

**Original Article****Mother Tongue Integration into Focus-on-Form Instruction: A Case of Writing Accuracy at the Sentence Level***Nargess Nourizadeh<sup>1,\*</sup>, Amir Valadi<sup>2</sup>*<sup>1</sup> Department of English language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Lorestan University<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education

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**Abstract**

According to option-based conceptualizations of Focus on Form instruction (FonF), put forward by Ellis (2012), in EFL contexts employing mother tongue can be a viable option to be embedded in FonF instruction. This study investigated the use of the mother tongue in FonF instruction and its possible effect on language learners' written performance. To this end, 100 language learners at elementary and intermediate levels of proficiency, in four groups of 25, participated in this study. Two experimental groups received four FonF instructive sessions mediated by their mother tongue, and for the other groups, no L1 use was allowed. After the instruction, the participants were required to take tests in which the intended grammatical structures were supposed to be produced in a written format. The results showed that the learners receiving the L1-mediated instruction outperformed their counterparts. The findings were discussed psycho-linguistic factors involved in language data processing, and they can be useful to language teachers in the EFL contexts regarding making decisions about using L1 in L2 language teaching contexts.

**Keywords:** FonF instruction, Mother tongue, Mother tongue-mediated FonF instruction

## 1. Introduction

One of the main functions of any language teaching program has always been manipulating the language data to which learners are exposed to facilitate language processing and, as a result, language production for them. In educational settings, teachers, as the main facilitators of language learning, resort to different procedures to modify language data so that their learners can follow the language learning route from input to intake and, finally, to uptake (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). However, the procedure through which the modification should happen has been a matter of dispute in the realm of language teaching.

In retrospect, Input Modification (IM) in English language teaching has traveled a distance from a pure focus on grammatical forms in isolation to deemphasize them in favor of meaning-focused activities and, ultimately, to come up with a combination of both forms and meaning, which is referred to as Focus on Form (FonF) instruction in the related literature. FonF instruction, as the latest and the most favored approach towards input modification, has lent itself to different conceptualizations and operationalizations since Long (1991) introduced it, probably because of its high malleability (Ellis, 2016).

Option-based conceptualization of FonF instruction, put forward by Ellis (2012, 2015, 2016), proposes that this type of instruction be embedded with whatever options language teachers have at their disposal to better implement it in the classroom. By the same token, in the educational contexts where both teachers and learners share the same mother tongue, an option to be taken advantage of is the learners' mother tongue (L1). As such, the present study aims at combining FonF instruction with learners' mother tongue to see its effect on their writing accuracy at two language proficiency levels: elementary and intermediate. To this end, the research questions can be formulated into the followings:

1. Does L1-mediated focus on the form have any effects on learners' writing accuracy?
2. If so, does the language proficiency of the learners play any role in this regard?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Focus-on-Form Instruction

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), language instruction mainly has to do with the way language input is modified and adapted to the proficiency level of language learners, and the role that language teachers can play in this regard is critical. The related literature

(Kumaravadivelu, 2006) introduces three branches of input modification (IM) in English language teaching: form-focused, meaning-focused, and both form-and meaning-focused respectively. Form-focused IM attempts at simplifying and modifying grammatical rules which are considered as the underlying building blocks of any language. In this approach, grammar is viewed as an object of inquiry that lends itself to analyze, codify, and, finally present. Many scholars (Norris & Ortega, 2000) have strongly argued that limiting learners to form-focused IM not only distorts the nature of the target language but also decreases the learners' potential to develop appropriate language knowledge/ability, especially when productive modes of language are demanded. This caused the second type of IM to come into vogue.

Proponents of meaning-focused IM (Krashen, 1985), as the second approach to IM, argue that systematic attention to grammatical form of utterances is neither a crucial condition nor a sufficient one for ultimate learning, though it might be effective to some extent, and that teaching language as a whole provides meaning and usability for learners. This approach to IM is heavily influenced by Krashen's (1985) *input hypothesis* stating that language is acquired only by understanding messages, that is, by receiving comprehensible input. However, criticisms have been leveled against this view as well.

