

The Use of Arabic (L1) in Teaching and Learning English (L2): A Study Conducted on Non-Major EFL Students at King Khalid University

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Abstract

Researchers have different opinions regarding the use of mother tongue in the EFL classroom. Also, students and teachers are divided over the issue of using L1 in the EFL classroom. The present study aims at investigating student and teacher perspectives regarding the use of L1 in learning and teaching English. The sample includes (345) non-major EFL male students at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. Statistical analysis of the questionnaires given to students and teachers shows that students use L1 in varying degrees; (41.44%) of them always use L1 and (45.79%) of them sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom. Concerning teachers, (72.72%) of teachers who are native speakers of L1 sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom. Also, the majority of students (86.95%) think that it is useful to use L1 in the EFL classroom. Teachers, however, are divided over this issue, (63.63%) of the teachers who are native speakers of L1 think that it is useful to use L1, whereas only (28.57%) of the non-native speaker teachers of L1 support this idea. In addition, the majority of students (82.09%) prefer to have teachers of English who know their mother tongue. (63.63%) of L1 native teachers and (64.28%) of the teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 think that it is preferable if teachers of English know the students mother tongue. Furthermore, most of the students (46.69% strongly agree and 31.75% agree) think that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has a number of benefits. If L1 is used occasionally and only when needed, it appears to be an effective teaching aid in the EFL classroom. However, we should maximize the use of L2 in the EFL classroom and students must use English not L1.

I- Introduction

The English Language Center of the Faculty of Languages and Translation at King Khalid University provides various intensive English courses for non-major EFL students. These students are pursuing their studies in various majors: Computer Science (011& 012), Engineering (013&014), Arabic Language (015), Religion (015), Science (016) and Medical Sciences (019). It is worth mentioning that English is the medium of instruction in Computer Science, Engineering, and Medical Sciences. This study aims at describing how often students and teachers use Arabic (L1) in the EFL classroom, for what purposes and in which contexts.

Since the end of the 19th century, the role of the mother tongue has been the most discussed methodological problem apart from the issue of teaching grammar (Butzkamm, 2009, 17). The Communicative Approach, developed throughout the 20th century as a response to the Audio-lingual Method and Grammar-Translation methods, recommends that language teachers and students use the target language as exclusively as possible during instructional time and if possible also beyond the classroom (Cook, 2001). In May 2009, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published a Draft Position Statement on the use of the target language (TL) in the classroom, which recommended that the TL should be used at least for 90% of the time in a foreign language (FL) classroom. (Osswald, 2010). “This anti-L1 attitude was clearly a mainstream element in the twentieth century language teaching methodology” (Cook, 2001, 405)

On the other hand, other researchers argue that L1 has been a neglected resource, and the mother tongue should be employed regularly and systematically when appropriate in the EFL classroom (Osswald, 2010). Furthermore, "Many teachers find that the use of some L1 provides more time to practice L2 because understanding is achieved much more rapidly (Morahan, 2003). Teachers may use L1 to explain the meanings of new words, to teach grammar, or in classroom management

. Also, "teachers use L1 to establish a positive relationship with students" (Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney, 2008, 252).

Cook (2005) suggests that if the L1 is always present in the learners' mind, its role in the classroom might have positive effects on learning and teaching as "a way of conveying L2 meaning," "a short-cut for explaining tasks (tests, etc.," "a way of explaining grammar," and "practicing L2 uses such as code-switching (Cook, 2005,59).

Cook (2001) and Butzkamm (2009) argue that if L1 is used in a principled and systematic way, then it can promote and increase the use of L2. This is why guidelines have to be established that promote effective bilingual methods.

However, there are differences in the frequency of L1 use. For example , measures undertaken in the American university context and various secondary school contexts in Japan and New Zealand point to an overuse of L1. On the other hand, studies conducted in the Australian university context show low frequencies of L1 use.(Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney, 2008). Duff and Polio (1994) and Macaro (2001) analyzed instructors' use of English and TL alternation and found that the amount of TL used in a FL classroom depends on the individual teachers, the foreign language being taught and the environment. Macaro (2001) stated that there is a need for "a framework that identifies when reference to the L1 can be a valuable tool and when it is simply used as an easy option" (p.545).

The L1 shall now be used purposely to help learning through comparisons between the L2 and L1. Also, "the L2 meanings do not exist separately from the L1 meanings in the learner's mind, regardless of whether they are part of the same vocabulary store or parts of different stores mediated by a single conceptual system" (Cook, 2001, 405).

