

USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN ENGLISH OBSERVATION DIARIES

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The use of mother tongue in foreign language classes is a poorly investigated area, although its importance is inevitable taken the amount of input, thus the success of language learning into consideration. Research in this field is carried out mainly in the form of lesson observations, which provide fertile ground for the investigation of classroom practices. One productive way of the observations is English-specialised primary teachers' monitoring, because a written document called observation diary is made about the ongoing teaching and learning practice of language classes. In this paper the appearance and types of mother tongue use are summarised relying on observation diaries which include observation logs and lesson plans. Mother tongue use shapes a complex system in the context of language users, forms, functions and school tasks. Teachers' and learners' practise of using mother tongue is discussed in relation to the variety of these constituents. The most commonly used forms of mother tongue use on the part of the teacher are explanation, command, and disciplining, while language learners use it mainly for translation and summary. The observation diary writer's mother tongue use materializes in the form of comments related to the course of the lesson. Depending on language forms, there are a number of functions to which mother tongue is used, such as organization, disciplining, teaching grammatical rules, explaining rules of games, giving additional information, etc. The tendency of mother tongue use is outlined and results are also demonstrated by classes. The research method made the calculation of time duration spent on mother tongue use possible, thus the estimated time by language classes and by particular language blocks are also indicated.

Keywords: use of mother tongue, code switching, observation diary, lesson plan, translation, explanation, command, disciplining

In a modern language class teaching is mostly based on the communicative approach that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of language learning and implies the use of target language for all sorts of activities in the classroom. Good practice in language teaching should be built on the communicative approach as opposed to the traditional Grammar-Translation Method which involves translating texts word by word, memorising grammar rules and exceptions as well as rote learning enormous vocabulary lists. The total dismissal of the mother tongue, representing the

other side of the teaching scale, is embodied in the Direct Way which also proves to be extremely difficult to hold in certain circumstances.

Code switching, the sociolinguistic account of this phenomenon, is widely discussed in bi- or multilingual settings. As for language education, code switching is primarily studied in the context of second language acquisition, but being put in foreign language context its forms of appearance are somewhat different. Literature on foreign language teaching reports on the extensive use of mother tongue in the foreign language class. Although the communicative approach to language teaching is based on interaction between the participants, which presupposes the intensive but not necessarily inclusive (Tumbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009; Levine, 2011) use of target language, classroom communication restricting mother tongue use seems to be difficult to maintain especially in foreign language setting where the target language is usually the second language for both the teachers and learners. Furthermore, in foreign language setting mother tongue functions as vernacular, a relaxed spoken system in which the least conscious attention is paid on speech, as opposed to the use of foreign language which functions as institutional discourse. The difference in the function of L1 and L2 is the reason why I prefer using the term *use of mother tongue* rather than code-switching in the foreign language context.

Although the use of target language in a foreign language class is a basic requirement that participants should follow, the results of interaction studies reveal that both teachers and learners turn to the L1 for a variety of reasons (Nikolov, 1999). Analysing primary school children's classroom interactions Nikolov (2000) found that irrespectively of age, language level or the type of exercise, pupils turn to L1 while working in pairs or groups. They use the mother tongue when they turn to the teacher to ask for help or information in connection with a task, in order to instruct or discipline one another, when they help peers with explanations, correct each other's mistakes, and while they are solving a task. While the use of mother tongue on the part of the learner can be treated as the constituent of the natural language learning process, language teachers quite often prefer using the mother tongue to the target language in the English lesson (Nikolov, 2008).

Language learners in a foreign language classroom, where both the teacher and the learners speak the same mother tongue usually turn to the vernacular when they face with communication problems. However, the encounter with native speakers may facilitate the use of target language. 11-year-old children's communication strategies in a language class conducted by a native language teacher (Szulc-Kurpaska, 2000) revealed that learners applied mainly nouns to convey meaning and did not select language properties that would be informative. Besides single words, formulaic chunks, and coined new words were recalled, and they also switched into the mother tongue when communication problems occurred.

Pennington (1995) found that in bilingual setting teachers' code-switching behaviour indicated a general pattern. L2 was used predominantly for whole-class instruction and for the formal presentation of the language context, but they relied on mother tongue use in face-to-face interaction and in discourse without language teaching content.

Pennington (1998) proposed a model of code switching in the classroom, which relates vernacular and institutional classroom discourse to four frames: (1) lesson frame, (2) lesson support frame, (3) the institutional-support frame, and (4) the commentary frame. The lesson frame is most likely to feature the institutional discourse because it consists of pre-structured information, formal patterns of interaction and asymmetrical role relationships, while the lesson support frame aims to maintain on-task

behaviour by clarifying talk and keeping discipline. The institutional-support frame is related to the wider school agenda and the commentary frame is the one more likely to entail vernacular discourse. Thus discourse in the classroom ceases to be authentic since communication calls upon the institutional purpose of teaching English as a foreign language and thus it should be regarded as a sociolinguistic variety of institutional discourse with a certain pedagogical goal (Seedhouse, 1996:23). Classroom discourse can be defined as an activity primarily meant to promote language learning and it can be valued by this aim supporting its use in the classroom.