Because none of the above-mentioned IMs could guarantee fluency and accuracy, there was a shift of attention to both form and meaning as the third type of IM from the 1990s onwards. In line with this shift of view, Long (1991) proposed a focus on form (FonF) instruction as any type of instruction that guides learners' attention to linguistic features as they arise incidentally when learners are engaged in meaningful or communicative activities. Kellem and Halvorsen (2018) note that teachers need to pay attention to contextual factors and learners' needs when they want to decide about integrating form-focused instruction into their practice, and they should remember that there is no universal or standardized way of using this kind of instruction in language classrooms.

In ELT literature, some studies have investigated the effect of focus-on-form instruction on learners' writing skills. Rahimpour, Salimi, and Farrokhi (2012) have, for instance, researched the effect of focus on form instruction in an EFL context, using communicative materials. They studied pre-intermediate learners who were assigned to two groups receiving intensive and extensive focus on form instructions. According to the results

of tests of writing accuracy, both groups benefited from their instruction, and the intensive focus on the form group did slightly better than the other one.

Salimi, Bonyadi, and Asghari (2014) also conducted a study on intermediate and advanced learners to find out the effect of form-focused instruction on the students' writing accuracy. The results revealed that this kind of instruction could benefit advanced students in their writing accuracy more.

In another study on 60 high school students in Iran, focus on form and meaning proved to be more successful in teaching Wh-questions to students than the traditional way of teaching grammar through examples followed by exercises (Bandar & Gorjian, 2017). These studies and many others have provided evidence to show the effective use of FonF instruction on learners' language productions.

There have also been studies on providing form-focused feedback to learners to see the effect on their writing. Shobeiry (2020) studied the impact of form- and content-focused feedback on 126 learners of English in an online course. She claimed that a combination of both types of feedback could improve learners' writing and added that content-focused feedback was more effective than form-focused feedback. However, in another recent study on 21 English language learners, about their engagement in providing peer-feedback on compositions, Fan and Xu (2020) found out that form-focused feedback made students more cognitively engaged in the process of providing peer feedback, compared with evaluative and content-related feedback.

## **2.2. L1 Use in L2 Language Instruction**

There is much dispute over the way L1 can help learning L2; the related literature shows that there are opposing views in this regard. Mouhanna (2009) argued that this mainly originates in the dominant political contexts and psychological findings in language teaching methodology. Generally speaking, the consensus has been on the idea that ELT practitioners should use English rather than the learners' L1 to come up with desired L2 outcomes because, in this way, learners are provided with the required input which is crucial for learning. However, some scholars have explained that there are reasons why teachers may need to pay attention to the influence of the learners' L1 and its possible benefits.

Ellis (2012) pointed out that learners' L1 is a resource in developing their L2, that is, L1 can function as a pre-existing cognitive structure of how language works and, thus, may

empower learners in faster language processing. Widdowson (2003) argued that language learning by nature is a complex bilingual undertaking in which learners keep their L1 and L2 in contact in their minds. According to Hall (2011), L1 use serves a much broader purpose of recognizing the value of learners' first language identities, cultures, and linguistic knowledge.

Cook (2002) strongly defended heeding the role of L1 as part of any language competence. He explained this by introducing the term 'multicompetence' and defined it as a state of mind with two grammar systems, unlike 'monocompetence' which is the state of mind with only one grammar system. He maintained that language knowledge of the L2 user is different from that of the monolingual and that a multi-competent speaker views language differently in terms of metalinguistic awareness which influences cognition. A corollary of this is that greater metalinguistic awareness and better cognitive processing, which can be caused by L1 functioning, can result in at least linguistic awareness. From a teaching perspective, the notion of multicompetence advocates a change in the long-lasting philosophy concerning L2-only policy for language instruction.

