Volume 20 Issue 37
Originally issued as G6



Global Journal of human-social science: G
Linguistics & Education
Volume 20 Issue 6 Version 1.0 Year 2020
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

# Contextual Variables of Learning English as a Second Language (ESL): A Comparative Focus on ESL Teaching Contexts

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*Keywords: contextual variables; global language; learner attitude; language status; ESL.*

*GJHSS-G Classification: FOR Code: 200399*




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# Contextual Variables of Learning English as a Second Language (ESL): A Comparative Focus on ESL Teaching Contexts

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## I. Introduction

One of the most striking language expansions to date has been the spread of English which has far exceeded the famous case, the spread of Latin during the Roman Empire (Strevens, 1981, p. 2). From being a language of a very small nation first it spread over the British Isles, then with the colonisation of America its spread increased. Some of this spread was the result of the migration of English people to the new colonies, such as New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. Speakers of English settled in new lands and continued to use English.

It was also used in those colonies under British administration where only a few British people settled permanently. Places like India and Ceylon, West Africa, Malaya and islands in the Pacific, and in the West Indian colonies like Jamaica where small communities of English speakers dominated the West Africans who were brought there as slaves.

The end of the colonial period, however, did not bring an end to the spread of English. Many of the new nations in former British colonies realised the importance of English not only as a language of commerce, science and technology, but also as an international language of communication, i.e. *lingua franca*. In some of these nations, most of the education in schools and advanced institutions is provided through the medium of English. Although other nations have decided to use their indigenous language as the medium of instruction in schools, English nevertheless is the main second language.

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### a) Literature Review

Platt, Weber & Ho (1984, p. 23) classify English in terms of its role and status as a medium of communication under three categories: English as a foreign language; English as a second language; and English as a first language. He argues that any language can be considered a foreign language, second language, or first language depending on factors such as the competence that the speakers have in the language, the function it fulfils in a community and at what stage the speakers may have acquired the language.

The globalization process fostered by computer technology has triggered unprecedented desire for learning English, even in countries where English is hardly used in day-to-day communication. The Internet has facilitated communication between members of different nations; World trade has integrated millions of people, even with minimal trade capacity, in day-to-day international business activities; Interactions between international social, economic, media and political organisations throughout the world have amounted to the levels that international communication became as regular as local. All these and other developments have contributed to the popularity of English worldwide. Learning English has become a desirable educational accomplishment for large sections of societies throughout the world, even for people who have hardly had anything to do with it. Thus, ESL teaching has gained a prominent place in national language policies worldwide.

The language-teaching field is divided into three major areas: *first language teaching*, *second language teaching* and *foreign language teaching*. Although there is a considerable degree of overlap in methods they are distinct in many respects. In countries where English is not a second language (such as Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Egypt, etc.), traditionally, English was taught as a foreign language, which uses a prescriptive method in



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grammar teaching concentrating on the development of passive acquisition skills (merely *rule guidance*) that would enable the learner to understand what s/he reads or hears. With the developments outlined above, these countries have made fundamental changes in English language teaching. They have replaced their traditional foreign language teaching methods with second language teaching models based upon the underlined principle, *"rules guided habit formation"*, which has a prescriptive approach to grammar teaching (rules) and considers grammar a means of habit formation to develop performance skills. Thus, these countries also adopted ESL as part of their language policies.

It is clear that English functions differently as an L2 contextual variable of ESL teaching at the country-domain level depending on its status of being first, second and foreign language. Thus, it is necessary to consider English as a contextual variable under the three distinct status categories defined by Kachru (1985) at the country- domain level as follows:

- ESL teaching in inner circle countries where English is L1.
- ESL teaching in outer circle countries where English is L2.
- ESL teaching in expanding circle countries where English is a foreign language.