Considering mother tongue use as infiltrating foreign language classroom communication, a number of questions arise: who is it used by and what is it used for, can any function be attributed to its use, what are its forms of appearance, how often and how long is it used in a foreign language class, and what types of school tasks yearn for its use? All these questions are going to be answered relying on observation diaries made by English-specialised teacher trainees.

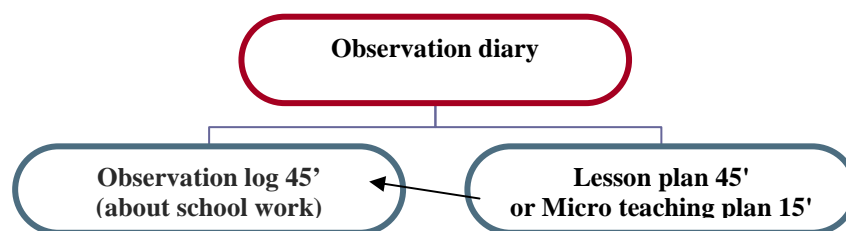
Methodology

For investigating the use of mother tongue a novel way was followed that entails the study of observation diaries. A quite common practice for data collection about school work is visiting the class to observe and if possible record the ongoing processes. Analysing data collected this way might provide a reliable source for classroom research. One form of recording this data is the observation diary, a written document made by pre-service teachers who, as a part of their school practise, participate in classes and record what is going on. Besides recording the course of actions, additional information is embedded into diaries substantiating its value. Observation diaries typically contain the following data:

- data on the class (which year they are in, name of the school, teacher and diary maker, the course book pupils learn from)
- teaching purpose (material, aids, aims, main language learning skills and other skills to improve, presupposed knowledge of learners)
- description of ongoing activities,
- language behaviour of the participants,
- time duration in which certain activities are carried out,
- classroom instructions,
- children's behaviour,
- and comments made by the diary maker.

Observation diaries include observation logs, lesson plans or micro teaching plans (Figure 1). Observation logs are recorded by the observer about school work; while lesson plans and micro teaching plans are prepared by teacher trainees before their teaching practise takes place and include the intended teaching material. At the beginning of their practice teacher trainees visit lessons and make records in order to gather ideas about the good practice that enables them to prepare their own micro teaching and lesson plans. Later on, besides observing classes, they start their teaching practice. By a teacher trainee who is to start the practice only a part of a lesson is taught, which usually takes 15 minutes and a micro teaching plan has been prepared to support the teaching procedure.

Figure 1. *Terms*



The diaries I analysed were written by English-specialised teacher trainees about their visit to primary school in order to perform their school practise. Normally, diaries should be written in English but having read them I realised that Hungarian, the mother tongue of the diary maker quite often appears. At first, I wondered why students use mother tongue against the rule saying that diaries should be written in English and wanted to know whether the use of mother tongue serves any function or can be attributed only to the low language proficiency of the diary writer.

Table 1. *Mother tongue use in the observation diaries*

	Observation diaries	
	Without mother tongue use	With mother tongue use
Observation log	197	126
Lesson plan	38	32
Micro teaching plan	15 +15	18
All:	265	176 = 66.4%

This motivation made me investigate the use of mother tongue in observation diaries. As Table 1 shows 265 diaries were looked through altogether, including 197 observation logs, 38 lesson plans and 30 micro teaching plans. Micro teaching plans normally do not stand separately but are integrated into the observation logs, that is why I indicated in Table 1 that half of the diaries were part of the observation logs, and the other half were written independently. I found observation diaries with and without the use of mother tongue. Hungarian was used in 176 diaries (66.4%) out of the 265 I looked through, clearly indicating the intensive use.

Before presenting the results I call the attention to the research method discussing the issue of observer's paradox. When teachers are observed and become aware of the focus of attention they try to avoid situations or activities they think should not be employed in the classroom and try to follow the good practice of language teaching. Turning to the mother tongue might be perceived by teachers as an undesirable classroom routine that needs to be reduced or abolished. From this methodological perspective, observation diaries function as neutral documents because they are negotiated as part of teacher trainees' practising procedure rather than an account on classroom participants' performance, therefore use them for classroom research eliminates the observer's paradox.

Research questions

Realising that the use of mother tongue based on observation diaries is not sporadic at all, I wanted to gain insight into how it works and investigate whether it is used randomly or shows any pattern. My attention was focused on eliciting answers to the following questions:

1. What is mother tongue used for in the foreign language classroom?
2. Who uses the mother tongue in the English class?
3. Is mother tongue in observation diaries used systematically?
4. What are the forms and functions of mother tongue use?
5. Is there a difference in use between the types of observation diaries?
6. How often is mother tongue used?
7. How much time is spent on using the mother tongue in an English class?

The research results may get closer to understanding mother tongue use in the foreign language classroom.

Results

A model of mother tongue use in the English classroom

Before presenting the results of the analysis the novelty of the applied method must be emphasized. Since observation diaries contain the description of activities in progress, the time frame in which certain activities are carried out, the behaviour and language behaviour of the participants, and the diary maker's comments, these documents certify the ongoing procedures, thus real-life classroom processes can reliably be demonstrated by them.

A model of mother tongue use in the foreign language classroom is represented in Table 2. The use of mother tongue in observation diaries shows a complex system, although this kind of representation might not be complete. The participants who use the mother tongue recorded in diaries are language teachers, language learners and teacher trainees who write the diary.