Ellis (2012) noted that we need to investigate the extent to which teacher's variable use of L1 affects learning L2. He believes that "claims and counter-claims about the relationship between L1 use and L2 learning have run far ahead of the evidence" (p.131). As Hall and Cook (2012) have mentioned, the 'monolingual assumption' has been questioned and there have been studies on the benefits of including learners' first language in the context of teaching English.

In line with recent debates over the use of L1 in the context of L2 teaching, Bruen and Kelly (2014) interviewed 12 lecturers in Japanese and German, in addition to their students, about their attitudes regarding the use of L1 in the classroom. The lecturers in this study acknowledged that it was essential to use language learners' first language to decrease their anxiety and create a comforting context for learning. Similarly, the students in this study agreed with a balance in using L1 and claimed that especially at lower levels they benefited from L1 use. The first language was mostly used to explain complex terms and structures to avoid cognitive overload.

In another study, through verbalization, Harun, Massari, and Behak (2013) collected data from 8 Malay learners trying to learn English tense and aspect. According to the results, learners' first language use in a metalanguage, during individual and collaborative activities,

proved to work as a mediational tool to understand target structures. The researchers have referred to L1 use as “a specific linguistic tool for cognitive functions” that can help learners achieve better results in L2 tasks (Harun, Massari, & Behak, 2013, p.135).

Finally, Zhang (2018) compared the effects of L1 and L2 interactions among learners in collaborative writing tasks. Learners were paired and divided into two groups, one interacting in L1 and the other in L2. Their essays were scored for complexity, accuracy, fluency, and text quality. The results indicated that those who interacted in L1 during the task produced more complex sentences, and there were fewer syntactic errors, which can have implications for the use of L1 in L2 writing classes.

### **2.3. L1 as an Option in Focus on Form Instruction**

According to Ellis (2012), FonF instruction could be implemented according to viable methodological options at the disposal of language teachers. He argued that the rigor of this new conceptualization, an option-based FonF instruction, lies in the combinations of different options available to language teachers. By the same token, one can hypothesize that in EFL contexts, where both the language teacher and learners share the same mother tongue, a possible methodological option available to the language teacher is the combination of the first language (L1) use with FonF instruction.

Moreover, acquiring and developing productive skills, speaking and writing seems to be a hard job for many language learners as it needs conscious effort and much practice, and producing a well-organized, error-free piece of language seems to be out of reach for many L2 learners. Writing processes like producing sentences and proofreading them require the active engagement of working memory (Kellogg, 2001), and learners could become cognitively overloaded, especially at lower levels of proficiency, a case in which using L1 in instructions can work as a solution.

In a case study of Spanish as a foreign language, Nakatsukasa and Loewen (2015) recorded a class of Spanish, with English as the first language, to investigate the teacher's use of L1 during focus-on-form episodes. The researchers tried to understand the relationship between the teacher's use of L1, L2, or both languages in one utterance, and the linguistic area that was being taught. The results revealed that the teacher used L1 and L2 equally in grammar and vocabulary sections, and code-switching occurred in sections related to semantics. They also found out that the teacher's choice of using L1 or L2 depended on the

learners' questions and understanding of instructions. In vocabulary episodes, for instance, using L1 was a strategy to save time.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Design and Context of the Study**

This study was mainly an investigation into the effectiveness of L1 in FonF instruction by comparing the effect of L1-mediated and L2-mediated instruction on the participants' written production. To deal with this, the study enjoyed a comparative quasi-experimental design. This research was conducted at one of the branches of the Iran Language Institute (the ILI) in Khorramabad during the summer course. The ILI observes the English-only policy seriously and using the learners' mother tongue is not allowed at any level, and it was, therefore, the right context for this study.

#### **3.2. Participants**

The participants of this study were 100 female English language learners from Iran language institutes at two different language proficiency levels: elementary, and intermediate. To see if there was a difference between levels in benefitting from L1-mediated instructions, participants were selected among Elementary and Intermediate levels.

