been quite vital to bring up bilingual and multilingual individuals all around the world. Therefore, demands and attitudes towards language learning have become more common than ever. That's why it would be useful to touch on the nature of code-switching and what it stands for the researchers of this era. The term code or variation in a language can be described as a selection of words and utterances that may change from one to another. On the other hand, code-switching refers to the process in which a multilingual or bilingual person shifts between languages that s/he knows or the others may be familiar with in a context or conversation. According to Gumperz (1982), "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (p.59) is defined as code-switching. Lowi (2005) asserts that researchers shouldn't focus on CS only as a speaking instrument, conversely it might play a major role in identity formation and cultural interaction. So, as well as its being a physical way of articulation it also combines the components of culture and personal bonds. Holmes (2013), on the other hand, defines it as an alternation of language that is shifted for a clearer interpretation by the listener within a specific context. Within a language or two languages code-switching may happen in morphological structures as it does in syntax and the speaker's utterances namely, words or sentences switched, depending on the listener's competence.

Types of Code-Switching

Inter-sentential code-switching mainly occurs after the completion of the first language and then the speaker starts to the next sentence with L2. Both sides share the same topic, but the switching takes place a bit more in complexity. The speaker usually sets his/her sentences in two different languages such as "Coronavirus is spreading all over the world, there is a huge death toll as people don't care about the social distance. Bu anlamda sosyal mesafeyi korumak büyük önem arz ediyor." (For this reason, following social distance rule is of vital importance.)

In Intra-sentential code-switching, the person who speaks, shifts between two codes such as Turkish and English in the middle of the sentence or clause. Switching from English to Spanish, from Urdu to Arabic or from English to Turkish are common examples of intra-sentential code-switching. For instance, "Chapter seven bu haftaki ödeviniz." (For this week, chapter seven is your homework.)

Tag switching is more common because during the conversation the speaker adds tags which are one or two phrases into his or her statements. Expressions like ‘you know’, ‘I mean’ are common English examples.

As Al-Qaysi (2016) proposes, to be able to pin down the merits and limitations of the implementation of CS, learners’ and educators’ perspectives towards CS remain open to careful investigation. For those who claim that first language should be prohibited in the classrooms, the main point is that the teacher is the only facilitator for students, and they should interact more often in L2 as much as possible. Luo (2019) expresses that there has been an agreement between officials and parents about the ban of Chinese in EFL classrooms, especially in listening and speaking classrooms. He also asserts that the teacher’s use of the first language can be considered bad, as this may cause hindrance in practicing English. On the other hand, the others’ approach to CS is pretty calmer because they believe that without the use and comprehension of the mother tongue, the learning process becomes incomplete. According to García and Lin (2017), besides being an effective teaching instrument for teachers to convey meaning better, code-switching also contributes to the academic use of L2. CS taking place in the classroom might be useful for the comprehension of new vocabulary, checking learners’ understanding and giving feedback to students (Zacharias, 2003). The heating debate among researchers, teachers, or educators has long been going on and the deadlock of L1 practice in foreign language classrooms has its extensiveness even today. Thus, that is the focal point of this study to clarify whether the use of the first language in EFL classrooms is facilitating or adopting a full use of English is inhibiting in view of both students and teachers’ aspects. Therefore, this study aims to give possible answers to these research questions:

- 1- What attitudes and beliefs do students have on CS?
- 2- Do the students attitudes and beliefs differ regarding the variables of sub-section of the scale, gender, and grade?
- 3- What are the perceptions of teachers on CS based on the structured-form?
- 4- What are the CS manners of teachers in their classrooms?
- 5- What is the interview-based thoughts and opinions of teachers on CS?

Method

Design

In this study, the mixed-method design (Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design) was carefully tried to collect data both from students who were quantitatively administered by a 5-point Likert scale and teachers who were not only employed by close-ended questions with structured forms, but also 8 open-ended questions were asked to unravel their manners towards teachers’

switching between Turkish and English in the classrooms. As Creswell (2014) asserts, quantitative and qualitative research designs both have strong and weak points, to formulate a more effective insight into the research questions and tackle the limitations of both design methods, a combination of the two data forms is of vital importance for better results.