When deciding to use or not use L1 in the classroom, we have to keep in mind that four factors should be taken into consideration "one factor to consider is efficiency: can something be done more effectively through the L1? A second factor is learning: will L2 learning be helped by using the L1 alongside the L2? The third factor is naturalness: do the participants feel more comfortable about some functions or topics in the first language ... the fourth factor is external relevance: will use of both languages help the students to master specific L2 uses that they may need

in the world beyond the classroom?” (Cook, 2001, 413), but now let us first have a look at the role of L1 in language teaching methods.

I.1. The Role of L1 in Language Teaching Methods

Everyone has his own opinion about when, how and how often a teacher would resort to students’ mother tongue. In the same way, different teaching methods look at the issue of using mother tongue in the EFL classroom in various ways. Table (1) below summarizes the role of L1 in eight teaching methods.

Table (1): The Role of Students' Native Language in Teaching Methods.*

Method	The Role of Students' Native Language
The Grammar-Translation Method	Meaning of Target language is made clear by translating it into students' native language. Language that is used in class is mostly the students' native language.
The Direct Method	Students' native language should not be used in classroom.
The Audio-Lingual Method	Students' native language should not be used in the classroom.
The Silent Way	Students' native language can be used to give instructions when necessary, to help students improve pronunciation. It is used (at least at beginning level of proficiency) during feedback sessions.
Desuggestopedia	Native-language translation is used to make meaning clear. Teachers use the native language in class when necessary. Teachers use native language less and less as the course proceeds.
Community Language Learning	Native language is used in this method to enhance students' security, to give meanings of words and to give directions. As the course proceeds, the use of L1 reduces.
Total Physical Response	TPR is usually introduced in L1. After the introduction, L1 is rarely used.
Communicative Language Teaching	Judicious use of L1 is permitted in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

* Source: Adapted from (Larsen-Freeman, 2000)

It is clear from the table above that L1 is used in most of these eight methods of language teaching with the exception of the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method. In addition, the use of L1 ranges from using it frequently in the classroom, as it is the case in the Grammar-Translation Method, to the judicious use of L1, as it is the case in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This raises two questions: First, why L1 is used? And second, why L1 is not used?

I.2. Reasons to Use the L1

According to Paul Nation, L1 is used because of the following reasons: "Firstly, it is more natural to use L1 with others who have the same L1. Secondly, it is easier and more communicatively effective to use the L1, and thirdly, using the L2 can be a source of embarrassment particularly for shy learners and those who feel they are not very proficient in the L2." (Nation, 2001). Furthermore, Rell (2005) classified the reasons to use L1 into three categories: (1) cognitive reasons, (2) pedagogical reasons, (3) affective reasons.(Rell, 2005)

I.2.1.Cognitive Reasons

- 1- Meta-talk promotes acquisition. This means "that speaking out loud in L1 while processing L2 is a normal psycholinguistic process and that verbal thinking in L1 mediates one's relationship with the new language...and is quite necessary and natural."(Rell, 2005,24)
- 2- The use L1 allows students to relate L2 learning to the knowledge they have about phonetics, phonology, syntax, and lexicon of their mother tongue.
- 3- L1 allows students and teachers to use more learning and teaching strategies. "Use of L1 should be viewed as a teacher strategy... and promoting use of varying learning techniques in the classroom, including the incorporation of L1, serves to validate different learning preferences and styles." (Rell, 2005, 25).
- 4- L1 is useful in clarifying abstract ideas and difficult concepts of L2.
- 5- When L1 is used, students learn more. "According to various scholars, use of the L1 not only promotes L2 acquisition but allows students to learn more than when than when the L2 is excluded." (Rell,2005, 27).