Both the teacher and the participants were from the same city and spoke Persian as their L1. The learners' age ranged from 15 to 25 years old and they shared the same mother tongue with the teacher, who spoke Persian. All the language learners had started learning English at the ILI, and, before this study, had been studying in this institute for some time: the elementary level for a year and the intermediate level for more than one and a half years.

The learners were already placed at elementary and intermediate levels after an initial placement test and passing the previous levels, with the grading system which involved 60 percent of oral performance during the course and 40 percent of a written final exam. None of the participants were taking any other language courses outside the mentioned institute. The teacher, who was one of the researchers in this study and was also a placement interviewer in the ILI, had been teaching in that institute for more than 10 years and presented the instructions for the intended structures and tasks.

Table 1

*Demographic Background of the Participants*

No. of Students	100 (50 Elementary & 50 Intermediate)
Gender	Female
Native Language	Persian
Level	Elementary and Intermediate
Age	15-25

**3.3. Instruments**

This study mainly used three sets of instruments. The first one was a pretest for each level to make sure that the learners were not familiar with the content of instructions and the intended grammatical forms, although the formal content of instruction was not covered in the participants' syllabus at the time of the study. Each test contained five open-ended items on the intended grammatical forms requiring the participants to produce them in a written format and five multiple-choice items requiring the participants to recognize the correct forms. The vocabulary used in the test items was checked by the teacher to make sure it was in the range of the learners' knowledge.

Second, there were immediate and delayed written posttests to measure the effectiveness of the instructions. The tests required the participants to produce the forms in a controlled way. The content of the tests was chosen from the book "Grammar Practice in Context" by Bolton and Goodey (1997) and contained five prompts that needed grammatically proper replies on the part of the participants. As to the validity of the pre-and post-tests, the point worth mentioning here is that what this study followed was "content validity" of the tests because, primarily, the purpose was to see whether the learners were able to produce the intended forms or not. To ensure content validity of the tests, the researchers, from an insider's view, checked and discussed the test items and test instructions for clarity, the relevance of the questions to the specified structures, item formats, and coverage of the materials taught (Fowler, 2013), and also made sure that the vocabulary in the test items was known by the learners of the intended levels.

**3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

At each level of language proficiency, there were 50 language learners in two groups of 25: L1-mediated and L2-mediated. Therefore, there were four groups of learners: L1-mediated elementary, L2-mediated elementary; L1-mediated intermediate, L2-mediated



intermediate. A written pretest for each level containing the intended linguistic forms was administered to all the participants to make sure that the participants did not have the previous familiarity with the forms. Afterward, each class received four sessions of FonF instruction on a grammatical point chosen from the institute's syllabus which had not been covered at the time. The instruction for the elementary level was focused on the present perfect tense and for the intermediate level on future perfect.

The FonF instruction was presented solely in English for L2-mediated classes and for L1-mediated classes both the instructor and the learners were given the chance to use Persian, the L1, on occasions when both the instructor and learners were involved with the forms and in collaborative writing activities. The learners at the same level of proficiency received the same instruction, that is, the content was the same for the same levels, the only difference being the use of the learners' L1 (Persian) in the L1-mediated classes. All the instructions were presented to the learners using *the Conscious Raising* (CR) technique that gives priority to learners' self-discovery of language forms and renders them using an attention-drawing technique (Schmidt, 1990).

Each instruction session lasted around 90 minutes and included four stages. In stage one, a passage was given to the learners in which the target forms were highlighted. Later, the language learners were asked to scan the passage for any possible new words. If so, the meanings were provided. In stage two, the passage was worked on using paraphrasing, questions/answers, and summarizing with the purpose of comprehension. In stage three, the highlighted sentences were brought to the learners' attention and discussed. Finally, in stage four, the learners were involved in written activities requiring them to produce the intended grammatical forms.

