

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**  
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**MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIVERSITY\_BISKRA**  
**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**DEPARTEMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECTION OF ENGLISH**



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**Evaluating the Use of First Language in the English Language Classroom**

Case Study of a Second Year Pupils Middle School, Biskra.

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Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for a Master Degree in  
Sciences of Language

Prepared by:

Chams Edhouha Anede

Supervised by:

Kenza Merghmi

**Board of Examiners:**

**Dr. Tarek Assassi**

**Chairperson**

University of Biskra

**Ms. Kenza Merghmi**

**Supervisor**

University of Biskra

**Dr. Ahmed Chaouki Houadjli**

**Examiner**

University of Biskra

**Ms. Meriem Zeghdoud**

**Examiner**

University of Biskra

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIS**

**L1:** The First Language.

**L2:** The Second Language.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**NL:** Native Language.

**FL:** Foreign Language.

**TL:** Target Language.

### **Abstract**

This study sheds light on the issue of using the first language in EFL classrooms. The current study looks into the teachers' attitudes towards the use of first language in the first language in English classrooms. The analysis for this paper was conducted on data from an online questionnaire based on 30 total participants all participants are second year middle school English teachers. The results showed also showed that most participants use L1 in EFL classroom in different situations as it helps them to better present the lessons for their young students. Thus, it was found that first language can have positive effects in the English class time. To sum up, the research showed that teachers have a variety of reasons for using the first language in English classrooms and that usage may be affected and changed by other variables that need further research and study.

**Key words:** First Language, English Classroom, Attitudes.

# General Introduction

## Introduction

Language is the most important means of communication in persons' life; it facilitates the transfer of information and the exchange of ideas. All people have their own mother tongue, which is the first language they acquire from birth and they develop it through interaction with society and from their daily life. People are not sufficient for the first language only, because in this life they are forced to learn other languages in addition to their first language. One of the most important languages currently spoken around the world is English language.

English is considered as the most important language at the present time because it is used in most countries, and due to its importance in working and ordinary life, people are keen to learn it. Due to its great role in daily life, most countries are keen to include it in their educational curricula and teach it as a foreign language, one of these countries is Algeria.

In Algeria teaching English as a foreign language starts in the middle school. In the first year, people learn letters, numbers, days, months and colors, which are easy to learn. As for the second year it is considered one of the most difficult stages of teaching and learning English because it includes teaching grammar and vocabulary of new language. In this difficult stage, some teachers prefer use English language alone because they believe that it is the appropriate language, which ensures that students learn English language in a better way. Some scholars support the idea of using only English language like: **Macaro (2005,p.66)** has pointed out that there is no study confirmed yet that learning FL will improved when they avoid including the first language in foreign language classroom. Using the mother tongue may hamper the learning process for that teacher should use only the foreign language (**Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Levine, 2003; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008; Littlewood & Yu, 2009**). However, **Krashen (1981)** in his hypothesis of comprehensible input, claimed that the first language should not play any role in learning foreign language and the foreign language must taught learned through the foreign language only without including other languages.

Other teachers prefer using L1 in this stage, because they believe that it helps them in teaching English and facilitates explaining lessons. There are some scholars support including L1 in EFL classrooms like: **Cook (2001)** is considered to be one of the researchers who supported the use of the first language in the second and foreign language classroom, by doing the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collections. He stated that when the translation

method is used learners need their native language and their language competence. He also argued that even though many teachers try to work hard to keep their students far and separated from their mother tongue, but the students still use their native language even when they are asked to do not use it. Other researchers like (**Anton & Dicamilla, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2000 ; Watanabe, 2008**). emphasized that the first language can be used as a tool of knowledge that helps in learning the foreign language (**Anton & Dicamilla, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2000 ; Watanabe, 2008**).

Skinner (**1985, 2001**) argued that using the first language can facilitate communication between the foreign language and the previous knowledge and ideas that developed only in the native language.

The study in the following papers will try to find out the English teachers' position regarding the use of first language in EFL classrooms in second year middle school. This study based on three major questions. The first questions aimed to find out whether teachers use the first language in English class time or no. Then the second question aimed to highlight the teachers' attitudes toward using L1 in EFL classrooms. The last question posed to find out whether using L1 has positive or negative effects in EFL classrooms.

The following study divided into three chapters, each chapter with a particular focus. The first chapter covers the first language, while the second chapter devoted to cover teaching English as foreign language. The third chapter contain analyzing and discussion of the questionnaire to answer the question of this study.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THE FIRST LANGUAGE**

**Introduction**

Since the beginning of creation, Human was created with a natural means of communication, which is speaking. The spoken language differs from one country to another, and even in one country the dialects can differ. After any person is born, the first language he/she acquires is his/her native language, which is often the language of his/her country or the language spoken by his/her family or society where he/she lives. The first language is not the only language that a person learns. Rather, he/she learns other languages such as second, third, fourth or foreign language because of his/her needs in life.

Over the years, several studies have been conducted with the aim of defining and describing the first language and the second language, by studying them from different aspects in order to make a distinction among them. Knowing and understanding these two languages help the teachers to be patient in teaching, and make student enjoy when they are exploring the new language. Although the processes of acquiring the first language and the second language share common sequences, they still different and vary especially in outcome. While all speakers achieve native proficiency in their first language, they are not able to do the same thing in their second language.

To be able to assess such result, this chapter will not be a full representation of all the processes mentioned in literature, but it will contain the definition of First language and second language acquisition, and the most important theories in learning and acquiring the two languages like input hypothesis, translation and positive and negative transfer and the common errors.

**1.1. Definition of Mother Tongue/ First Language/ Native Language/ Primary Language:**

It is difficult sometimes to make the distinction between the concepts, mother tongue, first language, native language and primary language. Although, all of these terms are considered as synonyms, it is not easy to distinguish their meaning clearly (Buck, 2001).

In general, a mother tongue can be defined as the language that any person learns before any other language has been learnt. Children learn the mother tongue or the first language



naturally and automatically. They learn it from the social environment around them. During the childhood stage, children learn their first language at home, and they acquire it from birth. However, there are other cases when the first language and the mother tongue differ from each other for example, a child from Hayu community (Hayu is considered one of the marginalized areas in Nepal). This region has its own language and dialect that differs from the official Nepali language. The Hayu language is distinctive and has its own scripts, but it has not yet been recognized in educational system and school of Nepal. The child from Hayu speaks Nepali as his first language, but his mother tongue is Hayu. This mother tongue has its own phonological, syntactic and morphological systems (Buck, 2001).

Mother tongue, first language and native language are terms refer to the same meaning, but there are some cases when they differ from each other. First language, mother tongue and native language are common terms for the language which a person acquires first in his childhood because it is spoken in the family and/ or it is the language of the country where he is living (Pokharel, 2001, p. 201).

## **1.2. Definition of Second and Foreign Language**

Both second language and foreign language share the same characteristic, which is they are learnt after the native language of the person, but they still different from each other. To distinguish between second language and foreign language The Collins Dictionary defined second language as language that a person learns after learning his or her first language, while foreign language refers to the language that is used in a country other one's native language (2013). Second language can refer to any language learned after learning L1 (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

## **1.3. Second Language Acquisition**

Second language acquisition refers to the study of how learners learn new language (second language) after the native language has been learned. It means also the way and the process of learning any language after the native language. This term may refer to learning third or fourth language, not only second language (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

**1.4. Similarities and Differences between First and Second Language**

The similarity between the first and the second language is that learning both they both started by how to make basic sounds, then words, phrases, simple sentences, and finally the complex sentences (Ellis, 2008). On the other hand, first language and second language differ in many areas. The first area of differences between them is the input, especially the quantity and the quality of input. Macnamara (1975) stated that “connection model that implies... language learning process depends on the input frequency and regularity” (pp. 71-94). The quantity of input in first language and second language refers to the amount of receiving the language. For instance, the duration of the child’s exposure to L1 is long compared to the duration of the learner’s exposure to L2. Child hears L1 all day every day, whereas the adult learner hears it only three or four hours a week (Macnamara, 1975). Chomsky assesses “language learning is not really something that the child does, it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment much as the child’s body grows and mature in a predetermined way when provided with an appropriate nutrition and environmental stimulation” (Cook, & Newson, 2007, pp. 204-205). Even if the adult exposure to L2 more than three or four hours a week, it still less than child’s exposure, and when child’s interacts with his/her parents and family that is much greater than the adult receiving. This idea of one on one interaction and teacher’s speaking to many learners in classrooms refers to the quality of input. The next difference between L1 and L2 learning is age. A child under the age of five years is able to acquire L1 easily because his/her brain is in the stages of developing, learning and memorizing the new things. Whereas learning L2 by adult is a little more difficult compared to child (Gass, & Selinker, 2010).

**1.5. Input Hypothesis**

According to Gass and Selinker (2008) the input hypothesis, developed by Krashen as part of his overall monitor model and as part of his general plan of acquisition. It is complement to the natural order hypothesis.

Krashen defined “comprehensible input” in a particular way. Essentially, comprehensible input is the language that heard/read and progresses slightly over the learner’s current grammar status. A language that contains structures that learners already have knowledge about them do not serve any purpose in acquiring language that contains advanced structures based on the

current knowledge of the learners which is not useful. Therefore, the learners will not do anything with these structures because they exceed their ability. Ellis (2008) focused on Krashen's point of view on the input hypothesis and mentioned that his view is only related to acquisitions and she claimed that the structures that learners advance along the natural order by understanding the inputs are just above their level of competence. Although, comprehensible inputs are necessary to acquire them, this is not enough because learners also need effectively dispose of the input to be made.

As a result of simplification with the help of contextual and additional language guides, the input becomes compressible.

### **1.6. Input and First Language Acquisition**

Input hypothesis has an important role in acquiring the first language because it is considered as the origin of many methods and theoretical issues that second language acquisition researchers have taken up. Several previous studies have shown the relationship between the language used by caretaker r to children (i.e input features) and their acquisition with some mixed results. Newport and Gleitman (1977), for example, investigated some evidence of close relationship between frequency of specific linguistics features in mothers' speech and the growth of some features in their children.

