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Investigating Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes towards the Use of First Language in Teaching English as a Foreign Language for Middle School Classes

The Case of First-year Pupils and Teachers at Ben Djabellah Omar Middle School in Bouchagroun, Biskra

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah the Almighty, most Gracious, most Merciful, all the praise is due to

God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds.

I would like to dedicate this work:

To the memory of my beloved mother **Djedid Oum Elkhir** and my beloved father **Mohamed** who supported my dreams, and encouraged me. Their pure love made me the person I am.

To my beloved sons **Salah** and **Sofian**,

To my dear sister **Nabila,** my soulmate, who has always stood by my side,

To my little sisters **Sarah** and **Meriem**,

To my angels **MehdiSinda** and **Dilan**,

To all my friends, especially **Kafia**, **Chahinez,** and **Lamia** for their emotional support,

And to all those who love me and believed in my success.

Yousra

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The issue of mother tongue (L1) interference in English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms has long been a subject of debate in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. The present study aims to investigate the role and effectiveness of L1 in EFL classrooms. Additionally, it aims to explore the attitudes of first year middle school learners at Ben Djabellah Omar Middle School in Bouchagroun, Biskra as well as the attitudes of teachers from different middle schools in Biskra. A mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques, was adopted due to the nature of the study using two questionnaires as the primary research tools. One semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to seventeen (17) middle school teachers and another was conducted with sixty five (65) learners. The results obtained from analysing the accumulated data have supported the primary idea stating that the majority of teachers consider L1 a useful support tool, especially when explaining complex grammatical rules. Similarly, learners expressed positive attitudes, stating that L1 helps them understand lessons more clearly and reduces their anxiety. Therefore, the results confirmed the research hypotheses, indicating that the strategic use of L1 in EFL classrooms can enhance comprehension and promote a more supportive learning environment. Accordingly, EFL teachers are encouraged to make balanced and pedagogically guided use of L1 in their classrooms.

Key words: L1, EFL context, attitudes, attitudes, mother tongue, middle school teachers, pupils.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second language

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MT: Mother Tongue

RH: Research Hypothesis

Q: Question

Vs: Versus

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General Introduction

Introduction

English has become a universal language and a means of communication all around the world, and teaching and learning the field noticed a crucial development. However, the issue to include or exclude the native language in the EFL classroom has been the subject of on-going debate and research. Thus, one of the most essential questions is the function and the frequency of the mother tongue use from teachers and learners' perspectives.

In this sense, researchers were divided into two groups in accordance with the approach they follow. On the one hand, supporters of the monolingual approach assume that teaching English monolingually through maximum exposure to the target language increases the learning of that language and that the employment of the first language hinders students' achievement in the L2. On the other hand, supporters of Bilingualism believe in the idea that L1 has a facilitating role in the process of learning English as the strategies learners opt for learning are closely associated with their mother tongue. According to them, the strategic use of L1 can facilitate comprehension and improve learning outcomes.

The preset research attempts to explore both learners' and teachers' attitudes regarding the native language use: whether they hold positive or negative attitudes. It also attempts to determine how these attitudes influence EFL teaching and learning.

1. Statement of the Problem

The view of using the mother tongue to teach a second or foreign language in classrooms has remained a controversial topic among researchers and teachers. They were divided between those who contend that utilising the mother tongue in the classroom is

likely to impede second language learning, and those who claim that L1 presents benefits in teaching and learning L2.

The decision to undertake this work is deeply rooted in the researcher's personal experience as a middle school teacher witnessing the phenomenon of holding on to one's first language and facing many learners speaking exclusively Arabic even though they were in an English class. Another reason for conducting this research was a seminar held with the researcher's inspector in which he talked about the obligation to integrate L1 in teaching EFL grammar. In addition, the new directives of the ministry of education concerning English teaching and the implementation of L1 in teaching EFL came to effect.

2. Research Questions

In order to reach our aims, a number of research questions are raised

Q1: What are the purposes behind the use of L1 in EFL classes?

Q2: What are the attitudes of EFL middle school teachers towards the use of L1 in teaching EFL?

Q3: What are the attitudes of EFL first year middle school learners towards the use of L1 in learning English?

3. Research Hypotheses

In the light of what have been mentioned before, in terms of research questions and aims, two hypothesis were proposed

RH 1: EFL teachers (with more teaching experience) are more likely to view the use of L1 as a helpful tool in EFL learning. Thus, they would have positive attitudes toward the use of L1 in the EFL class.

RH 2: First year middle school learners' (especially those with lower proficiency levels) are likely to find the use of L1 beneficial for understanding EFL, and reducing confusion. Therefore, they would have positive attitudes towards the use of L1 in the EFL class.

4. Aims of the Study

Despite the growing interest in the topic of using L1 to teach L2/FL, there is a lack of comprehensive research exploring the attitudes of both teachers and learners towards the use of L1 in English classrooms. These attitudes are crucial as they may significantly influence teaching methodologies, learning strategies, designing syllabi, and ultimately, the success of language teaching.

Therefore, the current research mainly aims at investigating middle school learners' perceptions and teachers' attitudes towards the use of L1 in EFL classrooms as well as the reasons behind using it. This research is also intended to identify the benefits and the challenges associated with the use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL settings (Algerian middle schools).

Finally, it aims to provide insights for EFL teachers in balancing the use of the mother tongue and the foreign language in their teaching methods.

5. Significance of Study

The results of the study are believed to help both teachers and learners recognise the extent to which the first language can be used. Moreover, this study is hoped to contribute

to the existing body of research on language pedagogy by providing insights into the complex role of L1 in EFL teaching. It is assumed that exploring teachers' and learners' attitudes will offer a balanced view of the issue and will help inform more effective teaching practices in multilingual classrooms.

6. Research Methodology
6.1 Research Approach and Method

In order to confirm/disconfirm the research hypotheses and to obtain information from the subjected samples, an exploratory method was used because it aims to explore both first-year middle school learner's and their teachers' attitudes about the use of the mother tongue in teaching and learning EFL. More precisely, it investigates whether teaching bilinguals would solve the grammar and vocabulary complexity.

A mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was adopted due to the nature of the study.

6.2. Population and Sampling

The current study involves two samples:

Teachers: A sample of seventeen (17) EFL middle school teachers from different middle schools in Biskra was selected randomly to ensure diversity in terms of teaching experience and educational background.

Learners: The population of this research is the first-year pupils of Ben Djaballah Omar Middle school in Bouchagroun, Biskra. The total number is 180 divided into 5 classes. The researcher worked with a sample of (65) pupils. The selection was based on purposive sampling for practical matters as the researcher is actually the teacher of both selected groups.

These two samples have been chosen for the sake of collecting their attitudes concerning the effect of integrating L1 in English teaching classes.

6.3 Data Gathering Tools

This thesis relied on two questionnaires to gather the necessary information about the topic. First of all, a semi-structured questionnaire for both samples (middle school teachers and 1st year middle school learners) was used to gather quantitative data on their attitudes towards the use of L1 in the classroom.

Questionnaires were chosen as a primary data collection tool due to their efficiency in reaching a relatively large number of participants in a short period of time. In the context of investigating attitudes (particularly on a sensitive and often debated topic like L1 use in EFL classrooms) questionnaires offer participants the opportunity to respond anonymously. Moreover, the semi-structured format allowed the inclusion of both closed-ended and open-ended items, which not only provided measurable data but also captured explanatory insights into the reasons behind participants' preferences and classroom practices. This combination made the questionnaire a valuable tool for exploring the complex dynamics surrounding the use of the mother tongue in foreign language teaching.

7. Structure of the Study

This work consists of two fundamental parts: the first part is devoted to the review of related literature; i.e. the theoretical background, and the second part represents the fieldwork. Initially, the theoretical part reviews the literature about the use of L1 in teaching foreign languages and summarises the different approaches of teaching FLs and explains the debate about L1 integration in Fl/EFL classes. Moreover, it describes Algeria's language repertoire and deals with the use of English in educational settings. Finally, it extends with teachers' and learners' attitudes towards L1 use, providing a thorough summary of existing research on teachers' and learners' attitudes toward using L1 in EFL classes.

The second part of the dissertation is devoted to the practical part of this work. It provides a detailed description, analysis (quantitative and qualitative) and discussion of the data obtained from the research tools.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

The first language (L1) plays a fundamental role in shaping an individual's linguistic, cognitive, and social development. In the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language learning (FLL), the influence of L1 has long been a subject of considerable interest and debate. More particularly, the use of L1 in EFL classrooms has been a longstanding and evolving topic in language teaching theory and practice. In fact, understanding how learners' first language affects the process of learning a foreign language is essential for educators and teachers who aim to design more effective teaching methods and learning environments.

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive theoretical background on the concept and use of L1 in EFL settings. It begins with key definitions, including language, first language and second language to clarify the foundational terminology of this study. It then traces the historical trajectory of L1 use in language classrooms. Next, the chapter explores the ongoing debate surrounding mother tongue use in EFL education, highlighting both monolingual arguments and bilingual perspectives that challenge these assumptions and advocate for more nuanced, context-based approaches. It further examines the status of L1 in various teaching methods, particularly in 'Communicative Language Teaching', and addresses how both teachers and learners use and respond to L1 in classroom interaction.

Additionally, the chapter delves into classroom language practices, including code-switching and the factors influencing language choice. The discussion also considers the positive and negative effects of L1. Finally, special attention is given to the role of the mother tongue in grammar instruction, as well as to teachers' and learners' attitudes towards its use.

Therefore, this chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the complex and multifaceted role that L1 plays in EFL classrooms today. It serves as a basis for the practical investigation and analysis that will follow in the practical chapter.

1.1 Key Definitions

1.1.1 Definition of Language

Language is a complex system of communication which involves the use of symbols (spoken, written, or signed) to convey meaning. Hall (2011) refers to language as "the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols" (p. 15). Thus, it is a uniquely human capacity that allows for the expression of thought, emotion, and intention (Crystal, 2003). Gee (2014) adds that language is not only a tool for communication but also a medium for cultural transmission, identity construction, and cognitive development.

1.1.2 Definition of First Language (L1)

The 'first language' (L1), also known as 'the mother tongue' or 'native language', is the language person acquires first, typically in early childhood, and use as their primary means of communication within their community (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Although these three terms are often used interchangeably, they may carry slightly different connotations depending on the context. However, they generally refer to the language acquired earliest and most effortlessly. Pokharel (as cited in Khati, 2011) confirms that these terms commonly refer to the language acquired in childhood either because it is spoken in the home or because it is the dominant language in the child's environment.

The concept of 'mother tongue' has evolved over time, particularly due to shifts in childrearing practices. As Lust (2006) notes, these changes have led to a refinement of its original meaning. Skutnabb-Kangas (2008) defines the mother tongue as the first language

a child acquires naturally, without formal instruction. It is the language learned in early childhood through interaction within the family and immediate environment.

In the same vein, Khati (2011) defines the mother tongue as being typically the language spoken at home and learned before any other language. It is shaped by familial and social exposure during early childhood. It is learned naturally without formal instruction and serves as the foundational linguistic framework through which individuals initially communicate, understand the world and develop cognitive and social skills (Brown, 2007). Saville-Troike (2012) emphasizes that L1 plays a crucial role in shaping a person's perception of the world and serves as a reference point in the process of acquiring additional languages.

In the context of this research, the terms 'mother tongue' and 'first language' are used to refer specifically to Standard Arabic (SA). While Modern Standard Arabic is the contemporary form of Classical Arabic and serves as the official language in Arab nations—including Algeria—it is also the language of instruction in formal education. (Cadora, 1992). SA holds a prestigious status due to its association with religion, historical heritage, and rich literary tradition.

1.1.3 Definition of Second Language (L2)

A second language (L2) refers to any language learned after the first language, often in a formal or educational context, and used for communication in society or academia (Ellis, 2008). Unlike L1 acquisition, L2 learning can occur in a range of settings and is often influenced by factors such as motivation, exposure, age, and the learner's proficiency in their L1 (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Richards and Schmidt (2010) define an L2 as "a language that is not the mother tongue of the speaker, but that is used in the environment of that person."

1.1.4 Definition of Foreign Language (FL)

A foreign language is defined as a language that is not the native or first language (L1) of the speaker and is learned primarily in a classroom setting, rather than through natural exposure in a community where that language is used daily. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), a foreign language is "a language which is not widely spoken or used in the learners' immediate social context but is taught and learned primarily in academic settings."

Similarly, Crystal (2003) explains that a foreign language is one that is learned "for practical, educational, or cultural purposes" in a setting where it is not commonly used as a means of everyday communication. Therefore, the distinction between a foreign language and a second language (L2) lies mainly in the context of use: the former (S2) is used regularly within a society, while the latter (FL) is not typically used outside of the classroom.

In the context of this study, English is considered a foreign language in Algeria as it is not used as a primary medium of communication in daily life but is taught within formal educational institutions in all main levels /stages of the educational process (primary, middle, secondary schools). Moreover, in these recent years, English is increasingly used in Algerian universities across various fields and disciplines like medicine and engineering due to the need for students and researchers to access global knowledge and engage with international academic communities.

As for primary schools (the case of our study), English was recently introduced as a foreign language, marking a significant shift in national language education policy, aiming at promoting early language acquisition and aligning with global educational trends.

1.2 The Language Repertoire of Algeria and the Status of EFL

Political figures like Ahmed Taleb El Ibrahimi viewed Arabic as central to national identity and French as a symbol of foreign domination. Recently, the language repertoire of Algeria has added English as a foreign language to be taught in schools and universities.

This point of the chapter deals with the language repertoire in Algeria describing the existing the languages and offers a panoramic view on EFL policy in the Algerian education with focus on middle school level and its different objectives. It attempts to have an eye view on the general situation of EFL teaching after the adoption of new reforms.

1.2.1 Historical Context of Language in Algeria

Algeria's language repertoire is recognised by its rich historical and sociopolitical background. The country is officially bilingual, knowing both Arabic and Tamazight (Berber) as national languages, with Arabic being the official language of government and education (Algerian Constitution, 2016). Tamazight was officially recognized in 2002 and constitutionally elevated in 2016, reflecting a growing acknowledgment of the indigenous Amazigh identity. However, these formal recognitions, the practical use of Tamazight in public life remains limited, and Arabic continues to dominate most institutional settings (Benrabah, 2014).

In addition, French plays an important role in Algeria's linguistic landscape. Although it has no official status, French remains widely used in higher education, media, science, and commerce. This is largely because of Algeria's colonial history under French rule from 1830 to 1962, which left a lasting imprint on the country's education system and administration (Benrabah, 2007). Thus, the French language has kept its strong presence in

Algeria due to many factors as historical ties and the country's continued economic and cultural connections with France (Ager, 1999). It, nowadays, functions as a second language for millions of Algerians and acts as a scaffold to global cultural and scientific discourse, often competing with English, which is increasingly viewed as a language of globalization and opportunity (Yelles-Chaouche, 2019).

The Algerian linguistic repertoire, therefore, is a complex interplay of Arabic, Tamazight, French, and increasingly English, each serving different functions and reflecting different layers of identity and historical impact. This multilingual environment promotes a unique form of linguistic pluralism, but also presents challenges like language policy inconsistencies and identity tensions. Balancing the promotion of national languages while maintaining functional multilingualism remains a great issue in Algeria's sociolinguistic development (Hachimi, 2013; Benrabah, 2014).

1.2.2 The Introduction of English

English language plays a fundamental role in nearly all aspects of modern life in the last few decades. Harmer (2001, p. 2) states, "English seems to be one of the main languages of international communication and even people who are not speakers of English often know words. A result, a huge interest is given to learn it as a second or foreign language. The increasing need for learning EFL pushed the Algerian government to imply it its educational system.

In the 1990s, with the rise of globalization, English began to obtain more celebrity in Algeria and gained global importance, thus becoming increasingly present in academic and scientific fields. In fact, the trend towards English is seen as a kind of reaction to the increasing need for international communication, particularly in fields such as business, technology, and academia, where English is often the lingua franca. The decision to

introduce English as a required foreign language in schools and universities marked the beginning of a new era in Algerian education (Chouat, 2006).

1.2.3 English Teaching in Algeria and the Educational Reform

Two prominent factors have shaped the educational reform process in Algeria which are the domestic needs and international pressures. After independence, the Algerian government focused on developing a powerful educational system that may advance Arabization (the promotion of Arabic over French) and provide education to all Algerian citizens. However, the changing dynamics of the global economy and the increasing demand for English proficiency led to the introduction of several reforms aimed at enhancing the role of English in education.

In 2001, Algeria witnessed a significant modification in its educational curriculum by making English a mandatory subject from the first year of secondary school. This move was part of a broader effort to modernise the education system and improve the country's competitiveness in the global knowledge economy (Benrabah, 2013). English is taught close to Arabic and French, but it has not yet reached the same level of proficiency as the latter two languages, partly due to historical background and the strength of French-language institutions.

Now, English has been given the status of a second foreign language by the Algerian authorities. Therefore, it has become a compulsory subject matter in the curriculum in all schools all over the country. Moreover, its application and use extended to higher education. Indeed, in universities and technical institutes, English is increasingly being used as the medium of instruction, especially in fields such as engineering, computer science, medicine, and economics (Gassab, 2012). Many universities in Algeria now offer

programs entirely in English, and academic journals are also increasingly published in English to ensure wider international visibility.

1.2.4 Variables Affecting English Language Teaching in Algeria

English in Algeria is still taught as a mandatory foreign language. At the beginning of 1990s, policy makers tried to introduce English at the primary level, but they failed. In September 1993, pupils of the fourth grade were asked to choose between French and English as the first mandatory foreign language. This decision failed because the number of pupils who chose was negligible.

In1996, Algeria opted to make English its chief foreign language in schools replacing French, but it failed again. The failure in changing the status of English happened because language in education planning in Algeria is generally grounded on political and ideological objectives. Nevertheless and despite its importance, English remains in perpetual competition with French.

1.2.5 Educational Reforms and Future Prospects

The ongoing educational reforms in Algeria aim to address many of the challenges facing the English language curriculum. There are increasing efforts to provide teacher training, enhance language resources, and integrate English more effectively into the educational system. For instance, the government has introduced initiatives to offer English language immersion programs and has begun collaborating with international institutions to improve the quality of English education (Sadi, 2019).

However, further reforms are needed to ensure that English education becomes more accessible and effective. This includes improving the overall quality of education, reducing regional disparities, and fostering a more comprehensive approach to language learning

that includes not only English but also the development of other global languages, such as Spanish and German.

1.3 L1 Use in the Language Classroom: A Historical Perspective

The use of L1 in language classrooms has long been shaped by evolving pedagogical theories, political influences, and societal attitudes towards language learning. Moreover, its status has experienced significant shifts over time. This section offers a historical perspective on the role of L1 in language teaching, tracing its development across key periods and showing its position among different language teaching methods. Understanding this historical background provides essential insight into the ongoing debates surrounding L1 use in modern EFL classrooms that will be discussed later in this chapter.

