〔研究ノート〕

The Effect of Teachers' Language Choice on Students' Learning of Grammar - First Language or Target Language?

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1. Introduction

The importance of qualitative and quantitative target language（TL）input by teachers in foreign language classrooms has been emphasized in the field of language teaching（Ellis, 1984; Gass, 1997; Nunan, 1991）. It is argued that high quality TL input is indispensable for students to acquire TL, especially in an environment where TL is not commonly used outside the classroom. Therefore, the use of TL in the classroom is not only encouraged, but it sometimes is determined to be the only language that can be used in the classroom. On the other hand, recent studies argue that, even though TL input is important, it is still appropriate to use students' first language（L1）in language classrooms（Auerbach, 1993; Brooks-Lewis, 2009; G. Cook, 2010; V. Cook, 2001; Forman, 2012; Hall & G. Cook, 2012; Kang, 2008; Levine, 2003; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Stern, 1992; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull & Arnett 2002; Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005）. Some studies suggest that banning the use of L1 completely in foreign language classrooms is not the most effective way to teach TL. In other words, L1 can facilitate students' learning if it is used in a controlled and effective way. However, few studies have offered empirical data to examine how teachers' language choice is related to students' learning. Therefore, the present study examines the effect of teachers' language choices in foreign language classrooms.

2. Literature Review

The exclusive use of TL in language classrooms has been favored since the late 19th century, strengthened by widely recognized theories such as the L1=L2 learning hypothesis（Ellis, 1984; Krashen, 1981）, comprehensible input hypothesis（Krashen, 1982）, and output hypothesis（Swain, 1985）.

However, for the last two decades, challenges have been made to the long held dominance of exclusive TL use in language classrooms, claiming that the role of L1 in language teaching deserves reexamination. Through their comprehensive research, Hall and G. Cook（2012）conclude that "judicious" use of L1 can facilitate learning. Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain（2009）list some positive aspects of L1 use in aiding the learning of TL. Several empirical studies also support effective and legitimate use of L1 in language classrooms. For example, in a study of a French immersion classroom,

Swain and Lapkin (2000) found that students' use of L1 had important cognitive and social functions. V. Cook (2001) described the positive use of L1 by teachers' in conveying meaning, explaining grammar, organizing classes and in students' collaborative learning and strategy use. She stated that "bringing the L1 back from exile may lead not only to the improvement of existing teaching methods but also to innovations in methodology" (p. 419). Forcing students into an exclusive TL environment might even make them "feel disoriented and powerless" (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, p. 70), which could be a source of demotivation. Kang (2008) also attributed students' loss of interest in learning to a teacher's exclusive TL use. Brooks-Lewis (2009) described positive effects of including L1 in an English classroom in Mexico, such as Spanish-speaking students' reduced anxiety, an enhanced affective environment for leaning, and development of learner-centered curriculum. Forman (2012) observed teachers' use of L1 and TL in terms of their pedagogic function in 19 hours of English classes in a provincial Thai university and noted that translating seemed to provide "accurate understanding of TL for all students." Levine (2003) also indicated that both TL and L1 seem to serve important functions in the language classroom. Nagy and Robertson (2009) pointed out that teachers' L1 use mediates between the TL text and the students who do not understand the text in TL. Macaro (2009) examined differences in methods of teaching vocabulary and argued that it can be considered legitimate for teachers to provide an L1 equivalent because it would lightens learners' cognitive load and it sometimes provides "cognitive and metacognitive opportunities available for learners" (p. 49). Jingxia (2010) examined the attitudes of teachers and students in Chinese universities toward the teachers' code switching to L1 in English classrooms and concluded that L1 plays a positive role in the process of TL teaching and learning. All these empirical studies tell us that L1 deserves a place in language classrooms.

On the other hand, researchers in the field agree that students should have appropriate exposure to TL input in language classrooms. Especially in foreign language learning environments, in which students have no direct exposure to TL outside of the classroom, it is crucial that high quality TL input is amply provided. Turnbull (2001), in response to V. Cook (2001), warns teachers of overusing L1 by pointing out that "licensing teachers to speak the L1 [in language classroom] will lead to an overuse of the L1 by many teachers" (p. 536), although he notes that maximum use of TL does not mean total avoidance of L1, and that "use of L1 and TL should be seen as complementary, depending on the characteristic and states of the language learning process" (p. 535).