In contrast, other researchers like Furrow, Nelson, and Benediet (1979) found a lot of evidence for input interference. Four aspects of L1 development were related to a number of input measures. These are mean length of utterance, verbs per utterance, and noun phrases per utterance and auxiliaries per verb phrase.

Wells (1985) found that there are some relationships involving input and acquisition, and there are such fragile features seem to be sensitive to input, for example, auxiliaries and verbs. Such correlation studies have many problems. One of these problems is that they did not take into consideration the children's age and stages of development. Large number of linguists like Ellis (2008) claimed that learning L2 stages and acquiring L1 stages are totally different from each other, and the talk is basic thing in different stages.

**1.7. Input and second language acquisition:**

According to Ellis (1994) the input comes in written or spoken form. It occurs in the context of interaction when it is spoken (i.e. when the learner tries to converse with native speaker, a teacher or another learner). It can also occur in the context of non-reciprocal discourse (i.e. watching the film or listening to the radio).

Behaviorists' theories agree about the role that input plays in L2 acquisition and they emphasized its importance, and they claim that presenting learners with the right amount of input controlled the whole process of acquisition and then reinforce their attempts to practice L2. There is a little room for any active processing by the learning depending on the view of learning. In 1960's, behaviorists were challenged by Chomsky. It was argued that among many cases, the match between the kind of language found in the input learners received and the kind of language they themselves produced is poor. It was pointed out that hypothesizing is better explained by a set of mental processes which took place inside the mind of the learner and which converted the language in the input into a form that can be stored and handled in production by learner. The mentalists' view of input has been shown that interaction helps learners to provide with "Scaffolding" that is beyond them. Researchers like Chomsky (1960) and Ellis (1994) are supporting the importance of input and interaction suggest that through the process of learning how learners communicate in it, they acquire this language.

**1.8. Translation**

House (2009, p.04) defined translation as: "replacing a text in one language by the same text but in another language". To translate any text it is important to be concerned with particular communicative uses of language and not only with linguistics forms. When words or sentences are used in communication, which means they are combine to make meaning in different ways. In translation the whole text has to be replaced not only such parts of it. Translation deals with the text as a single piece, i.e. it is impossible to separate some words and sentences from the original text to translate into another language, and leave the other sentences from the same text without translation. The right translation refers to the translation of the entire text without separating words or changing the meaning (House, 2009).

**1.9. L1 Transfer**

The term L1 transfer refers to the transfer of features, patterns, or elements of first language into the speech of second language (Oldin, 1989). Oldin (1989) defined language transfer as cross linguistic influence. According to Oldin (1989, p. 25) "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language that had previously or perhaps imperfectly acquired".

Other scholars like Sharwood and Smith attempted to make a distinction between transfer and influence. Transfer is totally different from the cross linguistics influence because transfer refers to transformation of linguistic behaviors from L1 into L2 involving inter-lingual effects, while the cross linguistics influence tends to avoid L1 effects (Sharwood & Smith & Kellerman, 1986). According to Zobl "Learners must attain a certain level of development with respect to L2 structure before transfer is active" (1980, p. 49).

**1.10. L1 Transfer Background**

Transfer usually means the integration of features of L1 into the knowledge systems of L2 that the learner is attempting to build (Ellis, 1994). Distinguishing this learning process that includes the use of L1 for different purposes of communication is important (Ellis, 1994).

Empirically it is easy to distinguish the process of translation in L2 learning and the use of L1 as communication process, but other opinions have been totally changed. Transfer was primary understood through a behaviorist's framework of learning. It was presumed that "habits" of L1 would be taken into L2. In cases where L1 differed from TL, that would be result in interference or negative transfer. Hyltenstam and Pienemann (1985, p. 11) have defined the notion of transfer as a central component of language proficiency to contrastive analysis, it has been dealt in recent years extensively within a broader framework of linguistics. Thus, the mentalists redefined the notion transfer within their perspective. (Kellerman, 1980, 1983; Jordens & Kellerman, 1981) have claimed the view that the predictions of transfer must be based on both the structural properties of L1 and L2 and on insights into how L1 structures are perceived intuitively by the learner that being either transformable or non-transformable into specific phase of L2 acquisition. The structural distance between L1 and L2 and the way that learner perceives this distance guide the conditions of transformability.

### 1.11. Types of Transfer

The similarities and differences between First and second language and EFL produce both positive and negative transfer (Oldin, 1989).

#### 1.11.1. Positive Transfer

Positive transfer effects can be determined through comparisons of success of groups with different native languages. Such comparisons revealed that cross-linguistics similarities between target language and native language. Language systems can help learners to obtain a head start in reading and writing in TL similarities in syntactic structures facilitates the acquisition of grammar. Learners whom speak language with syntax that is similar to the syntax of TL resort to face no difficulties with articles, word order and relative clauses. Future research may show that cross-linguistics similarities in other areas enhance acquisition (Oldin, 2009).

#### 1.11.2. Negative Transfer

The negative transfer includes distinctions of norms between FL and TL. It is often easy to identify the negative transfer. Focusing on errors that have been viewed as interference or negative transfer leads to transfer from L1 patterns to L2 (Ellis, 1994). Oldin (1993) classified transfer into four types:

a) **Underproduction.** Underproduction occurs when L2 learners omit using some elements in L2 due to influence of L1, for example, where she works? Instead of, where does she work? Underproduction appears when the speaker avoids some difficult structures in L2 because they are different from L1, which leads learner to under produce some structures in L2 (Oldin, 1993).

b) **Overproduction.** Overproduction occurs when L2 learner was influenced by his L1, this influencing leads him add some elements from L1 to L2. For instance, nobody does not speak instead of nobody speaks (oldin, 1993).

c) **Production Errors:** There are two types of errors in speech and writing. They are resulted by the similarities and differences between the NL and FL:

i) **Substitution:** It includes using forms or words of NL in the FL, for example, Ringbom (1986) noted the use of the Swedish word “bort” which means “away” in English sentences written by Swedish native speakers.

Eg. Now I Live home with my parents, but sometimes I must go bort.

ii) **Claques:** They are the errors that are like the NL structures, for example, Fantini (1985) notes the following sentence spoken by a Spanish-English bilingual child:

Spanish: Vamos ràpido a ponder el fuego afuera.

English: Let’s quickly put the fire out.

## **1.12. Inter-lingual and Intra-lingual Transfer**

Both inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer are terms refer to the same meaning, which is errors. The reasons of inter-lingual’s errors differ from the reasons of intra-lingual errors.

### **1.12.1. Inter-lingual transfer**

According to Brown (2007), inter-lingual transfer is considered as significant source of error for all learners. The initial stage of learning FL is challenging, in this early stage of learning, the only previous linguistics system that the learners know in the NL, for example: English learner say “sheep” for “ship” or “the book of Jack” instead “Jack’s book”, or in other language such as French learners may say “Je sais Jean” instead of “Je connais Jean”. All these errors are known as negative inter-lingual transfer.

### **1.12.2. Intra-lingual transfer**

Intra-lingual transfer is error which is resulted by faulty of target language, and it is the major factor in L2 and EFL learning. The negative counterpart of intra-lingual transfer is called overgeneralization. Researcher Jaszczolt (1995) and Taylor (1975) pointed out that the early

stages of language learning are characterized by a predominance of interference, but when learners start acquiring elements of the new systems, intra-lingual transfer generalization manifested in the target language. (Ellis, 1994) pointed out that intra-lingual errors are also often further subdivided. Thus, Richards (1971) found the following errors:

- Overgeneralization errors occur when the learner create wrong structures in place of TL or NL.
- Ignorance of rule restrictions involves the application of rules to context where they do not apply, for example: “He made me to rest” instead of “He asked or he invited me to go”.
- Incomplete application of rules includes the failure of develop a structure. Thus, EFL learners have been observed that they use the declarative form, for example: “you like to sing?” instead of interrogative word order: “Do you like to sing?” this sort of intra-lingual errors referred to errors of transitional competence (Richard, 1971).
- False concepts hypothesized (when learner fails to understand fully) a distinction in the TL, for example he use “was” as marker in past tense in “One day it was happened”.

### **1.13. The Inter-language Hypothesis**

The term inter-language was defined by Selinker (1972) that it refer to the first stages of grammars that learners develop on their own way to acquire the EFL competence. Mclaughlin (1987) noticed that inter-language theory has passed through continual development, one of its current themes is the term of hypothesis testing: e.i. the idea that learners form hypotheses about what are the rules of the EFL or L2, testing them, confirming them if find conviction evidence in the input or rejecting them if they find negative evidence. This process takes a large place on subconscious level. Inter-language theory has also identified other specific process such as overgeneralization (i.e. the extension of EFL or L2 rule to a context in which it does not apply in the target language) and simplification (i.e. the reduction of the target language system to a simpler form). Previous studies showed that learner’s errors, acquisition order and development sequences have close relationship with inter-language theory (Ellis, 1994).

Inter-language development stands on five central cognitive processes include in second/ foreign language, first language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second/ foreign language learning, and strategies of second / foreign language communication and overgeneralization of the target language (Selinker, 1972). However, Adjemian (1976)



contradicted Selinker (1972), he confirmed the natural and universal aspects of inter-language. Adjemian (1976) interests with the dynamic character of inter-language and he showed that it is not stable; he confirmed that the second and foreign language learners are always changed and developed. Ellis (1994) assumes that learners perceived these mental grammars dynamically. Having the linguistics influence of the learner's first language, distorting or overgeneralization of the target language's rules by the learner when s/he attempts to generate the intended meaning may lead to inter-language. Adjemian (1976) notice that inter-language is an individual, single and unique system which is not confirm yet to the target language norms and evidently integrate linguistics errors or deficiencies modeling the learner's current linguistic level and modulation what s/he need acquire to reach a standard of the target language. Notwithstanding, a substantial degree of the uniformity in the characteristics of inter-language exists and in the types of errors of various second/foreign language learners, for instance, Bengali learners commit a common error and make a common mistake in speaking by missing add "s" in the verbs that are used in simple present tense and having a third person singular subject (Maniruzzaman, 2006).