Two identical posttests were given to the participants: one right after the instruction and the other two weeks later. During posttests, all the individual learners took part in tests which mainly involved replying to five prompts requiring them to produce the intended grammatical forms in written formats within a time limit of three minutes. The learners' performance in the tests was scored concerning their accuracy of production based on the following Likert-type scale:

The learners produced the intended grammatical form..... in the context given.

*Perfectly correctly(4) Satisfactorily correctly(3) Partially correctly(2) Not correctly(1) Couldn't use the form(0)*

For scoring the post-tests the teacher focused on the intended structures, and any other possible grammatical mistakes and spelling errors were overlooked.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Procedure**

The independent variables in this research were L1 and L2 effects and the dependent variables were the learners' scores on the written posttests. As there were four groups of participants, (two elementary, and two intermediate), the scores of each level were compared to one another. L1-mediated classes were the experimental groups, and L2-mediated classes functioned as control groups. To analyze the data, the normality was examined through three measures: Skewness, Kurtosis, and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. To make the comparisons, the main statistical test for analyzing the results was *t*-test.

Because all the participants were tested by the same rater twice, during the first and second posttests, the intra rater reliability was calculated out of the correlation between the first posttest grades and the second ones, giving a significant positive correlation,  $r=.75$ ,  $p < .05$ , and assuring the rater's consistency of scoring.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Pretests**

It was earlier mentioned that pretests were administered to find out whether the learners in elementary and intermediate levels had any prior familiarity with the intended grammatical forms. The results of these tests showed that none of the participants had any previous knowledge as to the grammatical forms, which assured us of the fact that the participants did not enjoy any background knowledge of the forms. This lack of knowledge, of course, was quite predictable as the forms had been selected from the institute's syllabus not covered at the time of the research.

### **4.2. Normality of Data**

To analyze the data normality, three measures of normal distribution were investigated: Skewness, Kurtosis, and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The related results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Normal Distribution of the Participants' Scores*

Groups	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	
					K-S	Asymp sig. (2-tailed)
Intermediate L1-mediated	2.18	1.45	-0.338	-1.02	0.945	0.324
Intermediate L2-mediated	1.75	1.19	-0.318	-0.673	1.12	0.172
Elementary L1-mediated	2.80	1.36	-1.249	0.685	1.37	0.045
Elementary L2-mediated	1.79	1.10	-0.083	-0.396	0.992	0.278

It can be deduced from the table that all statistical tests are indicative of the fact that the data were normally distributed among the participants. Skewness and Kurtosis values lie between an acceptable span of -2 and 2, and the value of Asymp sig. (2-tailed) for One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is more than the assumed significant level of probability (0.05), which paved the way for running independent-sample t-tests for groups at the same proficiency levels to make valid comparisons.

**4.3. Posttests**

**4.3.1. The First Posttest for Intermediate Level**

As Table 2 shows, the L1-mediated participants at the intermediate level performed better compared with their L2-mediated counterparts in writing scores. However, to make sure that the mentioned difference was of statistical significance, a t-test was run, the result of which is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Independent Sample Test for Participants' Writing Performance at the Intermediate Level*

Groups			95% CI for			Mean Difference	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
L1-mediated			L2-mediated						
M	SD	n	M	SD	N				

Writing score.	2.75	1.36	25	2.10	0.98	25	.12, 1.57	2.47*	48	0.03
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\* p ≤ .05

As the table shows, there was a significant difference in the scores for L1-mediated group and those of L2-mediated group at the intermediate level;  $t(48) = 2.47, p = 0.03$ ”, suggesting that L1-mediated instruction was useful in helping learners’ writing accuracy gains.

#### 4.3.2. The First Posttest for Elementary Level

At the elementary level, the L1-mediated participants outperformed the L2-mediated in writing scores. This was further approved by a t-test, the result of which is shown in Table 3, showing that there was a significant difference in the scores for the L1-mediated group and those of the L2-mediated group,  $t(48) = 2.55, p = 0.01$ . It is clear from the results that L1-mediated instruction was more helpful in enhancing learners’ writing accuracy gains compared with L2-mediated ones.