Mother tongue is used in a variety of forms to which a number of language functions are connected. Teachers use it for instructing and disciplining learners, for explanation and conversation. They instruct learners using the imperative, interrogative, and declarative forms in order to organise classroom activities and school tasks, make learners solve tasks and urge them to use English in the classroom. When the teacher using the vernacular instructs the learner to use the target language is quite controversial, since the primary intention of this kind of verbalization is to elicit language use. However, language behaviour like this not only fails to facilitate language learning but works against natural acquisition processes.

Nikolov (2000) found that elder students use English more often when the teacher does not speak in the mother tongue at all, in other words, the more English is used by the teacher in a foreign language class the more is used by the students. Teachers using the target language should set an example in the classroom since language learning relies largely on copying the phonetic, phonological, morphological and grammatical features of the foreign language and it also urges learners to its use. Moreover, young learners' foreign language learning is largely based on the supportive

environment that maintains acquisition-like conditions, and the extensive use of target language is a crucial factor in this.

Disciplining by the teacher usually happens in imperative, interrogative, and exclamation forms, and also in the form of making remarks. Disciplining is directed to the behaviour of learners and to managing task solving. Teachers also explain grammar rules (e.g. possessive adjectives, pronouns, plural nouns, the distinction between this or these, and must or mustn't), vocabulary and rules of games in Hungarian.

Mother tongue is used for conversations to share background information with children. In class 2, for example, the teacher starts a conversation with pupils about going to the market, putting up questions in order to find out what fruit they know.

Relying on observation diaries, language learners in a language class use the mother tongue, first and foremost, for translations. They translate words or phrases, sentences and texts, and rarely summarise texts in Hungarian as indicated by the diaries. When analysing the results a more comprehensive picture will be shown on this phenomenon.

Diary writers make their comments in Hungarian about the school work, teacher's work, learners' work, and about their own pursuits. Mother tongue is used in a number of exercise types, such as learning and practicing vocabulary, learning and practicing grammar, writing tests, telling and summarising tales, playing and explaining games, translating songs, doing reading and listening comprehension exercises, and for setting and checking the homework.

Table 2. *Use of the mother tongue in observation diaries.*

User of the mother tongue	Language form	Function	Type of exercises
Teacher	instruction	organising solving tasks using English	learning vocabulary practicing vocabulary learning grammar practicing grammar tests tales games songs
	- imperative - interrogative - declarative		
	disciplining	solving tasks behaviour	
	- imperative - interrogative - remarks - exclamation		
	explanation		
	conversation	background info	
Learner	translation	word/phrase sentence text	reading comprehension listening comprehension
	summary	content	checking the homework
Diary writer	comment	school work teacher's work learners' work own pursuit	setting the homework

Evidence for code mixing can also be found in the diaries. Code mixing in second language acquisition is a developmental stage during which language learners mix elements of more than one language. However, as the examples show, the diaries report on teachers' code mixing. Teachers might

use this strategy of language use for different purposes. First and foremost, when they explain grammar rules and decide to switch on the mother tongue, it would be very difficult to completely omit the target language since its working must be described with its components. For this reason, the easiest way is to integrate foreign language items into the mother tongue explanation. Another explanation for teachers' code mixing can be for practical reasons, i.e. they want to avoid additional explanations both in the target language and in Hungarian.

Although this model of mother tongue use designed on data gained from observation diaries is not exhaustive, it highlights the most common classroom discourses which involve mother tongue use as opposed to using the target language.

Use of mother tongue in the observation diaries

As it can be seen in Table 1, the rate of diaries mother tongue is used in is quite high (66.4%), especially in the light of the commonly accepted standard in teacher-training which inspires students to the restricted use of target language.

Figure 2. Use of mother tongue in the observation diaries %

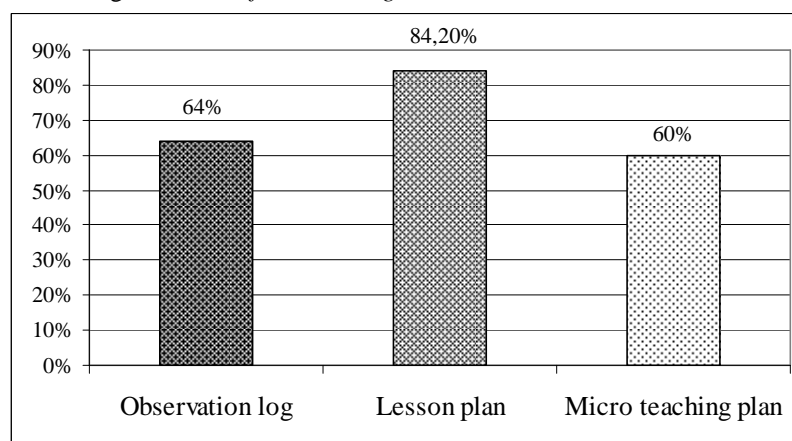


Figure 2 presents the distribution of mother tongue use between the different forms of observation diaries in which mother tongue use occurred. Among the 176 diaries with mother tongue use mostly lesson plans (82.2%) and observation logs (64 %) relied on its use, but more than half (60%) of the micro teaching plans also used the native language.