Tarone (1979) explains inter-language as a set of styles that are attached to the context of use. Research revealed that utterances of learners are systematically different at the last two senses. First, the linguistic context may have various affects on the use of related phonological and syntactic structures by the learners. Then, the task that used by learners for elicitation of data may have variable impact on the production of related phonological and syntactic structures of the learners. Tarone (1979) concludes that inter-language speech production differs systematically with the context and elicitation task.

De Angelis (199) as cited in Grass and Selinker (2008) tested the production of Italian by French, Canadian L1speaker with three foreign languages: Spanish, English and Italian. She identified two types of inter-language transfer: full lexical inter-language transfer and partial lexical inter-language transfer. The first type of transfer divided instances into an entire non target word from an earlier inter-language and it was used in the production of Italian target language. The second types of transfer grouped in which partial morphological information from non target inter-language word used in Italian target language production. De Angelis followed one of the fundamental key principles in this domain and showed strong relationship of phonological similarity between the two languages.

### 1.14. Inter-language Theory

According to Ellis (1994) inter-language theory was the first major attempt to provide an explanation of L2 acquisition that leads it to be an appropriate starting point, this theory was developed by many other theories like Torane's variability models. Early inter-language theory was investigated by the research that pointed out learners' errors and the general pattern of L2 development. Considering of the cognitive perspective, cognitive theories of inter-language assume that learners build their mental grammars of L2 with the aid of learning strategies. This grammar account for performance in the same way as the native speaker grammar; that is, learners use the rules they have learned to interpret and produce utterances. Inter-language is systematic because Jakobovits and Cook behave grammatically in sense that they draw on the rules they have internalized a view that casts doubt on the use of the term error itself (Jakobovits, 1970; Cook, 1971), as utterances of learners are only erroneous with reference to target language norms, not to the norms of their grammars.

### 1.15. Inter-language continuum

The inter-language continuum contains series of overlapping grammars each grammar shares its own rules with the previously constructed grammar, but also it consists of some new rules, each rule has the status of a hypotheses, and each grammar of inter-language is likely to be characterized by competing rules. Corder (1976) mentioned that there will be several concurrent hypotheses leading to a set of coexistent approximate system, this is a consideration for systematic variability in learner performance.

One of the findings of this view of the inter-language continuum is that L1 acquisition is characterized not by simplification but by complexification. It means that each grammar constructed by the learner is more complex than the grammar that preceded it.

Corder (1977) suggested that the starting point of the learner is the same as in L1 acquisition; the basic system is containing lexical items and few simple rules. This system formulates the initial hypothesis and may be universal (e.i. all languages when they stripped down, result in the same basic system). It follows that EFL and L2 knowledge entails a recreation continuum rather than a restructuring one; that is, the starting point is not only L1 which is gradually replaced by

EFL and L2 rules and terms. Previous studies suggested that this is an explanation of why inter-language systems manifest universal properties, particularly in the early stages of development (Ellis, 2008, p. 409).

### 1.16. Inter-language Characteristic

Troike (2006, p. 40) found that an inter-language has the following characteristics:

- **It is systematic.** Inter-language is governed by rules which constitute the learner's internal grammar at any particular point or stage of development. These rules are discovered by analyzing the language that is used by the learners when they are able to produce and interpret correct words and phrases.

- **It is dynamic.** The system of rules in the learners' minds changes frequently

**Selinker (1992)** suggested that this change is not progression along a continuum, but it is discontinuous progression "from stable plateau to stable plateau" (p.226).

- **It is variable.** Although the inter-language is systematic, differences in context lead to different patterns of language use.

### Conclusion

Everyone has his/her first language that he/she acquired it since his/her birth. Nowadays, the first language is not sufficient because the life's conditions have changed. This changes force and impose the individual to possess the mother tongue in addition to other languages either second or foreign language, in order to develop and keep pace with the other societies.

Learning a second language is not easy as learning the first language, so while learning second language the learner faces several difficulties because conditions of learning differ and learner's age varies. Linguists realized these differences between languages, which led them to adopt studies and experiments to discover and explain the reasons for difference. These studies have resulted theories and rules that interpreted everything about these languages.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

**THE ENGLISH**

**LANGUAGE**

**CLASSROOM**

**Introduction**

As both teachers and learners have not been sure about the role of first and native language in EFL teaching and learning process, most language specialists as teachers and educators are completely against the use of first language in EFL classrooms. However, the other teachers and mostly students have a different opinion on this issue. Moreover, they assumed it as a supportive and beneficial way in their language learning and teaching classrooms. On the basis of this issue, a number of recent studies have set a way in using mother tongue in language pedagogy by using grammar translation method in language pedagogy. The concept of using the first language in EFL teaching and learning process was dismissed as communicative and practical. It was also seen as difficult and irrelevant matter (Duff, 1994). A popular belief has been extended among the teachers that the use of first language may prevent EFL learning ( Malmkjar, 1998). But the changing of importance and the quality of language classes may support learners in their own way of learning. Based on this fact, researchers have tried to clarify the load of language, and investigate the ways that support and help learners to reach their learning purposes. Among which the use of first language in the EFL learning has been a debatable topic in language pedagogy.

Although most language teachers and educators are against including the mother tongue in EFL classrooms, this perspective is changing day after day and educators have started working to facilitate the role of the first language in EFL classroom (Liao, 2006; Kavaliauskiene & Kaminskiene, 2007; Cook, 2007). Students tend to include the mother tongue in EFL learning because they consider it as a supportive strategy and got benefits from it. It was also a view of seeing learner's mother tongue as a valuable resource to make up for their limitations in the process of EFL learning (Corder, 1981). So, the learners have set a way in the use of mother tongue as a learning means to reach their purposes in comprehending, remembering and producing their FL or L2 whether their teachers encourage them or not.

Most learners translate from FL into their L1 in EFL learning process. No matter how good the learners are at comprehending reading or listening materials. This fact leads EFL teachers realize the importance of L1 and to encourage including of L1 in EFL classrooms (Kavaliauskiene & kaminskiene, 2007).

To understand the use of first language use in English language classrooms, this chapter

contains important elements about using the first language in EFL class. It presents the use of L1 in English class times, teachers' and students' attitudes toward using L1, L1 functions other issues related to the use of L1 in EFL classrooms.

### **2.1. The Use of First Language in English Classroom**

In Algerian middle school, the excessive use of L1 in English classrooms can be obviously observed. For second year middle school pupils have only three or four hours of English classes a week. This is not sufficient for several reasons, because they have less time to practice English; this situation is inappropriate especially if the teachers fail to be a good resource (Rana, 2009).

It was noticed that in one hour of EFL class period; more than 80% hours are consumed by L1 in the second year middle school (Luitel, 2005, p. 45). Teachers tend to use L1 even if the lesson is meant for involving the pupils in practical conversation through English. Teachers tend to teach the lessons by using L2-L1 translation method (Luitel, 2005). Smartness level of the pupils also plays an interesting role in the use of L1 during EFL class. Luitel (2005) found that pupils whom are poorer in knowledge; translation helps them to produce better vocabulary knowledge. The excessive use of L1 during EFL class might have facilitated understanding by the pupils but at the same time it might hinder improving their productive competence (Khanal, 2004). Khanal also found that moderating the use of L1 in EFL helps teachers and pupils in teaching and learning the foreign language. On the one hand, teachers insist on the importance of using L1 in EFL classroom because they think that it is necessary for the explanation of difficult ideas and concepts, they use it in some phrases and expressions and to present complex grammar points. On the other hand, pupils prefer use their L1 to explain their own problems and when they do not know the answer. Similarly, some pupils use the L1 to give answer and to ask questions. The study shows that the responsible factors for using L1 in EFL classrooms is the pupils' weaknesses and their poor background. In this study, (Sharma, 2006, p. 80) found out that more than half of pupils said that they use L1 in EFL classroom to practice the use of some phrases and to explain some ideas and to define new vocabulary items. This study also shows that teachers of second year middle school should be very selective on when to use or to not use L1. It shows that EFL classes are focused on reading and writing skills and teachers get help of L1 for difficult ideas, new words and grammar points. Including and excluding of L1 in EFL classes is changing from one class to another.

**2.2. The use of First Language in Teaching Methodology**

Willis is one of the researchers who tried to review and research the role of L1 in English classrooms. In one of his studies, he stated “Encourage attempt to use the target language but do not ban mother tongue use”. Other opinions agree with re-establishing the L1 in EFL classrooms (Willis, 1996, p. 30). Many scholars try to reconsider the role of the pupils’ native language in English classrooms (Elridge, 1996). Others state that learners’ native language is an essential in learning TL (Stroch and Wigglesworth, 2003). It was claimed that “Both of the first and target language complete each other but it depends on the stages and traits of the language learning process” (Turnbull, 2001, p. 535). Some scholars found that the role of L1 in EFL classrooms is as a tool that facilitates learning English in early stages.

A great deal of debate was carried out about importance of L1 use in EFL classes. Many researchers have been trying to illustrate the benefits of using L1 and how they facilitate the English learning process. Stanely (2002), for instance, was one of the researchers who conducted an experiment while she was teaching a multilingual class of about 34 learners; she gathered them in one group in order to help them. In her experiment, she planned to teach them in two different ways. On the one hand, she was teaching them by using only English language, but unfortunately these students was not able to continue studying because of the difficulties they were facing. On the other hand, she used only L1 while teaching English to other groups whom found it easy to study and continue the English course.

Other researchers such as Banos (2009) and Kavaliauskiene (2009) pointed out the importance of including L1 in EFL class; they indicted that using l1 while learning English facilitates the learning process, especially with beginners. Nowadays most English instructors find it easy, normal, effective and more beneficial to use L1 while teaching FL. Other scholars study and analyze the cases in which L1 is completely deleted. They think it is inappropriate sometimes (Larsenfreeman, 2001; Nation, 2003). Brown (2000, p. 68) point out “Using the native language facilitates learning English more than interfering with this learning”, and he advises teachers to include L1 while teaching English and how it affects the atmosphere of the classrooms positively.