One may wonder, then, how much L1 could be legitimately used in language classrooms. As a first step to address this question, several researchers have investigated how often L1 is actually used by teachers in language classrooms and found that there is indeed tremendous variety. For example, Duff and Polio (1990) observed 13 different foreign language classes in a university in California and found that the percentage of

TL used by teachers varied from 10% to 100%（p. 156）. Teachers in their study also showed some degree of variation in two different lessons. Turnbull（2001）recorded four teachers of French using L1 and TL over eight weeks. The teachers' use of TL varied from 24% to 72%. Other similar studies also reported that the amount of L1 used by teachers in language classrooms differed significantly（Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Liu, Ahn, Beak, & Han, 2004; McMillan & Turnbull, 2009; Nagy & Robertson, 2009; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002; Stern, 1992）.

Stern（1992）suggested that rather than being opposed to each other, the use of L1 and TL should form a continuum and that the balance of L1 and TL should depend on the purpose and context of learning. Turnbull（2001）cited Calman and Daniel（1998）and Shapson, Kaufman, and Durward（1978）who suggested that acceptable use of TL should be 75% and 95%, respectively. Instead of presenting a definitive TL/L1 ratio, several researchers suggested that teachers' professional judgment should determine L1 use. McMillan and Rivers（2011）, who investigated teachers' attitudes on use of L1 in Japanese universities, suggested that teachers should be able to determine optimal use of L1 by gauging students' proficiency and the difficulties of the task. Forman（2012）reported that teachers' judicious use of L1 in the classroom is both principled and productive. Ustunel and Seedhouse（2005）analyzed teachers' code switching in an English classroom in a Turkish university and concluded that it was "inextricably entwined" with the pedagogical focus and context of the lesson. Macaro（2009）suggested that teachers' judgment is central to the establishment of an optimal level of L1 use. After reviewing ample literature, Hall and G. Cook（2012）stated that the use of L1 in language classrooms should be decided mainly on the basis of "teachers' and learners' legitimacy, value, and appropriate classroom function"（p. 294）. McMillan and Turnbull（2009）interviewed French immersion teachers on their beliefs regarding their language choice in the classroom. On the basis of their findings, they advised that teachers should have confidence in their beliefs and practices rather than "blindly following official policy, or feeling guilty for adopting pedagogically principled code switching"（p. 34）.

Teachers' judgment seems crucial in deciding how much and when to use L1 in language classrooms. To aid teachers in making such important decisions, several researchers have proposed constructive guidelines for the use of L1 in language classrooms（G. Cook, 2010; Duff & Polio, 1990; Littlewood & Yu, 2011）. Such suggestions would help teachers in determining the judicious use of L1 in the TL/L1 maze.

However, even though research justifies trusting teachers to make decisions about their L1 use, and despite the fact that many studies suggest that the appropriate use of L1 could be beneficial to students' learning, a TL only policy still prevails nationally in many countries such as the UAE, Mexico, and South Korea for teaching English, and in Europe for teaching any language（Hall & G. Cook, 2012）. In Hong Kong, all English lessons in primary schools should be conducted in English, and in China, the Ministry

of Education encourages teachers' maximum use of English in high school English classrooms (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). However, some studies show that national TL only policies create a burden for teachers because it is not always efficient to comply with the policy for practical reasons. For example, Kang (2008) described one teacher's conflict in using L1 against the "Teaching English through English" (TETE) policy of South Korea, mainly in order to maintain classroom discipline and enhance student comprehension. She suggested that teachers should be cautious about the TETE approach because full practice of TETE is not always beneficial to students who have low proficiency. Liu et al. (2004) also reported that a considerably low ratio of TL (32% on average) was actually spoken in English classrooms in South Korea despite the national policy. McMillan and Turnbull (2009) criticized the French immersion policy throughout Canada because it does not reflect the current direction in the field of SLA research of accepting judicious and principled L1 use in language classrooms. Nagy and Robertson (2009) suggested that some teachers in Hungary extensively use L1 even though the national curriculum implies that teachers are expected to use TL most of the time. In short, the recent progress in the research regarding L1 use in language classrooms is not yet widely reflected in the national language education policies of many countries, which sometimes causes conflict or guilt among teachers who occasionally resort to L1 for the sake of efficiency and to improve students' learning. Actually, a number of studies report that teachers feel guilty for using L1 in their language classrooms (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 2009; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). Such feelings of guilt could create obstacles in delivering efficient lessons, and they should be dispelled because L1 has a legitimate role in language classrooms as has been repeatedly reported by a number of researchers. It is time for policy makers to examine up-to-date research findings more carefully and incorporate constructive suggestions for efficient ways of teaching language into the national policy.