*b) Contextual variables of ESL*

i. *English as a dominant contextual variable*

Participants of ESL programs in inner circle countries, such as the U.S.A., U.K., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc., consist of foreign workers, their children at school, and foreign students who pursue their tertiary education. ESL students in these countries come from a variety of different countries and have different L1s. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of people in these countries learn English as an L1. Foreign population in these countries use English as a lingua Franca, and thus, all of the ESL students use English as a principle medium of communication outside the classroom environment. This accessibility presents a desirable communicative environment for many people in expanding circle countries. A lot of people from these countries choose to participate in ESL programs to improve their English.

Almost all of the participants of ESL programs in outer circle countries are mainly part of the local population who have settled in these countries. ESL programs are part of regular and systematic school curricula. An overwhelming majority of populations in these countries are able to communicate in English. These societies are predominantly bilingual within the range described as *'balanced bilingual'* by Romain (1995, p. 14), which means that speakers in these countries are able to use English fluently equally as they can their local L1s. A number of these countries have developed English-based creole languages, such as the Singaporean English and English in the Philippines (Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984, p. 23) where students have the option of choosing English as L1 or L2 at school. ESL programs in these countries are fairly standardised within the framework of local national language policies by considering local L1s.

Participants of ESL programs in expanding circle countries almost entirely consist of natives of these countries using the official languages of these countries as their L1. English is not used as a second language in these countries, and the society is predominantly monolingual in this sense. A majority of these candidates do not use English outside their ESL classes, except for those who pursue their advanced education in institutions where English is used as the medium of instruction. Despite all the positive attitudes and institutional efforts, fluency seems to be a permanent major problem. No matter how high the competence level can be developed, the level of fluency and performance skills of an overwhelming majority of ESL learners fall too short to meet the criteria required for balanced bilingualism. Thus, it is appropriate to consider these learners as *'pseudo bilinguals'* in Romain's term (1995, p. 15) due to the fact that English being absent within a reachable communicative context. Some of these ESL candidates often visit inner circle countries to improve their English or pursue their post secondary education in English as good command of English is considered an indispensable prerequisite for good employment as well as being accepted as a positive social quality in these countries.

While maintaining English requires a special attention for ESL learners in expanding circle countries, the situation is entirely different in inner circle countries. In these countries ESL learners may face the deterioration of their L1:

> *Consideration of dialects and registers of a language and of the relationships between two languages includes the relative prestige of different languages and dialects and of the cultures and ethnic groups associated with them. Students whose first language has a low status vis a vis the second may lose their first language, perhaps feeling they have to give up their own linguistic and cultural background to join the more prestigious society associated with the target language.* (Walqui, 2000)

ii. *Students' knowledge of English*

Students' prior knowledge of English is a significant factor in their current learning. High school students who learn English as a second language in inner circle countries may possess skills ranging from conversational fluency acquired from contacts with the English-speaking world to formal knowledge obtained in English as a foreign language classes in their countries of origin. The extent and type of prior knowledge is an



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essential consideration in planning instruction. For example, a student with informal conversational English skills may have little understanding of English grammatical systems and may need specific instruction in English grammar to catch up with language skills necessary for their education. However, students with such low competence level would not be able to pursue education in English in expanding circle countries.

iii. *Distance between English and L1*

English can be more or less difficult to learn, depending on how different it is from the languages the learner already knows. Clyne (1982, p. 35) demonstrated that English was closest to Dutch, German and Italian compared to other languages such as Serbian, Croatian, Greek, Arabic, etc. as the former group also belonged to the Indo-European language family, like English. He also found that cultural similarity was another factor that affected language shift. First generation Dutch families started to use English at home while third generation Italians still used Italian within the family domain.

L1 structure similarity to English plays an important role for ESL learners. Learning the structures of English is more difficult for example for an L1 Turkish speaker compared to an L1 German speaker because Turkish is an agglutinative language with the SOV sentence structure while English is free with the SVO one which is closer to German in this respect. English may be even much more difficult to learn for Chinese and Japanese speakers because of difference in the alphabets. English uses an orthographic system whereas Chinese and Japanese use logographic systems. The aspect system of contrast 'perfective/ imperfective' that exists in all three tenses of English verbs may present difficulty for a speaker of Turkish because it does not exist in Turkish while it may provide convenience for native Indo- European language speakers.