**2.3. Arguments Against First Language Use in English Classrooms**

Both EFL teachers and learners tend to use their first language in English class time in order to understand the whole points of the lesson. When EFL students use their L1 during English sessions too much that could attenuate their learning (Auerbach, 1993). Opponents of using the first language in EFL classrooms suggested that English language should be taught by using only English language exclusively, and “no L1 use” was the optimal choice. They felt that learners used their first language to facilitate English learning process, but indeed using L1 hindered and decreased English learning (Krashen, 1982, p. 20). These opponents look at using L1 in EFL classrooms was considered as Grammar Translation Method that focused on translation from L1 to English (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Others believed that it is better if both EFL teachers and students used English language only without reliance on L1. However, other scholars claimed that it was not the quantity but the quality of English language exposure that matters (Dickson, 1992).

Although, opponents of L1 believed that successful EFL teaching and learning should not involved L1. They assert that it is difficult for EFL students with lower proficiency level to use English exclusively (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). De la Campa (2006) advised people to be patient whole learning and avoid too much stress to learn this language prematurely. From Chambers’ view, he believed that circumstances where using L1 is considered inappropriate and teachers are still trying to minimize L1 use as much as possible. Teachers, for instance, may use L1 to explain the hard ideas and words that faced them which are impossible to be explained and understood by using only English language (Chambers, 1991).

In conclusion, the opponents of using L1 during English sessions concluded that using L1 is harmful in EFL class; and teachers should avoid L1 and reliance only on English.

**2.4. Arguments for First Language Use in the English Classroom**

The advocates of L1 use in EFL classrooms believed that L1 may motivate students to learn English, and it can bring benefits to EFL students. It was stated that “the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogical sound” (Auerbach, 1993, p. 15), and the advocates of L1 use affirmed that there is an evidence that supports including L1 in EFL classrooms, and it was considered as a successful manner (Snorraddottir, 2014). The theory



“no L1 use” had meeting challenges. Cook (2001, 2008) argued that when learning EFL both English language and first language are interwoven in the students’ minds, and it became impossible to attempt separating these languages from each other, this argument was agreed by Cummins (1981, 1991), who claimed that “ L1 and EFL are sharing the same proficiency, and both of them are existing in the mind at the same time” (1991, p. 3).

Another theory that supports L1 in EFL was given by Atkinson (1987); he suggested that using L1 has some purposes and functions. Among which translating vocabulary, checking comprehension, giving instructions for tasks, and Atkinson also reported that using L1 in EFL classrooms was beneficial for English learning beginners because it could help them to express exactly what they wanted to say.

In conclusion, despite the studies that have been conducted by many scholars and researchers in recent years, researchers still encouraging using English only. Consequently, many other studies have been conducted to explore the role of first language in EFL class time.

## **2.5. The Role of First Language in Various English Foreign Language Methods**

Larsen-freeman (2001) described the role of L1 in the context of EFL. The role of L1 was proposed in various EFL methods:

### **2.5.1. Grammar Translation Method**

The grammar translation method refers to the method of teaching foreign language. The learners’ first language in EFL classrooms was considered as a facilitator tool to learn EFL (Larsen-freeman, 2002, p. 18).

### **2.5.2. Direct Method**

Direct method refers to natural method that is usually used in teaching foreign language. It excludes the idea of using L1 and encourages using only the target language in foreign language classrooms (Larsen-freeman, 2000, pp. 30, 47).

### **2.5.3. Audio-lingual Method**

Audio-lingual method refers to an oral approach; it is also similar to the direct method. It drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns (Larsen-freeman, 2000, pp. 30, 47).

**2.5.4. Silent way**

Using L1 has some advantages. For instance, it is used by teachers to give instructions, to improve the learners' pronunciation, and to give a feedback to learn especially in the early stages of proficiency (Larsen-freeman, 2002).

**2.5.5.Suggestopedia**

Translating into the first language clarifies the meaning of words in a dialogue. Teachers can use the first language in some important situations (Larsen-freeman, 2002).

**2.5.5. Community Language Learning**

Using the students' native language reinforced and enhanced the directions, the sessions and the security of students. Furthermore, learners express their feelings well and in a more understandable way when using L1 (Larsen-freeman, 2004).

**2.5.7. Total Physical Response**

This method is introduced by using the physical movement in teaching language. It aims to create link between action and speech to facilitate learning language and vocabulary (Larsen-freeman, 2002).

**2.5.8. Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative language teaching refers to learn and practice language by interaction with one another or with teachers. This method is applied by using the learners' first language (Larsen-freeman, 2002).

**2.6. Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of L1 in EFL Classroom**

Many scholars conducted several studies to explore L2 and EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of L1 in L2 classrooms, specifically in EFL context (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Bruen & Kelly, 2014; Copland & Neokleous, 2010; De La compa & Nassaji, 2009; Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; Kim & Petraki, 2009; Macaro, 1997; Mohebbi & Alavi, 2014; Polio & Duff, 1994; Sharma, 2006; Tang, 2002). These studies conducted in various EFL contexts. Schweers

(1999, pp. 6-9) conducted his study in Spanish context, found that all teachers supported using their L1 (Spanish) in their English classrooms. Kovacic and Kirinic (2011), whom conducted their study in Croatian context, reported that 80% of teachers preferred to use their L1 in English classrooms. The same findings were found by both Sharma (2006) and Tang (2002).

Al-Nofaie (2010) conducted his study at a female intermediate school in Saudi Arabia where both teachers' and students' first language is Arabic, and English was taught as a foreign language. The findings of this study were that teachers' attitudes toward using Arabic in English class were positive because L1 helps them in certain situations, such as explaining the difficult English vocabulary items. Al-Shamari (2011, pp. 95-102), his case of study was conducted in two Saudi technical colleges. He reported that teachers supported the use of L1 in EFL classrooms, and they believing that the use of L1 made EFL learning process more effective. The positive experiences of using L1 in teaching English lead teachers to have positive attitudes toward the role of L1 in EFL classrooms. Other studies have suggested that using L1 may improve English learning process by serving vital in class cognitive, communicative and social functions. Some other scholars found that using L1 in English class has practical benefits, such as minimizing misunderstandings of some ideas and vocabulary items (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Kim & Petraki, 2009). Consequently, L1 may be considered as a necessity tool for EFL lesson. It was states that "The strongest advocates of an L2 only policy, allowed her students to use the L1 frequently" (Copland & Neokleous, 2010, p. 276).

### **2.7. Students' Attitudes towards the Use of L1 in the EFL Classroom**

Many scholars conducted several studies to explore the students' attitudes and views regarding the use of L1 in EFL classrooms (e.g., Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Kim & Petraki, 2009; Schweers, 1999; Storch & Aldosari, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). These studies were among themselves in pair and group work. The common findings among all these studies considered that L1 can be utilized as a useful cognitive tool for achieving and obtaining learning tasks. The study of Storch and wigglesworth (2003) stated that most EFL learners supported L1 use in their EFL classrooms because they found that using their L1 enabled them achieve their English learning goals, such as providing each other with definitions of some difficult words and explanation of grammar points. Using L1 was considered as conducive to their studies by helping them to continue and provide justifications for grammatical choices more quickly and clearly. This study also noticed that the EFL students whom did not use their L1 felt that using

L1 while learning English could be helpful because it help them to understand the hard activities in depth. Moreover, Kim and Petraki (2009) concluded that EFL students in Kora believed that including L1 in English class played a supportive role in English classrooms and they confirmed that L1 is an important tool in learning EFL. Duff and Polio (1990) reported that English learners were satisfied with their teachers whom use L1.

Furthermore, several studies (see, for example, Al Shammari, 2011; Schweers, 1999; Sharma, 2006; Tang, 2002) concluded that EFL learners feel favorably toward using their L1 in English class. Schweers (1999) noted that more than 90% of English students that are participating in his study found that their L1 (Spanish) had a necessary role in their English class. Tang (2002) in his study on Chinese students reported that 70% of English language students supported the use of their L1 (Chinese) in their English class. The study of Kovacic and Kirinic (2011) in Kroatia had similar results: 68% students in the study stated that their L1 (Croatian) should be an official tool in EFL classrooms. Al Shammari (2011) and Sharma (2006) come to the same conclusion as the previous scholars' studies in the context of EFL.

On the other hand, Nazary (2008) found different results. This study was conducted in the EFL context of Iran with 85 students who were selected based on their L2 proficiency according to three categories: elementary, intermediate, and advanced level by using a questionnaire. Nazary noticed EFL Iranian students in all levels rejected using their L1 in their English classes because they felt that L1 may reduce their English learning process. Lin (1990) conducted many studies to, the first one was by choosing 300 Greek students and dividing them into three levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced. He was attempting to observe their reactions and attitudes with their various levels. This study showed that advanced level learners had a negative attitudes toward using L1 and they did not react effectively to the use of L1; conversely, elementary and intermediate levels found it interesting to use L1 while learning EFL. He also carried out an experiment to examine the attitudes of 100 EFL learners while using L1 in learning English. The result was they had positive attitudes. Some researchers and instructors noticed that most EFL learners prefer to use L1 while learning English because it affects their attitudes and interests; it also creates a good communicative atmosphere which encourages them to learn English. Third study that he conducted was in Spanish context with EFL learners and their 19 instructors in order to get some results that show their attitudes toward using L1. This study showed that 88.7% tended to use L1 and responded positively to it. Learners also prefer to spend 39% of class using L1.

These studies show that there are two perspectives on using L1 in EFL classrooms. Most students in several studies supported including L1 in EFL classrooms because they felt that it may help them to achieve certain learning challenges. One study found that most students were reluctant to use their L1 for the reason that they believe that using their L1 in English class might hindered their exposure to EFL.