1.3.1 Language Teaching and Mother Tongue Use up to the 18th Century

Historically, the use of the mother tongue in language education was standard practice. In the classical Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), which dates back to antiquity and persisted through the Middle Ages, the first language served as the medium of instruction for teaching Latin and Greek (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). This method was essentially based on translation exercises, grammatical analysis, and memorization of vocabulary, all facilitated through L1 use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Bussmann (2006) defined GTM

as a traditional method of foreign language instruction whose principle is translating from one's first language into foreign language and vice versa.

During this period, the emphasis was not on spoken fluency but rather on reading, writing, and interpreting classical texts, making the use of the learners' native language

both practical and necessary. As a result, L1 was seen as essential for mediating the new language content (Kelly, 1969).

In fact, at that time, language education was often limited to the educated elite, so there was little emphasis on immersive or communicative methods.

1.3.2 English Language Teaching and the Shifting Mother Tongue Status: 18th–20th Century

The late 18th and 19th centuries marked a gradual shift away from the mother tongue. This period was characterized by the influence of educational reformers and the emergence of new pedagogical approaches. Notably, the Direct Method, developed in the late 19th century, advocated for exclusive use of the target language, arguing that L2 should be acquired similarly to an L1 through immersion and natural communication (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). They state, "translation was viewed not only as unnecessary but as actively harmful to the process of language learning" (p. 224). In addition, they explain that this method aimed "to teach the foreign language in the same way as the mother tongue, by direct association of the word and idea, and without the use of the native language" (p. 219).

This philosophy continued into the 20th century, especially during the rise of the Audiolingual Method in the United States, which strictly prohibited the use of L1 to avoid interference and promote habit formation (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). According to Boudergui (2017), the Audiolingual Method teaches the language directly, without using the mother tongue to explain new items. Freeman and Anderson (2011) also discussed this issue when stating that learners who attempt to master the target language wield their native language habits.

In brief, these approaches contributed to the growing belief that the mother tongue was an obstacle to effective L2 acquisition.

1.3.3 English-Only Movement and Emergent Bilingualism

In the late 20th century, especially in English speaking countries like the United States, the "English-only" movement became increasingly prominent. In fact, monolingual education policies were promoted and the use of other languages in the classroom was discouraged (Crawford, 2000). This ideology reinforced the exclusion of L1 in English language teaching. However, such views have been increasingly contested by research in bilingual education and sociolinguistics, which emphasises the cognitive, social, and linguistic benefits of maintaining L1 alongside L2 learning. According to Cummins (2007), "supporting L1 development enhances rather than hinders the acquisition of L2". Thus, the assumption that bilingualism is a barrier to academic success was challenged.

Emergent Bilingualism, a term introduced by Ofelia García (2009), to recognize learners' growing competencies in both L1 and L2, reframes learners' linguistic identity in more positive and dynamic terms. García argues that emergent bilinguals should be seen as individuals who are "developing the ability to operate in two (or more) languages". She adds that educators must "recognize and build upon the full linguistic repertoire" that learners bring to the classroom (García, 2009, p. 322). This perspective supports the integration of learners' home languages into the classroom as valuable resources, thus promoting identity, inclusion, and academic achievement.

1.3.4 L1 within Linguistic Imperialism

Some scholars have criticised the exclusion of the first language (L1) in EFL classrooms by looking at it as part of linguistic imperialism. Phillipson (1992) argues that

the spread of English often comes at the cost of local languages and identities, creating unfair advantages and promoting the dominance of English-speaking countries. From this perspective, encouraging English-only policies in schools can take away learners' right to use their native language and make it seem less valuable. Therefore, using L1 in the classroom is not just about teaching methods, but it is also a moral issue that supports language diversity and fairness in education (Pennycook, 2010).

1.3.5 L1 within Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emerged in 1970, emphasises interaction, real-life communication, and meaning-making in the target language. Initially, CLT strongly discouraged L1 use, aligning with the monolingual principle to maximise L2 exposure (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The rationale was that students learn best by using the target language in authentic contexts, with minimal reliance on translation or L1. However, more recent interpretations of CLT recognize that judicious L1 use can enhance rather than hinder communication. Nation (2003) argues that L1 can serve practical functions such as explaining complex grammar, giving instructions, or managing classroom behaviour.

Similarly, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) explain that strategic L1 use can support learning goals while maintaining communicative intent. Moreover, Richards and Rodgers (1986 as cited in Farah and Salah, 2012) confirm, "It has raised the ban on using L1 in the L2 learning; however, limited L1 use is allowed in the EFL classroom". Freeman and Anderson (2011) also declared that the use of mother tongue is permitted in situations like explaining activities, assigning home works, and during some communicative activities.

The shift reflects a more flexible, learner-centered approach in CLT, where the teacher's role includes selecting appropriate methods to support understanding. As Cook

(2001) notes, effective language classrooms often use a bilingual approach where L1 and L2 complement each other rather than compete.

To conclude, the role of the mother tongue in language education has undergone significant transformation from the classical period to the present day and has evolved significantly across various teaching methodologies. Initially, L1 served as a practical and necessary tool for facilitating understanding. However, with the rise of reformist approaches, L1 was gradually marginalized in favor of full immersion in the target language. In recent decades, however, this stance has been increasingly challenged. L1 was used alongside L2. As such, the integration of L1 in EFL contexts is no longer viewed purely as a methodological concern, but as a pedagogical and ethical imperative in support of equity, diversity, and academic success.

1.4 The Debate on Mother Tongue Use in EFL Classes

The use of the mother tongue (L1) in EFL classrooms has long been a subject of heated debate. Scholars, educators, and policymakers have taken differing stances on the issue, often aligning with either the 'Monolingual Approach', which discourages the use of L1 and emphasizes immersion in the target language, or the 'Bilingual Approach', which promotes the integration of L1 and its strategic and purposeful role to aid learning.

1.4.1 The Monolingual Approach: Arguments against Mother Tongue Use

1.4.1.1 Maximum Exposure

Advocates of the monolingual approach argue that maximum exposure to the target language accelerates acquisition and immersion (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). The belief is rooted in behaviourist and input-based theories, suggesting that more exposure to authentic input leads to greater fluency and faster learning (Krashen, 1985). Using L1 in

class, they argue, reduces opportunities for learners to hear and practice the L2, potentially slowing progress.

1.4.1.2 Negative Transfer and Language Interference

One of the central criticisms of L1 use is its potential to interfere with L2 acquisition. Odlin (1989) notes that language transfer can lead to the fossilization of errors especially in grammar, syntax, and pronunciation. For Arabic-speaking learners, for example, syntactic differences such as the VSO (verb-subject-object) structure in Arabic versus the SVO (subject-verb-object) structure in English can result in persistent grammatical errors.

1.4.1.3 Problems with Translation

Translation is often discouraged by monolingual proponents, who argue that it fosters a misleading word-for-word equivalence between languages (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Translation may reduce learners' ability to think directly in English, leading to cognitive dependency on L1 structures and semantics. Hence, methods like the Audio-Lingual Method and the Communicative Approach emerged to promote L2-only environments where learners are compelled to communicate solely in English. They promoted techniques that focus on meaning-making directly in the L2 to foster deeper cognitive and communicative competence.

1.4.1.4 Ideological Roots and the Native Speaker Model

The monolingual approach, particularly prevalent during the 20th century, aligns with ideologies that equate language proficiency with nativeness (Miles, 2004). Teachers are often expected to be native speakers, and English-only classrooms are perceived as more "authentic." Krashen and Terrell (1983) s.imilarly assert that just like L1 acquisition,

learning a foreign language requires continuous exposure to L2, which supposedly makes the use of L1 counterproductive.

1.4.2 The Bilingual Approach: Arguments In Defense of Mother Tongue Use

1.4.2.1 Challenging the Monolingual Assumptions

Critics of the monolingual view argue that its foundations are not necessarily pedagogical but ideological. Auerbach (1993) asserts that enforcing English-only policies can reflect power dynamics rather than evidence-based teaching practices. Bilingual education, in contrast, respects learners' linguistic repertoires and supports inclusivity and cognitive development.

1.4.2.2 Maximum Exposure from the Bilingual Perspective

Researchers like Cook (2001) and Cummins (2007) propose that strategic L1 use aids comprehension, particularly for complex concepts. Far from diminishing L2 exposure, L1 can help learners make sense of new material, reduce cognitive load, and facilitate classroom management. Particularly for beginners, L1 serves as a cognitive bridge that allows smoother transitions to L2 competence.

1.4.2.3 Interference and Transfer from the Bilingual Perspective

Bilingual advocates acknowledge the risk of interference but emphasise that language transfer can be both positive and negative (Ellis, 2008). Through guided instruction, learners can become aware of cross-linguistic influences, enabling them to regulate their L2 output more effectively (Macaro, 2009). Rather than suppressing L1, teachers can use it to foster metalinguistic awareness.

1.4.2.4 Translation and the Bilingual Argument: A pedagogical Tool

Translation, when used judiciously, is a valuable pedagogical tool. It allows learners to draw on their full linguistic knowledge, make connections, and understand subtle meanings (Weschler, 1997). Rather than viewing translation as a crutch, bilingual approaches see it as a bridge that enables learners to develop L2 skills more confidently and effectively. Studies (Weschler, 1997; Ibrahim Mohamed & Lobo, 2019) highlight that translation improves comprehension, aids in vocabulary retention, and engages learners. It also facilitates communication and improves teacher-student rapport.

1.4.2.5 Empirical Support and Practical Realities

Research increasingly supports the view that excluding L1 completely is neither realistic nor beneficial (Atkinson, 1987; Harbord, 1992; Lewis, 2009). In multicultural classrooms where learners and teachers may not share the same L1, monolingualism is often impractical. Moreover, historical shifts, such as migration and globalization, have diversified classrooms, making bilingual strategies more relevant than ever (Galali & Cinkara, 2017).

1.4.3 Bridging the Divide: Towards a Balanced Approach

Despite their philosophical differences, monolingual and bilingual approaches can be integrated pragmatically. Many teachers blend elements of both, aiming to maximize the strengths of each while minimizing potential drawbacks. As Nunan (1999, cited in Pacek, 2003) observes, no single method fits all contexts. Therefore, flexibility and contextual awareness should guide decisions on mother tongue use in the EFL classroom.

1.5 First Language (L1) Use in Foreign Language (FL) Classrooms

Both teachers and learners use language in the classroom, and this significantly affects the quality of language learning. While target language use is often encouraged in class, the L1 continues to play a meaningful role in facilitating learning, building rapport, and managing classroom interactions.

1.5.1 Teacher Talk in the Foreign Language Classroom

Teachers often resort to L1 for practical and pedagogical reasons. They use it for explaining difficult concepts, managing classroom behaviour, or providing emotional support (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). Atkinson (1987) argues that L1 use can be justified when it aids comprehension, saves time, or fosters a positive classroom atmosphere. Holthouse (2006) confirms this idea as he notes the usefulness of L1 in delivering complex instructions and in creating a positive classroom atmosphere—particularly for less confident or unmotivated students.

Macaro (2001) further identifies functions such as translating vocabulary, explaining grammar, or checking understanding as legitimate uses of L1 in EFL instruction. Yavuz (2012) states that EFL teachers use L1 mainly for methodological issues in their classes. He mentions the need to instruct and control the learners due to the overcrowded classes, the necessity for the learners to prepare for tests, the urge to energize students when they lack interest, and the teaching of abstract vocabulary. Furthermore, L1 is most used for translating unfamiliar words and clarifying intricate grammar rules that learners struggle to grasp (Jingxia, 2010). In short, these uses support cognitive and affective learner needs.

Jim Scrivener, in his seminal work "Learning Teaching", emphasised that when L1 is used purposefully and sparingly, it can become a powerful pedagogical tool. He

highlights that L1 can streamline instruction and reduce cognitive overload. For instance, L1 can be used in explaining complex grammar rules, abstract vocabulary, or nuanced cultural concepts in L2 that may confuse learners, especially at lower proficiency levels. Indeed, a brief L1 explanation can save time, prevent misunderstandings, and keep lessons focused. Similarly, clarifying activity instructions in L1 ensures learners grasp tasks quickly, allowing more time for meaningful L2 practice (Scrivener, 1994). However, just as Scrivener supports L1 use in specific scenarios, he stresses that L2 should dominate classroom interaction. He explains that teachers must model rich, contextualized L2 input to immerse learners in the target language.

Despite its utility, many teachers tend to minimize L1 use, citing the importance of promoting target language exposure (Turnbull, 2001). In fact, an overuse of L1 may limit students' opportunities to practice L2 and may hinder the development of fluency. Moreover, it can create dependency, where learners wait for translations instead of engaging with L2 input. Therefore, many training programs encourage English-only classrooms, especially at higher proficiency levels (Ellis, 2008). However, there is growing support for balanced, judicious use rather than complete exclusion.

1.5.2 Learner Talk in the Foreign Language Classroom

Learners, especially in beginner or lower-intermediate classes, often rely on L1 to process new information, express complex ideas, or collaborate with peers (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Using L1 can help learners lower anxiety, clarify understanding, and co-construct knowledge in pair or group tasks (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Moreover, L1 use can serve metacognitive purposes such as planning, evaluating, or negotiating meaning (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998).

Holthouse (2006) identifies other important roles for L1 when learners themselves turn to it in FL settings. One key role is that L1 can clarify some unfamiliar concepts, explain tasks and instructional goals, elicit vocabulary and aid language development, supporting learners as they bridge known and new terms. Another important role is checking comprehension. Learners may use it among peers to confirm or clarify information, thus fostering peer cooperation. Indeed, students can support each other by explaining difficult points in their shared native language. This reflects the reality that learners often use L1 to overcome linguistic gaps and facilitate mutual understanding. These functions illustrate that learners' use of L1 is often strategic and purposeful, not merely habitual.

1.5.3 First language Use in the EFL Classroom

In the EFL, context, the use of students' first language (L1) in EFL classrooms is not merely a methodological preference but is deeply tied to learners' identity, confidence, and emotional well-being. Yavus (2012) argues that excluding learners' native language from English instruction risks erasing their cultural and linguistic identities, stating that "teaching English without taking the students' first language into account does not only destroy their identity and culture but also turns them into newborn babies with adult minds." This perspective highlights the psychological and cultural cost of English-only approaches, particularly in contexts where language is a core component of self and community.

Atkinson (1987) advocated the following potential occasions for using the mother tongue in EFL settings. They are enumerated in the table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: *Suggested Uses for L1 in the EFL Classroom*

1. **Eliciting language** "How do you say 'X' in English?"

2. **Checking comprehension** "How do you say "I've been waiting for ten minutes" in Arabic?" (Also used for comprehension of a reading or listening text.)

3. **Giving complex instructions to basic levels**

4. **Co-operating in groups** Learners compare and correct answers to exercises or tasks in the L1. Students at times can explain new points better than the teacher.

5. **Explaining classroom methodology at basic levels**

6. **Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item**

7. **Checking for sense** If students write or say something in the L2 that does not make sense, have them try to translate it into the L1 to realize their error.

8. **Testing** Translation items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings.

9. **Developing circumlocution strategies** When students do not know how to say something in the L2, have them think of different ways to say the same thing in the L1, which may be easier to translate.

1.5.4 Code-Switching (CS) in the FL/EFL Classroom

Code switching was and still is the concern of many linguists. It is the alternation between L1 and L2 within discourse: a common feature of EFL classrooms. The term 'Code-Switching' refers to the use of elements from two languages in the same utterance or in the same stretch of conversation "(Paradis, Genesee & Cargo, 2011). Thus, it occurs within the same single utterance by shifting from one code to another. Moreover, Myers-Scotton (1993) suggests, "Code-switching is the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety (or varieties) in utterances of a matrix variety during the same conversation" (p. 3). In the same vein, Halliday (1978) defines, "Code –Shift actualized as a process within the individual :the speaker moves from one code to another and back , more or less rapidly in course of single sentence" (p. 65). That is to mean, code alternating depends on the bilingual its self and his degree of mastery of language and his flexibility between languages.

Gardner-Chloros (2009) emphasises the importance of understanding the meaning of "code" in order to define code-switching as she says, "code is understood as neutral umbrella term for language, dialects, styles/ registers…." (p. 11).

Teachers and learners use code-switching as a communicative strategy to fill lexical gaps, emphasize points, or facilitate classroom management (Sert, 2005). While once viewed as a sign of linguistic deficiency, recent research frames code-switching as a pragmatic and resourceful practice that reflects bilingual competence (Canagarajah, 2011).

The choice between L1 and L2 in classroom interaction is shaped by multiple factors, including learner proficiency, task complexity, teacher beliefs, and institutional policy (Levine, 2011). Teachers often make spontaneous decisions about language use, balancing communicative goals with students' linguistic needs. As a result, effective language instruction often involves flexible and context-sensitive use of both L1 and L2 (Hall & Cook, 2012).

Code-switching emerges as a common and purposeful practice used by teachers in an EFL class to facilitate comprehension. One notable form of code-switching observed in EFL classrooms is known as "sandwiching." This technique involves alternating between English and the students' L1, often within the same sentence or even around a single lexical item, to clarify meaning and support understanding.

For instance, in the context of this study about using Arabic in EFL classes, a teacher may begin by introducing a new phrase in English, such as "work solo," and then immediately provide the Arabic equivalent, "لوحدك," before repeating the English phrase again: *"work solo – لوحدك"*. This repetition pattern helps students associate the new English term with a familiar concept in their native language. Similarly, the teacher might

say *"work in pairs – مع زميلك"*. In both examples, the sandwiching technique allows learners to quickly grasp the meaning of unfamiliar English phrases without breaking the flow of the lesson.

Beyond "sandwiching", several other code-switching techniques are employed in EFL classrooms to support learning. These include:

➢ **Tag-switching:** referred also as Extra –Sentential. It inserting one word or a tag phrase from one language into a sentence in another language. For example, a teacher might say, "*This is a difficult task, ya'ni,*" using the Arabic tag *"ya'ni"* (meaning "meaning") to clarify the statement or in: "*I think , it' s clear, sah?"*

➢ **Inter-sentential switching:** The shift of language is at the level of sentence boundaries either in the beginning or in the end of the sentence; for instance, "*derti your homework*?"

➢ **Intra-sentential switching:** The change is done at the middle of sentence. In most cases, it is a spontaneous situation where the speaker is unaware when he/she produces it, and it is used to express doubt or hesitation; for example, "*I am going to finish the sequence three today inchallah*". Another example is when a teacher might say, "Please open your books على الصفحة عشرة," mixing English with Arabic to specify the page number.

• **Reiteration:** Repeating the same information in both languages to ensure understanding. A teacher might first explain a concept in English and then repeat it in Arabic to reinforce comprehension. For instance, he/she instructs the students by saying, *"read the text and write 'true' or 'false'"*. To reinforce the meaning, the teacher then repeats the instruction in Arabic "اقرأ النص واكتب 'صحيح' أو 'خطأ'". This

repetition in both English and Arabic helps ensure comprehension and supports language development.

- **Equivalence:** Using the learners' first language to explain a term or concept that has a direct equivalent in the target language, helping facilitate the transfer of meaning. For instance, in class, the teacher shows a flashcard of a pet cat and asks the students, *"What is this?"* The learners respond with the Arabic word *"قط"*. The teacher then confirms and connects the two languages by saying, *"Yes, it's a cat – just like 'قط' in Arabic."* This direct comparison reinforces vocabulary understanding and supports learners in building connections between the two languages.