The indication of the time frame spent on each teaching unit in the diaries allows calculating the time spent on mother tongue use as well (Table 3). By a teaching unit I mean the part of a lesson in which mother tongue use occurs. Since the lessons were not recorded, the calculation of time spent on activities is based only on estimation from the time indicated next to each activity in the observation diary. However, estimating the duration helps to form a more comprehensive view about the classroom processes, since not only the whole duration of mother tongue use can be calculated but also the time spent on mother tongue use in a language class.

As Figure 3 shows, mother tongue is used in 27% of a lesson relying on a micro teaching plan. It implies that teacher trainees prepare with activities in the mother tongue for teaching. Taking lesson plans as a source, mother tongue is used in almost 20% of the language class, and based on observation logs it is used in more than 10% of the lesson. This tendency

shows that the less trained the teacher is the more time is spent on mother tongue use in the language class. On the first hand, this result seems to support Nikolov's (2008) findings that English teachers in the primary school are not prepared enough and they use the mother tongue in most of the lesson. On the other hand, they show a tendency of development in decreasing mother tongue use in the classroom.

Figure 3. *Time spent on mother tongue use in the English class (%)*

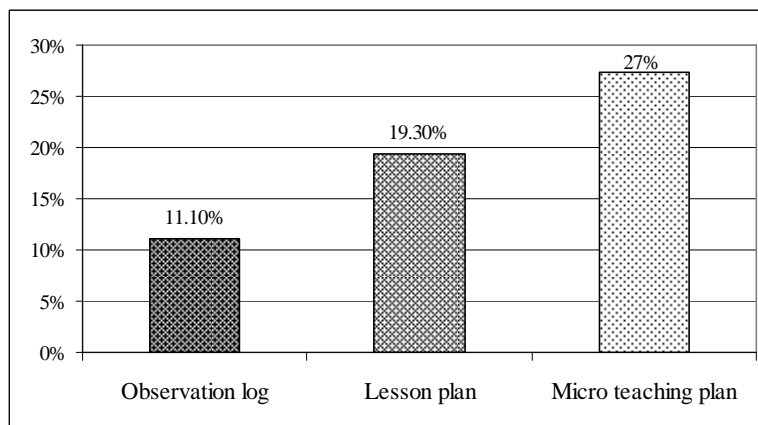


Table 3 shows the time in minutes spent on mother tongue use in a language class. On the average 5.6 minutes are used for activities using the mother tongue in case the length of the class is 45 minutes, as it is usual in Hungary.

Table 3. *Use of mother tongue in the English classroom*

	Minutes	Minutes/Class
Observation log	641	5
Lesson plan	280	8.7
Micro teaching plan	75	4.1
All	996	5.6

Another advantage of gaining data from observation diaries is that the sections of mother tongue use can be identified, i.e. it is possible to gather and categorise information about different classroom actions which are conducted in the mother tongue. Based on the diaries some parts of certain activities seems to require the use of mother tongue on the part of the teacher or the learner and these activities can consist of smaller units, called sections. It proved to be quite practical to identify these sections in a language class, since not always the entire activity is carried on in the mother tongue.

In Table 4 the number of language sections with mother tongue use can be seen with and without comments. Diary writers' comments are taken out of the calculation because they reflect additional ideas and observations that can not be asserted as part of the ongoing teaching activity; rather they make remarks on the employment of certain means or activities, such as aids, tasks, behaviour, language use, etc.

Table 4. *Sections of mother tongue use in the English class*

	Language sections in mother tongue	Without comments	Mean
Observation logs	241	194	1.53
Lesson plans	86	81	1.12
All	327	275	1.56

In an English classroom mother tongue use appears in almost 2 sections on the average, i.e. a language class is 'interrupted' twice with the use of mother tongue. The number of sections with mother tongue use is higher in the observation logs than in the lesson plans suggesting that teacher trainees who prepare for teaching with constructing the lesson plan try to reduce the number of sections in which mother tongue is used (it is used only 1.12 sections on the average), nevertheless they spend more time (8.7 minutes/class, see Table 3) on using it.

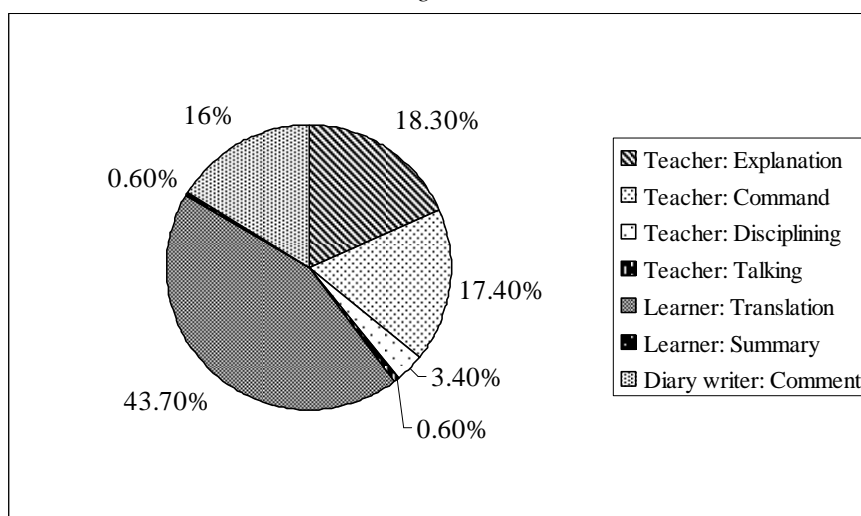
The sections of mother tongue use can be represented by the most common language forms. Teachers use Hungarian the more often for explanations closely followed by giving instructions. Language learners, on the other hand, use the mother tongue mainly in translations and rarely for summarisations. Diary writers, especially in the observation logs, add their comments in their mother tongue quite often.