3. Background

In this section, the current state of English education in Japan will be discussed. In spite of a number of studies that describe positive role of L1 in language classrooms, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has decided that all English classes in Japanese high schools should be basically conducted in English (TL) starting in 2013 (MEXT, 2009a). In Japan, the shift from a traditional grammar-translation teaching style to a more communicative teaching style has yet to be completed (McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Morizumi, Jimbo, Okada, & Terauchi, 2010; Nishimuro & Borg, 2013; Nishino, 2011), which led MEXT to take a bolder step and make it an official policy to teach English through English in the hope of accelerating the shift. For teachers who had been trained to deliver their lessons by depending on L1 to a great extent, this major alteration in the policy seemed rather shocking. Some teachers have pointed out difficulties in complying with the policy such as students'

and teachers' proficiency, the preparation for college examinations, and the lack of appropriate teacher training (Tanabe, 2011; Yomiurishinbun, 2013). Indeed, according to the MEXT's research in 2010, the percentage of teachers who reported using TL more than 50% of the time in language classrooms was 54.5%, even for communication oriented classes (Oral Communication I), and 15.6% for integrative classes (English I) (MEXT, 2010). Another study conducted by the Action Research Center for Language Education (2012) asked 50 high school English teachers about their intention of using TL and L1 the following year. About 20% of the teachers reported that they planned to conduct their lessons mostly in TL, and about 30% of the teachers said that they did not plan to use much TL in their lessons. Tanabe (2011) asked 123 English teachers in Japan about the percentage of TL use in their English classrooms. Only 9.3% of the teachers used TL more than 50% of the class time in general. Surprisingly, 61.9% of the teachers reported that they used TL less than 25% of the class time. Another study by Tanabe (2012) asked university students about the English education they had had in high school. The result confirmed the teachers' report: 55.3% of the students answered that they had not had regular English lessons conducted mostly (70 to 80%) in TL. According to Tayama (2011), a number of Japanese teachers believe that it is not possible to conduct English classes exclusively in TL.

As for university English classes, it is largely left to each school, department, or instructor of the class to decide the details of the lessons. There is no empirical research on the ratio of English/Japanese use for language instruction in English classes. While some universities claim that English classes are taught in English only, many other universities still let teachers use L1 extensively in English classes. However, the MEXT's decision to require that teachers teach English through English would certainly affect university English classrooms because students who become familiar with this pedagogy in high school would expect exclusive TL teaching in universities. The present study was conducted as an experimental study on how exclusive TL teaching would influence students' learning in university foreign language classrooms.

Among three universities (two private, one national) in which the researcher was teaching when the present study was conducted, one has a department policy of teaching some of the English classes in English (a few exceptions are made to this policy for advanced-content classes due to the specialty of the content materials), and the other two schools have no explicit policy on what language should be used for instruction in language classrooms. To accommodate the design of the study, the research was conducted in a school without any explicit language policy. The school has a department of English, and it offers a rich curriculum for learning English as a foreign language. All the students who enroll in the English department need to take a variety of English classes to fulfill the requirement for graduation. Among these classes are English grammar, writing, reading, listening, TOEIC preparation, and integrative English (I. E.). While some classes are taught by instructors who share the same L1 (Japanese) with

the students, other classes, such as I. E. and listening classes, are mostly conducted by teachers whose native language is the TL (English). Naturally, those classes taught by native teachers are mainly conducted in TL, although occasionally L1 is used by both teachers and students. On the other hand, teachers whose L1 is Japanese differ to a great extent in their use of L1 in their classrooms. While English is encouraged in some classes (such as writing and reading classes), no explicit obligations are imposed on teachers regarding the language choice for other classes (such as grammar and TOEIC preparation classes). Among the classes the researcher was teaching at the time of this study, grammar class was chosen for the study for the reason discussed below.

