

The Effect of Answering Multiple-choice questions in L1 (Turkish) in L2 (English) Reading Test

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Purpose

- investigating the effect of using test-takers' mother tongue (Turkish as L1) and foreign language (English as L2) in the test questions for reading in the language classroom

Previous Research

- beginning levels of language learning (Godev, Martinez-Gibson & Toris, 2002; Lee, 1986; Nevo, 1989; Poh & Hock, 1979; Shohamy, 1984)
Question language matters in the beginning levels, but not in the advanced levels.
- Advanced levels of language learning (e.g. Cox, Bown, & Bell, 2019)
Question language also matters in the advanced level + low anxiety

Research Questions

- Is there statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension scores of control and experimental group participants who were exposed to questions in English and in Turkish?
- What are the attitudes of the learners of English towards answering the questions in their L1 (Turkish)?

Overall Design

| Control group | Experimental group |
|--|---|
| No pre-test divided into two groups by the institution based on the proficiency test | |
| No specific treatment or instruction by the researcher Followed the instructions' curriculum towards the proficiency test (YDS / YÖKDİL) | |
| Post-test | |
| Responding to reading comprehension questions (4 texts, each including five multiple choice questions, all in English) | Responding to reading comprehension (the same 4 English texts, each including multiple-choice questions, all in L1 (Turkish)) |
| Semi-structured interviews | |

Methodology

Participants (N=29)

- Intermediate/ English L2 learners
- General practitioners, Turkish L1
- control group (n=14) , experimental group (n=15)

Task Design

- Responding to reading comprehension questions (4 texts, each including five multiple choice questions)
- 35 minutes allotted

Instruments & Analysis Procedures

Performance Data (posttest)

- Quantitative analysis)An Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test)

Perception Data (semi-structured interviews)

- Qualitative analysis (open-response questions)

Summary of Results for Research Question 1

- Significant difference in the scores of the experimental group participants ($Md = 15$, $n = 15$) and of the control group participants ($Md = 12$, $n = 14$), $U = 182$, $z = 3.429$, $p = .001$, $r = .6$.

Summary of Results for Research Question 2

- Learners reported having an overall positive experience with answering questions in L1 (*easier, text/question difficulty, high confidence level, low anxiety*)
- Preference for L1 questions

Conclusions

- Using L1 as the question language seems to have a positive impact on learners' number of correct answers, anxiety and confidence levels
- Intermediate students prefer L1 questions, but not against L2 questions
- Showing the ability to understand text by L1, not overburdened by the change in the language structures or use of synonyms in the questions

Limitations

- Small convenience sample
- Outside instruction influenced results
- Relatively short treatment period
- Short texts

Pedagogical Implications

- Certain professions may benefit from bilingual fluency (Reading in L2 and explaining in L1)
- Benefiting from both L1 and L2 questions
- Ability to understand L2 texts

Future Research Directions

- Larger scale investigations
- Different tasks (open-ended questions and summary tasks)

Selected Bibliography

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