Table 5. *Sections of mother tongue use by language forms*

	Teacher				Learner		Diary writer	All
	Expla- nation	Instruction	Discip- lining	Conver- sation	Trans- lating	Summary	Comments	
Observation logs	44	52	11	2	84	1	47	241
Lesson plans	16	5	0	0	59	1	5	86
All	60	57	11	2	143	2	52	327

Figure 4 shows the distribution of sections with mother tongue use in the most frequent language forms. The most common mother tongue section is language learners' translation (43.7%). Teachers use the more sections for explanation (18.3%) and for giving instructions (17.4%). Diary writers make their comments in 16% of the sections.

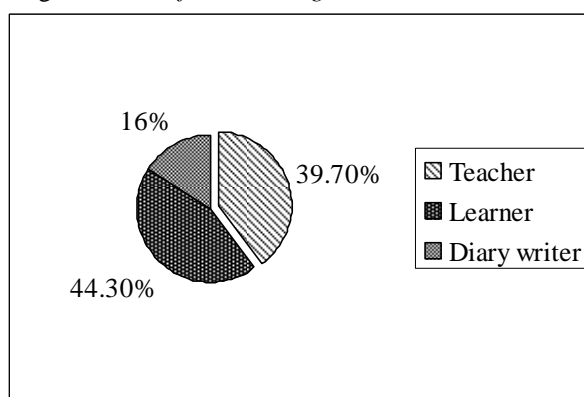
Figure 4. Use of mother tongue by language forms based on the sections of mother tongue use



To discover how much the teacher, the learners and the diary writer use their native language data on the most common forms of mother tongue use, can be summarized (Figure 6). The most common forms of mother tongue use, as it was indicated before, are teachers' explanation, command, disciplining and talking, learners' translation and summary, and diary writers' comments.

Mother tongue is used mainly by language learners (44.3%) closely followed by language teachers (39.7%). Diary writers' comments take 16% of the mother tongue use in the observation diaries. Although, all the forms of observation diaries are written by teacher trainees in different positions, acting as observers, pre-service teachers or diary writers, when they fill in the position of diary writer they use the mother tongue as well.

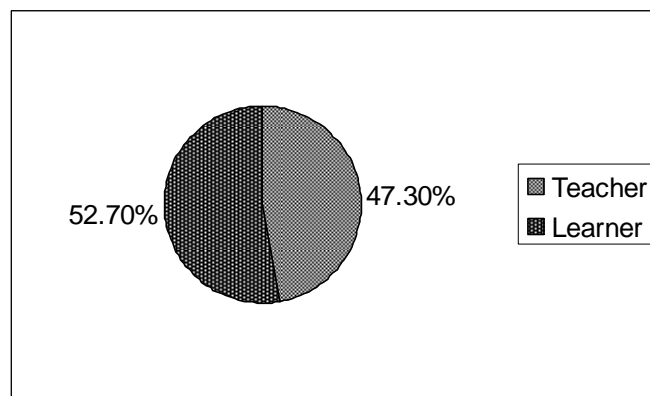
Figure 6. Use of mother tongue in observation diaries



Without the diary writer's comments, distribution of mother tongue use between classroom participants can be assumed (Figure 7). The mother tongue use of the teacher and the language learner in the classroom is very close to each other suggesting that the more the teacher uses it, the more it is used by learners. However, the teacher does not only set an example with the language use but also responsible for choosing the right methodology for teaching. For this reason, teachers who conduct teacher trainees teaching practice should take much higher responsibility, since they not only influence learners' language behaviour but are in command of trainees'

performance. Any activities or methodologies the language teacher chooses convey the message of ideal classroom communication. However, certain exercises, such as translations, assume the extensive use of mother tongue, therefore they should be reduced to an optimal level that serves understanding, but do not hinder the language acquisition process. Moreover, teacher trainees may widely apply translations believing that it is an essential part of language teaching.

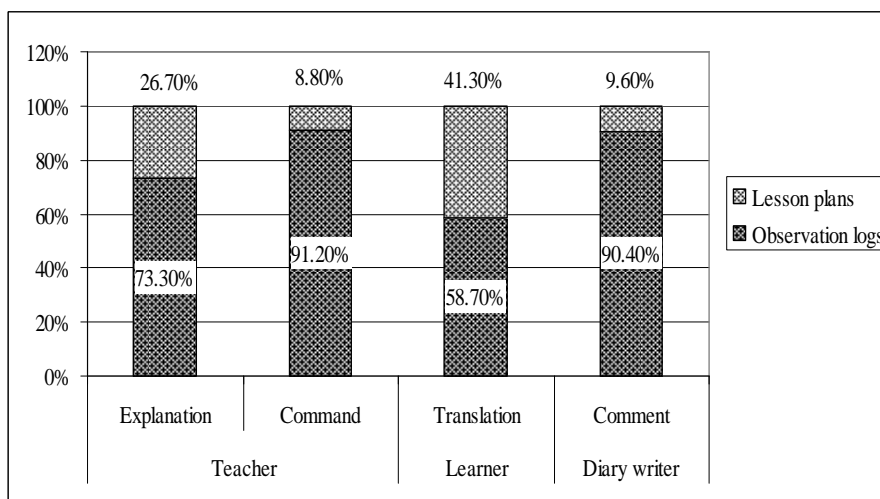
Figure 7. *Use of mother tongue in the classroom*