MEXT states that all English classes should be taught in English, including teaching grammar. However, it is often said that it is better to teach grammar in L1 (V. Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio 1990; Forman, 2012; Kurauchi, 2008), and a number of empirical studies that analyzed teachers' actual L1 use in the classroom found that teaching grammar is one of the most frequent triggers for teachers to switch to L1 (V. Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio, 1990; Forman, 2012; Liu et al., 2004; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Jingxia, 2010; Kang, 2008; Kurauchi, 2008; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002). Even Turnbull (2001), who values TL input by teachers quite strongly, also agrees with the idea of using L1 to explain "a difficult grammar concept or unknown word" (p. 535). According to Kurauchi (2008), students also want teachers to use L1 to explain grammar, a tendency that is stronger among students with lower proficiency. The differences between English and Japanese in terms of linguistic structure are also an important factor to consider. Duff and Polio (1990) found that several teachers mentioned L1/TL differences as a factor affecting the amount of TL used in their classrooms. A similar opinion was expressed by teachers in Jingxia's study (2010). If the differences between two languages are large, then teachers feel that students might not understand their explanations in TL.

Is it more efficient to explain grammar in Japanese (L1), then? If explanations are in L1 instead of TL, would students learn better? Would L1 instruction be more helpful to students with lower proficiency than to those with higher proficiency? To date, few empirical studies have investigated the effect of teachers' language choice on students' learning of grammar. Therefore, the present study aims to provide empirical data on the efficacy of L1 and TL in teaching grammar. Students' proficiency is also taken into consideration because students with lower proficiency tend to prefer that grammar be explained in L1, and teachers also seem to believe that it is more efficient to resort to L1 especially for students with lower proficiency. Two research questions (RQs) are proposed in order to examine how teachers' language choice affects students' learning of grammar in language classrooms.

RQ1. Does the teachers' language choice (L1 or TL) in teaching grammar affect students' learning?

RQ2. Does the effect of teachers' language choice in teaching grammar vary according to students' proficiency?

4. Method

4. 1. Participants

The participants of this study were the first year students majoring in English in a middle-sized private university located in a suburb of Tokyo. Students in four classes (hereafter called class A, B, C, and D) in their first year participated in the study. Data of the students who were absent from the treatment lesson, the placement test or post-test, or whose first language is not Japanese were not analyzed. As a result, data from the remaining 68 students were used in the present study. All students had taken the TOEIC Bridge test as a placement test one month prior to enrolling in the university. The TOEIC Bridge test score indicated that participants' English proficiency was intermediate. The descriptive statistics for the placement test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The Descriptive Statistics for the Placement Test

Class	n	M	SD
A	13	88.00	10.42
B	17	89.29	9.21
C	19	123.89	2.35
D	19	128.52	1.30

The results of a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference among groups regarding placement test scores. A post hoc test (Tukey HSD) showed that differences between classes A and B and classes C and D are significant (F (3, 64) = 181.435, p = .000), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Result of the Tukey Test

	A	B	C	D
A			*	*
B			*	*
C	*	*		
D	*	*		

*$p < .01$

4. 2. Procedure

Three teachers (two female, one male), including the researcher herself, taught a grammar class in which grammar is taught exclusively. Although some communicative