At the Defence Language Institute in Monterey, California languages are placed in four categories depending on their average learning difficulty from the perspective of a native English speaker. The basic intensive language course, which brings a student to an intermediate level, can be as short as 24 weeks for languages such as Dutch or Spanish (Walqui, 2000), which are Indo European languages and use the same writing system as English, or as long as 65 weeks for languages such as Arabic, Korean, or Vietnamese, which are members of other language families and use different writing systems.

Differences in discourse structures between L1 and English are also an important contextual variable to consider, which influence comprehension of rhetorical sequences during reading and structuring written work and practice in English. Kaplan (1966) demonstrated that English discourse was linear and distinct from Russian discourse, which is digressive while other discourses in Asian languages were circular. Clyne's (1987) studies comparing English and German academic texts posit the view that English discourse presents episodes in a linear structure and it differs from German's discourse, which presents episodes in a digressive one.

iv. *Proficiency in L1*

The student's level of proficiency in the native language including not only oral language and literacy, but also metalinguistic development, training in formal and academic features of language use, and knowledge of rhetorical patterns and variations in genre and style affects acquisition of ESL. The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn English. This helps explain why Turkish, Chinese, Japanese foreign exchange students tend to be successful in Eng-L1-Ctrs high schools: They already have high school level proficiency in their native language. Similarly, students from expanding circle countries, such as Russia, Iran, Malaysia, etc. on exchange programs studying English programs at universities in Turkey are relatively successful for the same reason, their high level of proficiency in their own languages, which is one of the prerequisites to join these programs.

v. *Attitudes to L1*

Language attitudes in the learner, peer group, school, neighbourhood, and society at large can have an enormous effect on the ESL learning process, both positive and negative. It is vital that teachers and students examine and understand these attitudes. In particular, they need to understand that learning a second language does not mean giving up one's first language. Rather, it involves adding a new language in the learner's repertoire.

Furthermore, teachers should express their appreciation to the students' L1, bearing in mind the fact that linguistic skills and knowledge attained through L1 provide a potential source for students ESL learning. If their ways of communication talking outside of school are valued when used in appropriate contexts, students are more likely to be open to learning not only English but also other languages.

vi. *Learners and diverse needs*

In inner circle countries, foreign students come from diverse backgrounds and many of the ESL programs have diverse needs and goals. With adolescent language learners, factors such as peer pressure, the presence of role models, the level of home support, differences in cultural backgrounds and norms can strongly affect the desire and ability to learn a second language. Learners in this group cannot use their L1 in ESL classes; therefore, all the communication between students and the teacher takes place in English



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enabling students to practice everything they learn and all other issues come up in the class in English.

ESL learners in outer circle countries, as well as in expanding countries, come from similar backgrounds with the same L1. Members of the former groups are already fluent in English and they can easily communicate in English in the school environment by avoiding the use of their L1, whereas the members of the latter group have a strong tendency towards using their L1 during ESL classes.

A large proportion of ESL material used in expanding circle countries consists of the same materials published and used in inner circle countries. They may well serve for their purposes in those countries where they are published, however, it is important to emphasize here that linguistic context and ESL teaching requirements in expanding circle countries are totally inconsistent with the needs in inner circle countries where these materials are originally developed. Their knowledge contents and grammar instruction sequences are not consistent with expanding countries' curricular requirements and L1 grammar issues relevant to ESL teaching. Educators and students often complain about them being too repetitious, irrelevant and boring, along with being too costly.