Participants

To investigate the related issues, the sequential mixed methods sampling was selected as it includes both probability sampling for quantitative process and purposive sampling for qualitative one (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and put into practice with the consent of the participating students and teachers. As Israel and Hay (2006) point out, the protection of the contributors is of vital importance in order not to come up against any challenges and giving them a sense of trust is morally much noteworthy. Consequently, great importance was attached to the anonymity of the participants. As participants, 226 students ranging from 5th grade to the 12th grade were selected from 11 cities of Turkey. Likewise, teachers working at the secondary and high schools, voluntarily participated in the survey. Totally 92 teachers 55 of whom work in secondary schools and 37 are in the high schools partook in structured forms. Additionally, 23 teachers from Kocaeli were structurally interviewed to boost the qualitative part. On account of the world-affecting outbreak, namely, coronavirus which forced the whole world to quarantine, it was impossible to reach the participants in person, and an online way of communication was held with both their and their institutions' assent. Thus, demographic information of the participants is presented in the following.

During the survey process, 106 secondary school students and 120 high school students voluntarily took part in this research. 10.4% ($f=11$) of secondary school students stated that they are at the beginning level, 77.4% ($f=82$) are at the intermediate level and 12.3% ($f=13$) are at the advanced level. On the other hand, 29.2% ($f=35$) of the high school students were beginners, 65.8% ($f=79$) of them were intermediates, and 5% ($f=6$) had C1-C2 levels of language proficiency.

In general, 226 students in 11 cities of Turkey willingly contributed to the survey about code-switching. As it is noticed, most of the participants with 53.1 percentage ($f=120$) were from Kocaeli due to the researcher's dwelling there. 15.5% of the respondents with the frequency of 35 participated in Siirt. Sakarya was the third city with the highest number of participants with 11.1% ($f=25$) and Erzincan with 7.1% ($f=16$) was the fourth one. This was followed by İstanbul with 6.2% ($f=14$) students and by Hakkari with 4% ($f=9$). The number of participants from Batman and Malatya was equal with .9% ($f=2$). In Ardahan, Bartın, and Kirklareli only .4% students took part in the study ($f=3$).

The total number of the participants for teachers is 92. While males constitute 31.5% ($f=29$) of the group, the rate for girls is 68.5% ($f=63$). Only 1 male has a master's degree, this number is 8 for females. Meanwhile, 79.3% ($f=73$) of teachers have ELT graduation degree, 18.5% ($f=17$) of the whole graduated from English Language and Literature, and 2.2% namely 2 teachers have Linguistics diplomas. Secondary school teachers make up 59.8% ($f=55$) of the group and high school ones are 40.2% ($f=37$).

Teachers taking part in this survey were from all regions of Turkey and they contributed to this study from 34 cities. As it is clear, 30.4 of the participants ($f=28$) work in the Southeast Anatolian Region and 18.5% of them ($f=17$) are from the Eastern Anatolian Region. For the Marmara Region, the percentage is 19.6 which corresponds to 18 teachers while teachers from Black Sea Region are 15 (16.3%). These are followed by the Mediterranean Region with 7.6% ($f=7$) and Central Anatolian Region with 4.3% ($f=4$). Finally, the Aegean Region with 3 attendants constitutes 3.3% of the total population.

Data Collection

Before the data collection procedures were implemented, as code-switching had ethical dimensions, the institutional consent and approval were obtained for the current study. Afterwards, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the protocols of interview, the detailed procedures, duration, and voluntary participation or withdrawals.

The data were obtained from both teachers and students ranging from 5th to 12th grades in EFL classrooms across the country through a four-week study. The instruments for data collection were two questionnaires one for students and the other for teachers. A five-point likert questionnaire was devised for students to gauge (a) code-switching's impact on their language learning (b) their attitudes to language shifting, and (c) its motivating effect on students' classroom participation. It included a total of 24 questions. On the other hand, a structured questionnaire consisting of 8 questions was prepared for 92 teachers. Meanwhile, 8 open-ended questions via video conference interviews were asked to 23 teachers from Kocaeli to elicit teachers' thoughts, stances, and approaches to code-switching in their classes. The questionnaires began with background information such as age, gender, years of experience, city of teaching/learning, etc. 5-point Likert scale of students' questionnaire included items like *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree* with each statement. Students' questionnaire was created in Turkish to avoid any ambiguity. For total items of students' questionnaire ($n=24$) the reliability Cronbach alpha level was calculated as .82, which is accepted as feasible to collect data.