- 6- L1 remains in the students' minds even when prohibited. "The L1 will remain in the students' minds despite its prohibition and should therefore be permitted in the L2 classroom." (Rell,2005, 28).
- 7- The use of L1 does not impede L2 learning. " No study so far ... has been able to demonstrate a causal relationship between exclusion of the L1 and improved learning." (Rell, 2005, 30)

I.2.2.Pedagogical Reasons

- 1- Use of the L1 allows for more fluid conversation.
- 2- Establishes humanistic language learning. "The L1 serves the humanistic function of allowing students to say what they really want to say". (Rell, 2005, 31)
- 3- The use of L1 makes the classroom look real.
- 4- Makes instructions clear.
- 5- The use L1 can save the time of teacher and students, and afford students more time to practice L2. "In the foreign language classroom where the L1 is forbidden, an inordinate amount of time may be spent in an effort to explain even one word not understood in the L2." (Wells, 1999)
- 6- Allows for comparison of two languages.
- 7- Teachers who do not believe in the sole use of L2. "If teachers do not believe theoretically nor pedagogically in sole use of the L2, then implementing this strategy into the classroom is unlikely" (Rell, 2005, 37).
- 8- Increases participation. "Certain scholars claim that allowing use of the L1 enables students to become more involved in the classroom" (Rell,2005,37)
- 9- Teachers who are non-native speakers of L2 rely on L1. The present study shows that (72.72%) of teachers who are native speakers of L1 sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom and (27.27%) of them rarely use L1.
- 10- Translation activities can enhance L2 learning. "Translation activities, which incorporate use of the L1 in the L2 classroom, may form a communicative approach if implemented properly" (Rell, 2005,39).

I.2.3 Affective Reasons

- 1- The use of L1 strengthens teacher/students relationship. "Developing a comfortable working relationship with the teacher is significant and it appears that the use of the L1 serves as a means to cultivate this association." (Rell, 2005,39).
- 2- The use of L1 Arouses interest/ increases motivation, increases confidence, allows learners to say what they want to say, decreases anxiety and some students prefer some use of the L1. The present study shows that (86.95%) of the students think that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is useful.
- 3- The teacher serves as bilingual model, when students observe him/her using L1 and L2. "In these circumstances, students demonstrate less anxiety in the classroom and show signs of increased confidence, all of which support the motivational system at play." (Rell, 2005,46).

I.3. Reasons Not to Use L1

In 1961, a conference was held at Makerere University in Uganda. The following five basic tenets emerged from this conference: English is best taught monolingually; the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker; the earlier English is taught, the better the results; the more English is taught, the better the results; if other languages are used, standard of English will drop. (in Auebrach, 1993). These tenets are good reasons for teachers not to use L1 in English classrooms. Also, "These tenets have become the cornerstones of hegemony of English worldwide" (Auebrach, 1993). In addition, there are other reasons for not using L1, some of them would be:

- 1- If students in the classroom have different mother tongues, it becomes impossible to find a teacher who can use all these languages.
- 2- L1 is ignored in methodologies. "Many teacher training programs and university language departments do not specifically comment on the use of the L1" (Rell, 2005, 47)
- 3- Certain teaching methods, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual method ,and CLT discourage the use of L1.
- 4- In order to learn L2 , students need maximal amount of comprehensible input.
- 5- Teachers are inconsistent about L1 use. Some teachers support the

use of L1, others ban it. The present study shows that (63.63%) of the teachers who are native speakers of L1 think that it is useful to use L1 in the EFL classroom, whereas only (28.57%) of the teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 support this idea.

- 6- Teachers and students have alternative strategies. They can use paraphrase, visual aids, pantomime, repetition, realia, simplification, etc.
- 7- Translation activities give students wrong idea about language learning. This is because there is no exact correspondence between two languages.
- 8- L1 should not be used to make life easier for teachers and students. "Sole use of L2 creates stress but that stress benefits students more than slipping back into the L1" (Rell, 2005, 62)

I.4. Uses of L1

L1 can be used to convey the meaning of unknown words effectively. "There are numerous ways of conveying the meaning of an unknown word. These include a definition in L2, a demonstration, a picture or a diagram, a real object, L2 context clues, or an L1 translation. In terms of the accuracy of conveying the meaning, none of these ways is intrinsically better than any of the others." (Nation, 2001). Furthermore, giving the meaning of words in L1 enhances comprehension. "Research shows that L1 glosses provided by teachers or looked up in a good bilingual dictionary are beneficial for text comprehension and word learning." (Nation, 2005,4)

According to Atkinson 1993, the mother tongue may be useful in the procedural stages of a class, for example: setting up pair and group work, sorting out an activity which is clearly not working, checking comprehension and using L1 for translation as a teaching technique.(in Prodromou, 2002).

Larrea 2002, lists the following cases where we may use L1, when:

- 1- starting beginner classes to make students feel more comfortable when facing the enormous task of learning a foreign language.
- 2- L1 is used for the purpose of contrastive analysis, i.e. to introduce the major grammatical differences between L1 and L2.