Concerning ESL materials used in the U.S.A. Walqui, (2000) raises this issue with a different kind of complain:

*A basic educational principle is that new learning should be based on prior experiences and existing skills. Although this principle is known and generally agreed upon by educators, in practice it is often overshadowed by the administrative convenience of the linear curriculum and the single textbook. Homogeneous curricula and materials are problematic enough if all learners are from a single language and cultural background, but they are indefensible given the great diversity in today's classrooms. Such diversity requires a different conception of curricula and a different approach to materials. Differentiation and individualization are not a luxury in this context: They are a necessity.*

vii. *Diverse goals*

Learners' goals may determine (Gardner, 1989) how they use English, how native- like their pronunciation will be, how lexically elaborate and grammatically accurate their utterances will be, and how much energy they will expand to understand messages in the target language. Learners' goals can vary from wholly integrative, the desire to become a full member of the English-speaking world to primarily instrumental oriented toward specific goals such as communicating fluently with foreigners, academic or professional success. Educators working with English language learners must also consider whether the communities in which their students live, work, and study accept them, support their efforts, and offer them genuine English-learning opportunities.

viii. *Peer groups and role models*

Teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer groups. In ESL learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers. In inner circle countries peer pressure often reduces the desire of the student to work toward native pronunciation, because the sounds of the target language may be regarded as strange. For ESL learners speaking like a native speaker may unconsciously be regarded as a sign of no longer belonging to their native-language peer group. In working with secondary school students, it is important to keep these peer influences in mind and to foster a positive image for proficiency in a second language.

In inner circle countries belonging concerns do not exist, but there are other concerns, such as not being able to speak fluently, failure despite all the efforts and support by the family, lagging behind successful colleagues, being underestimated by peer group members.

Students need to have positive and realistic role models who demonstrate the value of being proficient in more than one language. It is also helpful for students to read about personal experiences of people from different countries and diverse cultures. Through discussions of challenges experienced by others, students can develop a better understanding of their own challenges.

ix. *Home support*

Rodriguez (1982) stressed that support from home is very important for successful second language learning. Some educators believe that parents of English language learners should speak only English in the home. However, far more important than speaking English is that parents value both the native language and English, communicate with their children in whichever language is most comfortable, and show support and interest in their children's progress.

x. *The learning process, styles and motivation*

When we think of second language development as a learning process, we need to remember that different students have different learning styles, that intrinsic motivation aids learning, and that the quality of classroom interaction matters a great deal. Research has shown that individuals vary greatly in the ways they learn a second language (Skehan, 1989). Some learners are more analytically oriented and try to analyze words and sentences in very small details. Others are more globally oriented, needing to experience overall patterns of language in meaningful contexts before making sense of the linguistic parts and forms. Some learners are more visually oriented while others more geared to sounds.



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According to Deci & Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation is related to basic human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Intrinsically motivated activities are those that the learner engages in for their own sake because of their value, interest, and challenge. Such activities present the best possible opportunities for learning.

Language learning does not occur as a result of the transmission of facts about language or from a succession of rote memorization drills. It is the result of opportunities for meaningful interaction with others in the target language. Therefore, lecturing and recitation are not the most appropriate modes of language use in the second language classroom. Teachers need to move toward more richly interactive language use, such as that found in instructional conversations (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) and collaborative classroom work (Adger, Kalyanpur, Peterson, & Bridger, 1995).

xi. *ESL instructors*

Until recently language teacher training programs in many expanding circle countries intended to train teachers for foreign language teaching. They were originally two-year diploma programs and most of their offsprings were not fluent in English themselves when they were recruited as English language teachers. Most of these teachers still work in current ESL programs as instructors and administrators. Moreover, education departments recruited a lot of people who had English-medium training in other professions to meet the increasing demand, particularly at state secondary institutions. These people lacked the skills essential to ESL teaching.

Relevant to this point, Newbrook (1988) reports that the local usage of English in Hong Kong is a lot more different from the standard norms. He argues that one of the reasons for that is the fact that most secondary school teachers and many tertiary teachers are themselves ethnic Chinese and they are in very many cases seriously misinformed as to the status of grammatical and lexical features; and that therefore, as the examples provided by their own usage, their teaching misleads students.

Historical development along with recent developments triggered by modern technology attributed English a unique status worldwide as well as placing more emphasis on ESL teaching and making it an important agenda for educators. As a language it functions uniquely at the international level. Its status functions as a tripartite contextual variable at the macro-context level in inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle countries dominating other variables of ESL teaching in these countries.