- **Floor-holding:** Using L1 to maintain the flow of conversation while the speaker searches for the appropriate word or phrase in the target language. It allows learners to keep speaking without losing their turn, helping them stay engaged in communicative tasks. It is also called **"Conversation Relay"**. In this activity, the teacher introduces a topic (such as *monuments*) and asks small groups of 3–4 pupils to choose one monument and describe it using adjectives like *old*, *beautiful*, or *high*. Each pupil is given 30 seconds to speak. When one pupil finishes, the next continues the description without pausing. During this process, if a learner struggles to find the right word in English, they might use L1 fillers like *"ممم"*, or phrases such as *"دعني أخمن"* (*"Just a minute"*) to hold their turn while they think. These floor-holding expressions support fluency by giving learners time to process their thoughts without interrupting the conversational flow.

- **Conflict control:** Switching to the L1 to prevent misunderstandings or to clarify culturally specific references. At class, the conflict appears, for example, when dealing with verb "to be" in the present simple. The teacher gives an example: "*I*

am a pupil" in awareness and the learners start translating the sentence "انا تلميذ".
Therefore, the conflict appears when the verb 'to be' has no translation into Arabic
and the teacher tries to clarify that .

These strategies highlight the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of code-switching
in EFL classrooms. When used judiciously, they can enhance understanding, support
learner identity, and create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

1.5.5 The Use of Bilingual Dictionaries

Bilingual dictionaries are commonly used tools that allow learners to draw quick
parallels between L1 and L2 vocabulary. While some educators fear that their use
promotes dependence, research shows that bilingual dictionaries can aid vocabulary
acquisition, especially when used actively and reflectively (Laufer & Hadar, 1997). They
are particularly helpful for learners at lower levels who lack the semantic network in L2 to
guess word meanings from context (Nation, 2001). Encouraging learners to compare word
usage and connotation across languages can deepen lexical understanding.

1.5.6 Vocabulary Records

Vocabulary records are personal logs where learners write down new words,
meanings, and examples. These can be enhanced by including L1 equivalents. Schmitt
(2000) notes that incorporating the mother tongue helps consolidate memory and offers
cognitive hooks for recall. Learners who annotate vocabulary with L1 translations,
phonetic clues, or example sentences are better able to retrieve and use words
appropriately. When guided by teachers, this strategy balances L1 support with L2
development, fostering independent learning habits.

1.6 The Influence of Mother Tongue on FL Classes: Language Transfer

While the role of the mother tongue is increasingly recognised, promoting the active use of the second or target language remains a central goal in EFL classrooms. Teachers must strike a balance between encouraging authentic target (FL) communication and drawing on L1 as a supportive tool.

According to Chen (2020), the term "transfer" refers to the impact of the acquired knowledge, skills and methods on learning new information and skills. Skehan (2008, as cited in kheddadi, 2017) defines language transfer as "the influence of the mother tongue or other languages which have been learned". In other words, EFL learners transfer some characteristics from their first language to English, because they face language contradictions in language system between the old knowledge and the new one of the target language (English). Language transfer can appear as positive or negative.

1.6.1 Positive Transfer: Cognates and Loan Words

Positive transfer occurs when similarities between L1 and L2 facilitate learning. It happens when the transfer from the native language to the foreign language is understandable and without errors. In other words, positive transfer occurs when learners use their knowledge about L1 in order to learn specific structures in the target language. 'Cognates', referring to words that share form and meaning across languages, can accelerate vocabulary acquisition (Odlin, 1989). For example, learners of English whose L1 is French or Spanish often benefit from thousands of cognates (e.g., *information*, *important*), which build lexical confidence (Ringbom, 2007). Similarly, loan words borrowed into English from other languages can create familiar reference points for learners, supporting comprehension and retention (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

Many learners use grammatical rules used in learning their native language. If there are more similarities between L1and L2, students can master the rules of L2 easily and accelerate the learning process. One example is Arabic and English language similarities, found in the use of prepositions to express the same meaning. For instance, the use of "I am from Algeria" to indicate starting point as in "انا من الجزائر" (Direct transfer from Arabic).This can prove that the positive transfer plays an important role in learning another language (Chen, 2020).

1.6.2 Negative Transfer: False Friends

Negative transfer refers to instances when learners wrongly apply L1 structures or meanings to L2, resulting in errors. This indicates that the speaker lacks certain linguistic knowledge in using the target language. Troike (2006) defines negative transfer as the inappropriate influence of L1 structure on FL use. In the same vein, Cristopherson (1973) claimed that interference is transfer of skill X which has a negative impact on the command of skill Y due to the differences between both skills. To put it simply, negative transfer is defined by Cortes (2006) as "the negative influence that the knowledge of the first language has in the learning of the target languages due to the knowledge of the different existing between both languages" (p. 4).

False friends, words that look similar but differ in meaning (e.g., *actual* in English vs. *actuel* in French), can confuse learners and cause pragmatic errors (Odlin, 1989). Additionally, syntactic or phonological structures from L1 may influence L2 output in unproductive ways, particularly when learners are unaware of the differences (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Addressing these contrasts explicitly can minimize errors and enhance learners' metalinguistic awareness.

To conclude, the influence of the mother tongue on FL learning is both complex and significant. While positive transfer can facilitate vocabulary acquisition and boost learner confidence, negative transfer can lead to persistent errors. It is important to recognise both aspects to ensure effective EFL instruction. Rather than viewing the mother tongue solely as a hindrance, teachers should treat it as a cognitive resource that, when used strategically, can enhance language awareness and support learning. Ultimately, the challenge lies in striking a pedagogical balance: leveraging L1 to scaffold understanding while ensuring the target language remains the primary medium of communication and development.

1.7 The Role of Mother Tongue in EFL Grammar Teaching

It was crucial to include a discussion about the use of L1 in the teaching of grammar (particularly this skill and not another) within EFL classrooms. The idea came from the observation that L1 is most frequently employed by teachers in first levels of Algerian middle schools when explaining grammatical rules, clarifying sentence structures, and ensuring learners' comprehension. By investigating this interference, the study aims to provide insights into how L1 can serve as a strategic tool for enhancing grammatical understanding and learner engagement in early stages of English language education.

The use of the mother tongue (L1) in grammar instruction within EFL classrooms remains a pedagogical strategy that offers both cognitive and practical benefits. When presenting grammar, teachers often face the challenge of explaining abstract grammatical rules and complex structures in a way that is understandable to learners with limited target language proficiency. Using L1 at this stage can facilitate learners' comprehension of rules by providing clear comparisons with their native language structures. Indeed, L1 can be a tool for drawing learners' attention to cross-linguistic differences, promoting contrastive analysis, which is known to support grammar learning (Nation, 2003). Using L1 in explicit

grammar presentation can also enhance clarity, especially when dealing with tense systems, word order, and/or modality, which are grammar aspects that differ significantly from the learners' native language. This, ambiguity is reduced and learners can build metalinguistic awareness.

However, L1 use should be strategic and purposeful to avoid inhibition of immersion in the target language (Cook, 2001). Ellis (2006) supports this point, indicating that judicious use of L1 during grammar presentation can reduce cognitive overload and increase comprehension. Moreover, in the same vein, Scrivener (2002) argues, through his extensive research in teacher training and materials development, for a wise and purposeful use of the mother tongue when teaching grammar, moving beyond the simplistic prohibition that limited successful language learning. Moreover, Scrivener (2002) suggests that the new learning is built upon existing knowledge and experience, and for language learners, their mother tongue constitutes a significant part of this foundation.

Scrivener's approach to grammar teaching in EFL classrooms emphasises clarity, efficiency, and learner comprehension. He acknowledged that while the greatest goal for learners is to use and understand English, there are specific cases where L1 use can facilitate the learning and teaching process mainly for complex grammar rather than lengthy and boring explanation in English which may confuse lower proficiency students. In fact, a quick and precise explanation in L1 can save time that must be reinvested in more productive activities (Harbord, 1992 as cited in Cambridge Language Research, 2019).

Scrivener (2002) encourages teachers to grasp the use of the mother tongue to foster deeper understanding of grammatical structure. Teachers should encourage their learners to consider that the same idea would be expressed in their own language. This is not merely a matter of translation but rather about pushing learners to analyse the similarities and

differences between L1 and L2 much like "laboratory scientists, trying out experiments to see if they can notice and characterize important difference" (Scrivener, 2005).

1.8 Attitudes towards the Use of L1 in EFL Classes: A Synthesis of Studies

Attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom are shaped by a range of factors including pedagogical beliefs, language policies, learner proficiency levels, and cultural norms. Research has shown that both teachers and students often hold contradicted or context-dependent views about L1 use. While many recognise its value for clarity and comfort, others are concerned about its potential to reduce target language exposure.

Studies in various EFL contexts have shown that a moderate and strategic use of L1 can support learning without necessarily hindering L2 acquisition. For example, Schweers (1999) investigated the value of using learners' mother tongue (Spanish) in the English classroom at Puerto Rico University. The collected data revealed that the majority of students and teachers had positive attitude towards using Spanish during English lessons because it helped explain difficult concepts, check understanding and define new vocabulary items. Schweers (1991) argued that L2 could "be learned through raising awareness to the similarities and differences between the L1 and L2" (p. 13). He also stressed the importance of bringing learners' L1 back to L2 classes as this would lead to positive attitudes towards learning another language. Limited and judicious use of L1 could be tolerated because of its pedagogical and affective benefits.

Another important study was carried out by Burden (2001) which explored learners' and teachers' need to use Japanese in English classes. The results indicated that there was a general agreement between teachers and students regarding the importance of L1 use in the TL classes in situations where to explain new vocabulary, give instructions, teach grammar

and check comprehension. Burden (2001) emphasised the value of occasional inclusion of L1 in L2 classes to meet learners' psychological need of not portraying their MT as an inferior to the TL.

Similarly, Tang's (2002) study of Chinese university students and teachers found that both had positive attitudes towards using L1 (Chinese) during English classes. They saw a value of using L1 to discuss difficult grammatical rules, to explain challenging vocabulary items, and to practice new phrases and expressions. Tang (2002) concluded, "limited and judicious use of the mother tongue in the English classroom does not reduce students' exposure to English, but rather can assist in the teaching and learning processes" (p. 41).

In a similar study, Sharma (2006) examined teachers' and learners' attitudes towards using Nepali in EFL classes. The results showed the need to utilise L1 (Nepali) in order to explain difficult vocabulary, discuss complex grammar rules, clarify difficult concepts, and practice the use of new expressions and phrases. Sharma (2006) argued that banishing L1 from English classrooms would negatively affect students' progress as this would "certainly deprive the students of certain opportunities to learn more and better" (p. 86).

Despite these findings, institutional policies or traditional language teaching ideologies often discourage L1 use. This tension is reflected in teachers' and students' mixed responses. For instance, Copland and Neokleous (2011) observed that teachers in Cyprus felt pressured to minimize L1 use due to school policies, even though they believed it could help students understand instructions and clarify meaning more effectively. Moreover, when conducting a research about examining the Saudi teachers' and students' attitudes towards using Arabic in the English classroom, Al-Nofaie's (2010) found that both teachers and students claimed for limited and judicious use of L1, believing that excessive use of Arabic would hinder their learning.

Such research studies suggest that rather than imposing blanket "English-only" policies, L1 use in EFL should be guided by pedagogical principles that prioritise learner needs, context sensitivity, and instructional clarity.

1.8.1 Teachers' Attitudes

Teachers' attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in EFL classrooms are often shaped by their training, beliefs about language learning, teaching context, and institutional policies. Numerous studies suggest that while many teachers support the judicious use of L1, they also experience tension between pedagogical needs and the prevailing "English-only" ideology.

A study by Macaro (2001) in UK secondary schools found that teachers frequently used L1 to explain grammar and vocabulary, manage classrooms, and give instructions especially with lower-proficiency learners. Teachers believed this helped maximize understanding and learning efficiency. However, they expressed concern that overuse of L1could diminish students' exposure to the target language, which can potentially result in slowing L2 acquisition. Macaro (2001) concluded that teachers often feel mentally conflicted, trying to balance what works best in the classroom with what teaching theories or policies impose them to do.

Similarly, a study by Barnard and McLellan (2014) on EFL teachers in Southeast Asia revealed that although teachers acknowledged the benefits of L1 for boosting learner confidence and comprehension, many felt constrained by institutional expectations that favored exclusive use of English. Teachers described experiencing a professional dilemma as their personal pedagogical beliefs conflicted with external expectations. As a result, some teachers covertly incorporated L1 in ways that were technically against school guidelines.

In Saudi Arabia, Alshammari (2011) surveyed EFL teachers in secondary schools and found that a majority used Arabic in their classes for grammar explanations and translation of vocabulary. Teachers justified this based on students' needs but remained cautious not to rely too heavily on L1. In short, Alshammari (2011) noted that teachers saw L1 as a scaffolding tool, useful in the short term but something to be phased out as learners became more proficient.

To sum up, these studies demonstrate that teachers generally see value in L1 use and consider it a practical and effective support in language teaching; however, they feel conflicted when pedagogical needs clash with policy directives. Cook (2001) argues, "Excluding the L1 altogether is not only impractical but counterproductive to communicative goals," especially in beginner and intermediate classrooms. Teachers thus often find themselves negotiating between what is pedagogically sound and what is politically or institutionally expected. This reveals the need for more flexible, context-sensitive language policies that empower teachers to make informed instructional choices.

1.8.2 Learners' Attitudes

Learners' attitudes towards the use of L1 in EFL classes are influenced by their level of language proficiency, past educational experiences, and individual learning preferences. Investigating the learners' perceptions towards the use of the mother tongue in EFL context is a very interesting issue because of learners' direct involvement in learning the target language. Research across different cultural and educational settings has consistently shown that many learners appreciate L1 use when it helps with understanding and reduces language anxiety.

Al-Nofaie (2010), in a study of Saudi secondary school students, reported that learners strongly supported the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms, especially for explaining difficult grammar, translating unfamiliar vocabulary, and giving exam instructions. Students felt that L1 helped them feel more secure and better prepared for assessments.

A similar conclusion was drawn in a study conducted by Cinkara and Galali (2017) on a sample of EFL learners at Salah Addin University, Erbil. The study indicates the learners' positive perception towards the use of L1 when it seeks to facilitate the learning process especially for low achievers. In other words, the study supports the limited use of L1 because it plays a facilitating role for low-level learners to get exposure to the foreign language. Therefore, it helps all learners in plenty of circumstances.

Prodromou's (2002) study of Greek learners of English of various proficiency levels (Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced) revealed that students agreed that L1 helped them feel less anxious and more in control of their learning. In fact, findings showed that elementary students have more positive perception, while intermediate and advanced learners were more resistant to L1 use. They reported that the classroom is the most appropriate context that provides the opportunity to expose students to natural English. Using the native language in this case is considered as a waste of learners' time of exposure to the foreign language.

Hall and Cook (2012), in a broad review of international data, emphasised that most learners do not expect full immersion but rather appreciate a balance between L1 and L2 that facilitates understanding and supports their learning goals. The study highlighted that learners often view L1 not as a barrier but as a bridge to mastering English.

Another study entitled "Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages" was conducted by Hamze in 2010. Students from different Arabic nationalities participated in

this research and confessed that they do not encourage the frequent use of Arabic in class and assumed that it does not contribute in learning English. However, they are aware of the significant part that L1 plays in explaining grammar rules, difficult concepts and new vocabulary. They think that teachers can use other affective techniques that serve better than the dependence on the first language like using pictures, visual aids, objects and realia.

All in all, these findings suggest that learners generally support the strategic use of L1, particularly when it is employed as a learning aid rather than a substitute for L2 exposure.

1.8.3 Institutional Attitudes and Policy Influence

Institutional policies often play a decisive role in shaping classroom language practices and, by extension, the attitudes of both teachers and learners. In many educational systems, "English-only" policies are enforced based on the belief that immersion is the most effective way to promote target language learning. However, these top-down policies frequently conflict with the realities of multilingual classrooms, where learners benefit from strategic L1 use.

For instance, a research conducted by Auerbach (1993) highlights how prohibiting the use of the mother tongue can disempower learners and restrict teachers' flexibility. Teachers often feel pressured to adhere to English-only mandates, even when such policies are pedagogically limiting. Similarly, Spahiu (2013) found that in Kosovo, institutional regulations that emphasise English immersion often conflicted with teachers' practical need to clarify complex topics in Albanian.

Such institutional stances may ignore the different needs of EFL learners, especially those at lower proficiency levels. As noted by Forman (2012) in the context of Thai

classrooms, teachers found that even when L1 is used a little, it made instruction more effective. However, official guidelines discouraged such practices. This disconnection between policy and practice suggests the need for more context-sensitive approaches that recognise the supportive role of L1 in language education.

1.8.4 Comparative International Perspectives

Attitudes towards L1 use in EFL classrooms differ significantly across countries because of the difference in national education policies, linguistic diversity, and cultural perceptions of English. These factors influence how L1 is perceived: Either as a legitimate pedagogical aid or as an obstacle to integration In FL classes.

In East Asian countries such as Japan and China, L1 is often used more frequently in EFL classrooms, especially in secondary education. Teachers in these contexts tend to view L1 as a legitimate instructional resource, particularly for grammar explanations and classroom management (Butzkamm, 2003).

In contrast, in Western contexts such as the United Kingdom or the United States, where English is the majority language, the emphasis tends to be on exclusive use of English, even in beginner-level foreign language instruction. However, even here, educators have begun to question strict English-only approaches. For example, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) found that Canadian French and ESL teachers supported limited L1 use, especially for explaining instructions or managing behaviour.

Meanwhile, in multilingual settings like South Africa or India, the use of L1 is often unavoidable due to the linguistic backgrounds of students. In these contexts, bilingual or translanguaging approaches (where students move fluidly between languages) are

increasingly being explored as effective pedagogical tools that honor learners' linguistic repertoires and promote deeper engagement with English (Probyn, 2009).

In the Arab world, attitudes towards L1 use in EFL instruction reflect a complex interplay of language policy, national identity, and pedagogical pragmatism. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, and Jordan have implemented English language education as a national priority due to globalization and economic development goals. Despite these efforts, Arabic continues to play a prominent role in EFL classrooms. Studies such as Alshammari (2011) in Saudi Arabia and Benrabah (2007) in Algeria show that many EFL teachers rely on Arabic to explain complex grammar, translate vocabulary, and ensure comprehension, particularly among lower-level learners.

Teachers often view Arabic as a necessary scaffold that supports learning, despite institutional policies that may favor English-only instruction. However, across many Arab countries, a tension remains between policy and practice. On one hand, there is a desire to integrate international best practices that encourage and maximize exposure to English. On the other hand, the practical realities of large class sizes, limited student proficiency, and sociolinguistic factors often necessitate L1 use. As Rabab'ah (2013) points out, this tension leads to varied classroom practices, with some teachers openly embracing L1 use and others applying it more discreetly to avoid administrative inspection.