### **2.8. Functions of First Language Use**

Reasonable using L1 in EFL may support a number of functions. In the context of this work, “functions” refers to the reasons, purposes and goals of including L1 in English class. Several studies (e.g., De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Kim & Elder, 2005; Polio & Duff, 1994; Rolin-Inziti & Brownlie, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) carried out studies in order to identify the various functions of L1 use and how it affects the EFL teaching and learning process. Some studies explored the functions were achieved by teachers (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Rolin-Inziti & Brownlie, 2002). While others explored the functions that had students achieved by reverting to the first language. (Storch & Aldosari, 2010; storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

The studies are varied in terms of types of functions identified. Rolin-Inziti and Brownlie (2002) reported three main functions for L1 use by teachers. While De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) proposed that there are 14 such categories, whereas other studies focused on the functions of L1 use, and proposed that there are four main functions achieved by EFL learners. The same results were founded in the study that focused on L1 use in EFL classrooms; for instance, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) proposed four main functions, while Storch and Aldosari (2010) reported five. These diverseness in results likely related to differences in students’ proficiency level, settings, participants, methods of data analysis and other circumstances.

### **2.9. Functions of First Language Use among EFL Teachers**

Auerbach stated that “When native language is used, practitioners, and learners consistently report positive results” (1993, p. 18). Cummins (2007) also claimed that rethinking exclusively is necessary in EFL classrooms because he think using the first language may be beneficial to EFL students. Absolutely, EFL teachers can achieve different functions that may be useful for them in teaching challenges when learners use their L1. Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) reported that that using learners’ first language in EFL class had several main functions. They also uncovered

that teachers use the L1 for various pedagogical functions in order to facilitate EFL learning by helping the students to better understand English instructions and support them to participate in the class (2002, p. 410). De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) concluded that EFL teachers relied on the students L1 and considered it as a supportive and a facilitate mean that can help the students more than the experienced teachers. Teacher lack of experiences viewed to this findings as an experienced teacher should be able o aware when to use L1 in the appropriate time, and how to deal with a particular problem, while non-experienced teacher may face a problem may face a problem because they did not have the skill of using L1 as a means of facilitating the English learning process.

### **2.10. Functions of First Language Use Among EFL Students**

It has been noticed that some EFL teachers favor and encourage the group work, such as pair work because they considered it as an effective method to help learners to be exposed to EFL and they reported that many English teachers do not agree with pair work idea and they think that students may use their L1 throughout group tasks without needing to any effective means (Storch & Aldosari, 2010). Using the L1 can be useful and have an effective role in EFL class. It was observed that in pair work group, students whom share the same L1 and whom are more fluent can help their less fluent partner (Lucas & Katz, 1994).

This part will explain two studies, Storch and wigglesworth (2003) and Storch and Aldosari (2010), these studies locked and focused at the functions that are observed by students when they use their L1 during pair or group work.

Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) conducted a study about functions that are explored by students whom use their L1 in pair work. In this study twenty-four students from the same university were divided into twelve pairs; six pairs shared the same L1, while the others did not. They asked them to complete two tasks: a text reconstruction task, and a short joint composition task. During completing these tasks learners were talking and they had recording them. The data analyses of students whom shared the same L1 denoted four main functions: task management about students discussed in order to know how they should completed and structured the tasks; vocabulary and meaning in which students used their L1 in order to discuss the difficulties and the meaning of some difficult words; grammar; and task clarification to discuss the meanings of instructions. Rhe interview of students whom shared the same L1 showed that using the first

language helped the students to understand the task very well and supported them to complete these tasks more easily and quickly. The study concluded that using L1 can provide learners with beneficial tool for EFL learning and it is an interesting mean that facilitate English learning process (Artemeva, 1995).

In the second study, Storch and Aldosari (2010) conducted this study at Saudi Arabia University College, which their L1 was Arabic and English was being taught as a foreign language. The participants on this study were Thirty-six first year university students. They divided them into three groups according to their proficiency level , six pairs consists of two students from the high proficiency group (H-H); six pairs comprised of one students from the high proficiency group and the other one was from the lower proficiency level (H-L); and the last six pairs consisted of two lower proficiency level students (L-L). These groups were asked by Storch and Aldosari to complete three tasks: jigsaw, composition, and text editing in three weeks period. The discussions of these pairs were audio-recorded. The results reported that using L1 (Arabic) during completing the tasks provided these five following functions:

- .Task management: using L1 helps students to clarify instructions and to discuss tasks management.
- . Discussing and generating ideas: students used their first language while completing the tasks to generate or comment on ideas.
- . Grammar deliberation: Students tend to use their L1 for the sake of decreasing English grammatical points and text structure.
- . Vocabulary deliberation: they use L1 to explain the meaning of words and sentences in EFL.
- . Mechanics deliberation: students use their L1 to discuss punctuation and EFL spelling and punctuation.

The findings also showed that the number of L1 usage was related with type of tasks. For instance, using of L1 was demanded in task management more than the other tasks, while deliberation mechanics demanded the least number of L1 usage.

Students realized the importance of using their L1; but they attempted to balance the use of their first language during pair work. Storch and Aldosari (2010) concluded that students' L1 played an important role because it helps them to face the difficulties of the tasks, and they used their L1 in completing the tasks when they felt that they need it and it would be helpful and effective tool.

The above sections showed that using L1 by teachers differs from using it by students, but in both cases reverting L1 in EFL class enhances and makes EFL learning process easier.

### **2.11. Negative Ramifications of First Language Use**

Despite the realization of using the students' first language in EFL classrooms and its benefits and effects, there is evidence of "dangers associated with overuse of the L1" (Bruen & Kelly, 2014, p. 11). The first danger is that overuse of students' first language in EFL classrooms may have negative effects in English classrooms by harshened of EFL input (Turnbull, 2001). Atkinson (1987) suggested that overuse of L1 in EFL classrooms can make the students think that they cannot learn EFL without including their L1 and without translation. L1 overuse in English class can lead to misunderstanding of EFL grammars and vocabulary and poor understanding of grammatical features due to reliance to translation, and they ignored their ability to use English in their activities even if they failure in some activities at the beginning.

Rolin-Ianziti and Vershney (2008) studied and analyzed the issue of L1 overuse in EFL classrooms. They reported that students' scare of using their L1 in EFL classrooms and they felt that L1 minimizes and hinders their opportunities of learning and improving English language. Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney state, "excessive use of L1 may lead to a cognitive dependence of L1, which combined with a lack of attention to the target language, is regarded as a hindrance to language learning" (2008, p. 260). Furthermore, they concluded that minimizing or even ignoring L1 use in EFL classrooms can help students to learn EFL without relying to their L1 and in a more effective and natural way.

One cause of ignoring L1 use in EFL classrooms by teachers is that they might be a lack of teaching experience as noted by De la Campa and Nassaji (2009). Another cause, suggested by Duff and Polio (1990), is that over reliance and overuse of L1 in EFL class is referred to the lack of awareness regarding misuse of L1 in English class. Awareness about the L1 use, overuse, reliance, and over reliance by teachers is important because teachers should be aware when and how use it in an appropriate situation and on the right way and time (Polio & Duff, 1994). Excessive using of L1 by EFL teachers was due to the benefits that arise from the practice. The first language could improve and facilitate EFL teaching, providing that it should not be considered as "a device to be used to save time for more useful activities, nor to make life easier



for the teacher of the students” (Harbord, 1992, p. 355).

All these reasons are varied from one scholar to another one, and both EFL teachers and students should be aware how and when to rely on their L1 during EFL class time. The excessive use of L1 influences learning, and it may play a negative role in EFL classroom. Therefore, EFL teachers and students should be able to identify the extent when and how to use L1 in EFL classrooms.

### **2.12. Amount of first Language Use**

Several studies have been conducted by many scholars for the purpose of identifying to what extent L1 use in the English classes can be acceptable i.e with positive or neutral effects and when its overuse can bring negative outcomes (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Duff & Polio, 1990; Storch & Aldosari, 2010). Some of scholars focused on the students’ use of their first language during pair work (storch& aldosari, 2010), while the other focused on teachers’ use of L1 during EFL class time (De la Campa & Nassaji, 209; Duff & Polio, 1990).

The amount of using L1 by learners was varied according to the students’ proficiency level and the type of the task (Storch & Aldosari, 2010; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Storch and Aldosari (2010) noted that the percentage of total words used by students whom worked in pair was 7%: The higher proficiency level used L1 words 5% of English class time, while the lower proficiency level used L1 12% of English class time. They also observed that regardless of students’ proficiency level, they attempted to minimize the use of L1 during the completing the task on group work. EFL realized that in order to learn English, they have to use it during EFL as much as possible in interviews and tried decreasing the amounts of L1 use during their group work.

The amounts of using L1 by EFL teachers vary from one teacher to another according to the experience of teachers. Turnbull (2001) reported that teachers whom use L1 more than 75% of time in class are relying on it and depriving their students from obtaining the English. 75% of class time in English language and 25% of L1 use is acceptable ratio (Shapson & Durward & Kaufman, 1978), while Calman and Daniel (1998) suggested that using 95% of English language and 5% of L1 in EFL class time is the optimal choice. Duff and Polio (1990) reported that: the amount of L1 use varied according to the students’ proficiency level and teachers’ experiences.

De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) concluded that the amount of using the first language by the novice teachers more is more than the experienced teachers.

In conclusion, identifying the amount of L1 use in EFL classrooms is influenced by numerous of factors that are playing an important role during EFL classroom, these factors are including: students' proficiency level, teachers' experience, type of tasks and activities, and teaching policies.

Other studies reported that the students' proficiency level is interesting to identify the amount of L1 use in English class time. De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) claimed that one of the most effective factors on L1 use in EFL is the students' low proficiency level. Duff and Polio (1990) noted that the use of first language in EFL classrooms may occurred also among EFL teachers themselves whom shared the same L1. Student's proficiency level is an important factor, but they should be attention about the amount of L1 use to avoid overusing L1 during EFL class time.