Contextual variables related to L1 and the learner, teaching and the teacher, and attitudes and norms vary and carry the characteristics of the country. Thus, ESL teaching is shaped along the lines these variables operate in the country, and, in this sense, these variables are subjective at the country level. Thus, it is not possible to determine a strict framework as to how an ideal ESL teaching should be done in a given county, however, it may be possible to improve ESL teaching by considering how these variables work and to what extent they influence ESL teaching.

c) *Research questions*

Considering the above contextual variables the present study intends to answer the following research questions:

- How do Turkish and English function as contextual variables in the ESL classroom teaching context in Turkey, which can be classified as an expanding circle country?
- Are there any differences between the way native and non-native English teachers influence the ESL instruction/learning process in the classroom context, and if any, what positive and negative impacts such differences cause from the learner's point of view?

## II. The Study

a) *The context of the study*

The study was conducted in two Upper-Intermediate Level English preparatory classes, coded as Class A and Class B, with students of similar linguistic backgrounds, and it was based on the observations of three English language teachers' classroom practice. Class A had 16 students and Class B had 13 students. The students were predominantly high-school offsprings of native Turkish speakers who were qualified to enrol the university's Fine Arts programs after a university entry exam and who were subsequently given a proficiency and placement exams and placed at the prep school's B2 level ESL program, which is the highest level of the four gradual levels, B2, B1, C2, C1. The ESL program at this level consists of classroom teaching of 27 lessons a week concentrating on the skill development areas in Reading, Writing, Grammar, Listening and ESP shared by a separate instructor for each skill.

b) *Participants and instruments*

The participants and instruments of the study were three female English language teachers and three classroom observations based on their in-class performances respectively. Two of the participants observed in the study were non-native speakers (coded as NNEST1 and NNEST2) with Turkish L1, and the other was a native speaker (coded as NEST) of English. All of the participants had been working for the preparatory school for over a reasonable period of time and they were all well known to be amongst the most appreciated teachers in the preparatory school for their above average teaching qualities.



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c) *Procedures*

NNEST1 and NEST were observed separately during their in-class teaching activities in Class A, and NNEST2 was observed in Class B. NNEST1 and NNEST2 were the ESP instructors of Classes A and B respectively, and they both used the same ESP art text titled *"Art and Truth"* containing two parts with some vocabulary and comprehension exercises after each part. NEST was the Writing instructor of Class A and but for the purpose of this study she used another text titled *"Smoking among the Youth"* with some content relevance to ESP as an introductory reading text to in-class writing. Thus, during the observation stage of the study, all the three participants performed the same teaching activities, two of them using the same ESP text and the other an ESP related reading text. It would be appropriate, here, to mention that ESP teaching involved similar activities performed in reading classes except that ESP texts contained passages in the area of arts.

Prior to the observations the participants were notified individually in person that they would be observed for an hour of in-class teaching period, but they were not aware of each other's observations for what specific purpose they would be observed. NNEST1 and NNEST2 were told to continue as they had chosen with their own ESP teaching programs; however it was almost certain that they would both start off the same ESP text during the observation as both of them would be observed in their first teaching hours of their weekly ESP syllabus. NEST was requested to use a reading text of her choice in the way she would use an ESP reading text as she had previously done in her ESP teaching. The participants, observations, classes, and the topic contents of the material used during the observations in the study can be summarised as follows:

*Table 1*

| Observations | Classes | Teachers | Material | Number of Students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Class A | NNEST 1 | *Art and Truth* | 16 |
| 2 | Class A | NEST | *Smoking among the Youth* | 16 |
| 3 | Class B | NNEST 2 | *Art and Truth* | 13 |

## III. Results

a) *Observation 1*

The lesson began with NNEST1's brain storming activities initiated with asking students various questions intended to introduce the topic of the reading material and triggering the students' response related to the topic. The teacher used Turkish for the instruction and Turkish and English in the introduction of the synonyms of the words *'art'* and *'truth'* used in the topic and in the definition of the dichotomy implied by these words. Some students responded voluntarily without guidance. Those who did not response were also drawn in successfully by direct questions put to them in Turkish; though, they were also attentive observing closely whatever happens in the class. Before the reading materials were distributed everyone had become familiar with what the text was about.