Data Analysis

In the current study, both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed research methods were used to have a better interpretation of teachers' code-switching in view of students and teachers' answers. Through SPSS usage, quantitatively analyzed results were compared with open-ended questions of teachers to obtain appropriate critical analysis about why teachers alternate between languages in the classroom and what their and students' perceptions are about this situation. To calculate the percentages and frequencies in the Likert-scale and structured forms, descriptive statistics were chosen. Meanwhile, One-Sample T-Test was applied to reveal if there was any statistically significant difference among subsections of the students' questionnaire regarding code-switching. Independent Samples T-Test was aimed to find out whether gender makes a difference or not. One-Way ANOVA was administrated to see if any variance was in terms of grades or not. In addition, Miles and Huberman's (1994) model for qualitative data analysis was utilized.

Results

The descriptive and statistical results of students and teachers' questionnaires were categorized according to the tables below. Furthermore, the questions and answers of the conducted interview were presented to the reader with analysis.

Students' Attitudes and Beliefs on Teachers' Code-switching

Table 1. One Sample T-test Results for Sub-sections of Scale

Sections of Scale	N	x	S	SD	t	P
Code-switching's impact	226	23.20	5.86	225	59.48	.000
Attitudes to language shifting	226	26.99	6.12	225	66.27	.000
Motivating effect on students' classroom participation	226	12.20	3.49	225	52.54	.000

Table 1 illustrates that the coding of the data was statistically calculated under three sub-sections. In analyzing the students' questionnaire regarding the impact of CS on students' language learning, students' attitudes to CS, and its motivating effect on students' classroom participation one-sample t-test was employed to investigate if there was any statistically significant difference among these sub-sections. The mean values reveal that students' attitudes and beliefs on language shifting is higher than other categories ($x = 23.20$). As, the p-values were .000 ($p < 0.05$) for all categories it showed that there was a statistically significant difference among three sub-sections.

Table 2. Independent Samples T-test Results for Sections of Scale in terms of Gender

Sections of Scale	Gender	N	x	S	SD	t	p
Code-switching's impact	Male	61	21.70	7.12	224	2.35	.020
	Female	165	23.25	5.24			
Attitudes to language shifting	Male	61	25.67	7.78	224	1.98	.049
	Female	165	27.47	5.33			
Motivating effect on students' classroom participation	Male	61	11.61	4.57	224	1.58	.116
	Female	165	12.43	2.98			

As presented in Table 2, the p-values for both genders reveal that there are statistically significant differences in code-switching's effect on students' language learning ($p = .020, p < 0.05$) and their attitudes to code-switching ($p = .049, p < 0.05$) sections in view of gender. On the other hand, it is clearly seen in the table that there is no significant difference in terms of gender in the last section ($p = .116, p > 0.05$). Considering the first part (code-switching's impact), it is understood that the mean values of the females ($x = 23.25$) are a bit higher than the males' ($x = 21.70$). In "attitudes to language shifting" part, the mean value for females ($n = 165$) is $x = 27.47$ and for males ($n = 61$) is $x = 25.67$. While the mean values of females are $x = 12.43$, those of males are $x = 11.61$ in the last part.

Table 3. Descriptive Results of One-way ANOVA in terms of Grades

Grades/Levels	N	Mean	SD
5th	10	51.60	17.22
6th	20	60.80	13.92
7th	33	66.45	15.52
8th	46	59.96	14.63
9th	40	62.03	10.44
10th	29	61.38	13.15
11th	29	64.90	8.86
12th	19	67.11	8.59
Total	226	62.39	13.16

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviations score values from 5th to 12th grade to find out if there is any statistically significant difference between the grades of the students. In addition, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the significant difference among the mean scores. As can be seen in table 3, the mean score of the 5th grade students ($n = 10$) were $x = 51.60$ and the standard deviation reported for them was 17.22, for 6th ones ($n = 20$) x was 60.80 while the standard deviation was 13.92, for 7th grade students ($n = 33$) mean score was $x = 66.45$ and standard deviation was 15.52, for 8th ones ($n = 46$) was $x = 59.96$ and standard deviation was 14.63, for 9th grade