1.8.5 Perspectives within the Algerian Context

In the case of Algerian middle schools in particular (as it is the concern of this research work), the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms has been a subject of ongoing debate and shifting policy. For a significant period, ministerial guidelines strictly discouraged the use of Arabic by EFL teachers, aiming to promote learners' exposure to the target

language. Teachers were expected to conduct lessons entirely in English, regardless of pupils' proficiency levels or comprehension challenges. However, recent educational reforms introduced by the Algerian Ministry of Education very recently have marked a shift in this stance. New policy updates have officially allowed the use of Arabic in EFL instruction, particularly for explaining complex grammar rules or clarifying difficult vocabulary. This was particularly recommended at the middle school level, where learners often struggle with full English use. These reforms recognise that limited, purposeful use of L1 can enhance understanding, reduce cognitive load, and support more effective learning, especially among beginners.

This change reflects a growing awareness within Algerian educational policy that strict English-only approaches may not be pedagogically effective in all contexts. By giving teachers more flexibility to use L1 strategically, the reforms aim to balance the need for target language exposure with the practical realities of the classroom and the linguistic needs of learners.

For concluding, the cross-national and national comparisons discussed in this point highlight the importance of localising language policies and teaching practices rather than applying one-size-fits-all models.

Conclusion

It became obvious that attitudes and perceptions play crucial roles in enabling students to learn effectively. Many studies were conducted on the attitudes of students and teachers towards using the first language in EFL classroom; however, the degree to which they agree or disagree on its use differentiate from one research to another. Therefore, the best way to deal with this issue is to use L1 reasonably only when necessary so as to facilitate the process of teaching and learning the target language.

Building on this understanding, the coming chapter, representing the fieldwork, aims to explore the attitudes of both EFL middle school teachers and pupils within the Algerian context regarding the use L1 in English classrooms. By investigating their perceptions, beliefs, and classroom experiences, this study seeks to provide context-specific insights into how L1 is viewed and employed in practice. Through this investigation, the research hopes to shed light on the practical realities faced by educators and learners and contribute to ongoing discussions about the balanced and effective use of L1 in foreign language instruction.

Chapter Two: Fieldwork

Introduction

The following investigation is conducted to determine learners' and teachers' attitudes concerning the use of the mother tongue in English classrooms. As both of teachers and learners are the main participants in the educational process, their opinions are of a huge interest. The actual chapter is designed to provide the description and the results that were obtained through the data collection methods. Data were collected by assigning two questionnaires; one was distributed to the first year learners at Ben Djaballah Omar Middle school (Bouchagroun, Biskra), and the other is addressed to teachers of English from different middle schools and different levels. In addition to the data collection instruments, this chapter answers the research questions that have been mentioned before in the general introduction. The chapter ends up with some pedagogical recommendations and suggestions.

2.1 Review of Research Methodology

2.1.1 Research Method

An exploratory research method was employed to examine the perspectives of both first-year middle school learners and their English language teachers regarding the incorporation of the mother tongue in EFL instruction. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether bilingual instruction can help alleviate challenges related to grammar and vocabulary acquisition.

Given the nature of the topic and the need to capture both measurable trends and in-depth insights, the research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

2.1.2 Population and Sampling

This study involved two distinct participant groups: A sample of teachers comprising seventeen (17) EFL teachers from various middle schools across Biskra. They were selected using random sampling to ensure variation in terms of professional experience and academic qualifications.

The study also involved a pupils' sample. It was drawn from first-year pupils at Ben Djaballah Omar Middle School in Bouchagroun, Biskra. The overall student population in this school comprises 180 learners, distributed across five classes. A sample of sixty-five (65) students was selected using purposive sampling, mainly for logistical convenience, as the researcher is also the classroom teacher of the selected groups.

Both samples were chosen with the aim of capturing their attitudes on the impact of using the mother tongue in English language instruction.

2.1.3 Data Collection Instruments

To obtain the required data for this study, the researcher employed two questionnaires as the primary research tool. A semi-structured questionnaire was administered to both groups: middle school EFL teachers and first-year learners to gather quantitative data regarding their views on the use of L1 in the English classroom.

The semi-structured design included a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. This combination enabled the collection of statistically analyzable data while also providing deeper insight into the participants' personal experiences and rationales. Hence, the questionnaire proved to be a suitable tool for exploring the nuanced and context-specific attitudes towards the integration of L1 in English language teaching.

2.1.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected quantitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, a practical and accessible tool for organizing and interpreting numerical data. Excel has been used to input participants' responses, calculate frequencies and percentages, and generate charts for visual representation. This software allowed for efficient processing of Likert-scale responses and categorical data, which helped identify trends and compare attitudes between teachers and learners. Excel was chosen for its ease of use and suitability for handling descriptive statistics, which aligned with the study's aim of exploring general patterns rather than conducting advanced statistical tests.

2.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

2.2.1 Aims of Teachers' Questionnaire

This semi-structured questionnaire has been conducted in order to explore EFL teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and classroom practices regarding the use of the first language (L) in teaching English. It is designed as well to explore how often teachers rely on L1, in which situations they use it, and their beliefs about the benefits and drawbacks in supporting learners' understanding and participations.

2.2.2 Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into five sections, each targeting a specific aspect of L1 use in English teaching: section one gathers the essential background information and professional details about the teachers; however, second section investigates how frequently teachers use L1 in their EFL classrooms and in which specific situations. It also asks teachers about the percentage of class time spent using L1, providing insights into their actual classroom practices. Section three, on the other hand, includes series of likert-scale statements that measures teachers' level of agreement, their beliefs about the

effectiveness and drawbacks of L1 use, such as improving understanding, reducing anxiety, or hindering English proficiency. It also measures whether or not L1 is beneficial for beginners. The last but not the least, section four explores whether teachers are influenced by any institutional guidelines on using L1, and whether they have received any formal training on balancing between first language and second language in their classrooms. The final section allows teachers to provide qualitative insights.

The questionnaire was administered (during the academic year 2024-2025) online due to the geographical dispersion of the participants and the difficulty of reaching them in person. Teachers were from various middle schools, which made face-to-face distribution impractical. To ensure accessibility and increase response rates, the questionnaire was shared via email and Facebook, using both direct messages and professional teacher groups. This digital mode of distribution allowed the researcher to reach a broader sample of teachers efficiently and provided participants with the flexibility to complete the questionnaire at their convenience.

2.2.3 Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

Q1. How long have you been teaching EFL?

Table 2.1 *Teachers' Experience in Teaching English*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) 1-2 years	7	41%
b) 2–5 years	6	35%
c) 6–10 years	2	12%
d) 10 years	2	12%
Total	**17**	**100%**
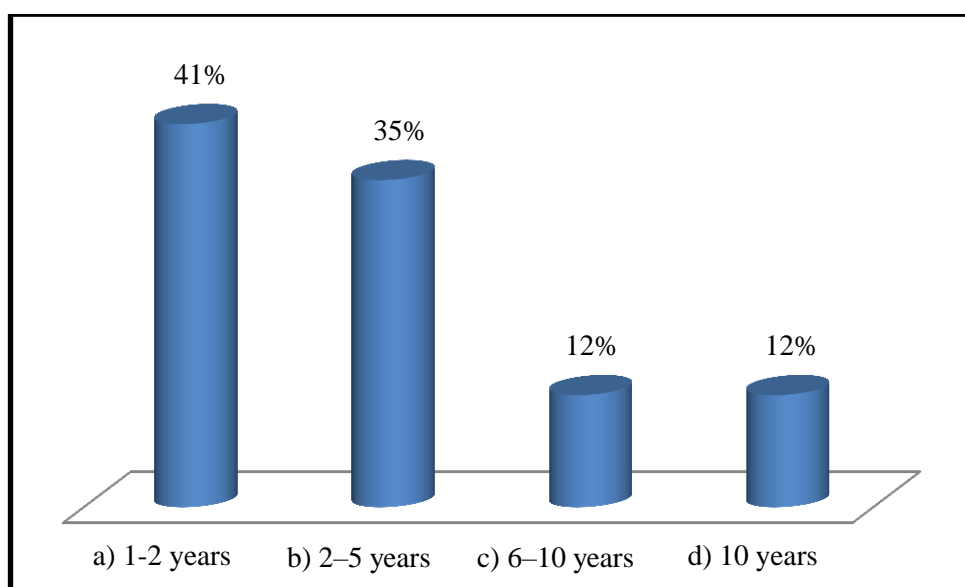
Figure 2.1 *Teachers'Eexperience in Teaching English*

The demographic data indicates the teaching experience of our teachers: 41% of participants had been teaching for 1 to 2 years. This followed closely by 35% of teachers who reported having 2 to 5 years of teaching experience. However, only small number of teachers has been teaching for longer time. 12% have between 6 to 10 years of experience, and another 12% have been teaching for more than 10 years. This may indicate that schools are hiring a lot of new teachers, or that the experienced teachers are leaving for other reasons.

Q2. Would you specify the age of the learners you primarily teach?

Table 2.2 *Learners' Age*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
	6	35%
b) Adolescents (13–18 years)	9	53%
c) Adults (18+ years)	2	12%
Total	**17**	**100%**
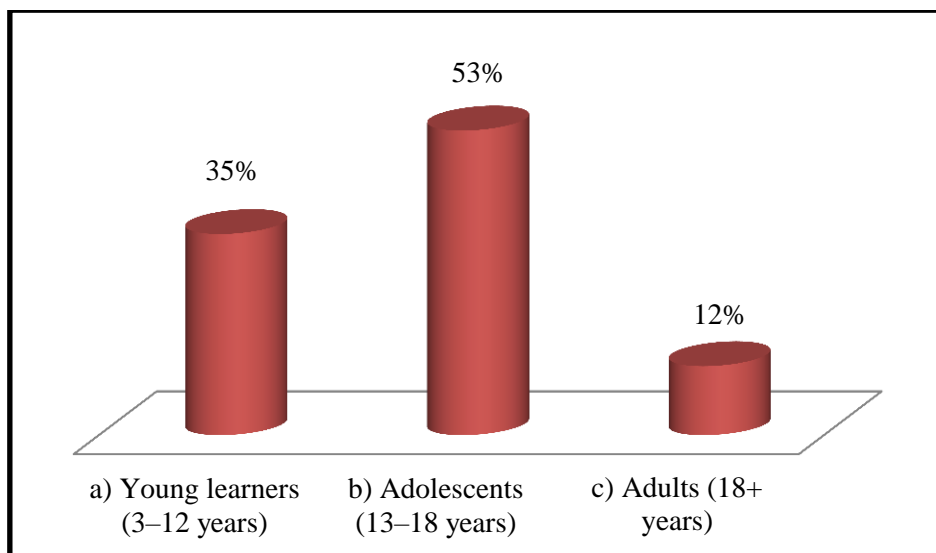
Figure 2.2 *Learners' Age*

The table above shows the age groups that the teachers mostly work with. More than half of the teachers 53% teach adolescents between 13 and 18 years old, while 35% work with young learners aged 3 to 12 years, while only 12% teach adults over 18.This means that English is mostly taught to young learners, especially those in their teenage years. Therefore, the teaching methods and classroom activities are designed to suit that age group.

Q3. Institution type:

Table 2.3 *Institution Type*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Public school	11	65%
b) Private language institute	5	29%
c) University	1	6%
Total	**17**	**100%**
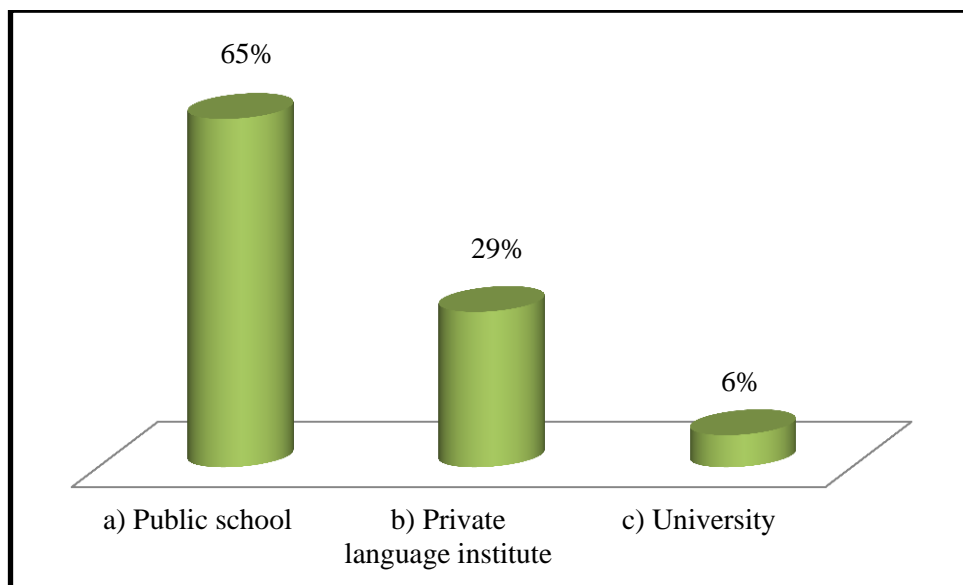
Figure 2.3 *Institution type*

According to the table 2.3 above, the majority of teachers in this study (65%) work in public schools while a small number of teachers (29%) are employed in private language institute, and only (6%) of them reported working at University. However, one of the participants added another type of institute which is "CEIL de Biskra (Chetma)", which focuses on helping learners enhance their English in a short period of time. Overall, the data indicates that teaching English is mostly taking place at the school level, especially in public education, and less in private and University settings.

Section Two: Frequency and Contexts of L1 Use

Q4. How often do you use L1 in your EFL classroom?

Table 2.4 Frequency of teachers' use of L1 in their EFL classroom

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Never	1	6%
b) Rarely	5	29%
c) Occasionally	8	47%
d) Frequently	2	11%
e) Very frequently	1	6%
Total	**17**	**100%**
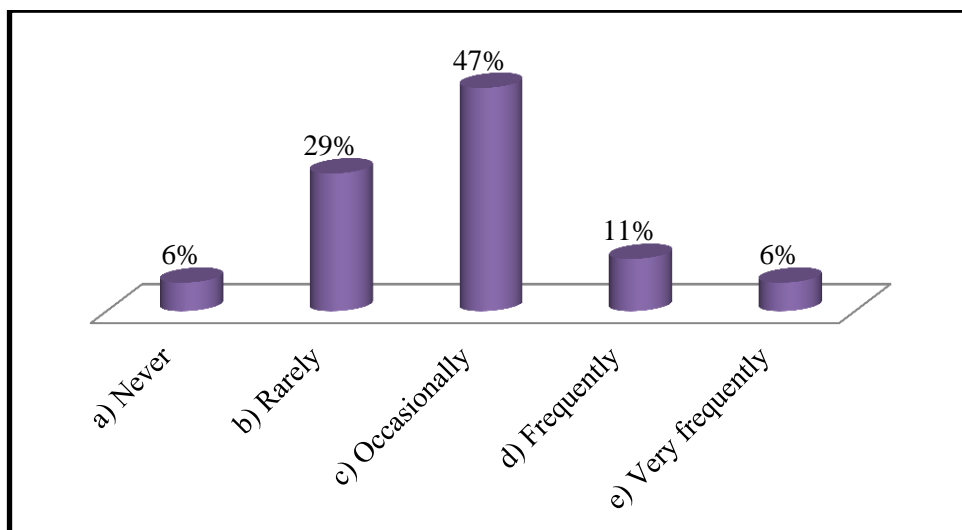
Figure 2.4 *Frequency of teachers' use of L1 in their EFL classroom*

As shown in the above table, the majority of teachers (47%) said that they occasionally use the first language (L1) in their classrooms, and 29% of them said they use it rarely. One of the teachers (6%) reported that s/he uses it very frequently and only one teacher (6%) never uses it. Finally, a smaller number (11%) said they use L1 frequently. Hence, in order to know the reason behind why they choose to use or avoid using, the teachers were asked to provide justifications. For the teachers who rarely use L1 believe it has a negative impact on the learners' language acquisition. They argue that using L1 frequently may lead pupils to rely on translation, which later can weaken their thinking and expression in English. Instead they prefer different methods like one teacher mentioned and we quote "I use body language, images, facial expressions, examples, ask them to use a dictionary" to support their understanding while maintaining the target language.

However, majority of the teachers use mother language occasionally and explain that they do so mainly to clarify grammar rules, explain difficult vocabulary or give instructions. These teachers use first language as support tool, especially for low level pupils. Meanwhile, the teachers who use L1 frequently explain that it is often necessary because their pupils find it difficult to understand English, especially when it comes to grammar and vocabulary; they mainly use it to avoid confusion and ensure that all pupils

can follow along. In addition, teachers who chose to use L1 very frequently justified it by addressing that their pupils have very low English vocabulary, it is hard for them to understand the lesson taught only in English. Lastly, only one teacher never uses L1 because it is an easy method.

Q5. In which situations do you use L1? Select all that apply.

Table 2.5 *Situations where Teachers Use L1*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Explaining grammar/vocabulary	2	12%
b) Giving instructions	0	0%
c) Managing classroom behavior	1	6%
d) Clarifying complexideas	1	6%
e) Building rapport with students	0	0%
f) Translating unfamiliar words	2	12%
More than one situation	11	52%
Total	**17**	**100%**
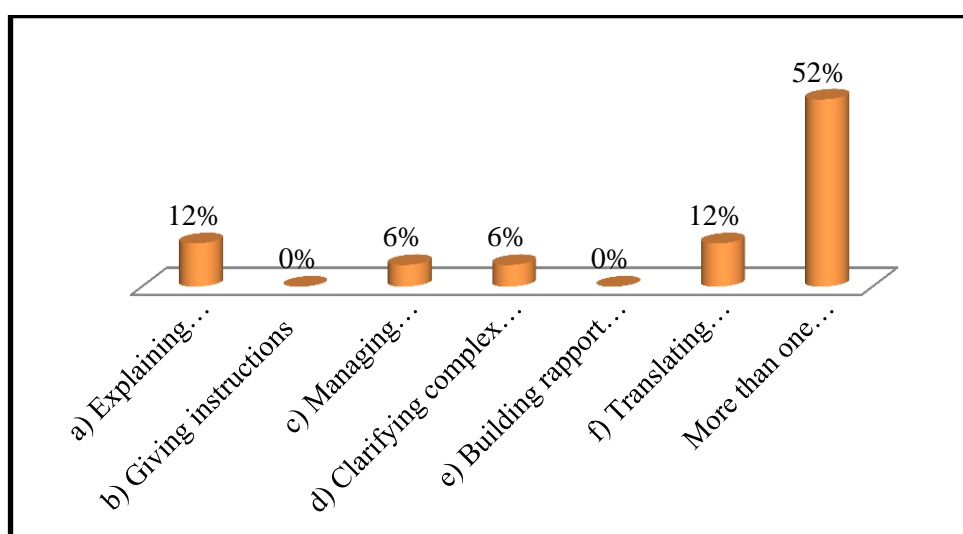
Figure 2.5 *Situations where Teachers Use L1*

According to the table 2.5, majority of teachers (52%) reported that they use the first language in more than one context; with grammar/vocabulary explanations and translating unfamiliar words as top specific reasons. Some teachers (12%) use L1 specifically for explaining grammar or vocabulary, and another 12% use it for translating unfamiliar words. Meanwhile, a small number of teachers use L1 for behavior management or

clarifying complex ideas (6%), and none for instructions or rapport. the results suggest that first language is mainly used as a support tool when learners find it hard to understanding the difficult parts of the lesson, especially grammar, vocabulary and complex ideas.