The text was read out sentence by sentence loudly by different students pointed out by the teacher randomly starting with the most reluctant student and continuing on in turns by getting everyone to do active reading stopping after every sentence where a through comprehension feedback was obtained and explanation given by the teacher. After each sentence the teacher asked if there was anything that they did not understand and she got other students to respond the unknown vocabulary subsequently she wrote their equivalences and other derivational forms of the unknown words in English. The students' responses were mainly answers to the questions and comments on unknown vocabulary in Turkish. The teacher emphasised some of the vocabularies during the course of the reading activity stressing their significance within the textual context and the general context of arts. Most of these vocabularies are underlined or printed in bold in the text such as *appealing, passion, expression, contemporary, crucifix*, etc.

The first observation was concluded with the completion of the exercises referring to the first part which included vocabulary matching and synonym/ antonym detection in the text. There was again full participation in this activity guided by the teacher and performed by turn taking of the students and sharing ideas on the vocabulary, their meanings and functions in the text. This activity enabled students to focus on the information and rhetoric developed until the end of this part.

Teacher - student and student - student communication and feedback were primarily conducted in Turkish. While lacking efficient use of output at this stage, there was a clear indication that the students had in fact understood the text they used during the observation and most the essential contents of all the previous texts they went through in the class in the previous ESP lessons. This was evident from their responses to vocabulary and expressions referring to concepts used in previous reading materials. Although in Turkish, their responses clearly indicated that they had built up a satisfactory level of general knowledge in arts area, which is one of the primary objectives of the



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ESP program syllabi of the preparatory school given the fact that this observation took place in the 10th week of the 13-week instruction period during which a gradual increase in general knowledge in faculty based content was set as a primary goal.

*b) Observation 2*

The lesson began with brain storming activities started by NEST successfully drawing students' attention on the topic referring the notions the topics imply such as *danger, health* and *habit*. This activity also included the introduction of the subtopics that would be used in the follow-up writing activities as content components, such as *government bans, prohibitions in the advertisement, the role played by the media,* etc. Although the instruction and meta-language used in this introductory stage was entirely in English, it was clear, from their responses closely followed the sequences of instructions set out by the teacher, that the students were quiet capable of understanding the instructions.

The text was read out, in a similar fashion as in the first observation, loudly by the students sentence by sentence each time by different students chosen by the instructor randomly leading everyone to participate in the activity. After every sentence there was a feedback break in the reading during which unknown words were explained by those who knew their equivalences in English (sometimes in Turkish) and the instructor. The pauses also included the teacher's explanations of vocabulary by introducing antonyms/synonyms, referring to the vocabulary used in ESP at this level, and stressing the relevance of these vocabularies to be used as part of the discourse content in the follow-up writing activities.

The students participated in this feedback process by using English; but, despite all the efforts and guidance for the teacher, the use of English was limited to the phrase level and there was no fluent flow of communication in English throughout the observation. There was a strong propensity towards using Turkish in student-student communication on occasions where the meaning of the vocabulary was difficult to obtain through negotiation as a result of not having instant access to accurate equivalence to match the desired connotative reference in English, such as *deter*, *insist* and *measure,* or the notion in question being too difficult to understand from its definition in English, such as *macho person smoking* and *seductive advertisement*. The teacher used a positive feedback strategy on these occasions by allowing students to exchange views in Turkish and asking what they meant in Turkish. The teacher was also able to use her awareness in the ESP syllabus to facilitate comprehension by drawing the students' attention on certain concepts used in English texts indicating the similarities between certain expressions used in ESP texts and her own teaching material, like *phenomenon* and *promotion.*

The students' participation was successfully obtained through the instructor's interpersonal communication skill, positive attitude and considered behaviour, which led to almost full comprehension of the text as an effective reading activity for the preparation of the students for their follow-up in-class writing activities.