activities are conducted in the class for students to utilize the focus grammar points, this grammar class is taught in a traditional way; teachers mainly explain grammar rules and students complete some exercises using those rules. Teacher 1 (male) has six years of experience in teaching grammar class at the school, teacher 2 (female) has four years, and teacher 3 (female) has eight years of teaching experience. All of the teachers are native speakers of Japanese (L1) who are fluent in English (TL). As mentioned earlier, grammar class is usually conducted mostly in Japanese, but teacher 3 used English (TL) exclusively during one 90-minute grammar lesson in classes B and D for the purpose of the study. The textbook used for the grammar class, *Make a Fresh Start with English* (Arai, Ikegami, & Nishiyama, 2013), has sample English sentences relevant to the target grammar points with explanations written in Japanese. Teacher 3 only used sample sentences from the textbook to explain the target grammar points. She did not make students pay attention to the grammar explanations in the textbook written in Japanese, nor did she give any grammatical explanation in Japanese. Instead, after giving simple grammar explanations in English, she deductively taught the target grammar points by introducing ample additional sentences as examples. Two other teachers (teachers 1 and 2) used mostly Japanese to explain the target grammar points in classes A and C. All the lessons were conducted in April 2013, which was at the beginning of the semester. The focus grammar points were how to construct basic English sentences, such as positive, negative, and question sentences (yes/no questions and questions with interrogatives such as who, when, why, which, where, and how). After the lesson, an immediate post-test was given to examine students' learning of the target grammar points. The post-test had 15 items and its reliability was sufficient (Cronbach's α = .801). A brief questionnaire was attached to the test to investigate students' preference in teachers' TL use, which is not discussed here since it is not the focus of the present study. Due to schedule constraints, it was not possible to conduct any delayed post-test. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 11.0.

5. Results

5. 1. Proficiency Tests

The results of the placement test (Table 1) show that there was a significant difference between classes A and B and classes C and D. Therefore, 68 participants were divided into four groups according to proficiency (higher and lower) and instruction type (L1 and TL). Students in Class A had lower proficiency and received L1 instruction. Students in Class B had lower proficiency and received TL instruction. Students in Class C had higher proficiency and received L1 instruction. Students in Class D had higher proficiency and received TL instruction. To ensure that proficiency was identical between groups that received L1 instruction and TL instruction, a 2 (proficiency: lower and higher) × 2 (instruction: L1 and TL) two-way ANOVA was performed. The result

shows that the interaction and the main effect of the instruction was not significant, F (1, 64) = 1.059, p = .307 and F (1, 64) = 3.337, p = .072. On the other hand, it shows a significant main effect of proficiency, F (1, 64) = 536.416, p = .000, which indicates that the scores of the higher groups were significantly higher than those of the lower groups. Thus, it is confirmed that participants in classes A and B did not differ in terms of proficiency and neither did those in classes C and D, but there was a significant difference in proficiency between classes A, B and C, D.

5. 2. Post-test

The descriptive statistics for the post-test are shown in Table 3. In order to examine the effect of instruction type (L1 and TL) on students' learning, a 2 (proficiency: lower and higher) × 2 (instruction: L1 and TL) two-way ANOVA was performed. The interaction and the main effect of the instruction were not significant, F (1, 64) = .430, p = .514 and F (1, 64) = .259, p = .613, while the main effect of proficiency was significant, F (1, 64) = 10.450, p = .002. This result indicates that the instruction type did not have a significant effect on the learning of the target grammar points.

Table 3

The Descriptive Statistics for the Post-test

Class	n	M	SD
A (Lower/L1)	13	9.23	2.77
B (Lower/TL)	17	9.11	2.91
C (Higher/L1)	19	11.21	2.12
D (Higher/TL)	19	12.10	4.20

6. Discussion

The results of the study demonstrate that languages used by teachers (L1 or TL) for grammar instruction did not significantly affect students' learning in both lower and higher proficiency classes. In other words, whether a teacher explains grammar in Japanese (L1) or in English (TL), the learning of students would not be significantly different. This result seems to contradict teachers' beliefs previously reported in many studies that grammar instruction is more effective in L1 than TL. For example, almost half of the teachers who participated in the study by Duff and Polio (1990) said that they consider students' L1 a more effective medium than TL for introducing important grammar points. One teacher in their study used L1 90% of the time, arguing that "grammatical awareness was of great concern" (p. 160). In the study by Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002), a teacher who did not use L1 in listening activities did use L1 in grammar activities. Littlewood and Yu (2011) and V. Cook (2001) found that teachers used L1 when explaining difficult grammar points. Turnbull (2001), who strongly

values TL input by teachers, also agreed that it is efficient for teachers to switch to L1 in order to ensure students' understanding of a difficult grammar concept.