($n=40$) t was $x=66.45$ and standard deviation was 10.44, for 10th level students ($n=29$) mean value was $x=61.38$ and standard deviation was 13.15, for 11th ones ($n=29$) the mean score was $x=64.90$ and standard deviation was 8.86, lastly for 12th grade students ($n=19$) the mean value was found as $x=67.11$ while standard deviation was reported as 8.59. It is clearly illustrated in the table that, as the grade level increases, the mean values go up in direct proportion.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA Statistics in terms of Grades

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	f	p	Significant Difference
Between groups	2671.975	7	381.711	2.291	.029	Between Pairs of all grades
Within groups	36321.977	218	166.615			
Total	38993.951	225				

According to one-way ANOVA results, there is a significant difference between students' scale scores in terms of grade level, $F(7, 218) = 2.291$, $p < .05$. In other words, students' scale scores change significantly according to the grade level.

Teachers' Reasons and Points of View on Code-Switching

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Teachers Questionnaire

Items	Answer	f	%
(1) Do you switch codes in your classes?	Yes	87	96.6
	No	5	5.4
(2) Language shifting during English classes is good for students' understanding.	Yes	82	89.1
	No	6	6.5
	No idea	4	4.3
(3) Does language shift affect educational process?	Yes	78	84.8
	No	10	10.9
	No idea	4	4.3
(4) Using Turkish in the classroom is a motivating factor.	Yes	68	73.9
	No	24	26.1
(5) Using only English is a motivating factor.	Yes	28	30.4
	No	64	69.6
(6) Do you agree with the idea that teachers code-switch because they are not familiar with the exact expressions in the target language?	I agree	36	39.1
	I disagree	45	48.9
	I have no idea	11	12.0
(7) How often do you think that you switch from English to Turkish in the class?	Always	11	12.0
	Usually	42	45.7
	Sometimes	27	29.3
	Rarely	12	13.0

(8) When do you especially alternate between English and Turkish?	Teaching Grammar	65	70.7
	Teaching Vocabulary	37	40.2
	Teaching Unknown structures	57	63.0
	If students have difficulty in understanding	75	81.5
	When adding emphasis	14	15.2
	When I sum up topic	25	27.2
	When I feel insufficient	13	14.1
	Other	2	2.2

As for item 1, 96.6% of the teachers ($f=87$) switch codes in their lessons whereas few of them say no that constitutes the percentage of 5.4%. This indicates that almost all of them alternate between English and Turkish during their EFL classes. For the second item, 89.1% of the teachers are in the opinion that language shifting is good for students' understanding while only 6.5% of them say no and 4.3% have no opinion about the situation. Likewise, most teachers (84.8%) think that language shifting directly affects the educational process. According to 73.9% of the teachers ($f=68$) usage of Turkish in the classroom is a factor for motivation. However, 26.1% of them ($f=24$) claim otherwise. As the table indicates for item 5 "*Using only English is a motivating factor.*", 69.6% of the participants ($f=64$) stated that they disagreed with only English usage. Regarding items 4 and 5, most of the teachers, support the claim that using Turkish is a motivating factor though few accept English as a motivating factor. When they were asked: "*Do you agree with the idea that teachers code-switch because they are not familiar with the exact expressions in the target language?*", 48.9% of teachers ($f=45$) expressed disagreement, 39.1% ($f=36$) agreed, and 12% ($f=11$) did not state an idea to this question. The frequency of teachers switching from English to Turkish is as follows; 45.7% '*usually*', 29.3% '*sometimes*', 13% '*rarely*', and 12% '*always*'. From these results, it can be proved that the majority of them switch from English to Turkish. In the 8th item, the purpose of teachers alternating between English and Turkish was asked. They were also informed that they could pick more than one option. Most of the teachers (81.5%) stated that they ($f=75$) used code-switching when the students were having difficulty in understanding what was taught. Approximately three-quarters of the participants also added that to '*teach grammar*' they needed to code-switch between English and Turkish. As the third, language shifting reason for '*unknown structures*' was 63% while 40.2% of the attendants pointed out they used CS for '*vocabulary*' teaching. As can be seen, when teachers '*sum up the topic*', only 27.2% of them ($f=25$) benefit from code-switching. On the other hand, the total number of those who consider themselves as '*insufficient in transferring information*' is 13 (14.1%). Finally, teacher 41, expressed his opinion on the reasons of his CS during EFL classes mostly related to '*cultural issues*', and teacher 46 marked '*other*' option by saying that he used code-switching for '*classroom management*'. As a result, the percentage for those who specified other statements on their reasons for CS was 2.2% ($f=2$).