Table 4.

*Independent Sample Test for Participants’ Writing Performance at the Elementary Level*

	Groups						95% CI for		T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
	L1-mediated			L2-mediated			Mean				
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	Difference				
Writing score.	2.82	1.35	25	1.80	1.12	25	.20, 1.79	2.55*	48	.01	

\* p ≤ .05

#### 4.3.3. The Delayed Posttests’ Results

As was previously mentioned, two weeks after the first posttests, the second posttests were administered. The results of the second posttests were in line with the first one, that is, with a slight variation, roughly the same results were obtained. The related tables without further explanation are given in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5.

*Independent Sample Test for Participants’ Writing Performance at the Intermediate Level*

	Groups						95% CI for Mean		T	Df
	L1-mediated			L2-mediated			Difference			
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N				
Writing score	2.51	1.10	25	1.55	1.20	25	.21, 1.68	2.63*	48	

\* p ≤ .05

Table 6.

*Independent Sample Test for Participants' Writing Performance at the Elementary Level*

	Groups						95% CI for		T	DF	Sig(2-tailed)
	L1-mediated			L2-mediated			Mean				
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N					
writing score	2.35	1.37	25	1.55	.97	25	.26, 1.72	2.86*	48	0.2	

\* p ≤ .05

## 5. Discussions

The researchers addressed two questions in this study; the first one asked if L1-mediated FonF instruction had any effects on learners' accuracy in writing at the sentence level, and the second question concerned the level of the learners to see if both Elementary, as a low level, and Intermediate, as a high level, benefited from L1-mediated instructions.

Generally speaking, as it was corroborated by this study at two language proficiency levels, the results of this study suggest that in a FonF instruction, getting help from learners' L1 could function beneficially and fruitfully for language learners at both levels.

The fact that L1-mediated FonF instruction tends to be more effective towards writing gains is of great pedagogical significance because problems with this skill persist to remain with language learners even at advanced levels of language proficiency. It seems that proper use of L1 has the pedagogical potential to deal with the problem in a rigorous and manageable way as this study provided evidence for.

The findings of this research regarding the superiority of L1-mediated FonF instruction can be discussed or justified from different perspectives. From a psycholinguistic point of view, this superiority can be tracked down to the concept of 'working memory' and its influence on language processing. It seems that there are good justifications to believe that working memory capacity and L2 production are related (Kellog, 2001). During language production, learners need to access lexical items, words, or language chunks from long-term

memory repertoire, and then to adapt them according to the message, and finally to assemble them accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately, all of which put heavy pressure on the working memory. This pressure is more felt for non-native learners.

Working memory capacity is more crucial, specifically when a learner is at lower language proficiency levels. This means that gaining access to lexical and grammatical items for such learners will be slower and more deliberate (Oppenheim, 2000; Segalowitz, 2003), which, in its turn, leaves fewer resources for paying attention to the morpho-syntactic ordering of the accessed items, causing the learners to commit errors or making them adopt a slow, serial mode of language production.

As to the accuracy of language production, it seems that working memory has a more vivid and vital role and can ensure grammatically accurate written production. One can argue that language learners are limited in their working memory capabilities when processing the second language chunks, that is, attending to both form and meaning simultaneously seems to be quite demanding for them, especially in timed writing tasks. In such a condition, L1 can function as a compensatory cognitive resource for the learners to deal with demanding tasks. Such an argument is in line with Harun, Massari, and Behak's (2013) study in which they found that L1 could work as a mediational tool for the language learners to regulate their learning and attend to specific L2 grammatical points.