### **Conclusion**

Language learning is very important process especially EFL, through teaching and learning this language, both EFL teachers and learners was and still confused about whether to use their L1 or not in English class. Teachers and learners had different opinions about the use of L1 in EFL classrooms, and this difference was due to their different personalities, contexts and experiences.

Some scholars encouraged the use of first language during English sessions like Skinner (1985); he believed that it facilitates teaching and learning EFL because he considered it as an important tool which helps teachers to explain the meaning of the difficult words and items. He also stated that it motivates students to be comfortable and express what they want to say.

Others scholars claimed that first language should be excluded from EFL classrooms like Krashen (1981), he believed that L1 should not play any role in EFL classrooms and both teachers and should only rely on English because the first language may hinder English learning.

# **Chapter Three**

## **FIELD WORK**

**Introduction**

This chapter deals with investigate teachers' attitudes toward L1 use in the EFL classrooms of second year middle school. The current chapter also provides a clear description of research methodology followed in this study in terms of research approach, research design, participants, instruments, questionnaire, data analysis procedures, and data analysis. It also provides the discussion and interpretation of the gathered data through an online questionnaire designed to EFL teachers of second year middle school.

To analyze data it was important to start with selecting participants for the current study. Then creating the materials that needed in data collection. This study had one form of data, an online survey. Finally, analyzing the data collected.

Using the online survey to collect and analyze data took a number of steps. The first step was to identify the study participants. The next step was to prepare the materials that would help answering the questionnaire of this study. The last step was to plan the steps in order to analyze the collected data from the online survey.

**3.1. Research approach**

The current study aims to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards L1 use in EFL classroom and how much they use it in different situations. It also aims to investigate the effects of L1 use in EFL classroom. The research approach adopted to carry u=out this study is qualitative approach because it serves this nature of this study.

**3.2. Research Design**

Regarding to the qualitative approach adopted in the present study, the case study is taught to be the most appropriate to provide a clear description and understanding the current issue. Accordingly, this strategy is used to explore teachers' attitudes toward L1 use.

### **3.3. Participants**

The participants of this study were Algerian teachers of second year middle school. There were 30 participated in an online survey and all of them completed the questions. The participants were from different Algerian middle schools.

### **3.4. Instruments**

The research materials used for the studies usually depend on the questions of study. Researchers conducted many studies and carried out many experiments in order to develop surveys that help them to reach various findings and conclusions. The kind of questions should be appropriate for purposes of the study. All surveys need a title to give the participants an idea about the topic that will be conducted in the survey. This study contained one set of material in one phase. This phase was an online questionnaire with three sections (see appendix for the survey question).

### **3.5. Questionnaire**

This questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part of survey addressed five reasons teachers had for using the first language in English classrooms of second year middle school. Participants (teachers) were asked to rate how often each reason applied to them. In other words, they were asked to choose how often they use the first language in the different situation provided in the survey: always, usually, sometimes or never. The second part of the online survey contained five opinions of teachers about using the first language in EFL classrooms. Participants were asked to decide to which degree they agreed or disagreed. The last question consisted of two questions. Participants were asked to choose their optimal choice between including the first language in EFL classrooms, or excluding the first language and replacing it by dictionaries. They were also asked about their views through their experiences in teaching English language if the use of first language has negative or positive effects in EFL classrooms.

The questions of part one and part two were asked in the online questionnaire were inspired from several sources as follows:

. I use my native language in the English classes because I am Explaining a new lesson to my pupils (Polio and Duff 1994).

- . I speak in the native language because I need to translate to pupils the new words and concepts to help them understand well (Cook, 2001).
- . (I answer the tasks of pupils in the mother tongue in EFL classes because they start asking me in Arabic language (Cook, 2001).
- . When the pupils riot during the sessions and I want to advise them, I use the mother tongue so that they understand me well (Polio and Duff, 1994).
- . I speak my first language while explaining the courses because I feel that pupils are consistent and focused with me (Polio and Duff, 1994).

The opinions of the part two were cited as following:

- . I feel comfortable speaking only in English while explaining the lessons (Lin, 2005).
- . I have to use the first language in English classrooms when I feel I need to (Khati, 2011).
- . It is not important to speak only the English in the classes especially in some gestures and cases such as joking in order to prevail in the comfort zone (Khati, 2011).
- . I think I speak in my native language more often than I speak English in EFL classrooms (Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz, 2011).
- . Having to speak English only in the front of pupils makes me feel anxious and stressed (Levine, 2003).

### **3.6. Aims of the Questionnaire**

This online questionnaire aims to answer the questions posed at the beginning of this study, and to investigate teachers' attitudes towards using L1 in the EFL classroom. It also aims to evaluate the use of L1 in EFL classrooms.

### **3.7. Data Analysis Procedures**

The data in this study were divided into three major parts in order to answer the questions presented in the beginning of the study. There were three major questions to answer in the online questionnaire each question answers one question of the study. The first question was asked about the frequency of the participants' use of the first language in different situations; therefore, the table (01) built to show how often they used the first language in EFL classrooms of second year middle school in Algeria in each situation. The contents of the table (01) were analyzed.

After analyzing the participants' answers to part one, a similar analysis was conducted for the second part of the online questionnaire, which looked at which degree the agreed or disagreed with opinions presented. The table (02) was created to analyze part two of the questionnaire. The third part of the online survey was answering by choosing one of the given choices. Tables (03) and (04) show the choices of participants through their teaching experience. Tables were created to facilitate analyzing and discussions the data. All these tables are presented in the results and discussions.

### **3.8. Analysis of the Online Questionnaire**

In general, participants' answers to the online questionnaire differ from one teacher to another according to their experiences through teaching EFL and their personal views. This chapter is an attempt to answer the following questions of the study:

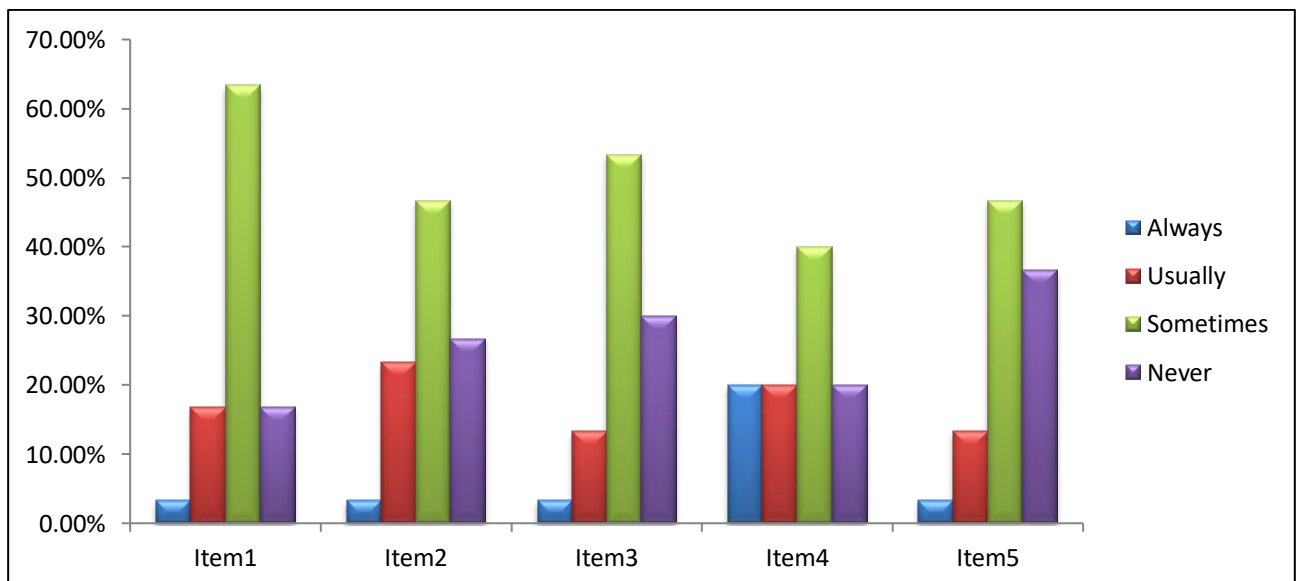
- 1) Does using first language in teaching English as a foreign language to second year middle school pupils help teachers to better explain their lessons?
- 2) What is the attitude of EFL teachers on using first language in English classroom?
- 3) Does the use of first language in EFL classrooms have positive or negative effects on EFL learning?

#### **3.8.1. Part One**

Table (01) bellow gives a summary of the participants' answers the part one of the online questionnaire, table (01) shows the number and the percentage of the participants answers of the part one, and figure (01) refers to the answers of the part one.

**Table 01:** numbers and percentages of the participants' use of L1 in different situations.

Items	Reasons	Number and percentage of participants			
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1	I use my native language in the English classes because I am Explaining a new lesson to my pupils.	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	19 (63.3%)	5 (16.7%)
2	I speak in the native language because I need to translate to pupils the new words and concepts to help them understand well.	1 (3.3%)	7 (23.3%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)
3	I answer the tasks of pupils in the mother tongue in EFL classes because they start asking me in Arabic language.	1 (3.3%)	4 (13.3%)	16 (53.3%)	9 (30%)
4	When the pupils riot during the sessions and I want to advise them, I use the mother tongue so that they understand me well.	6 (20%)	6 (20%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)
5	I speak my first language while explaining the courses because I feel that pupils are consistent and focused with me.	1 (3.3%)	4 (13.3%)	14 (46.7%)	11 (36.7%)



**Figure 01:** percentages of the participants' use of L1 in different situations.



Table (01) shows that in item 1 which ask about certain parts of English classrooms, one participant (3.3%) said that he/she always uses the first language in EFL classrooms when he is explaining new lesson, and five participants (16.7%) said that they usually use L1 in English class, nineteen participants (63.3%) said that they sometimes do that, and five participants (16.7%) said that they never use the first language when they are explaining new lessons and points.