*c) Observation 3*

The text was introduced by NNEST2 asking questions to the students and drawing their attention on the thematic content area of the text. The teacher used English during this introduction stage but the students mainly responded in Turkish although they understood the teacher's questions in English. This introduction stage constituted a lot of student-student communication in Turkish in an attempt to have some feedback on the accuracy and correctness of their own responses along with some teacher-student and student-student negotiation on meaning. The relevant subtopics related to the main topics were introduced through the students' contribution and those who involved in this process fully understood the general and subtopics that the title *Art and Truth* implied. Although just a few, some of the students seemed to be totally uninterested demonstrating obvious lack of interest and reluctance, and talking to the colleague sitting next to them, though the instructor tried her best to engage them in the activities.

The introduction of topic followed by loud reading of the text by the students sentence by sentence each time a different student chosen randomly by the teacher including the ones who demonstrated a serious degree of reluctance. After each sentence there was a feedback break during which the teacher explained unknown vocabulary and expressions by allowing others to express their opinions. The teacher used both Turkish and English during the feedback breaks to ensure that everything was fully comprehended by all the participants. The vocabulary work included drawing the students' attention on the synonyms and antonyms in English, word derivation and their usage in the context of art, pronunciation practice, and equivalences in Turkish, etc. The students were inclined to use Turkish in their responses although the teacher tried to obtain them in English.

From the vocabulary exercises at the end of the first part of the text it was clear that the text was satisfactorily comprehended by the class, even some of those who were reluctant to participate in the reading activities when asked to take their turn to answer. Another point that is worth to consider arising from this observation was the fact that the students were more responsive to answering questions and participating in activities when Turkish was used as a medium of instruction or on occasions when the teacher switched to Turkish from English.



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## IV. Conclusions

This study shows that instruction in L1 in ESL teaching plays a major role in comprehending the input from the written text, especially in ESP areas, which is an important process of knowledge development. This objective can also be met by using L2 as the medium of instruction for L2 input if it is used carefully at higher levels, but input instruction in L1 at lower levels is essential particularly in areas where the definitions of vocabularies and expressions in L2 are difficult for the L2 learner to understand. However, using L2 as the medium of instruction and meta-language functions as an effective L2 output factor contributing to fluency and the improvement of oral skills in L2.

Instructors of native L2 speakers can trigger L2 output in ESL programs facilitating communication and enabling students to use L2 in the classroom context. They should be informed of the other syllabi content areas and instruction sequences of the contents so that the students can find opportunity to communicate the knowledge acquired in other lessons through their guidance. This activity seems to be difficult accomplished by a native L1 instructor as the tendency towards using L1 in the classroom context is very difficult to avoid, perhaps it is almost impossible unless they are compelled to do so, particularly at lower levels, due to the fact that students can understand the subject matter in their own language much better and a lot more quickly than instruction given in L2. Indeed, this study proves that absence of English as an L2 within the macro-context level in Turkey, to put it differently, its status as a foreign language, functions as a dominant contextual variable causing a significant handicap for fluency development in ESL programs, and thus, constituting its macro-level contextual variable characteristics in the classroom domain.

Interpersonal skills and awareness of the contents of other syllabi of ESL teachers are just as import as their linguistic skills as they contribute to the creation of a fruitful communicative environment in the classroom domain, the utilization of knowledge acquired in other lessons, and students' participation. Although relevant to all teaching domains, motivation and empowerment are rather much more significant issues in the ESL teaching context because it is an environment where linguistic shortcomings may cause permanent dissatisfaction and feeling of weakness for the learner and it is an environment for the learner that is difficult to bear and cope with in which the learner's personality traits constitute unpredictable responses and behaviour patterns. This issue may be a point to consider in interpreting some overt in-class behaviour of students such as avoidance of learning, underestimation of others' progress, distraction of lessons, etc.

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