However, these studies are based merely on what teachers believe. No empirical data is available to demonstrate that what teachers believe is actually true. It is said that teachers' beliefs are shaped by a number of factors such as their experiences as language learners, pre- and in-service teacher training, and classroom practices (Borg, 2003). Teachers' beliefs are "working principles or maxims which teachers consciously or unconsciously refer to as they teach" (Richards, 1996, p. 282 also cited in McMillan & Turnbull, 2009, p. 19). Liu et al. (2004) report that teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence their decisions to use L1 in language classrooms, resulting in teaching grammar in L1. Although such beliefs may reflect the reality in language classrooms in many cases, there is no empirical data to support them regarding teachers' language use in teaching grammar.

Given the fact that such empirical studies are scarce, it would be worth looking into the few studies that do suggest a link between teachers' use of TL or L1 and students' achievement in some aspects of TL proficiency, although such studies are somewhat contradictory. Two studies introduced by Stern (1992) reported that use of L1 resulted in better achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. Macaro (2009) compared the leaning of students who received the L1 equivalent of new vocabulary and students who received L2 definitions of the same vocabulary and found no significant difference in the learning of the new vocabulary. However, several other studies suggest that teachers' use of TL resulted in better learning. Turnbull (2001) reported that the students of teachers who spoke TL most frequently outperformed students whose teacher spoke less TL on many measures of general TL proficiency and on achievement tests. Turnbull and Arnett (2002) also list a number of studies that demonstrate the correlation between teachers' use of TL and students' TL achievement. Unfortunately, there is no empirical study that focuses on the effect of TL instruction with respect to grammar teaching. Thus, the findings of present study are of great value, because they provide empirical evidence that exclusive TL grammar instruction does not hinder students' learning of grammar. Students did understand teachers' grammar instruction both in L1 and TL without showing any significant difference in learning, contrary to what many teachers believe.

One aspect that should be taken into consideration in evaluating the results of the present study, however, is the fact that the grammar points in the treatment lesson were rather basic and simple ones relating to the use of positive, negative, and interrogatives sentences. These grammar points can be fairly well explained deductively without using L1, and because of their simplicity, students seemed to have no difficulty understanding teachers' instruction in TL. If the grammar points in the lesson had been more advanced and complex structures such as subjunctives or the use of participial adjectives, then the result could have been different. Nagy and Robertson (2009) refer

to the complexity of task in their analysis of four English lessons in primary schools in Hungary. They report that teachers express the need to use L1 more when explaining complex and spontaneous materials compared to simple and predictable activities, which is quite understandable. If the focus grammar point is complex and complicated, then it would be more efficient for teachers to use L1 judiciously. Teachers should constantly judge the difficulty of the target material relative to the students' proficiency when deciding whether to use TL exclusively or to supplement with L1.

Another aspect to consider is time constraints. It takes more time to ensure students' understanding when grammar instruction is conducted in TL. As a matter of fact, a number of teachers mentioned time as one of the main constraints that hinder exclusive TL use in language classrooms (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Turnbull, 2001; Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005). Furthermore, the preparation for and delivery of TL-exclusive lessons take considerable time, especially if the textbook is written in L1 and the material in the textbook is not sufficient, as was the case in the present study. Teacher 3 used many additional TL sentences to supplement the sample sentences in the textbook, and she also prepared many drill exercises to make sure students understood the grammar points. Such preparation takes considerable time and could be a substantial burden for teachers who are already busy with their assigned work.

In order for teachers to deliver simple yet well-organized grammar instruction that is easy enough for students to follow in TL, there should be more opportunities for teacher training. It is imperative to provide support for teachers to plan such lessons, especially in a country like Japan, where teachers' use of L1 in language classrooms has been a widely held tradition for a long time. The lack of appropriate teacher training for planning TL-exclusive lessons has often been pointed out (Kanatani, 2012, 2013; Morizumi, et al., 2010; Yomiurishinbun, 2013), and this situation should be improved with great urgency. It is also important that teachers build confidence in their TL proficiency, because teachers sometimes refer to their lack of confidence as a reason to use L1 in the classroom (Kang, 2008; Nagy & Robertson, 2009). Opportunities for teacher training to plan TL-exclusive lessons and to raise teachers' general TL proficiency are needed in Japan.