Interviewed Teachers' Points of View on Code-Switching during Their Classes

The comments and answers of 23 teachers who were interviewed via video conference in Kocaeli are as follows:

1-Do you switch codes in your classes? (Do you switch from English to Turkish or vice versa?)

The answer of 20 teachers (87%) to this question was 'yes', and just 3 of them (13%) responded with 'no'. The interview group is also of the opinion that it is useful to switch codes between English and Turkish during the course.

2-How do you teach English? (Only in English language, by mostly using Turkish or benefiting from both etc.) You may give some details.

Teacher 9: *Mostly, I use English, however if I teach grammatical topics that are hard to understand such as relative clauses, passive voice, etc. I explain in Turkish first, then I go on my lesson in the target language.*

Teacher 3: *I teach English by mostly using the Turkish language because when I start to speak English some students don't understand what I say. On the other hand, I sometimes try to speak English in some situations and if I feel that my students don't understand even if I give many examples, pictures or objects, then I use Turkish again.*

In response to question 2, those surveyed indicated that their reasons for code-switching were various. Teacher 9 conducted mostly English-only lesson while teacher 3 used Turkish most of the time. However, it is clear that both, to some extent, benefited from Turkish for different reasons such as to teach grammar, to communicate, or to be understood by the students.

3- Do you think that teaching English via Turkish is useful for students to learn a language?

Teacher1: *I don't think this is true. As far as I have experienced through time (17 years of experience), this is only good if you are preparing them for a specific grammar examination, or else this doesn't contribute to their English.*

Teacher11: *Sometimes it may be useful especially for some grammar topics, but of course, for skills lessons, only English should be used. For example, I make a summary of personal pronouns, tenses in Turkish then I teach English versions. But for communication purposes, by no means should Turkish be used.*

As these quotes indicate, teachers' expressions for Turkish usage in English teaching context are mainly due to grammar topics that they assert are impossible to give in the target language on account of students' incompetence in that language. The participants, on the whole, demonstrated that as a language teaching method, fully taking advantage of Turkish in English teaching is not the proper way to teach the target language. This view was echoed by other informants as well. They added that

usage of Turkish in EFL classrooms facilitates learning grammar, but it has no use in speaking or communication.

4- How do you agree or disagree with the statement that “Foreign language is best taught by using only target language.”

Teacher7: *Most of the languages may be suitable to teach a foreign language by using only the target language but when it comes to Turkish, it is a bit difficult as Turkish and English are from different roots and different language families. It is also really hard because of the crowded classes in Turkey, especially in state schools.*

Teacher5: *Yes, that’s true but not always. It changes depending on situations like your students’ level, background, context. But our students have no chances to speak with somebody speaking English outside the classroom.*

When the fourth question was asked to participants, the majority commented as, there are many factors affecting the need for the first language in EFL settings. They listed them as the differences between students’ language levels, their backgrounds, crowded classrooms, limited time, language structure differences, clarification of some issues, and classroom management. Over half of those surveyed ($f=13$) reported that they agree with that statement; however, most of them put forward the reasons mentioned above, and 10 teachers stated their disagreement.

5- When do you especially alternate between English and Turkish?