- 3- the teacher's knowledge of students' L1 can also help him understand the learner's mistakes caused by interference.
- 4- L1 is used to explain complex instructions to basic levels.
- 5- L1 is used to get feedback from the students about the course, the teacher's approach, evaluation of teaching styles, etc.

Auerbuch (1993) mentions the following uses of L1: Classroom management, language analysis, presenting grammar rules, discussing cross-cultural issues, giving instructions, explaining errors and checking for comprehension(In Tang, 2002). According to Cook, mother tongue can be used positively by the teacher in the L2 classroom in many ways: to convey the meaning, to organize the class and to explain tasks to other students (Cook, 2001).

Schweers (1999) mentioned the following suggested uses for L1 in the EFL classroom:

- 1- Eliciting Language. "How do you say 'X' in English?"
- 2- Checking comprehension. "How do you say I've been waiting for ten minutes in Spanish?" (Also used for comprehension of a reading or listening text.)
- 3- Giving complex instructions to basic levels
- 4- Co-operating in groups. Learners compare and correct answers to exercises or tasks in the L1. Students at times can explain new points better than the teacher.
- 5- Explaining classroom methodology at basic levels
- 6- Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item
- 7- Checking for sense. If students write or say something in the L2 that does not make sense, have them try to translate it into the L1 to realize their error.
- 8- Translating items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings.

I.4.1.Appropriate Amount of L1 Use

Different scholars look at the amount of L1 use in different ways. Hammerly (1991) suggests employing the L1 "as little as possible". Tang

(2000) recommends using L1 not more than 10% of class time. He states that “ the amount of the mother tongue used should not exceed 10% of the class time” (in Rell, 2005, 46-47). According to Nation, “The L1 needs to be seen as a useful tool that like other tools should be used where needed but should not be over-used” (Nation, 2001).

I.4.2. Ways of increasing the use of L2

If we want our students to learn English rapidly, we have to increase the use of L2 in the classroom. “You may find it necessary to give instructions or explain certain items of grammar in the mother tongue. However, think carefully about how and when you use it and take every opportunity to expose your students to English. Make clear to students when you expect them to use English and encourage and praise them at all times when they make serious effort to practice their English in class.” (Robertson et.al , 2000,16)

I.5. Statement of the problem

As a teacher in the English Department and in the English Language Center at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, I noticed that many students want their teachers to use L1 in the EFL classroom, whereas, others are against the use of mother tongue in learning English. Also, teachers are divided over this issue. This study, thus, is an attempt to investigate how students use L1 in the EFL classroom, to see the opinions of students as well as teachers regarding the use of L1 in learning English, and to find out the right way of using L1 to enhance learning and teaching of English to non-major EFL students.

I.6. Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study lies in:

- 1- The importance of understanding how students and teachers use (L1) in learning and teaching English.
- 2- The significance of exploring students' and teachers' opinions regarding the use of the L1 in learning English.
- 3- The importance of knowing how to use (L1) effectively in teaching and learning English.

I.7. Study Questions

- 1- Do students and teachers use L1 in learning and teaching English? How frequently is it used and in what contexts?
- 2- What are the opinions of students and teachers regarding the use of L1 in learning and teaching English?
- 3- Do students differ in their opinions regarding the use of L1 in teaching English according to their majors?
- 4- Is there a difference between opinions of teachers who are native speakers of Arabic and those who are non-native speakers of Arabic regarding the use of L1 in teaching and learning English?
- 5- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using L1 in learning and teaching English from students and teachers points of view?

II. Review of Related Literature

Schweers (1999) conducted research on the use of the mother tongue in English classes at the University of Puerto Rico. This research consisted of recording a 35-minute sample from three classes at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. The classes were recorded to see how frequently and for what purposes these teachers used L1(Spanish) in their classes. The teachers also filled out a short questionnaire about their attitudes toward the use of Spanish in the English classroom. The results showed that in English classes in a Puerto Rican University, L1 should be used to some degree. Students feel there are clear cases where L1 would facilitate their comprehension of what is happening in class. A majority also agreed that the use of L1 helped them to learn English.