Q6. What percentage of class time do you estimate is spent using L1?

Table 2.6 *Percentage of Class Time Teachers Estimate to Spend Using L1*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) 0%	1	6%
b) 1–10%	6	35%
c) 11–20%	4	23%
d) 21–30%	3	18%
e) >30%	3	18%
Total	**17**	**100%**
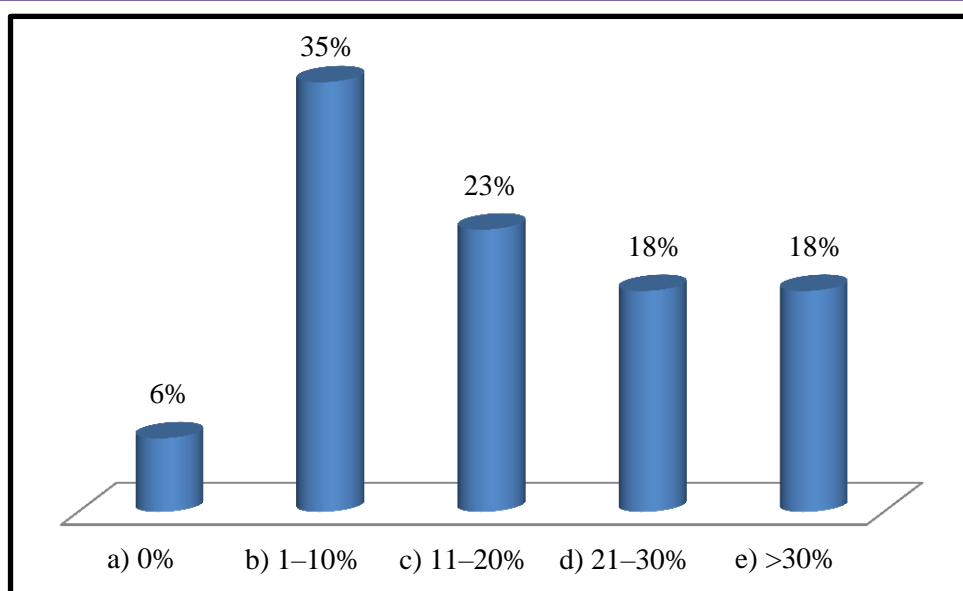
Figure 2.6 *Percentage of Class Time Teachers Estimate to Spend Using L1*

Statistically speaking, the largest group, 6 teachers (35%), admitted that they use L1 for about 1-10% of class time; however, 4 teachers (23%) use L1 for 11- 20% of the time, which is quite high. 18% goes for: teachers who use first language for 21-30%, and teachers who estimated using it for more than 30%. Only one teacher (6%) reported using no L1 at all (0% of class time). This variation shows that teachers differ in how much they

depend on first language, likely based on the learners' language level and the teaching settings. Some use it infrequent to support understanding, while others use it more frequent, maybe due to their learners' need to extra help.

Section Three: Perceptions of L1 Use

Q7. Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 =Strongly Agree)

Table 2.7 *Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of L1*

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
a) Using L1 improves students' understanding of challenging content.	18%	52%	12%	6%	12%
b) L1 use reduces students' anxiety and increases participation.	29%	53%	0%	6%	12%
c) Overusing L1 hinders students' English proficiency development.	23%	41%	12%	6%	18%
d) I feel confident teaching without relying on L1.	35%	29%	12%	6%	18%
e) L1 is particularly useful for beginner-level students.	41%	35%	6%	6%	12%
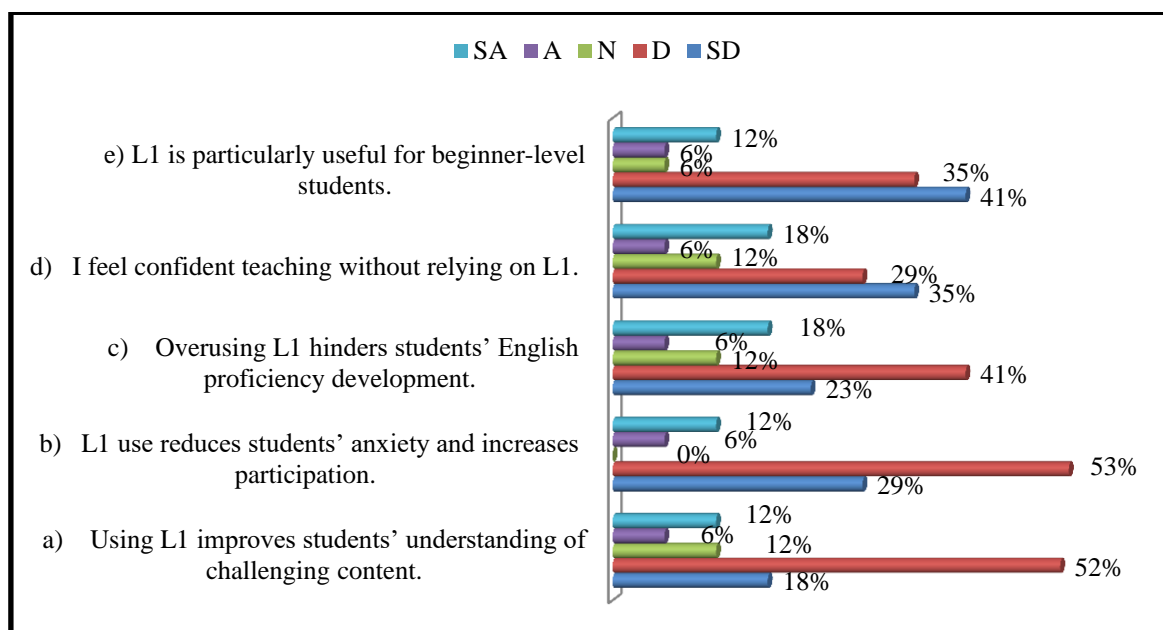
Figure 2.7 *Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of L1*

The above table demonstrates how teachers feel about using first language in their classrooms, based on their agreement with the five given statements. The results are shown as follows:

- Majority of the teachers (52%) disagree or strongly disagree (18%) that L1 improves understanding; while only a small number agree (6%) or strongly agree (12%) and only (12%) chose to be neutral.

- Regarding "L1 use reduces students' anxiety and increases participation", again, majority of teachers (53%) disagree or strongly disagree (29%), with only a few agreeing (6%) or strongly agreeing (12%) and no one opted for "neutral". This indicates that most of teachers are not fully convinced that first language helps learners to feel comfortable or involved in the lesson.

- When asked if "overusing L1 hinders students' English proficiency development", a significant portion of participants (41%) disagrees or strongly disagree (23%), but many still agree (6%) or strongly agree (18%). This variation in answers shows some concerns about the frequent use of L1 affecting English learning, though not all teachers see L1 as major problem.

- For the statement "I feel confident teaching relying on L1", most of the teachers (35%) strongly disagree with the statement, sum (29%) disagree, sum (12%) were neutral, sum of (6%) agree, and finally (18%) of the teachers strongly agree. This reveals that majority of teachers feel unconfident teaching only in English and may rely on L1 to some extent.

- Finally, about "L1 is particularly useful for beginner-level students", most teachers (41%) again strongly disagree with the given statement; some of them (35%)

disagree, with only a few of them (6%) agreeing with the statement. Adding to this, some of teachers (12%) strongly agree and others (6%) are neutral. This indicates that majority of teachers do not strongly support using first language even for low level learners.

Section Four: Institutional Policies and Training

Q8. Does your institution have guidelines about L1 use in EFL classes?

Table 2.8 *The existence of institution guidelines about L1 use in EFL classes*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Yes	4	23%
b) No	9	54%
c) Unsure	4	23%
Total	**17**	**100%**
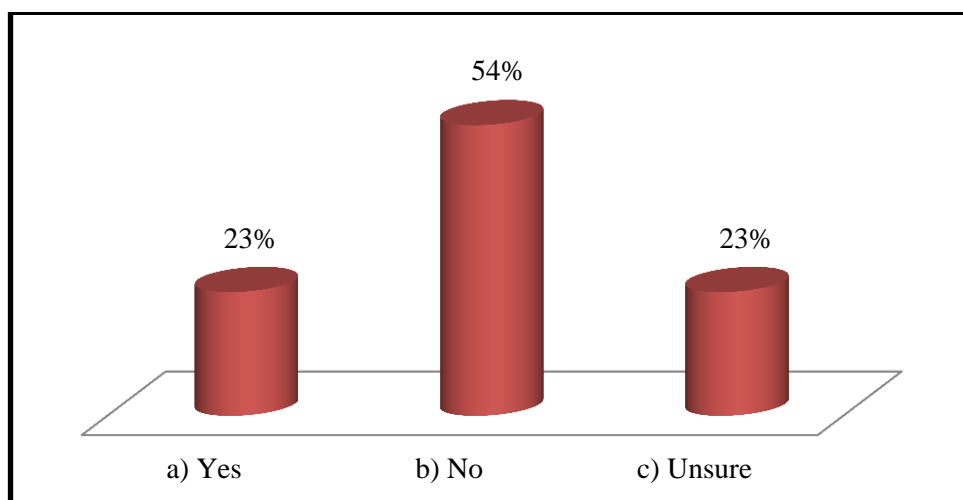
Figure 2.8 *The existence of institution guidelines about L1 use in EFL classes*

According to the data presented in the figure above, the majority of teachers (54%) reported that their institutions do not have any formal of guidelines regarding the use of the mother language in EFL classes. Meanwhile, (23%) of the participants stated that such guidelines exist in EFL classes; while the remaining (23%) were unsure. This indicates that a lack of institutional policy leads to inconsistent practices and leads also teachers to rely on their personal judgment.

Q9. Have you received training on balancing L1 and L2 (English) in the classroom?

Table 2.9 *The existence of teachers' training on balancing L1 and L2 (English) in the classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Yes	7	41%
b) No	10	59%
Total	**17**	**100%**
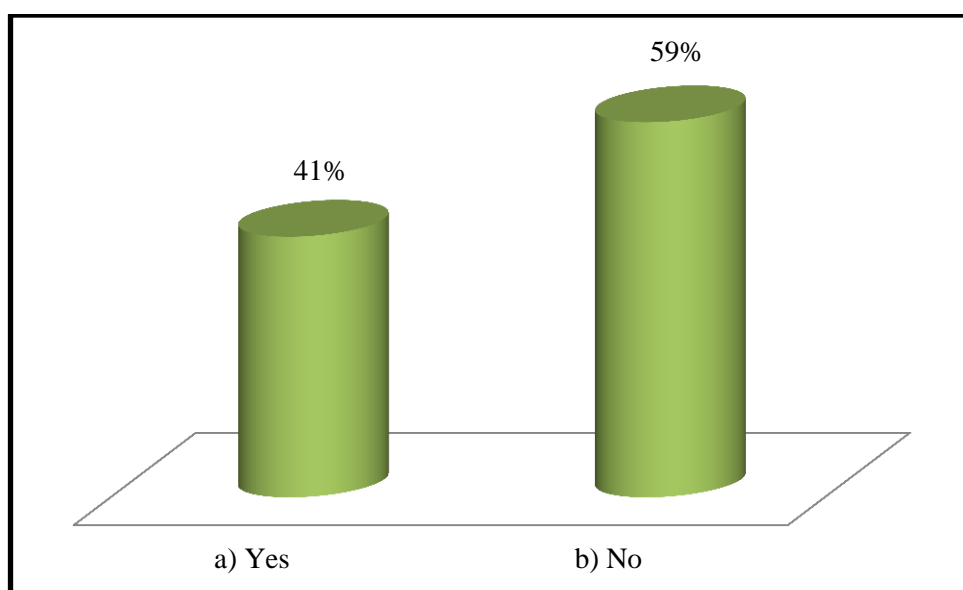
Figure 2.9 *The Existence of Teachers' Training on Balancing L1 and L2 (English) in the Classroom*

As shown in the table, (59%) of the respondents have not received training on how to balance the use of the first language (L1) and English (L2); only 41% said that they have received training on this matter.

Among those trained, responses were mixed—only 14% found the training very helpful. This absence of guidance places the burden of decision-making on individual teachers, leading to inconsistent practices and insecurity about when and how to use L1 effectively.

If yes, how helpful was the training?

Table 2.9.1 *The Degree of Teachers' Training Usefulness*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Not helpful	1	14%
b) Slightly helpful	2	28%
c) Moderately helpful	3	44%
d) Very helpful	1	14%
Total	**7**	**100%**
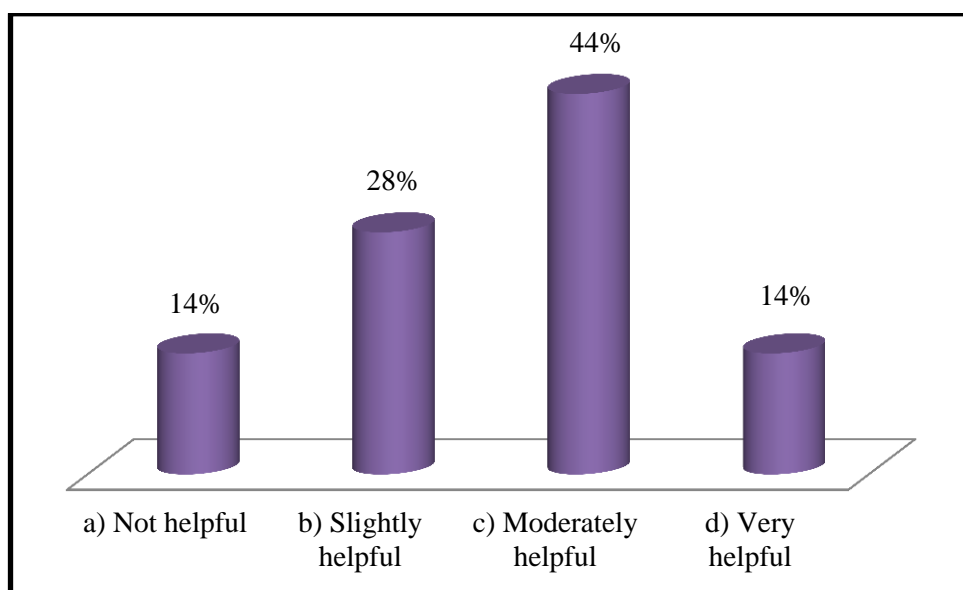
Figure 2.9.1 *The Degree of Teachers' Training Usefulness*

Among the seven teachers who received training on balancing the first language and second language use in the classroom, their feedback on the useful training varied. 44% of the sample found it moderately helpful, 28% found it slightly helpful and only 14% found it not helpful at all. Only one teacher (14%) found the training very helpful. This variation in responses shows that training appears limited and majority of teachers did not find it fully helpful; teachers may feel underprepared to make informed, pedagogically sound decisions regarding L1.

Section Five: Open-Ended Responses

Q10. What strategies do you use to minimize L1 reliance while ensuring comprehension?

- Hand gestures and body language
- Visually aids: flash cards, videos
- Real life situation
- Gestures, realia ...
- Visual. mimic...
- Through using technological materials and play based approach
- I use visual aids, simplified language, gestures, real-life examples, and peer collaboration to support understanding. I also check comprehension regularly and encourage students to ask questions in English.
- By encouraging students to do their own research via online dictionaries if i ever fail to communicate the information. But at first i use videos, photos, body language, facial expressions.
- Miming,
- Modeling
- Use of pictures,
- Teaching the meaning of certain expressions, such as classroom language, in advance
- I use a variety of strategies to reduce reliance on L1 while ensuring students still understand the material. These include simplifying my English, using repetition and paraphrasing, incorporating gestures and facial expressions, and using visual aids like pictures or videos.
- Use gestures and postures
- Simplify the language (use simple words instead of difficult ones)
- Give student challenges to talk in English as much as they can
- Miming, giving different examples, using side board for frequently used words in both languages
- Miming. Using gestures. Videos ect
- Use of picture gesture realia
- I prefer to use pictures or gestures

- Pictures, gestures
- Oral

The results show that majority of teachers use a wide range of non-verbal and visual strategies to reduce learners' L1 reliance while ensuring comprehension. Common techniques among teachers include the use of body language, facial expression, miming, and gesture, in addition to visual aids like pictures, flashcards, videos and real life examples. Some other teachers added that to make content more accessible and easier to understand, they tend to simplify English through using simple words, showing how to do tasks, repeating or explaining things in different way. Not only this, but teachers also encourage learners to work together and help them to rely on themselves for example telling them to use dictionaries or doing online research when they do not understand something. Others try to integrate games or playful activities to make the learning more fun and interactive, so that the pupils can learn in joyful atmosphere.

These responses show how teachers try hard to help learners understand English in an easy way without relying on L1 too much. They do it through varied ways such as pictures, speaking clearly or using body language. This way make the comprehension easier for the pupils no matter their level is; however, these strategies depend on few things, like how big the class is, the level of the learners in English, and how much time or materials the teacher need; some of them work better with small number of learners or active classes, but can be harder in big or mixed level classes.

Teaching strategies such as gestures, pictures or simplified English, fall under the form of communicative and multimodal approaches, and therefore help learners understand the content without referring toL1. However, the efficiency of these strategies may vary depending on class size, learner proficiency, and time constraints.

Q11. Describe a situation where using L1 significantly improved a lesson.

- There isn't a single situation actually. It's just it feels mandatory to use it because the students aren't exposed to the English language as much so in order for them to understand the lecture or the lesson we are obliged to use their native language

- I don't use L1 in teaching levels , but I used it with BAC and BEM students who has a weak English level

- Grammar

- Learning new vocabulary

- In a conditional lesson, a quick L1 explanation clarified confusion, helping students understand and complete tasks accurately.

- Only possible with A1 students. Because i was bound by time and the number of students so using L1 was the fastest solution. And i should mention that students' level of comprehension differs (matter of IQ and age). I had classes where i never used L1 because they were very smart.

- When I give my learners a new task that they are not familiar with, I use the L1 to explain it after that they'll get used to it

- During a lesson of the "Present Perfect" tense, many students struggled to understand the difference between it and the past simple. I briefly switched to their first language to explain the concept using relatable examples and comparisons to Arabic grammar. Their understanding improved noticeably, and they were able to complete the practice activities much more accurately and confidently

- Immediate increase in comprehension

- Students made fewer errors.

- Faster transition back to English

- When students engage in the activities more

- Once when i was explaining vocabulary related to biodiversity and ecosystems my their Year students had a difficult time with the words even with flashcards so i had to use l1 and relate the terms to the studies in the subject of science

- Give translation to some words

- Using the students' first language in this situation helped clarify a complex grammar point by connecting it to their prior knowledge. This made it easier and faster for them to grasp the concept than through continued explanation in English alone.