The percentage of mother tongue use in the most frequently used language forms can be seen in figure 8. In the observation logs mother tongue is used more often than in lesson plans in each language form. This difference is, however, the smallest in case of translation and the biggest in case of comments. That translation has a considerable part in both kinds of observation diaries points at the recurrence of this teaching method, i.e. it is used by teachers and by trainees who may integrate the learnt methods in their future classroom. The work of teachers who take part in training pre-service teachers is particularly liable because setting trainees an example with introducing them into good classroom practices is very important.

As figure 8 shows, diary writers avoid writing their comments in Hungarian when they prepare their own lesson plans, but use it for adding remarks in the observation logs. A possible explanation for this might be that in the planning phase comments are not as extensively used as in the observation phase, and making comments rarely occurs either in the mother tongue or in English. Although making commands in the mother tongue seems to be a common practice in the language classroom, this form of mother tongue use is not very general in the lessons plans, because they function as responses to the ongoing observed activities as opposed to prearranged actions.

Figure 8. Use of mother tongue in the most frequently used language forms



The duration of mother tongue use spent on certain language forms can be calculated from its overall use. From the estimated 996 minutes of mother tongue use recorded in the observation diaries 722 minutes are spent on translation by language learners. As Table 6 represents, teachers spend the most time with explanations and instructions made in the mother tongue.

Table 6. Duration of mother tongue by language forms

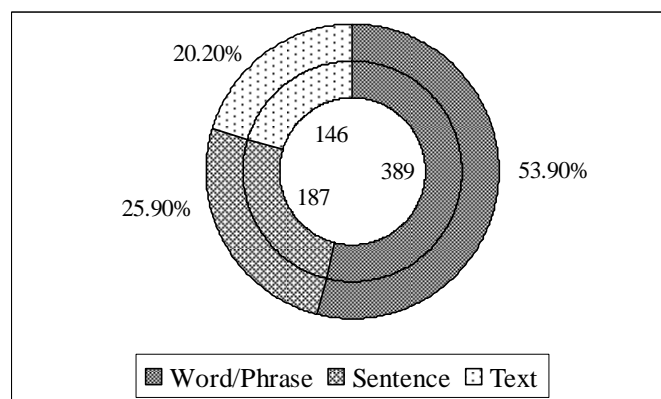
	Teacher				Learner		All
	Explanation	Instruction	Disciplin- ing	Conver- sation	Translating	Summary	
	Minutes/Diary						
Observation diary	119/33	54/14	12/8	12/1	441/69	3/1	641/126
Lesson plan	62/5	4/3	0	0	208/23	6/1	280/32
Micro teaching plan	0	2/2	0	0	73/16	0	75/18
All	181/38	60/19	12/8	12/1	722/108	9 2	996

Table 7 demonstrates the average time spent on mother tongue use by classroom participants. In lesson plans teacher trainees use it for explanation for more than 10 minutes per class. Based on the observation logs that reflect the documented ongoing activity, mother tongue is used mainly for instruction (8.8 minutes/class). Mother tongue use for translation is more intensive in the lesson plans suggesting that would-be teachers regard it as a relatively safe way of teaching or intend to follow the most common form of observed classroom activity. The investigation into the use of mother tongue by language forms in the English classroom shows that on the average 6.6 minutes are spent on translation in the mother tongue in a language class.

Table 7. *Use of mother tongue by language forms in the English classroom*

	Teacher		Learner
	Explanation	Instruction	Translation
	Minutes/class		
Observation log	3.6	8.8	6.3
Lesson plan	12.4	1.3	9
Micro teaching plan	0	1	4.5
All	4.7	3.1	6.6

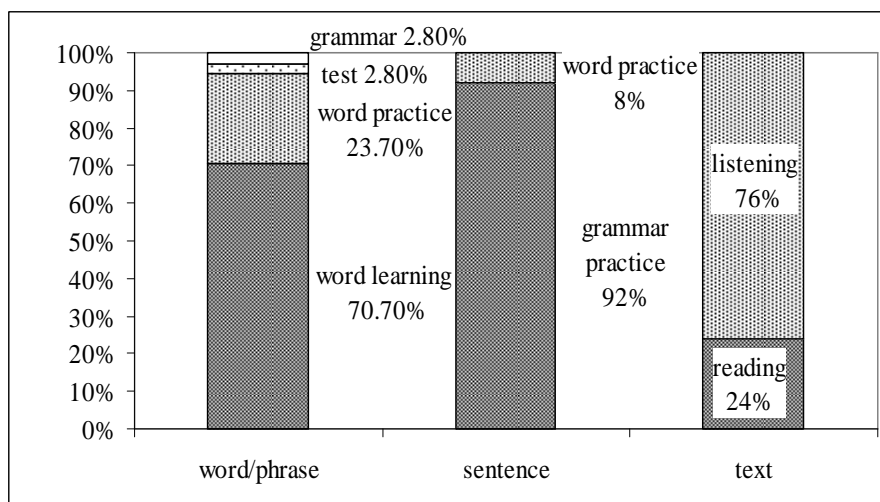
That translation seems to be the most common activity in which participants use the mother tongue requires investigation into the types of translations. Figure 9 shows that learners of English use it mainly for translating words and phrases (53.90%). It might be the result of the commonly accepted practice in the language classroom when learners write the meaning of the words in their vocabulary. Mother tongue is also used for translating sentences (25.90%) and texts (20.20%).