Cook (2001) in his study "Using the First Language in the Classroom" came to the conclusion that L1 can be a useful element in teaching L2. According to Cook, L1 can be used systematically in the classroom to:

- 1- provide a short-cut for giving instructions and explanations where the cost the L2 is too great
- 2- build up interlinked L1 and L2 knowledge in the students' minds
- 3- carry out learning tasks through collaborative dialogue with fellow students

4- develop L2 activities such as code-switching for later real-life use (Cook, 2001, 418)

In Prodromou (2002) a questionnaire was addressed to 300 Greek students at three levels, beginner, intermediate and advanced. They were asked general questions regarding their view on whether the teacher should know and use the students' mother tongue. 65% of the students at beginner level and about 50% of students at intermediate and advanced level believed the teacher should know the students' mother tongue. 66% of students at beginner level, about 58% of students at intermediate level believe, and 29% of advanced learners found the use of L1 in the classroom acceptable. With regard to the use of L1 to explain grammar, beginners are significantly in favor (31%) and intermediate and advanced are almost against (7% and 0%). This means that the higher the level of the student, the less they agree to the use of the mother-tongue in the classroom. (Prodromou, 2000)

Ferrer (2002) carried out a comparative study of students', teachers', and teacher educators' perceptions regarding the role of the mother tongue in the monolingual classroom. This study was conducted at a private English language school in Spain, and participant students were divided into three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Findings showed that all three levels "perceive the mother tongue as a legitimate tool to use when exploring the workings of the target grammar system, although, again, advanced students are the most reluctant." (Ferrer,2002).

Tang (2002) conducted a study in China which aimed to know whether Chinese (L1) is used in tertiary-level English classrooms, how frequently L1 is used, and attitudes of teachers and students toward using Chinese in the ELF classroom. This study came to the conclusion that "limited and judicious use of the mother tongue in the mother tongue in the English classroom doesn't reduce students' exposure to English, but rather can assist in the teaching learning processes." (Tang, 2002)

Miles (2004) conducted an experiment at the University of Kent, England. The participants in this study were male Japanese university students who spend their first year studying English in England. In this experiment three classes were compared. One class did not permit the use of L1 in the classroom, another did permit it, and the third utilized L1. The results showed that in the class where L1 was used, students showed a significant improvement in speaking. The findings of this study were

supportive of the thesis that L1 use in the English classroom does not hinder the learning of L2, and can, in fact, facilitate it. (Miles, 2004)

Rell, (2005), conducted a study in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California. In this study both the experimental and control groups studied two topics in grammar: (1) time expressions, and (2) direct and indirect object pronouns. The experimental group received instruction in the first language, whereas the control group received instruction in the second language. Findings showed that time expressions instruction in L2 resulted in higher gains for both short-term and long-term acquisition. On the other hand, the direct and indirect object pronoun results revealed that instruction in L1 resulted in higher gains. (Rell, 2006)

Seng and Hashim, (2006), conducted a study on four female Malay students. The purpose of this was to explore the extent of L1 in reading second language texts and to discover the possible reasons of the use of L1 in comprehending texts written in L2. Analysis based on the think-aloud protocols showed that "L1 was used by all the students in the study and that more than 30% of the total instances of strategy use involved the L1." The study also revealed various reasons for the students' use of the L1 while reading L2 texts. "One reason was that the L1 facilitated resolutions of word-related and idea-related difficulties. Furthermore, using the L1 might have helped the students reduce affective barriers and gain more confidence in tackling the L2 texts." (Seng and Hashim, 2006)

Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) investigated students' views regarding the use of the first language in the classroom. Participants in this study were first-year students at the University of Queensland in Australia who are enrolled in an introductory French course. Findings of this study showed that the majority of students preferred the use of the first language to perform classroom management. Furthermore, this study showed that L1 use may reduce anxiety and it may also be a motivating factor.

The present study differs from the previous studies in a number of ways. First, this study focuses on the use of native language in an Arabic context. Second, the participants in this study are all university non-major EFL students. Third, teachers are native and non-native speakers of L1 (Arabic).

III- Methodology &Results

III.1. Study Instrument

In this study two questionnaires were used for data collection. The first one was addressed to students and was divided into five parts (see appendix 1). The second questionnaire was addressed to teachers and consisted of six parts (see appendix 2).

III.1.1. Validity and reliability of the questionnaires

III.1.1.1. Validity:

Validity can be defined as the degree to which the question has measured whatever it was designed to measure. For ensuring that the questions used would not be misinterpreted (and thus measure something completely different), three colleagues were asked to read the questions and write down what they thought each was designed to measure. Questions which produced varying responses were removed or reworded. Two questionnaires were modified in the light of the comments and suggestions given by the three colleagues who read them.