- Grammar lesson

Responses demonstrate that using the learners' native language is often a practical and effective tool, especially when the pupils face difficulties to understand complex grammar rules, learning new vocabulary or unfamiliar tasks. The majority of teachers mentioned that they depend on L1 in situations where the level of English of pupils is too low so it is hard for them to grasp the lesson when using English alone. Additionally, in many cases, teachers switch to first language led to positive results such as clear improvements in understanding, fewer mistakes, and making the lesson more efficient and engaging. Teachers also added that large class sizes, time constraints, and varying learners' English level require the use of L1 as the most practical solution, for example, the difference between present perfect and past simple tenses, explaining specific scientific vocabulary, enhancing comprehension in grammar and vocabulary grammar lessons where visual aids were not sufficient. Overall, these cases illustrate strategic use of L1 can be highly beneficial and effective in enhancing learners comprehension and confidence, especially when used purposefully to overcome some difficulties, confusion or when dealing with unfamiliar content.

Q12. What challenges do you face when deciding whether to use L1?

- Sometimes it feels unprofessional to use it that's the main challenge that I would say I am facing. But, usually I avoid using L1 in teaching unless I have no other way to explain my idea.
- Over reliance will reduced learning abilities among learners ,
- The main challenges are balancing comprehension with English exposure, avoiding student overreliance on L1, and deciding when L1 use supports learning without limiting target language practice.
- Students getting comfortable and getting used to the idea of using L1 all the time.
- My learners start to rely on the use of L1 and refrain from using the TL
- My learners expect me to explain everything in L1

- One challenge is finding the right balance using L1 enough to support understanding, but not so many students become dependent on it.
- Too much simplification
- Results change easily
- It may be fear of student to not get aquier the language very well
- Hindering the L2 proper acquisition and learning
- Is making balance and making a smooth transfer of L1 to L2
- Language diversity
- Learning objectives and context
- I get afraid from letting my learners relying on it
- Inspector

According to the answers, teachers shared variety of concerns about using L1 in their EFL classrooms. A major challenge for the most of teachers is finding the right balance: using the first language to support comprehension without leading the learners to rely on it. Many teachers also expressed a fear that the frequent use of L1 can decrease learners' motivation or their ability to engage in English, and learners may even expect everything to be explained in L1, which makes it difficult for them to improve their English language. Some of them feel unprofessional to use L1 in class, especially if the inspectors or the school rules expect them to use only English. In addition, there are some cases where teachers find it difficult to decide when L1 is used too much, and when to switch back to English without confusing pupils.

In short, several teachers expressed their fear to use L1, which might hinder their proper acquisition of English language; yet, they still want to help their pupils understand the lesson very well. This tension echoes wider debates in language pedagogy, where strict immersion is often idealized, yet flexible bilingual strategies are more practical in diverse classrooms.

2.3 Pupils' Questionnaire

2.3.1 Aims of the Questionnaire

Through following the descriptive method, a semi-structured questionnaire has been conducted for the sake of investigating the learners' attitudes, experience and preferences regarding the use of their first language (L1) in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. It seeks to explore how often and why L1 is used by both the teachers and learners, and how learners perceive its impact on their language acquisition, especially in understanding, participation and motivation.

2.3.2 Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is served into six main sections. The first section collects the general background information, including students' age, gender, education level and their English proficiency level. The second section, on the other hand, explores how often L1 is used in the EFL classroom by both teachers and learners. Concerning the third section, it investigates the specific reasons behind using L1: in what situations teachers tend to use L1. However, the fourth section measures the students' attitudes towards the impact of L1 on their English learning, through a set of likert-scale statements. It mainly evaluates the students' perception of L1 use. The section five aims to gather pupils' opinion on how much L1 should be used in the classroom and identifies any situations here they think they should not use it at all. The final section of the questionnaire invites learners to express, in their words, how L1 use affect their motivation to learn English and to share any further comments on the role of L1 use in their EFL classroom.

The process of administering the questionnaire happened during the academic year 2024-2025. It was administered during regular class time by the teacher, who also acted as the researcher. This setting provided a familiar and comfortable environment, encouraging

students to participate willingly. Before distributing the questionnaire, the teacher offered a brief explanation of its purpose and clarified any unfamiliar terms or potentially confusing instructions. It is important to mention that all the questions had their Arabic translation to facilitate for pupils assimilating and answering the questions. During the process, the teacher remained available to address individual questions and assist learners in understanding specific items, especially those involving Likert-scale judgments or open-ended responses. This approach ensured that the participants fully understood the content, which enhanced the reliability and accuracy of the data collected.

2.3.3 Analysis of Pupils' Questionnaire

Section One: Demographic Information

Q1. Would you specify your age, please?

Table 2.10 *Age Distribution*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) 11 years old	21	32.31%
b) 12 years old	23	35.39%
c) 13 years old	13	20%
d) 14 years old	6	9.23%
e) 15 years old	2	3.07%
Total	**65**	**100%**
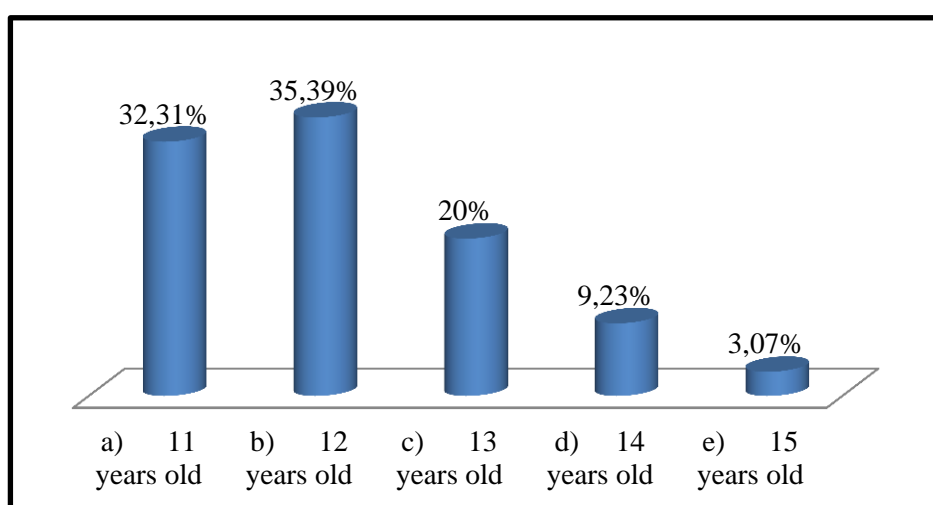
Figure 2.10 *Age Distribution*

The data reveal that most of the respondents belong to the younger group. Majority of them are 11 or 12 years old, representing (32.31%) and (35.39%) respectively. However, 20% of the respondents claimed that they are 13 years old, and the remaining of them are 14 years old (9.23%) and 15 years old with percentage of (3.07%). This means that the group being surveyed consists mostly of younger learners. At this level, the learners are typically more reliant on their mother tongue as a support tool for acquiring second language.

Q2. Would you specify your gender, please?

Table 2.11 *Gender Distribution*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) Male	28	43.08%
b) Female	37	56.92%
Total	**65**	**100%**
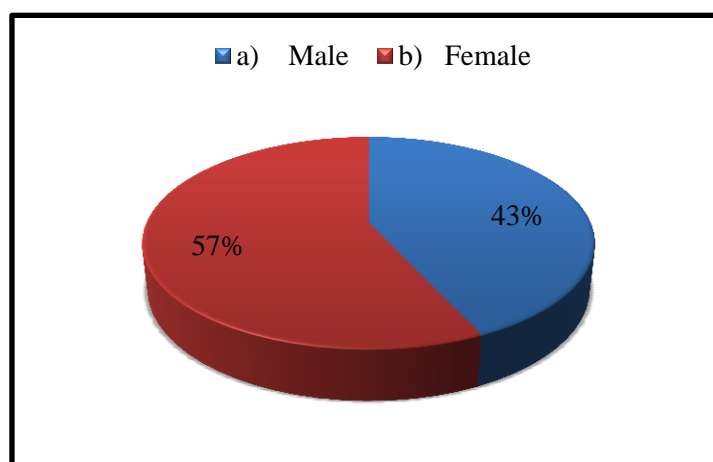
Figure 2.11 *Gender Distribution*

The figure above show that out of 65 participants, 37 (56.92%) are females and 28 (43.08%) are males. This gender distribution revealed that female learners are more interested to take part in academic studies or that the higher number of female respondents reflect the demographic makeup of the class.

Q3. Would you specify your English proficiency level?

Table 2.12 *Pupils Proficiency Level in English*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) **Beginner (A1)**	50	76.92%
b) **Elementary (A2)**	10	15.38%
c) **Intermediate (B1-B2)**	2	3.08%
d) **Advanced (C1-C2)**	3	4.62%
Total	**65**	**100%**
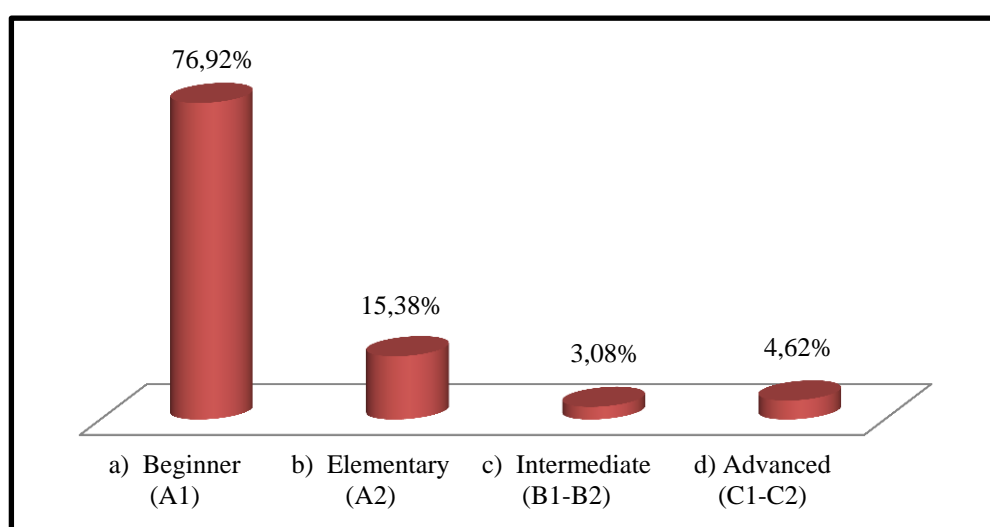
Figure 2.12 *Pupils' Proficiency Level in English*

An overwhelming majority of respondents (76.92%) identified themselves as beginners (A1) level, while a small number of learners (10) considered themselves as elementary (A2), with percentage of (15.38%). Only 2 learners (3.08%) reported that they are intermediate (B1-B2) and just 3 learners (4.62%) rated themselves as advanced (C1-C2). These findings are not surprising, given that the respondents are young learners and still beginners in acquiring English as second language and may require additional support in comprehension and using the second language. Ultimately, at this level, learners are likely to rely heavily on their mother tongue to support their understanding.

Section Two: Frequency of L1 Use

Q4. How often does your teacher use L1 (e.g., explaining concepts, instructions)?

Table 2.13 *Frequency of teachers' use of L1 in the English classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) **Never**	11	16.92%
b) **Rarely**	14	21.54%
c) **Sometimes**	39	60%
d) **Often**	0	0%
e) **Always**	1	1.54%
Total	**65**	**100%**
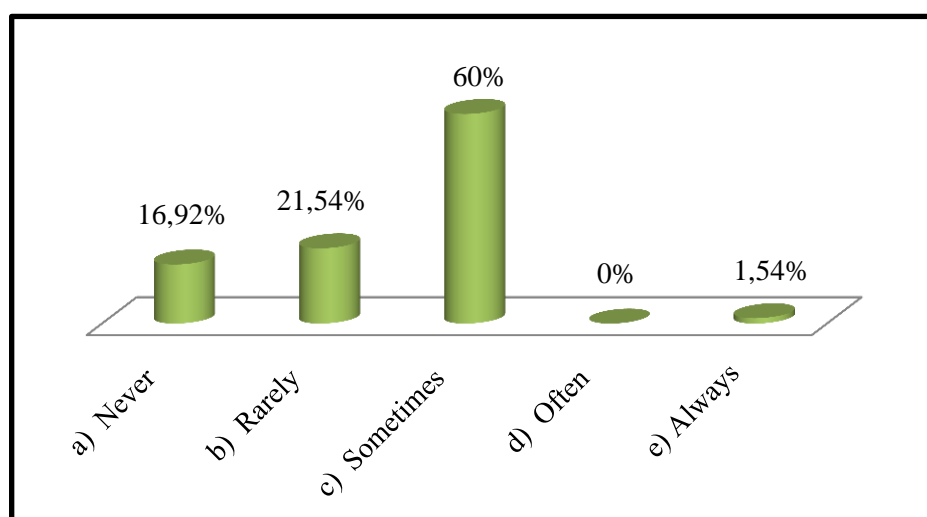
Figure 2.13 *Frequency of Teachers' Use of L1 in the English Classroom*

The data shows that most pupils perceive their teachers as using L1 "sometimes" (60%). However, some others (21.54%) said that their teacher rarely uses L1, while (16.92%) reported that it is never. Interestingly, no participant indicated that the teacher often uses L1, and only one pupil (1.54%) claimed that the teacher always uses it. These answers indicate that the teacher attempts to maintain English as the main medium of instruction, but still s/he likely uses L1 as a supportive tool when necessary.

Q5. How often do you use L1 in class (e.g., asking questions, discussing with peers)?

Table 2.14 *Frequency of Pupils' Use of L1in the English Classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) **Never**	1	1.54%
b) **Rarely**	9	13.85%
c) **Sometimes**	9	13.85%
d) **Often**	9	13.85%
e) **Always**	37	59.91%
Total	**65**	**100%**
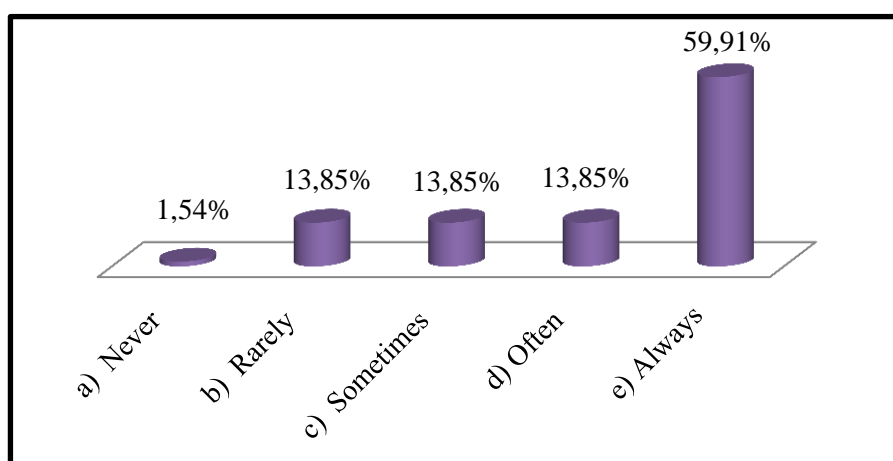
Figure 2.14 *Frequency of Pupils' Use of L1in the English Classroom*

In contrast, 59.91% of pupils reported that they "always" use their first language (L1) in class. This may point to learners' dependence on L1 due to limited English proficiency or a classroom culture that informally permits L1 use among peers. However, only small number of pupils claimed limited use of L1: 13.85% said they use it sometimes, others (13.85%) use it often and 13.85% use it rarely. Just one participant (1.54%) claimed to use never use it.

Section Three: Purposes of L1 Use

Q6. When does your teacher use L1? (Tick all that apply)

Table 2.15 *Situations in which teachers use L1 in the English classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) **Explaining grammar/vocabulary**	22	33.85%
b) **Giving instructions**	6	9.23%
c) **Clarifying complex ideas**	4	6.15%
d) **Managing classroom behavior**	1	1.54%
e) **Discussing cultural topics**	0	0%
f) **All of them**	2	3.08%
g) **More than one answer**	30	46.15%
Total	**65**	**100%**
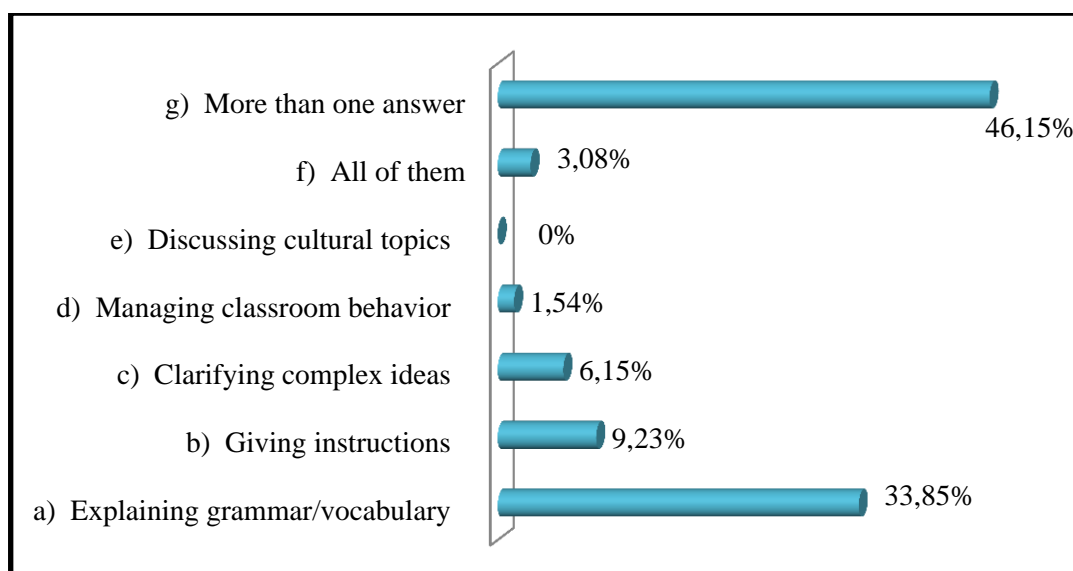
Figure 2.15 *Situations in which teachers use L1 in the English classroom*

The figure above reveals varied reasons for the teachers' use of the first language in their classrooms. Importantly, 46.15% of the participants opted for "more than one answer", indicating that their teacher uses L1 in multiple situations, rather than one single purpose. Additionally, small percentage of pupils indicated that L1 is used for giving instructions (9.23%) and clarifying complex ideas (6.15%). Very few pupils selected "all of them", and none reported that it is used for "discussing cultural topics". On the other hand, only one pupil (1.54%) noted that its use was for managing classroom behaviour.

The results reveal that teachers use the first language as pedagogical aid to support language comprehension, especially when explaining grammar and vocabulary. Its use was mainly limited in cultural discussion or behaviour management.