Table 6. When Teachers Alternate between English and Turkish

Answer	f	%
Teaching grammar	17	73.9
Teaching vocabulary	5	21.7
Teaching unknown structures	9	39.1
If students have difficulty in understanding	12	52.2
When adding emphasis	4	17.4
When I sum up the topic	1	4.3
When I feel insufficient	6	26.1
Other	3	13.0

This question was also asked in the questionnaire of 92 teachers across Turkey. The frequencies and percentages in table show that the main reason why teachers (73.9%) attempt to CS is ‘Teaching grammar’. The second majority of teachers (52.2%) say that it is better to code-switch ‘If students have difficulty in understanding’, and 39.1% are in the opinion that there appear some ‘Unknown structures’ when we convey the lesson and most of the students can’t understand so we switch to Turkish to make it clear. 6 teachers (26.1%) stated that they ‘feel insufficient’ in some cases

and therefore they apply to CS to compensate the gap. On the other hand, 21.7 percent of teachers ($f=5$) switch codes when they 'Teach vocabulary'. 'When adding emphasis' 17.4% of them think that it is useful to CS. In addition, 3 of the teachers (13%) put forward other reasons for their code-switching apart from the options researcher directed. Teacher 10 expressed that she mostly uses Turkish to 'Give instructions', teacher 13 prefers to CS when time is limited, and Teacher 17 specified that 'I switch codes when there is a need or else, I don't do'. Finally, only 1 teacher (4.3%) stated that he used CS while summarizing a subject.

6- Does usage of Turkish in EFL classes facilitate or debilitate learning of L2? (You may share your experiences.)

Teacher19: *It debilitates because students can learn a second language easily by speaking it, preparing dialogues, acting roles, singing songs in the target language. Especially using the communicative approach is the best method* (In this method communication in the target language is a primary factor for learning)

Teacher 21: *If students' level is low or cannot understand what you teach, speaking Turkish facilitates their target language learning. As an example, students sometimes force me to speak in Turkish once I speak in English. They do not bother themselves to get the point and just wait for you to explain in Turkish.*

The number of those who thought Turkish facilitates the ($f=12$) learning of L2 and those ($f=11$) who thought the contrary were close to each other. However, those who thought that the existence of the Turkish language in the EFL context had a positive effect also pointed out that Turkish should be used in a balanced way. As is clear in the excerpt of teacher 19, some argued that L1 use in the L2 environment impedes the pace of target language, thus claiming that L2 is best learned by practicing it in the classroom creating an attractive setting for L2. On the other side, some argued that there was no choice for the teacher other than using L1 due to students' levels as teacher 21 said. Another teacher (10) supported this statement by adding that "with limited time and many forms to teach you have no choice but to switch from l2 to l1".

7- How does code-switching affect the education process? Is it good or bad for learning? Could you please clarify with some examples or with your experiences?

Teacher7: *To some extent, code-switching makes my students much more confident, and they acquire positive attitudes towards English. You must balance it very well. If you use only English and they can't understand you, they get demoralized and they are afraid of it as if it were a monster. On the contrary, if you use mostly Turkish, in the course of time they forget the main function "communication" of the lesson and they see it as an ordinary theoretical subject to learn.*

Teacher5: *I think that's useful. I use code-switching, so my students not only understand me but also hear the target language. I mean, it depends on what you teach. If you want to teach a difficult unknown structure, it's good to switch the language. For example, while we are learning idioms, we try to find out the same expressions in Turkish which helps a lot to arouse students' interest.*

Two excerpts above reflect the general opinion of the teachers on this subject very well. Almost all the teachers interviewed mentioned the importance of a balanced use of mother tongue in the classrooms. Teacher 7 also draws attention to students' attitudes towards L2. Using only the target language can have negative effects on the student, she says. The teacher also emphasizes that this adverse condition may result from the overuse of Turkish as well. Here the balance between L1 and L2 plays an important role.

8- “Speaking Turkish in EFL classes is one of the main reasons for students not to be able to learn English at the expected level in Turkey.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Can you give some details, please?

Teacher9: *I don't agree. I teach in Science High Schools (best-qualified schools in Turkey) for more than 10 years (14 years of experience in total). My students always claim that their English level is B1 or more and they generally graduate from private middle schools which means that their English level should be higher as they got more English lessons in their schools. However, when we apply the placement test, we notice that the level is generally not as advanced as they claim. When we start to use native language especially for the expression of sentence structures, they learn and use the target structure much more easily. That's why, I disagree.*