Several studies have also pointed out that students prefer that teachers use L1 for grammar instruction. For example, Brooks-Lewis (2009) reported that students consider it helpful when teachers explicitly demonstrate similarities of L1 and TL grammar. Studies in which Japanese students were asked about their preference for language used by teachers also indicated that students prefer L1 as an instruction language when learning grammar (Kurauchi, 2008; Yuki, 2007). Considering the cognitive load required when trying to understand TL grammar instruction, teachers could judiciously use L1 when necessary to lighten the burden of students' effort. Failing to meet students' needs by adhering rigidly to TL might result in students' losing interest and thus in their demotivation (G. Cook, 2010; Kang, 2008; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Stern,

1992).

7. Conclusion

This study presented empirical data on how teachers' language choice (L1 or TL) during grammar instruction affects students' learning. Contrary to studies that recommend judicious L1 use in language classrooms especially in teaching grammar, and teachers' belief that it is better to explain grammar in L1, the results of this study show no significant difference in students' learning of grammar according to the languages used in instruction. The implication of the study is that teachers should not hesitate to conduct grammar lessons in TL, especially for instruction on simple and basic grammar points. Conducting grammar lessons in TL might go against their intuition or beliefs, but students do understand teachers' instruction in TL if the instruction is simple, well organized, and easy to follow. Planning such lessons surely takes much time, far more than planning lessons using L1. However, learners deserve maximum TL input, and it is teachers' duty to provide ample TL input of good quality. On the other hand, teachers need to be given appropriate training opportunities to conduct such lessons. Teachers also should keep in mind that L1 can sometime be the more efficient language to use in classroom, and they should not hesitate to use L1 if necessary. It is teachers' responsibility to decide when and how much L1 to use in language classrooms. Teachers can refer to suggestions from the literature, such as Atkinson (1993, cited in Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005), Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009, cited in Hall & Cook, 2012), G. Cook (2010), Duff and Polio (1990), Littlewood and Yu (2009), and Stern (1992) as a guide to the judicious use of L1. As for teaching English in a Japanese context, several insightful guidelines for teachers' use of TL have also been introduced (Yamamori, 2007, 2012; Morizumi, et al., 2010; Tanabe, 2012).

Finally, limitations of this study should be mentioned. The TOEIC Bridge test was used as a pretest in the study. However, because the TOEIC Bridge test is designed to assess general English proficiency, it did not accurately assess the participants' knowledge of the target grammar points in the treatment lessons. Some participants might already have been competent in using the grammar points of the treatment lessons, as they were fairly basic points. A test designed specifically to assess participants' knowledge of the target grammar points should have been used as a pretest, but this was not possible at the time of study because of time and schedule constraints. For the same reason, a delayed post-test was not conducted, which is another major weakness of the study. Furthermore, participants in the study were all English majors who might have had strong motivation to study English. If participants had included students with other majors, the results could be different. The number of participants (68) was fairly small, which limits the ability to draw any decisive conclusions. The number and variety of participants should be increased in the future research. The treatment lesson was conducted only once for 90 minutes, which is quite short. A longitudinal design

is preferable to obtain more precise data to determine the effect of teachers' language choice on students learning. However, despite a number of weaknesses, the present study has great value in its attempt to empirically demonstrate the effect of L1 and TL grammar instruction on students' learning. Finally, further empirical studies should be conducted to deepen understanding of the effect of teachers' language choice in language classroom instruction.

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─Abstract─

There has been a continuing debate over the use of students' first language (L1) in foreign language classrooms, and extensive literature reviews have been conducted to investigate L1 use in teaching (Auerbach, 1993; V. Cook, 2001; Hall & G. Cook, 2012; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Turnbull & Daily-O'Cain, 2009). The present study contributes empirical data to deepen understanding of the effect of teachers' language choice during grammar instruction on students' learning in foreign language classrooms. Groups of university students with lower and higher target-language proficiency who received grammar instruction in L1 and the target language (TL) were compared in terms of their learning. The results of the study suggest that the language used for instruction (L1 or TL) does not affect the learning of students with either lower or higher proficiency. The implication of the study is that teachers should not hesitate to provide grammar instruction in TL, although students' needs and the complexity of focus grammar points should be taken into consideration.