Figure 9. *Use of mother tongue in translation (minutes/%)*

The function of translating words, sentences and texts can be seen in Figure 10. Words and phrases are translated in order to learn (70.70%) and practice (23.70%) them, and also it can support grammar practice with the translation grammar expressions (2.80%), and it is used for writing tests (2.80%). From the fact that translation is directed mainly to the translation of words (53.90%) follows that testing vocabulary knowledge also relies on this method, i.e. learners are asked to write the meaning of Hungarian words in English or in reversed order. Nevertheless, the use of mother tongue for testing is less than 3% based on the diaries, which may not reflect the classroom practise. However, this form of activity is not typically part of the demonstrated classroom process. Furthermore, its appearance in observation diaries calls the attention to the activity itself, since in the course of teacher trainees' school practice the main goal is to show the most important and useful teaching techniques and avoid displaying how testing occurs (especially if it is based on the traditional method), since it is an obligatory but not necessarily the most important factor of language teaching.

The function of translating sentences is practising grammar (92%) and words (8%). That language learners use translations for practicing sentences also indicates the application of traditional grammar-translation practice in the English classroom. The translation of texts might serve the understanding of listening (76%) and reading comprehension (24%) exercises.

Figure 10. Division of mother tongue in translation by task types



The school year or language class in which the observation or teaching practice takes place is also indicated in the diaries making the classification of mother tongue use by classes possible. Table 8 shows how much time is spent on mother tongue use in the different language classes. Unfortunately, the analysed observation diaries were written in different quantity in different language classes, that is why making comparisons would not give adequate results. Most of the diaries with mother tongue use are written about the classroom processes of year 4. In the 55 diaries mother tongue was used for 219 minutes altogether meaning that 4 minutes is spent on mother tongue use on the average. In class 6 the time spent on mother tongue use is quite close to the means in class 4. In this school year, mother tongue was used for 116 minutes in the 32 diaries, for 3.6 minutes on the average. However, in class 5 more than 7 minutes was spent on mother tongue use taking the 30 diaries as a point of departure. Since in class 8, mother tongue was used only in one diary, the result cannot be described as a tendency.

Table 8. Use of mother tongue in translation by classes

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	All
Minutes/ Lesson	4/14	44/25	117/19	219/55	215/30	116/32	7/1	722/176
Mean	0.3	1.8	6.1	4	7.2	3.6	7	4.2

Taking the forms of mother tongue use into account, after translation, the second most common activity in which mother tongue is used is explanation. Its forms of appearance are illustrated in Figure 11. Explanation in the mother tongue is used mainly for explaining grammar (72.90%), but the rate of explanation of vocabulary in Hungarian is also quite high (24.90%). Another function of explanation in the native language is clarifying the rules of games. Unfortunately, contrary to the low occurrence of testing in mother tongue, the rate of explaining the rule of games is low not because games should not be the part of good classroom practice and consequently the part of teacher trainees' practice, but because playing games is not as common in a foreign language class as it should be.

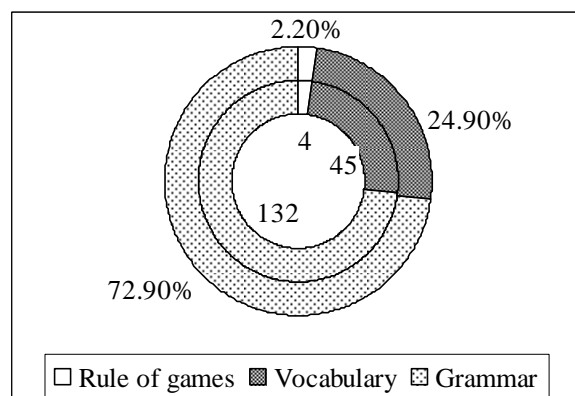
Figure 11. *Use of mother tongue in explanation (minutes/%)*

Table 9 shows the time used for explanation in the mother tongue by classes. As it was indicated before, the data of language classes cannot be evaluated in relation to one another because of the different number of observation diaries in each class, yet a kind of tendency might be illustrated. As most of the diaries were prepared and analysed in classes 4, 5, and 6 it is possible to rely on the mean values of mother tongue use in these classes in the case of explanation.