Answer to item 2 showed that there are eight participants (26.7%) speak in the native language because they need to translate to pupils the new words and items. The highest number of participants fourteen (46.7%), said that they sometimes use L1 to translate new words. Seven participants (23.3%) said that they usually do that. On the other hand, one participant (3.3%) said that he/she always use L1.

Item 3 talks about answering the tasks of the pupils in the mother tongue when they ask them in L1. Nine participants (30%) said that they never answer their pupils by using L1. Nevertheless, sixteen participants (53.3%) said that they sometimes use the mother tongue when pupils ask them in the mother tongue, while four participants (13.3%) said that they usually do that. One participant (3.3%) said that he/she always answer the pupil in L1 when they start asking him/her in L1.

In item 4 twelve participants (40%) said that they use L1 to advise pupils, while six participants (20%) said that they never use L1 to advise pupils when they riot. The same number of participants, six participants (20%) in both cases said that they usually and always do that.

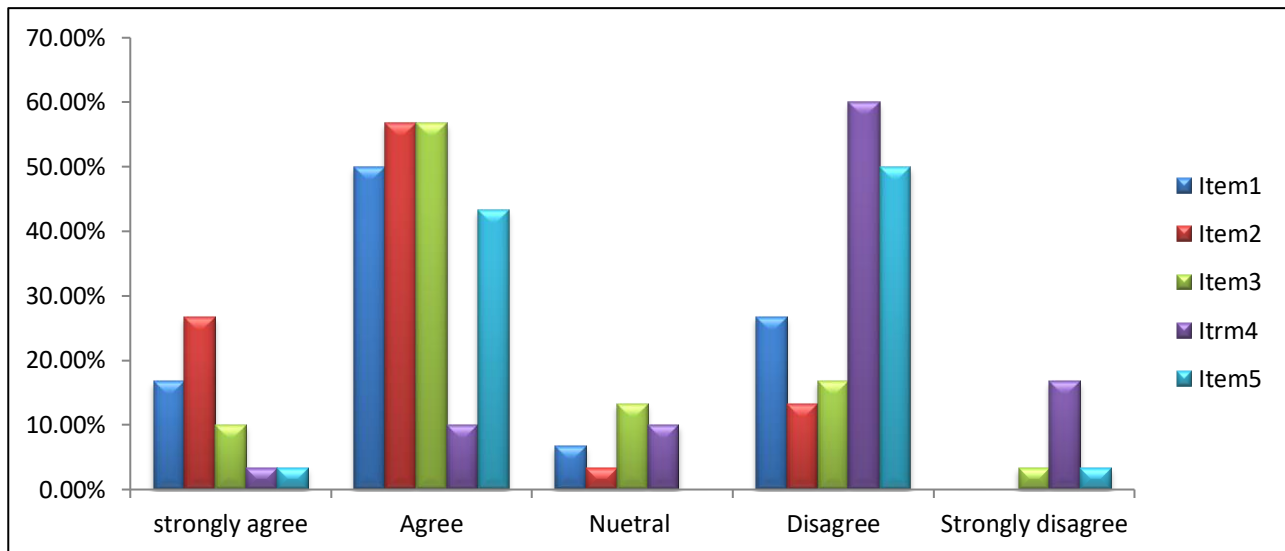
Answer to item 5 showed that there are eleven participants (36.7%) speak in the native language during English sessions to make pupils focus with them. The highest number of participants fourteen (46.7%), said that they sometimes use L1 while explaining the English courses. Four participants (13.3%) said that they usually do that. On the other hand, one participant (3.3%) said that he/she always use L1 to make pupils focus with them.

## 3.8.2. Part two

Table (02) shows the number and the percentage of participants' answers to part two of the online questionnaire, and figure (02) refers to answers of the part two.

**Table 02:** numbers and percentages of which degree participants agreed or disagreed with opinions.

Items	Opinions	Number and percentage of participants				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I feel comfortable speaking only in English while explaining the lessons.	5 (16.7%)	15 (50%)	2 (6.7%)	8 (26.7%)	0 (0%)
2	I have to use the first language in English classrooms when I feel I need to.	8 (26.7%)	17 (56.7%)	1 (3.3%)	4 (13.3%)	0 (0%)
3	It is not important to speak only the English in the classes especially in some gestures and cases such as joking in order to prevail in the comfort zone.	3 (10%)	17 (56.7%)	4 (13.3%)	5 (16.7%)	1 (3.3%)
4	I think I speak in my native language more often than I speak English in EFL classrooms.	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	18 (60%)	5 (16.7%)
5	Having to speak English only in the front of pupils makes me feel anxious and stressed.	1 (3.3%)	13 (43.3%)	0 (0%)	15 (50%)	1 (3.3%)



**Figure 02:** percentages of which degree participants agreed or disagreed with opinions.

A table (02) shows the teachers' attitudes about the use of the first language in English classrooms. The item 1 shows that five participants (16.7%) felt strongly agreed about feeling comfortable when they speak only English language in English classrooms. However the total number of participants whom agreed to feel comfortable when using English only was fifteen participants (50%). Two participants (6.7%) felt neutral about feeling comfortable, eight participants (26.7%) disagreed about doing that, and no one (0%) said strongly disagreed.

In item 2 eight participants (26.7%) strongly agreed that they have to use L1 when they feel they need to. The highest number of participants seventeen (56.7%), agreed that they use the first language when they need it. Only one participant (3.3%) felt neutral about using L1 when they need it, while four participants (13.3%) disagreed about using the first language in English classrooms when they feel they need to.

Answers to item 3 show that three participants (10%) strongly agreed about it is not important to speak only English especially in some gestures, While seventeen participants (56.7%) agreed on do. On the other hand, four participants (13.3%) felt neutral and five participants (16.7%) disagreed that using English only is not important especially in some gestures, and only participant (3.3%) said that Strongly disagreed on do that.

Item 4 talks about teachers think they speak in L1 more often than they speak in English language. Only one participant (3.3%) strongly agreed with that, while three participants (10%)

agreed. The same number of participants, three participants (10%) felt neutral about using L1 more than English language in EFL classrooms. The highest number of participants eighteen (60%) disagreed to using the first language more often than they use English and five participants (16.7%) strongly disagreed on do that.

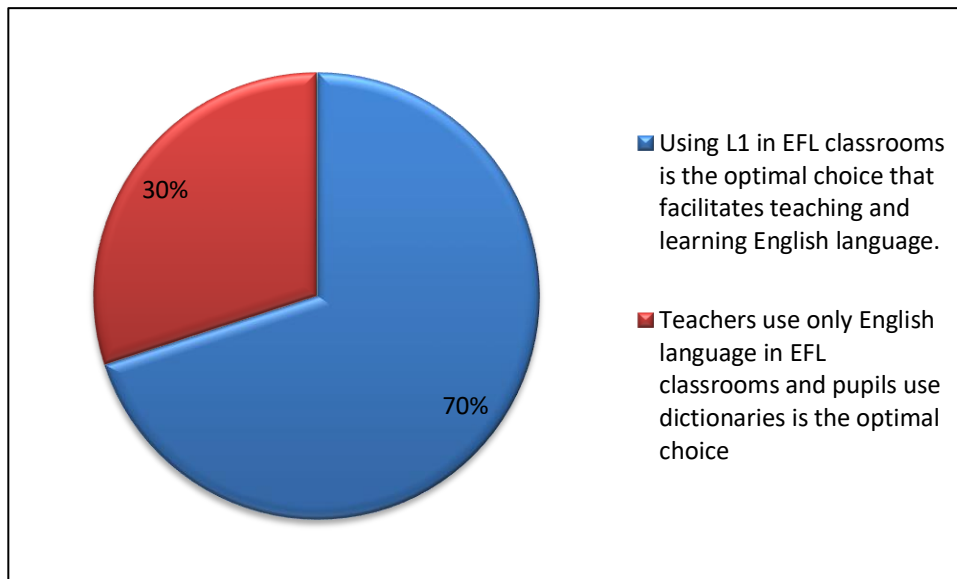
Answer to item 5 showed that one participant (3.3%) strongly agreed with speaking English only in EFL classrooms makes them feel stressed. Thirteen Participants (43.3%) agreed that using English language alone makes them anxiety, but no one was neutral. However the total number of participants who disagreed is fifteen participants (50%), while one participant (3.3%) strongly disagreed about that.

### 3.8.3. Part Three

Table (03) and figure (03) show the participants' answers and the percentage of the first question of part three.

**Table 03:** Numbers and percentages of participants' language choices in EFL classrooms.

The language that teachers should use in English classrooms	
Using L1 in EFL classrooms is the optimal choice that facilitates teaching and learning English language.	Teachers use only English language in EFL classrooms and pupils use dictionaries is the optimal choice
21 (70%)	9 (30%)



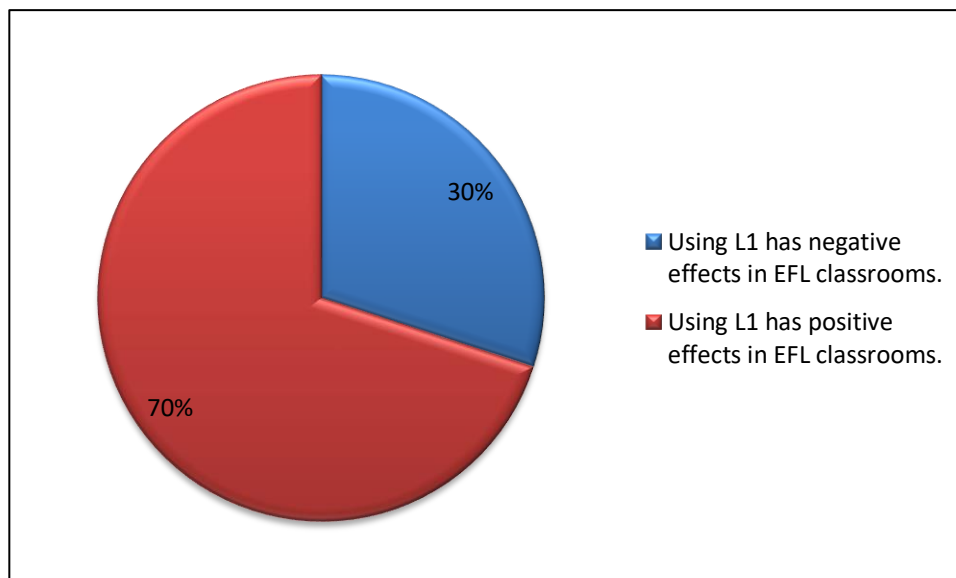
**Figure 03:** percentages of participants’ language choices in EFL classrooms.