Teacher10: *Yes, I completely agree. They(students) do not want to try to speak in basic (easy) forms. They don't feel relaxed during speaking and they feel bad because they are afraid of their friends, they think that their classmates will laugh at them if they fail in speaking. Half of the students have the same problem. They didn't experience the communication environment in the L2 during their previous years (middle school). So, they come to high school with anxieties and prejudices towards English. I think, speaking mostly Turkish in the lessons cause these problems. It would be more beneficial to reduce Turkish or to use it at a certain rate.*

As regards the 8th question, while 15 (65%) teachers agreed with this statement, 8 (35%) expressed their belief of disagreement. Those who agreed and disagreed also explained the reasons for their answers during the interview. Interestingly, the teachers who favored the use of Turkish in the lesson also added that the use should be at a certain level. They implied that over or underuse of L1 could trigger some problems in learning environments. Therefore, they stated a balanced L1 use is more secure and better in language acquisition.

Discussion

Based on the 5-point Likert scale applied to the secondary and high school students and semi-structured interviews with the teachers, this study was conducted to shed light on the attitudes, language choice reasons and experiences of the two groups about code-switching in the EFL context. In this respect, the results of the students' and teachers' data were expressed below under two separate headings with the principle suitable for the study.

Discussing Students' Results

The results of this study showed that the majority of students think, teachers' alternating between English and Turkish in EFL classes contributes significantly to their understanding of the lesson. It was also noticeable that the teacher's benefiting from L1 or L2 during the lesson did not affect students' attitudes towards the lesson negatively. On the contrary, code-switching as a positive contributor created a more comfortable atmosphere for them during the class because they were not in a stressful environment to keep up with the teacher's usage of only English in the classroom. The parallel studies in this area were the works of Ahmad & Jusoff (2009) and Selamat (2014). Their findings depending on CS were that it did not cause a hindering effect on students' language learning but had a facilitating aspect in classroom settings. Considering the speaking skill, most of the students (74%) agreed with the statement that transition from English to Turkish in the lesson has a beneficial impact on their communication attempts in the target language. Therefore, the teacher's use of CS as a communication tool was welcomed by the students. This result was in line with the studies of Bhatti et al. (2018), as their study proved that due to incompetency of students regarding English in speaking classes, the use of CS was both helpful and effective.

As the study revealed in terms of gender, the mean values in all three sections of the survey were higher in favour of female students compared to male ones (see Table 2). In CS's impact on students' language learning section, the mean values of girls were higher by 1.55, this ratio was 1.8 in the second section of the questionnaire and 0.82 in motivating effect of CS on their classroom participation part, in favour of female students. Although there were statistically significant differences based on gender in the first two sections, a statistically significant difference based on gender wasn't noticed in the last section ($p = .116$, $p > 0.05$). Considering the grade levels, the mean values in all grades from the 5th grade to the 12th grade went up as the grade level increased. In addition, it was realised that there was a statistically significant difference in the scale scores of the students depending on the grade level. In this respect, the study parallels with the results obtained by Horasan (2014) in terms of facilitating language teaching in the classroom and activating learning. Simasiku et al. (2015) addressed the findings of 12 teachers from different schools that revealed the alternation of languages in the English teaching domain contributes to the academic success of students.

With respect to the second section of the questionnaire, which was based on students' attitudes towards code-switching, it was found that students looked with favor on their teachers' shifting from English to Turkish if particularly they have difficulty in understanding. The overall response to the question "*I find it right when our teacher explains it in Turkish when we don't understand*" was very positive. Of the 226 participants, 152 responded with 'strongly agree' and 57 of them marked 'agree'. Regarding the positive responses of participants about the use of L1 in English classrooms, this proportion adds up to 92.4% of the total group. As in Atkinson's (1993) previous studies, learning a new language can be difficult for students especially those who are beginners and that makes learning rather disturbing, so the immersion of L1 to EFL classrooms both may be fruitful and supportive.

One interesting finding of this study was that, although the impact of CS on students' language learning (1st section of the questionnaire) and students' attitudes towards CS (section 2) were found positive with the higher percentage by the students, the results of the effect of CS on students' classroom participation as a motivating factor (section 3) were not the same. In the third section of the questionnaire, the '*agreeing*' and '*disagreeing*' answers given by the students towards using CS as a motivating element in the classroom in terms of increasing their interest in the lesson were very close to each other in percentage. These results corroborate the findings of Simasiku (2016), who found that participants' beliefs about the effect of CS on student's classroom engagement were not only promising but unfavorable as well. The promising findings were that students could understand the vocabulary and grammar at an expected rate. As for communication in the target language, the results were undesirable as students even didn't know how to respond to basic questions in English.