Table 9. *Use of mother tongue in explanation by classes*

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	All
Minutes/ Lesson	2/14	21/25	26/19	76/55	3/30	15/32	4/1	-
Mean	0.1	0.8	1.4	1.4	1.2	0.5	4	1.3

In class 4 the mother tongue is used for almost one and a half minutes and in class 5 for more than 1 minute for explaining things. However, the low occurrence (0.5) of mother tongue use for explanation in class 6 where learners are to study and practice a lot of grammar is quite unexpected.

Discussion and Implications

Results indicate that mother tongue use in the English classroom is quite systematic. Learners use it mainly for translation in order to learn and practise vocabulary and grammar. However, translation in the foreign language classroom is usually an instructed activity that aims to teach vocabulary and grammar. Its immense use reported in observation diaries suggests that teachers follow the traditional practise as opposed to the communicational approach to language teaching. Foreign language teaching often relies on the grammar-translation method which employs translation and learning word lists on a regular basis in the language classroom. Orosz (2008) found that vocabulary is usually practiced by the techniques of translating words from Hungarian to English without putting them into any context. Evidence for the exploitation of this method can be found in the observation diaries in the form of writing words, expressions and short sentences in the vocabulary book. This procedure brings out the rote learning of word lists, as well. The extensive use of vocabulary books is usually based on parental expectations towards school work, i.e. besides exercise books, vocabularies function as a kind of documents about what is going on in a language class conveying the message that children spend their time

beneficially in the foreign language environment. Moreover, they can function as a source of hearing children their lesson. As a consequence, parental expectations underpin the application of this method.

Teachers' explanation, instruction and disciplining in the mother tongue corresponds with the lesson support frame in Pennington's (1998) model of code switching in the language classroom, which aims to maintain on-task behaviour by clarifying talk and keeping discipline. Evidence for the use of commentary frame was also found in the observation diaries with the intention of sharing background knowledge. Background information about curriculum supportive stuff was communicated in forms of conversations. Pre-structured information and formal patterns of interaction, however, must have been shared mainly in the target language. Moreover, observation diaries are supposed to contain a list of classroom instructions or classroom English recorded on the basis of classroom communication, which specifies the most frequently used set phrases and expressions. Belonging to the lesson frame, classroom English features as the institutional discourse teachers and teacher trainees seem to be prepared for. In summary, interpreting the results based on Pennington's model (1998), it can be stated that in foreign language settings teachers use their mother tongue in the English classroom both in the lesson support frame and in the commentary frame in which interaction in the vernacular seems so be more emphatic and authentic. On the contrary, the target language might be used in the lesson frame, since it is constituted from certain patterns of communications. This claim might also be confirmed by the supplementary lists of classroom English attached to observation diaries.

The results of analysing observation diaries, on the first hand, indicate that teacher trainees' effort is based on their massive methodological knowledge backed up with language learning motivation (Hardi, 2010, 2011a), but their language knowledge should be improved (Hardi, 2011b). The findings also suggest that diary writers, especially when starting their teaching practise, are not confident enough to avoid the use of mother tongue for language teaching and to rely exclusively on their knowledge of the target language. However, the analysis and comparison of observation logs, lesson plans and micro teaching plans highlight that language teachers turn to the mother tongue less than teacher trainees, and teacher trainees at work less than those who have just started language teaching, suggesting that there is a tendency of using more English with getting more practice. This calls the attention that in the course of teacher training emphasis must be put not only on language teaching methodology, but the improvement of teacher trainees' language learning competences in English should be a primary duty. Trainees when preparing the diary must be inspired to be more confident, and follow the instruction of writing observation diaries in English. Since these diaries are looked through and mistakes are corrected, a good practising opportunity is provided by them which should be exploited in order to improve language knowledge.

Based on the data gathered from observation diaries, English teachers not only use the mother tongue in the English classroom, but are likely to apply the grammar translation method. On the first hand, as it was suggested before, the major motivation for doing so might be wanting to suit to parental expectations. Another possible explanation for the use of mother tongue, on the other hand, might be that it functions as a vernacular which is a relaxed form of language use. It must be time and energy consuming for language teachers to formulate grammar rules and instructions in English and to anticipate learners' understanding on them. Disciplining in the mother tongue can be more emphatic and calls for an immediate response of the

receiver, consequently it sounds more authentic even in a language classroom.

In sum, it is the teachers' responsibility to apply methods facilitating language learning and to use the target language in the foreign language classroom in more circumstances, for more language functions and forms making learners' second language acquisition easier.

Conclusion

Analysing observation diaries provides a reliable ground for both data collection and the interpretation of classroom activities. The usually hand-written manuscripts approve ongoing activities authentically, since they are based on observations that follow the specifications of the training institute about how to write them, what should be included and last but not least, in the case of observation logs what should be observed.

Observation logs report on the ongoing processes, while lesson plans and micro teaching plans inform about the planned activities. They all provide useful ground for teacher-trainees' teaching practise with the outmost aim to let valuable insight into classroom processes. This aim makes it operate as a source of information for gathering data on happenings in the classroom.

The research presented here relied on the factor of mother tongue use in the English classroom. The model of mother tongue use emerged and the system was further analysed in order to get deeper insight into its manifestation. Although the model, based on a new way of data collection presented in this study, is not comprehensive, it is the first working model of mother tongue use in the foreign language classroom. Further research, audio recording classroom processes, is needed to specify the findings of this investigation.

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