Systematic and judicious use of learners' first language can help language teachers to equip learners with explicit knowledge of the target language systems. This, in its turn, might help learners to notice the gap between the state of their inner grammars, interlanguage, and the target language, which can ultimately result in more accurate language productions (Schmidt, 2001).

Moreover, teachers' use of L1 can be a way of scaffolding the learning process and helping learners overcome problems regarding their limited L2 knowledge, an argument that can justify the findings of the current study from a metalinguistic point of view. In this study, in L1-mediated classes, we frequently witnessed occasions when learners got involved in grammatical exchanges, mostly in the form of IRF (initiation, response, follow-up) patterns, with the instructor in L1. Such metalinguistic exchanges were even observed when learners were working in groups together, independent of their teacher, something that we rarely observed in L2-mediated classes. Such metalinguistic awareness can facilitate L2 learning and help learners connect newly faced structures with knowledge of L2, and as a result,

develop their understandings of how forms and functions are mapped in the target language (Harun, Massari, & Behak, 2013).

## 6. Conclusions

This study examined the effect of using L1 in FonF instructions, at Elementary and Intermediate levels, on the syntactic accuracy of the learners' sentences. Comparing the results of the pre-and post-tests, the researchers concluded that learners of both levels produced more accurate sentences regarding the selected grammatical structure with L1 instructions. It can be argued that using L1 to teach target structures can help avoid working memory overload and create a more supportive environment for learners to pick up the structures.

The position of L1 in the acquisition of L2 has been a matter of dispute. There have been various debates for or against applying the first language in EFL classrooms over the past few decades, with a consensus on the assumption that teachers and learners should use just L2. However, it is neither realistic nor practical to exclude L1 use totally in a language classroom in which both teachers and learners speak the same mother tongue (Cook, 2001; Ellis, 2012; Hall & Cook, 2012).

It cannot be denied that excessive use of L1 for teaching L2 can have unfavorable impacts on the process of learning, and thus, the expected productive outcomes cannot be achieved. However, teachers and learners should not be deprived of the benefits of systematic use of L1 in the classroom to accelerate the learning process and improve the quality of the learners' language productions.

Rather than totally forbidding the use of learners' mother tongue in class, the current research suggests that teachers use L1 in a FonF instruction to help learners with the deficiencies of working memory and also speed up the process of learning through metalinguistic exchanges in L1. Therefore, it seems more logical to re-evaluate the English-only policy, which has excluded L1 and all the benefits it could bring along from language classrooms, and research the promising opportunities of using L1 in the classroom.

The first and the most important group of stakeholders benefiting from the findings of this study is language learners. It has been repeatedly experienced by teachers that learners ask for further explanations about what was taught in their mother tongue at recess, while this could be systematically scheduled in their syllabus. This study indicated that learners at

different language proficiency levels benefit from L1-mediated FonF instruction, which should be noted by language institutes following the English-only policy strictly.

EFL teachers are the second stakeholders who need to receive instruction, which makes the teacher education system the third group of stakeholders, and also reflect on how L1 can appropriately be used in L2 language classes. Teachers should think more about the practical benefits of the timely use of L1 in their instructions rather than stick to the common long-established idea that using L1 can hinder learners' progress, which has been proven to be wrong.

In the end, it should be mentioned that this study was not without limitations and that there are some points worth mentioning. First, this study was focused on controlled production at the sentence level on the part of the language learners, that is, it didn't aim at investigating free production. This means that if we had the learners produce the grammatical forms in less controlled tests, we might come up with different results. This, of course, is an avenue of research open.

Second, doing such studies in different contexts with different language learners seems to shed more light on L1 effectiveness in L2 learning. Our participants were selected from a language institute with an English-only teaching policy while replicating such studies in contexts where L1 use is permitted might result in somehow different findings.

And third, our main argument in defense of the results of this study is rooted in what psycholinguistics has produced evidence for in concepts such as working, short and long-term memory. However, we need a satisfactory body of experimental research to find more on the way memory interacts with L1-mediation instruction.

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