Q7. Why do you use L1 in class? (Tick all that apply)

Table 2.16 *Reasons behind pupils' use of L1 in the English classroom*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) To ask for help when stuck	1	1.54%
b) To discuss topics with peers	0	0%
c) To reduce anxiety	5	7.69%
d) To check understanding	3	4.62%
e) All of them	9	13.85%
f) More than one purpose	47	72.30%
Total	**65**	**100%**
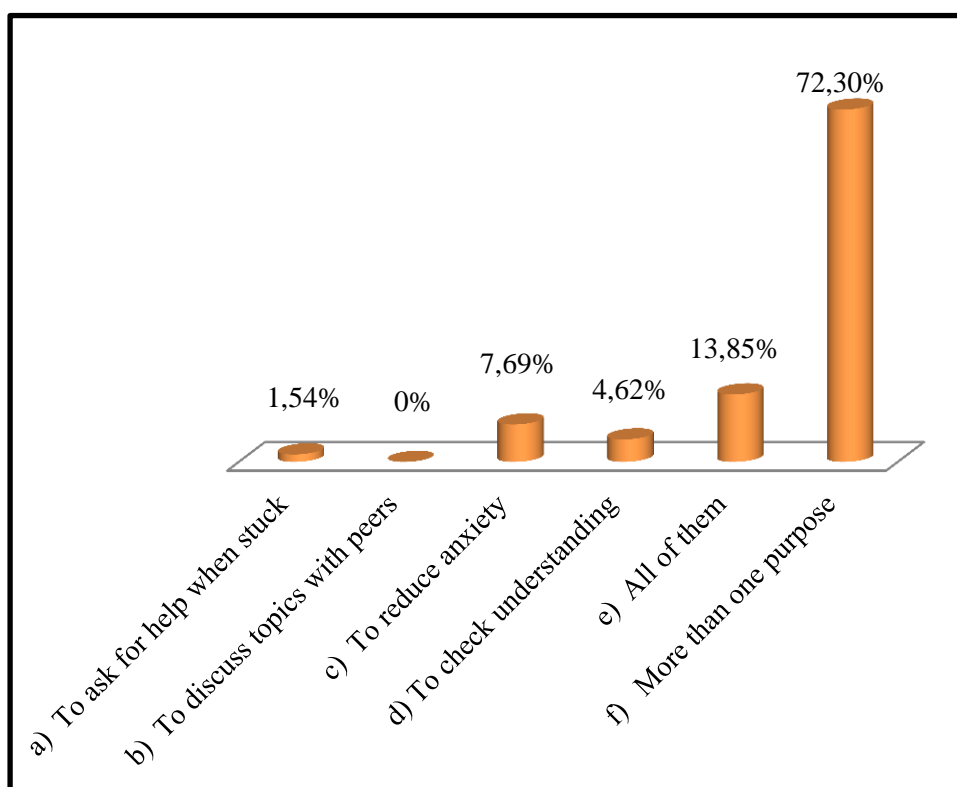
Figure 2.16 *Reasons behind pupils' use of L1 in the English classroom*

The findings presented in the figure 2.7 demonstrate that pupils use their first language in classes for different reasons, with the most frequent answer "more than one purpose", selected by (72.30%) of the participants. Additionally, very few pupils (13.85%) chose "all of them", and only 4.62% opted for "checking understanding". This includes "asking for help when stuck" (1.54%) and "reducing anxiety" (7.69%). Interestingly, no pupil selected "to discuss topics with peers". Overall, learners use their mother tongue for several reasons, such as asking for help, clarifying doubts, and reducing anxiety. This shows that L1 is used not just for learning but also for helping learners feel comfortable.

Section Four: Perceptions of L1 Use

Q8. Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree):

Table 2.17 *Pupils' degree of agreement or disagreement with the benefits of L1 use in the English class*

	SD		D		N		A		SA	
Statement	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
a) **L1 use helps me understand difficult concepts better.**	2	3.08%	2	3.08%	3	4.62%	0	0%	58	89.23%
b) **L1 use reduces my anxiety in class.**	10	15.38%	2	3.08%	6	9.23%	4	6.15%	43	66.15%
c) **Too much L1 limits my exposure to English.**	26	40%	2	3.08%	5	7.69%	2	3.08%	30	46.15%
d) **L1 use builds rapport between teachers and students.**	35	53.85%	4	6.15%	12	18.46%	2	3.08%	12	18.46%

The data in table 2.8 reflects pupils' attitudes toward the use of their first language (L1) in English language classrooms. The results can be organized as following:

- **Understanding Aid:** A majority of pupils (89.23%) strongly agree that L1 helps with understanding difficult concepts. This suggests that L1 plays a crucial role in facilitating comprehension, particularly when learners struggle with complex ideas. However, sum of 3.08% for strongly disagree and disagree (3.08%), and 4.62% for neutral.

- **Anxiety Reduction:** 66.15% of pupils strongly agree that L1 use lowers classroom anxiety. This supports the idea that L1 can be used as tool to make learners feel more comfortable and emotionally safe in class. However, 15.38% of them strongly disagree, 3.08% disagree, 6.15% agree with the statement and smaller percentage fell in between 9.23%.

- **Awareness of Drawbacks:** almost half of the respondents (46.15%) believe that using L1 too much can reduce their exposure to English. This demonstrates that many learners are aware of the negative effect of overusing the first language. A notable portion of learners (40%) strongly disagree, sum of 3.08% disagree, sum of 7.69% were neutral, and only 3.08% agree with the statement.

- **Relationship Building:** the statement "L1 use builds rapport between teachers and students" received the least support. 53.85% of the sample strongly disagree; with only 18.46% strongly agree. This suggests that pupilsdo not necessarily see L1 as a key element to strengthen teacher-student relationship; instead L1 contributes to other elements such as the classroom's social dynamics, enhancing engagement and participation. Importantly, sum of 6.15% disagree, sum of 18.46% neutral, and 3.08% of pupils do agree.

Overall, pupils understand the benefits and drawbacks of using their mother language: L1 helps them understand lessons and provide them emotional support, but it should be moderated to prevent interference with English acquisition. This shows that they are surprisingly aware of how language works, especially at this age and proficiency level.

Section Five: Learners' Preferences

Q9. What percentage of class time should involve L1?

Table 2.18 *Pupils' view about the amount of time that should be devoted to L1 use in the English class*

Option	Frequency	Percentage
a) **0% (Only English)**	8	12.30%
b) **10-25%**	38	58.46%
c) **26-50%**	16	24.62%
d) **Over 50%**	3	4.62%
Total	**65**	**100%**
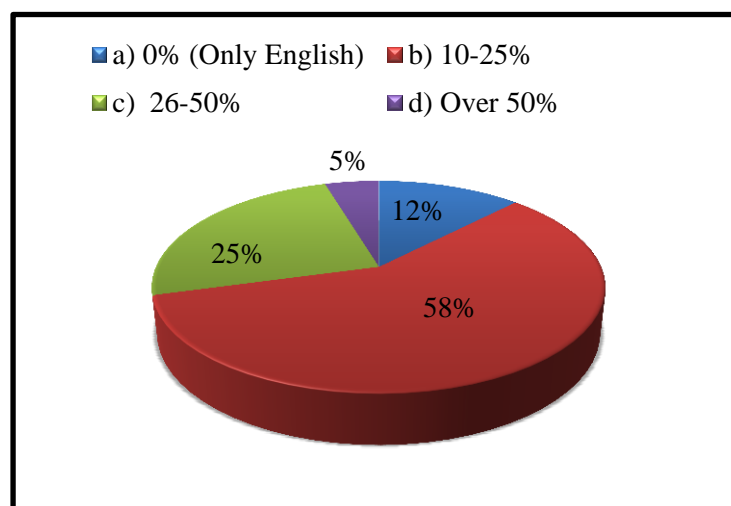
Figure 2.17 *Pupils' view about the amount of time that should be devoted to L1 use in the English class*

According to the results in the figure above, most learners (58.46%) favor using L1 in 10–25% of classroom time. This preference shows that learners see value in using their first language (L1) to support learning but not as dominant language. Only a small group

prefers either total immersion (12.30%) or high L1 use (4.62%), suggesting that most learners seek a middle path that blends support with challenge. However, another group of participants (24.62%) felt that 26-50% of the time should involve L1.

Q10. In which situations should L1 never be used? (E.g., exams, group activities)

1- The mother tongue shouldn't be used in reading tasks and the tutorial sessions. We don't use Arabic in tasks where we use flashcards it is better to use them rather than translating them into Arabic .

2- It must not be used at all, since I am interested to your lessons specially listening lessons , I love to know new vocabulary and your way of pronouncing them

3- During English language exams

4- During English reading and listening lessons

5- During English speaking and conversation sessions because using the mother tongue in these cases doesn't help in developing language skills. It negatively affects them (listening, writing, reading, and speaking)

6- During English language exams

7- During English reading sessions.

8- To correct the mistakes, we should know the terminology in English rather than translating into Arabic.

9- One should avoid using the mother tongue in exams, conversations, longing letters, and situations that require communication in a foreign language. These situations require complete immersion in the language to produce quick and accurate reactions. Using the mother tongue weakens our ability to speak and print old expressions on our tongue.

The responses to this question demonstrate that many pupils are clearly aware of the times when using their first language and when it should be avoided. Several learners emphasized that L1 should not be used during English language assessments, like exams. Others mentioned that using L1 during speaking activities hinders language development. They believe that full use of English language helps improve fluency, pronunciation and

confidence in communication. Additionally, some of the pupils expressed that reading and listening require direct engagement with second language, and relying on first language will hinder the comprehension of the lesson and learning new vocabularies.

Importantly to mention, one pupil highlighted that in English tasks such as flashcards activities, it is more effective to use visual aids rather than translating them into Arabic, which may reduce the quality of learning. A few pupils suggested that correcting mistakes should be in English rather than translating them into Arabic; meanwhile, one thoughtful answer pointed out that in situations where learners are supposed to use English to communicate is better for them to avoid using mother tongue, because it can be unhelpful: hinder their learning progress and limit their ability to think or communicate in English.

These responses show that learners have a good understanding of how language acquisition learning works—learners recognize that using L1 can sometimes be a hindrance rather than a help. Their comments reveal how they think carefully: L1 should be used only when it genuinely facilitates rather than replaces English learning.

Section Six: Open Feedback

Q11. How does L1 use impact your motivation to learn English?

1- Using the mother tongue sometimes makes writing easier, especially when dealing with complex topics, and it clarifies and simplifies meaning. But relying on it reduces one's ability to express oneself in English, and I have personally experienced this. I tried to change that, and I found YouTube helpful in improving.

2- Using the mother tongue helps me understand the hard concepts, the lessons and makes it easier for me to learn English.

3- It affects negatively, especially if it is used frequently. I lose motivation to learn English when the teacher keeps using Arabic and explains all the lessons in Arabic instead of using English.

4- The use of Arabic (L1) may affect positively the learners through encouraging them to learn the words by heart glossaries and dictionaries, then to understand the language form.

5- I have to use L1, to chat with my friends in social media. So, I feel confortable the time I ask madam about something I am concerned with it during the session. When she uses only English, I am lost and feel bored.

The answers to this question reveal a mix of positive and negative views on how using the first language (L1) affects students' motivation to learn English. Some of the learners see L1 as a helpful pedagogical tool that makes English learning easier and more flexible. For example, one pupil mentioned that using the mother tongue during writing tasks or when dealing with complex topics helps to clarify and simplify meanings as well as boosts understanding. Another one said that and we quote "Using the mother tongue helps me understand the hard concepts, the lessons and makes it easier for me to learn English". However, others emphasized that first language can have positive emotional impact, as one pupil mentioned feeling more comfortable and less anxious when allowed to ask questions in Arabic, especially when having problems following the lesson in English.

On the other hand, many of the pupils' responses also highlighted the negative effects of overusing the first language. One learner mentioned that the frequent use of Arabic by the teacher lowered their motivation, as we quote; "if it is used frequently. I lose motivation to learn English". One learner noted an interesting point, suggesting that first language can be used as a tool to learn word meanings through glossaries and dictionaries, then moving on to English usage. Another one stated that relying too much on L1 hinders the ability to express themselves in English, and as best way to fix this is through watching YouTube in English.

Q12. If you have any additional comments on L1 use in your EFL classroom, please feel free?

1- I believe that the mother tongue should only be used as an aid, not as a fundamental method. It might be useful in organizing difficult ideas, but it's better to train ourselves to think in English. This constant translation delays fluency and limits our ability to listen and think directly in English.

2- Honestly, dear teacher, I don't benefit when you will keep using Arabic too much. I prefer not that the teacher uses Arabic too much.

3- I prefer that the teacher uses English to explain the lesson, even though, we don't understand anything.

4- Using L1 in class helps me to understand and explain the concepts

5- I like the tutorial session, because our teacher gives us some interesting games to play with each other, so no need to use Arabic in this session

6- I love learning languages, but it will be better if it will be in Arabic use specially to ask about difficult concepts.

The answers to this open-ended question demonstrate a range of personal comments regarding the use of the first language (L1) in the English as a foreign language classroom. A common theme among majority of learners is the belief that L1 should be used as an aid but not as the main method of instruction. Another group of respondents expressed a clear preference for more English use by the teacher, even if they do not fully understand the lesson right away. This comment shows that these learners appear to value exposure to the target language over immediate comprehension, believing that staying in the English language helps them with their learning process.

At the same time, some other responses highlight the practical value of L1 in specific situations. For instance, one learner stated that L1 helps them to clarify difficult ideas and complex concepts, and another one felt more comfortable using Arabic to understand and ask about difficult matters. In contrast, one pupil added that during fun,

interactive activities like games sessions, it is preferred if the teacher uses English rather than Arabic. These reflections provide a rich, learner-centered rationale for using L1: it is helpful, even necessary, in the early stages but must be carefully managed. Pupils are aware of what helps or harm their learning progress and are able to judge teaching methods based on their own experience.

In sum, the responses from all sections of the pupils' questionnaire reveal that they have a thoughtful and balanced view on the use of the first language (L1) in EFL classroom. While most learners see L1 as supportive tool to understand difficult concepts and reducing anxiety, they also express a strong desire to use English, especially in activities that promote fluency. The findings show that learners are so aware of their own learning needs; they showed how active they are in the language learning process rather than being passive recipients. Therefore, teachers should aim for a flexible, balancing between using L1 when needed, but also making sure to expose learners to plenty of activities using English.

2.4 Comparative Insights between Teachers and Students on L1 Use in EFL Classrooms

This table compares the main questions from the Students' Questionnaire and the Teachers' Questionnaire regarding the use of the first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

Table 2. 19 *Comparative Insights between Teachers and Students on L1 Use in EFL Classrooms*

Question Category / Theme	Students' Questionnaire (Specific Question)	Teachers' Questionnaire (Specific Question)	Key Differences/Similarities & Insights
I. Perceptions/Attitudes Towards L1 Use (General)	**Q8:** Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree): L1 use helps me understand difficult concepts better. L1 use reduces my anxiety in class. Too much L1 limits my exposure to English. L1 use builds rapport betweenteachers and students.	**Q7:** Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree): Using L1 improves students' understanding of challenging content. L1 use reduces students' anxiety and increases participation. Overusing L1 hinders students' English proficiency development. I feel confident teaching without relying on L1. L1 is particularly useful for beginner-level students.	**Similarities:** Both questionnaires explore perceptions regarding L1's role in comprehension, anxiety reduction, and its potential to hinder L2 exposure. **Differences:** The students' questionnaire includes a statement on L1 building rapport, which is absent in the teachers' version. The teachers' questionnaire includes their confidence in teaching without L1 and L1's usefulness for beginners. **Insight:** Students generally hold a more positive view of L1's benefits for understanding and anxiety, while teachers are mostly skeptical and feel it hinders proficiency.
II. Purposes/Functions of L1 Use by Teachers	**Q6:** When does your teacher use L1? (Tick all that apply) Explaining grammar/vocabulary, Giving instructions, Clarifying complex ideas, Managing classroom behavior, Discussing cultural topics, All of them,	**Q5:** In which situations do you use L1? Select all that apply. Explaining grammar/vocabulary, Giving instructions, Managing classroom behavior, Clarifying complex ideas, Building	**Similarities:** Both ask about L1 use for explaining grammar/vocabulary, giving instructions, clarifying complex ideas, and managing classroom behavior. **Differences:** The teachers' questionnaire includes "Translating unfamiliar words" and "Building rapport with

	More than one answer.	rapport with students, Translating unfamiliar words, More than one situation.	students" as specific options, whereas the students' questionnaire has a more general "Discussing cultural topics" and "All of them" options. **Insight:** Teachers identify L1's main role as enhancing cognitive clarity in difficult content, with grammar/vocabulary explanations and translating unfamiliar words as top reasons. Students also perceive "explaining grammar and vocabulary" as the most frequent purpose for teacher L1 use.
III. Purposes/Functions of L1 Use by Students	**Q7:** Why do you use L1 in class? (Tick all that apply) To ask for help when stuck, To discuss topics with peers, To reduce anxiety, To check understanding, All of them, More than one purpose.	N/A (Not directly asked as a multiple-choice question to teachers about *student* L1 use)	**Differences:** This question is exclusively asked of students. **Insight:** Students primarily use L1 as a support mechanism for various reasons, including asking for help, clarifying doubts, and managing anxiety. This highlights L1's role in emotional regulation and coping strategies for learners.
IV. Frequency/Amount of L1 Use	**Q4:** How often does your teacher use L1 (e.g., explaining concepts, instructions)? **Q5:** How often do you use L1 in class (e.g., asking questions, discussing with peers)?	**Q4:** How often do you use L1 in your EFL classroom? **Q6:** What percentage of class time do you estimate is spent using L1?	**Similarities:** Both questionnaires inquire about the frequency of L1 use by teachers. They also ask about the estimated percentage of class time L1 is used, though the student question is framed as a preference for "what percentage of class time should involve

			L1."
			Differences: The students' questionnaire explicitly asks about *their own* frequency of L1 use, which is not a direct question in the teachers' questionnaire. **Insight:** There's a notable disconnect: most students perceive teachers using L1 "sometimes" (60%), while 59.91% of students report "always" using L1 themselves. Teachers, however, also report using L1 "occasionally" (47%), and 59% estimate L1 use under 20% of class time. This suggests students may rely more on L1 than teachers realize or admit.
V. Impact/Effectiveness of L1 Use	**Q8:** Rate your agreement with the following statements: L1 use helps me understand difficult concepts better. L1 use reduces my anxiety in class. Too much L1 limits my exposure to English. L1 use builds rapport between teachers and students.	**Q7:** Rate your agreement with the following statements: Using L1 improves students' understanding of challenging content. L1 use reduces students' anxiety and increases participation. Overusing L1 hinders students' English proficiency development. **Q11:** Describe a situation where using L1 significantly improved a lesson.	**Similarities:** Both questionnaires assess perceptions of L1's impact on comprehension and anxiety. They also address the potential negative impact of excessive L1 use on English exposure/proficiency. **Differences:** The teachers' questionnaire includes an open-ended question for teachers to describe a specific positive impact of L1 use. **Insight:** Students overwhelmingly agree L1 helps with understanding and

			reduces anxiety. Teachers are more skeptical of L1's benefits for understanding and reducing anxiety, but a majority agree overuse hinders proficiency. Teachers, however, can cite specific instances where L1 improved lessons, particularly for grammar clarification or introducing unfamiliar tasks.
VI. Factors Influencing L1 Use	N/A (Not a direct question about factors influencing *teacher* L1 use in the student questionnaire)	**Q1:** How long have you been teaching EFL? **Q2:** Would you specify the age of the learners you primarily teach? **Q3:** Institution type: **Q12:** What challenges do you face when deciding whether to use L1?	**Differences:** The teachers' questionnaire explicitly gathers demographic data related to their experience, learners' age, and institution type, which can influence L1 use. It also asks about challenges in deciding on L1 use. **Insight:** Teachers' L1 use is influenced by factors like student proficiency levels, time constraints, and institutional context. Challenges include the risk of learner overdependence and feeling L1 use is unprofessional.
VII. Policy/Guidelines on L1 Use	N/A (Not directly asked to students)	**Q8:** Does your institution have guidelines about L1 use in EFL classes? Q9: Have you received training on balancing L1 and L2 (English) in the classroom?	**Differences:** These questions are specific to the teachers' questionnaire. **Insight:** A significant lack of institutional guidelines (54% report none) and training (59% have not received it) leaves L1 decisions to individual teachers. This can lead

			to inconsistent practices and feelings of insecurity among teachers.
VIII. Preferred/Desired L1 Use	**Q9:** What percentage of class time should involve L1? **Q10:** In which situations should L1 never be used? **Q11:** How does L1 use impact your motivation to learn English? **Q12:** If you have any additional comments on L1 use in your EFL classroom, please feel free?	**Q10:** What strategies do you use to minimize L1 reliance while ensuring comprehension? **Q11:** Describe a situation where using L1 significantly improved a lesson. **Q12:** What challenges do you face when deciding whether to use L1?	**Similarities:** Both questionnaires include open-ended questions allowing for nuanced feedback on L1 use. **Differences:** Students are asked about their preferred percentage of L1 use and situations where L1 should *never* be used, directly addressing their ideal L1 integration. Teachers are asked about strategies to *minimize* L1 and challenges in *deciding* its use. **Insight:** Most students favor "judicious use" of L1 (10-25% of class time) and believe it should be excluded from exams and productive/receptive skill activities. Teachers also aim to minimize L1 use but recognize its necessity in certain situations. Both groups acknowledge L1 can affect motivation, either positively by aiding understanding or negatively by reducing exposure.