In the first question participants were asked about their views through their experience in EFL teaching if using L1 is the optimal choice that helps them or they prefer excluding L1 and allow the pupils to use dictionaries. Twenty-one participants (70%) said that L1 is the optimal choice in EFL classrooms, while nine participants (30%) preferred using English only and pupils use dictionaries when they need.

Table (04) and figure (04) show the participants’ answers and percentage of the second question.

**Table 04:** numbers and percentages of the effects of using L1 in EFL classrooms.

The effects of using the first language in English classrooms	
Using L1 has negative effects in EFL classrooms.	Using L1 has positive effects in EFL classrooms.
9 (30%)	21 (70%)



**Figure 04:** percentages of the effects of using L1 in EFL classrooms.

The second questions asked the participants about their views through their experience in EFL teaching if the use of L1 has negative or positive effects. Most of participants twenty-one (70%) said that the use of L1 has positive effects in EFL classrooms, while only nine participants (30%) said that L1 has negative effects in English classrooms.

### 3.9. Discussion and Interpretation of the findings

According to the results obtained from analysis of the online questionnaire appeared that most teachers encourage the use of L1 in the EFL classroom, and showed that the L1 use has positive effects on language learning.

The results suggested in part one that teachers use the first language in EFL classrooms in number of situations in different reasons. Some of the findings contradict some of the previous studies. Contextual factors may play a central role in teachers' choices. Most of the participants responded with sometimes to most of the questions in the online questionnaire. Huge number of them claimed they sometimes use first language to explain new lessons, to translate new words, or to answer the pupils' tasks. Most of them also claimed that they sometimes use L1 to advise pupils. The general result of this part is that most participants support including the first language in English classrooms.

The results of second part of the online questionnaire appeared that most participants

responded with agree to most of the opinions. Huge number of them claimed that they are agree that using L1 in English classrooms makes them comfortable, and use first language when they need it. The general finding the part two of the online questionnaire suggested that most participants prefer using L1 in English classrooms.

The results of third part of the online questionnaire shows that most participants prefer using the first language in EFL classrooms and they considered it better than using dictionaries, and through their experience in EFL teaching they believe that using L1 has positive effects in English classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this online questionnaire answer the three questions that were asked at the beginning of the study, each part of the questionnaire answers a question of the study. As shown in the tables, charts, and discussions above, there seemed to be a consensus in most of the participants' answers regarding to which language they use in English classrooms, either they use only English language, or they include the first language as facilitator tool. The majority of participants answered the same answer which is they sometimes use the first language in different situations, and most of them claimed that they prefer use the first language to explain new ideas, and to translate the difficult words to pupils better than allow them use dictionaries because through their experiences in teaching English language, they found that using the first language in EFL classrooms has positive effects. On the other hand as seemed in the results only few participants preferred using English language only during English class time.

# **General Conclusion**



## General Conclusion

Nowadays, EFL researchers claim that it does not seem logical to turn a blind eye to the use of first language in EFL classrooms. Hence, this study aimed to evaluate using L1 in English classroom, and whether teachers use it or no and what are its effects in EFL classrooms in the second year middle school.

The discussions in the current papers have aimed to respond to the research questions asked in the beginning of this study. The first question asked about weather using the first language in teaching EFL to second year middle school helps teachers to better explain English lessons. This study found English language teachers have various reasons for using the first language in EFL classrooms. Most participants in the first part of online questionnaire agreed that they sometimes include the first language in English class time to explain new lessons, to translate to pupils the difficult words and concepts, to answer some pupils' tasks, to advise pupils and to make pupils focus with English lessons. Huge number of participants answered with sometimes using L1 rather than never using it. In previous studies (e.g., Kovacic & Kirinic, 2001; Sharma, 2006) also said that they prefer sometimes use their L1 in the English classrooms. This study showed that using first language in EFL classrooms helps teachers a lot, but it could not mention all the reasons and situations in which they use L1, perhaps because of the low numbers in this study. Moreover, this online questionnaire did not ask the participants to state the reasons that lead them to use L1 in English classrooms.

The second part in the current study asked about the teachers' various attitudes towards the use of L1 in English classrooms. This study showed that most participants agreed with the opinions that support using L1 in English classrooms; they agreed to feel more comfortable using L1 in EFL class time which helps them to explain better, they agreed with the idea of they use L1 whenever they need it. Participants also support the opinions that said that it is not important to use only English language especially in some gestures and expressions.

As for the opinions that state that speaking the English language alone makes them nervous, and they use L1 more often than English language, the majority of participants disagreed with these ideas. As a final result to this question, English language teachers are not bothered by the use of English language alone in EFL classrooms, at the same time they have no problem with

using L1 as an aid if they need it, and even if they use L1, it will not be more used than English language.

The last part of online questionnaire consists of two questions, each questions gave the participants two choices about using L1 in EFL classrooms. Participants here answered them through their experiences in teaching English. The first questions asked them about whether they prefer to use the first language in explaining new lessons, or they prefer to use English language only, and if pupils do not understand some words, they translate these for them or they let pupils use dictionaries to translate these words themselves. Most of participants chose to use the first language, perhaps because using dictionaries take time to search and to explain the words, and teachers do not want to waste time in using dictionaries while they can explain the words themselves and without wasting time. The second question of third part posed at the beginning of the study, which is whether using L1 in English classrooms has negative or positive effects. The majority of teachers said that using L1 has positive effects. As final result to this part, using L1 is the optimal choice in EFL classrooms because it has positive effects.

Despite the widespread debate over whether the first language should be included or excluded in EFL classrooms, the results of this study showed that most of the participants in this online questionnaire support using L1 for several reasons and because it has positive effects in EFL classrooms in second year middle school.

## **Limitations**

Despite the information gathered through online questionnaire, this study was limited in a number of limitations that would need to be addressed in future research. Firstly, the main result of the study came from a limited number of participants in the online questionnaire; further exploring the beliefs of a greater number of teachers (e.g., via online questionnaire) may help to build more reliable generalization regarding teachers' attitudes toward L1 use in EFL classroom. A second limitation of this study was the use of a stand-alone online questionnaire to explore teachers' attitudes; follow up interviews with participating teachers and prepare questionnaire and interviews for students with presence in the class-observations would have resulted in deeper insight their beliefs about this issue.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

. This research produced several conclusions that would benefit further research.

.This study focused primarily on teachers' attitudes toward L1 use in EFL classrooms and explored the participants' results via an online questionnaire alone.

.The study did not explore teachers' attitudes via interviews or even through further items in the same questionnaire in order to understand the meaning of their answers.

.It would be valuable to further research teachers' attitudes and students' attitudes to compare their views in order to better understand how functionally L1 is begin used in the EFL classrooms.

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# Appendix

## Appendix

### Questionnaire:

Questions to the middle school teachers

### Part One:

Read the following statements that show a number of reasons why EFL in the middle school speak their first language in their classes while explaining lessons, how often do these reasons apply to you when you are in the classes explaining to the pupils? Reade the reasons in the table and choose the box that suits to you:

The reasons	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
I use my native language in the English classes because I am Explaining a new lesson to my pupils.				
I speak in the native language because I need to translate to pupils the new words and concepts to help them understand well.				
I answer the tasks of pupils in the mother tongue in EFL classes because they start asking me in Arabic language.				
When the pupils riot during the sessions and I want to advise them, I use the mother tongue so that they understand me well.				
I speak my first language while explaining the courses because I feel that pupils are consistent and focused with me.				

**Part Two:**

Please read the various opinions of teachers of the middle school about the use of native language in EFL classrooms. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with these opinions and check the boxes next to each statement:

Opinions	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel comfortable speaking only in English while explaining the lessons.					
I have to use the first language in English classrooms when I feel I need to.					
It is not important to speak only the English in the classes especially in some gestures and cases such as joking in order to prevail in the comfort zone.					
I think I speak in my native language more often than I speak English in EFL classrooms.					
Having to speak English only in the front of pupils makes me feel anxious and stressed.					

**Part Three:**

From your experience in teaching English, choose one of the two options for the following questions.

1) In the EFL classrooms:

- a. The use of the first language in teaching a foreign language is the optimal choice that facilitates both the teaching and learning EFL.
- b. Teachers have to use only English and pupils bring and use dictionaries.

2) Using L1 EFL classrooms has:

- a. Positive effects in EFL classrooms.
- b. Negative effects in EFL classrooms.

## التلخيص

تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على موضوع استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تبحث الدراسة الحالية في مواقف المعلمين تجاه استخدام اللغة الأولى في اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية. تم إجراء تحليل هذه الورقة بناءً على بيانات من استبيان عبر الإنترنت يعتمد على إجمالي 30 مشاركًا جميع المشاركين هم مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة الثانية الإعدادية. أظهرت النتائج أيضًا أن معظم المشاركين يستخدمون L1 في فصل اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مواقف مختلفة لأنه يساعدهم على تقديم الدروس بشكل أفضل لطلابهم الصغار. وهكذا ، وجد أن اللغة الأولى يمكن أن يكون لها آثار إيجابية في وقت حصة اللغة الإنجليزية. باختصار ، أظهر البحث أن المعلمين لديهم أسباب متنوعة لاستخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية ، وأن هذا الاستخدام قد يتأثر ويتغير بمتغيرات أخرى تحتاج إلى مزيد من البحث والدراسة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** اللغة الأولى , اقسام الانجليزية , المواقف .