Discussing Teachers' Results

In general, both teacher groups' (92 teachers from 34 cities and 23 teachers from Kocaeli) attitudes on code-switching during English classes were almost the same. Most of the teachers supported the idea that code-switching is a necessity for clarity and comprehensibility. When asked both groups "*Do you switch codes in your classes?*", out of 92 teachers 87 (96.6%) answered 'yes', and 20 (87%) of the 23 teachers in Kocaeli responded with 'yes' as well. In a similar study conducted by Yana and Nugraha (2019) on the use of CS in English education, they emphasized that CS is a necessity to facilitate the students' vocabulary acquisition, to enable them to focus on the subject, to keep the message in their memory with confidence and to give them the opportunity to learn the language quickly. Considering its advantages in the classroom environment, it has also been revealed in other studies (Azlan & Narasuman, 2013; Paramesvaran & Lim, 2018; Wu et al., 2020) that CS is a tool that facilitates learning rather than making it difficult and is needed as a connecting bridge between the target language and the native language. A possible explanation for these results is that

nearly most of the teachers in secondary and high schools in Turkey benefit from code-switching in their lessons for some reasons. These results are consistent with the findings of Nurhamidah et al. (2018), as they found out that code-switching was a facilitator for both students and teachers to accomplish some targets in language classrooms. Uys & van Dulm's (2011) results also showed that CS plays an important role for teachers not only in teaching practices but also in classroom management strategies.

This study has revealed that teachers code-switched owing to many reasons which were usually intentional and sometimes unintentional (Gulzar, 2010; Raschka et al., 2009). Regarding the same question (*when do you especially alternate between English and Turkish?*) addressed to both groups of teachers, most of the respondents based their reasons for CS on '*teaching grammar*' and '*students having difficulty in understanding*'. These results agree with Yuvayapan's (2019) findings which showed that shifting from L2 to L1 in terms of teaching grammar and defining the subject clearly for a better understanding is the ultimate purpose of code-switching. Interestingly, while the students welcomed the teachers' benefiting from CS in the speaking classes, the teachers did not find it completely correct. The teachers' idea was that students weren't struggling to speak English despite teachers' use of Turkish to keep the conversation in L2 up.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The speculations about the use of the first language in foreign language classrooms have been a long-standing subject for researchers. Accordingly, the main goal of the current study was to unearth both teachers' and students' points of view on teachers' code-switching in EFL classrooms across Turkey. In general, both students and teachers supported the use of code-switching in lessons. However, this situation also revealed a significant difference between the perspective of teachers and students.

One of the salient findings that made this research special was that while the students approved the teachers' use of code-switching regardless of whether it was used to teach grammar, vocabulary, unknown structures, etc. or for speaking purpose, the teachers who switched between Turkish and English in the lessons concluded that the process of code-switching should be handled in balance, even if it is a necessity or a compulsion. They pointed out the importance of this balance, especially in the communication of target language. Therefore, how and where code-switching should be used is the key point of the foreign language classrooms (Akkaya & Aydin, 2019).

In this study, it was clearly revealed that there is more than one factor affecting teachers' use of the mother tongue in a foreign language learning setting. Both the readiness level of the students and the teachers' efforts to make the lesson simpler and more understandable are only two of these factors. The fact that grammar rules pose difficulties for students, the difficulty of learning vocabulary

in the target language, and the inability to practice the language due to the exam-oriented language teaching curriculum are some other reasons forcing teachers to use Turkish in lessons.

Whether the inclusion or exclusion of the L1 in L2 settings is an obstacle or assistance is likely to continue to be explored in the light of science. The scope of this study was limited in terms of a quantitatively conducted questionnaire for students, so a face-to-face interview with students would also contribute to the quality of the research undoubtedly. A big sample size in view of all cities of Turkey can make research more effective in respect of generalizability. And finally, although the effects of CS on foreign language learning have been the core investigations of many studies, its motivating outcomes for students' classroom participation is still open to further research.

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