A clear comparison of both questionnaires shows that practices when using L1 is quite similar, but the perceptions differ in EFL classes. In both cases, L1 is used

occasionally to frequently, especially to explain grammar, clarify instructions, and translate unfamiliar vocabulary.

Although majority of learners use L1 as a support tool for comprehension and engaging in class, teachers tend to have a more conflicted view. Even though teachers use L1 when needed, especially to explain difficult concepts, many are concerned that using it excessively might harm their English acquisition or make them appear unprofessional. This concern is because many institutions do not give clear rules about when or how to use L1, and majority of teachers have not had proper training on how to balance both languages.

The emotional perspectives on L1 use also differ: learners connect L1 with feelings of confidence and clarity, whilst teachers link it with feeling guilt, professionalism, or the fear that learners might become too dependent on it. Despite this, both teachers and learners agree on using L1 in a limited and strategic way, particularly with beginners.

2.5. Discussion: Comparative Insights between Teachers and pupils on L1 Use in EFL Classrooms

The findings from both the pupils' and teachers' questionnaires reveal that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is complicated issue. A notable point to mention is that both groups agree and recognize the important presence of L1 as part of the learning environment. However, their justifications, attitudes, and perceived challenges reflect differing perspectives shaped by their roles, expectations, and experiences.

Most teachers say they use the first language sometimes (47%) or more often (17%), especially when they find it hard to explain difficult grammar or abstract words in English, so it is necessary practice for teaching, not because they want to, but because it helps learners to understand. Students, on the other hand, see L1 as a helpful tool that helps them comprehend better, feel more comfortable and less anxious, and makes lessons more

engaging. For them, L1 is not a tool that is used only when there is no option, but an essential key part of learning, especially in challenging tasks.

Even though both teachers and pupils agree on using the first language in classroom can be effective and helpful, teachers express greater concern about it. A significant proportion of teachers believe that overusing L1 can hinder learners' English development (64%) and many feel they should stick to use English only in order to maintain professional. This concern seems rooted from the lack of institutional guidelines—54% of teachers reported their schools have no official policy regarding L1 use, while 23% were unsure. Because of this, teachers are often left to decide on their own: they want to help learners to understand but at the same time they need to stay professional. Notably, while 59% of teachers have not received any formal training on how to balance between learners' native language (L1) and English (L2). Among those who received training, only few participants (14%) said it is very helpful.

Learners, in contrast, seem to value the use of their mother tongue and see it not as tool of understanding, but also as source of emotional support. According to their responses, it is clear that L1 helps them understand the lesson quickly, reduces their anxiety, and enhance their overall confidence in class. This highlights an important difference between the attitude of the teachers and learners: while teachers are cautious and try to reduce the use of L1 and maximize exposure to English, learners appear to appreciate the clarity and comfort that L1 provides.

Moreover, both teachers and learners agree that intensive use of L1 should be avoided, as it might lead learners depend on it too much. Majority of teachers stated that they try to avoid using L1 excessively by applying different strategies like visual aids, gestures, miming, or using simple English to support learners' comprehension. This

indicates that even though L1 is a helpful tool, both teachers and students prefer it to be used in a limited and thoughtful way, only when necessary and helps the learning process.

Conclusion

The usage of the first language (L1) in English classrooms can be helpful for both teachers and learners. However, their opinion and attitude differ because of their respective role: teachers feel they should use L1 as little as possible because they need to maintain professionalism in the English policy. Teachers feel professionally obligated to minimize L1, even as students demonstrate a more relaxed, utilitarian attitude toward it. Bridging this gap may require clearer institutional policies, more practical teacher training, and an open dialogue that respects both pedagogical goals and learner realities.

General Conclusion

The current study has explored the use of the first language (L1) in EFL classes, specifically middle school classes. It aimed to investigate the teachers' and learners' attitudes toward L1 use in the English language, and to determine whether both of the study groups perceive it as a helpful or hindering tool in the process of second language acquisition. Accordingly, this dissertation was guided by two research hypotheses: the first suggesting that more experienced EFL teachers are more likely to perceive L1 use as pedagogically beneficial tool, and the second proposing that first-year middle school learners with lower English proficiency are more inclined to view L1 as an aid for understanding and reducing confusion.

Furthermore, in order to confirm or reject the research hypotheses, the research method consisted of pupils' and teachers' questionnaires. They were used to collect relevant data on the subject and to make inferences about future recommendations. The dissertation was divided into two parts: theoretical and practical parts. The first chapter provided a clear overview on the role and use of the first language (L1) in foreign language classrooms, with a specific emphasis on middle school EFL settings. It reviews the theoretical basis for using the learners' native language in second language acquisition, the key pedagogical views were discussed, and arguments for and against employing L1 were presented. However, the second chapter presented the fieldwork conducted to explore the attitudes and practices of both teachers and learners concerning the use of L1.

The pupils' questionnaire was conducted in order to gather further data about learners' attitudes towards the use of first language (L1) in teaching English for middle school classes. The learners showed balanced understanding of when and why L1 is helpful, even though the majority of them are beginners in English, they revealed awareness that relying on it too much hinders their language development. They largely

favour limited and purposeful use of L1, especially in situations that promote comprehension or emotional support, such as when explaining difficult concepts or ideas, assessments like examinations, or when dealing with new vocabulary. It is worth noting that they expressed a clear preference for more English exposure during speaking tasks, group work and language production activities.

On the other hand, from the teachers' perspective, L1 should be used selectively and only when necessary to support learning process. They appear to understand that while L1 enhance learning for beginner pupils who have low level in English, overusing it may lead to second language acquisition issues. Teachers also added that the use of L1 in classrooms is guided by the learners' needs, their level in English, and age. The teachers also stressed the value of L1 in explaining grammar rules, giving instructions and clarifying complex ideas; however, they also understand the importance of maintaining English as the primary language of communication and interaction in class.

Therefore, both teachers' and students' questionnaires pointed out that L1 can serve as a temporary pedagogical tool rather than a substitute for English. Many of them acknowledged that effective language teaching should not be completely done in mother tongue but should instead focus on using it strategically, mainly to facilitate comprehension, build learners' confidence, and promote gradual independence in English, especially at early stages of language acquisition.

Finally, the present dissertation has mainly investigated the effectiveness of using L1 in middle school classes as an educational teaching tool to boost learners' English language acquisition. However, the full use of English remains very important for long term goal, especially for communicative competence, as well as the moderation of L1 use can improve learners' comprehension, reduce their anxiety and make them more engaged

with English. Based on these results, L1 should be integrated supportively rather than eliminated or overused.

Pedagogical Recommendations

For Teachers:

- Teachers feel more comfortable using L1 when it is needed to enhance comprehension, especially for difficult grammar rules, new vocabulary or instructions. However, it must be used purposefully and in limited way.

- It is necessary for the teachers to create balance between exposing learners to English while still using L1 as an assistant tool. This helps learners to develop fluency without feeling anxious or confused.

- Teachers should aim to use L1 as helpful tool for low level learners, especially at their early stages of language learning acquisition. Overtime, they should gradually reduce the use of L1 as learners gain confidence in English.

For Learners:

- Learners can use their native language to support, not replace. They should use it to clarify doubts or understand difficult points, but still they need to practice communicating in English as much as it is possible.

- L1 can be avoided to be overused especially during speaking and writing tasks, to develop their fluency and confidence.

- Learners can seek help in English first then they switch to their mother tongue: if they are confused in class, they try to ask in English first, and if they still unclear, then it is fine to use L1. This way helps them develop problem-solving skills in English.

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Appendices

A Questionnaire for Middle School EFL Teachers

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. This latter is about "Investigating teachers' use of L1 (students' first language) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms". Indeed, I would be highly thankful for the information that you will provide us with. The responses you provide will remain anonymous and contribute to the achievement of research objectives.

Thank you for your time, effort, and collaboration.

Section One: Background Information

Q1. How long have you been teaching EFL?

☐ 1-2 years

☐ 2–5 years

☐ 6–10 years

☐ 10 years

Q2.Would you specify the age of the learners you primarily teach?*

☐ Young learners (3–12years)

☐ Adolescents (13–18 years)

☐ Adults (18+ years)

Q3. Institution type:

☐ Public school

☐ Private language institute

☐ University

If other, would you specify, please?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Section Two: Frequency and Contexts of L1 Use

Q4. How often do you use L1 in your EFL classroom?

- ☐ Never

- ☐ Rarely

- ☐ Occasionally

- ☐ Frequently

- ☐ Very frequently

Justif please

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Q5. In which situations do you use L1?

- ☐ Explaining grammar/vocabulary
- ☐ Giving instructions
- ☐ Managing classroom behavior
- ☐ Clarifying complex ideas
- ☐ Building rapport with students
- ☐ Translating unfamiliar words

If other, please specify

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Q6. What percentage of class time do you estimate is spent using L1?

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ 1–10%
- ☐ 11–20%
- ☐ 21–30%
- ☐ >30%

Section Three: Perceptions of L1 Use

Q7. Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 =Strongly Agree)

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
e) Using L1 improves students' understanding of challenging content.					
f) L1 use reduces students' anxiety and increases participation.					
g) Overusing L1 hinders students' English proficiency development.					
h) I feel confident teaching without relying on L1.					
e) L1 is particularly useful for beginner-level students.					

Section Four: Institutional Policies and Training

Q8. Does your institution have guidelines about L1 use in EFL classes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Q9. Have you received training on balancing L1 and L2 (English) in the classroom?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how helpful was the training?

☐ Not helpful

☐ Slightly helpful

☐ Moderately helpful

☐ Very helpful

Section Five: Open-Ended Responses

Q10. What strategies do you use to minimize L1 reliance while ensuring comprehension?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q11. Describe a situation where using L1significantlyimproved alesson.*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q12. What challenges do you face when deciding whether to use L1?*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Your collaboration is highly appreciated. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Pupils' Questionnaire

A Questionnaire for Middle School EFL Pupils

Dear pupils,

This questionnaire is an attempt to collect data for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. This latter is about "Investigating teachers' use of L1 (students' first language) in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms". Indeed, I would be highly thankful for the information that you will provide us with. The responses you provide will remain anonymous and contribute to the achievement of research objectives.

Thank you for your time, effort, and collaboration.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age:

__ years

2. Gender:

- [ ] Male   - [ ] Female

3. Education Level:

- [ ] High School

- [ ] Undergraduate

- [ ] Graduate

Other: _____

4. English Proficiency Level:

- [ ] Beginner (A1)

- [ ] Elementary (A2)

- [ ] Intermediate (B1-B2)

- [ ] Advanced (C1-C2)

Section 2: Frequency of L1 Use

5. How often does your teacher use L1 (e.g., explaining concepts, instructions)?

- [ ] Never

- [ ] Rarely

- [ ] Sometimes

- [ ] Often

- [ ] Always

6. How often do you use L1 in class (e.g., asking questions, discussing with peers)?

- [ ] Never

- [ ] Rarely

- [ ] Sometimes

- [ ] Often

- [ ] Always

Section 3: Purposes of L1 Use

7. When does your teacher use L1? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] Explaining grammar/vocabulary

- [ ] Giving instructions

- [ ] Clarifying complex ideas

- [ ] Managing classroom behavior

- [ ] Discussing cultural topics

- [ ] Other: _____

8. Why do you use L1 in class? (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] To ask for help when stuck

- [ ] To discuss topics with peers

- [ ] To reduce anxiety

- [ ] To check understanding

Other: _____

Section 4: Perceptions of L1 Use

Rate your agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 =

Strongly

Agree):

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
a) L1 use helps me understand difficult concepts better.					
b) L1 use reduces my anxiety in class.					
c) Too much L1 limits my exposure to English.					
d) L1 use builds rapport between teachers and students.					

Section 5: Preferences

9. What percentage of class time should involve L1?

- [ ] 0% (Only English)

- [ ] 10-25%

- [ ] 26-50%

- [ ] Over 50%

10. In which situations should L1 never be used? (E.g., exams, group activities)

………

………

………

Section 6: Open Feedback

How does L1 use impact your motivation to learn English?

………

………

………

12. Any additional comments on L1 use in your EFL classroom?

………

………

………

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 3: Think, Match and Translate Some Tasks into Arabic (Suggested by the Inspector to Do in Class)

Phase 01 : Matching English / Arabic

A/

book		مسطرة
pen		ممحاة
ruler		كتاب
eraser		سيّالة

B/

		كتبك
My book		كتابي
Your books		سيّالات
The pen		السيّالة
pens		

Phase 02 : Translation English ➝ Arabic

A blue pen	
My green pencil	
Your English book	
Good	

Phase 03 : Translation English ← Arabic

My blue pen	كتبكم
Where ?	ماذا؟

Phase 04 : Translation English ← Arabic

	كتاب الانجليزية خاصتي
	أقلام جيدة
	ممحاة أخي
	واجباتك المنزلية

Phase 01 : Matching English / Arabic

A/

What is this word, Miss?		محفظتك تحت طاولتي.
Your bag is red.		ماهذه الكلمة يا آنسة؟
Your bag is under my desk.		أين مسطرتي يا علي؟
Where is my ruler, Ali?		محفظتك حمراء

Phase 02 : Translation English ➝ Arabic

It is a blue pencil	
Where is my blue pen?	
Your book in on my desk.	
What colour is your book?	

Phase 03 : Translation English ⇄ Arabic

My blue pen is not here.	كراسك جيد يا عمر.
Where is your book?	ماذا هناك على مكتبك؟

Phase 04 : Translation English ← Arabic

	أرجوك أعدني
	أين محفظتي؟
	هذه ممحاتك
	ما لون مسطرتك يا ليلى؟

N.B : It is not merely a matter of translation, but rather an opportunity for learners to think about and discover similarities and differences between their mother tongue and the target language ; English. It is expected to help teachers raise learners' awareness and critical thinking to promote their own learning strategies and therefore use their L1 to improve their English.

Task: I think and match = أفكر و أربط

book		سطرة
pen		محاة
ruler		كتاب
eraser		بالة

Task: I think and match = أفكر و أربط

My book		كتب
Your books		كتابي
The pen		سبلات
pens		البلة

Task: I think and find the equivalent in Arabic = أفكر و أجد المقابل بالعربية

A blue pen	
My green pencil	
Your English book	
Good	

Task: I think and find the equivalent = أفكر و أجد المقابل

My blue pen		كبكر
Where ?		ماذا؟

Task: I think and find the equivalent in English = أفكر و أجد المقابل بالانجليزية

	كتاب الانجليزية خاصتي
	أقلام رجلة
	محاة أختي

		واجباتي المنزلية

Task: I think and match = أفكر و أربط

What is this word, Miss?		محفظتك تحت طاولتي.
Your bag is red.		ما هذه الكلمة يا أنسة؟
Your bag is under my desk.		أين مسطرتي يا علي؟
Where is my ruler, Ali?		محفظتك حمرا.

Task: I think and find the equivalent in Arabic = أفكر و أجد المقابل بالعربية

It is a blue pencil	
Where is my blue pen?	
Your book in on my desk.	
What colour is your book?	

Task: I think and find the equivalent = أفكر و أجد المقابل

My blue pen is not here.		كراسك جديد يا عمر.
Where is your book?		ماذا هنالك على مكتبك؟

Task: I think and find the equivalent in English = أفكر و أجد المقابل بالانجليزية

	أرجوان أعيدي
	أين محفظتي؟
	هذه محاتك
	ما لون مسطرتك يا ليلى؟

الملخص

لطالما كانت مسألة تداخل اللغة الأم (L1) في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) موضع نقاش في مجال تعليم وتعلم اللغات الأجنبية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة دور وفعالية اللغة الأم في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مع التركيز على طلاب السنة الأولى ومعلميهم في متوسطة بن جاب الله عمر في بوشقرون، بسكرة . يستند البحث إلى فرضيتين: الأولى، أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية ذوي الخبرة يرون استخدام اللغة الأم استراتيجيةً مفيدةً في تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية؛ والثانية، أن طلاب السنة الأولى في هذه المرحلة ، ذوي الكفاءة اللغوية المنخفضة، يجدون استخدام اللغة الأم مفيدًا لفهم اللغة الإنجليزية وتقليل الالتباس. ولقبول أو رفض الفرضيتين، تم اعتماد نهج متعدد الأساليب يجمع بين أساليب جمع البيانات النوعية والكمية نظرًا لطبيعة الدراسة، حيث تم استخدام استبيانين كأدوات بحث رئيسية. تم توزيع الاستبيان الأول على سبعة عشر (17) معلمًا وأُجري الاستبيان الثاني على خمسة وستين (65) متعلمًا. وقد دعمت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من تحليل البيانات المتراكمة الفكرة الأساسية المتمثلة في أن غالبية المعلمين يعتبرون اللغة الأولى أداة دعم مفيدة، وخاصة عند شرح القواعد النحوية المعقدة. وبالمثل، أعرب المتعلمون عن مواقف إيجابية، مشيرين إلى أن اللغة الأولى تساعدهم على فهم الدروس بشكل أوضح وتقلل من قلقهم. وبالتالي، أكدت النتائج الفرضيات المقترحة، مشيرة إلى أن الاستخدام الاستراتيجي للغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يمكن أن يعزز الفهم ويعزز بيئة تعليمية أكثر دعمًا. وبناءً على ذلك، يتم تشجيع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على الاستخدام المتوازن والموجه تربويًا للغة الأولى في فصولهم الدراسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية :اللغة الأولى (L1) ، سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المواقف، التصورات،

اللغة الأم.