III.1.1.2. Reliability

Cronbach Alpha was used for measuring the reliability of the two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was given to a group of (40) students in the first semester (2008-2009), and the second questionnaire was given to (11) teachers in the first semester (2007-2008). The calculated Alpha, by the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), for the two questionnaires was respectively (0.72.60), (0.91.19).

III.1.2. Sample:

III.1.2.1. Teachers

As shown in Table 2 below, the total number of teachers who teach English Intensive Courses is 39, 11 of them are native speakers of Arabic (L1) and 28 are non-native speakers of L1

Table (2): Number of Teachers in Intensive Courses and their Qualifications, English Language Center, Second Term (2008-2009).

Teachers	Native speakers of arabic		Non-native speakers of arabic	
	Number	Who Returned the Questionnaire	Number	Who Returned the Questionnaire
M.A	3	3	-	-
B.A	15	8	31	28
		11		28

The table shows that 79.59% of the teachers at the English Language Center returned the questionnaire.

III.1.2.2. Students

On the other hand, the total number of students enrolled in Intensive Courses, English Language Center, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia in the second term in the academic year (2008-2009) was 2,052, as shown in Table 3 below. These students studied in various colleges. From each college one section was selected randomly. Thus, the sample of this study consisted of 391 undergraduate male students (19.05% of the total number of students). As it is clear in Table 4 below, out of 391 students, only 345 students returned the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that students who could not return the questionnaire were either absent when the questionnaire was administered, or failed to complete the questionnaire properly.

Table (3): Total Number of Students in Intensive Courses, English Language Center, Second Term (2008-2009).

College	Sections										Total
	S1*	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	
Computer (011)	52	52	54	52	52						262
Computer (012)	41	55	39	57							192
Engineering(013)	49	45	45	49	47	50	34				319
Engineering(014)	49	53	50	52	51						255
Arabic (015)	32	34	17	30	24	27	50	46	49	50	359
Shari'a (Religion) (015)	50	50	31	12							143
Science (016)	20	21	38	15	24	20	19	28			185
Medical Sciences (019)	60	39	47	45	26	37	43	40			337
Total	353	349	321	312	224	134	146	114	49	50	2052

* S=section

Table (4): Sample and number of students who returned the questionnaire.

College	Sample		Number of students who returned the questionnaire
	Section	No.	
Computer (011)	S1	52	48
Computer (012)	S4	57	44
Engineering (013)	S6	50	46
Engineering (014)	S5	51	43
Arabic (015)	S 10	50	48
Sharya'a (015)	S1	50	46
Science (016)	S3	38	30
Medical Sciences (019)	S7	43	40
Total		391	345

The table above shows that 88.23% of participants (students) returned the questionnaire.

III-2. Findings:

III.2.1. Frequency of using L1 in the EFL classroom

It is clear from Table 5 below that 41.44% of the students always use L1 and 45.79% of them sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom. It is worth mentioning that 78.26% of students from the Faculty of Shari'a always use L1 in learning English. This can be attributed to the fact that those students are very weak in English and they find L1 very helpful for them.

Concerning teachers, table (6) below shows that 72.72% of teachers who are native speakers of L1 sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom, whereas 27.27% of them rarely use L1.

Table (5): How often students use L1 in the English classroom.

College	A	%	S	%	R	%	N	%
Computer (011)	18	37.5	14	29.16	12	25	4	8.33
Computer (012)	15	34.09	14	31.81	12	27.27	3	6.81
Engineering (013)	17	36.95	26	56.52	3	6.52	0	0
Engineering (014)	11	25.58	28	65.11	4	9.30	0	0
Arabic (015)	26	54.16	20	41.66	1	2.08	1	2.08
Shari'a (015)	36	78.26	10	21.73	0	0	0	0
Sciences (016)	14	46.66	16	53.33	0	0	0	0
Medical Sciences (019)	6	15	30	75	4	10	0	0
	143	41.44	158	45.79	36	10.43	8	2.31

A= Always, S= Sometimes, R= Rarely, N= Never

The table above shows clearly that L1 can be helpful when students' linguistic proficiency is very low; e.g., students from Faculty of Shari'a (015).

Table (6): How often teachers use L1 in the English classroom.

Teachers	Responses							
	A	%	S	%	R	%	N	%
Native speakers of L1	0	0	8	72.72	3	27.27	0	0
Non-native speakers of L1	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	100

A= Always, S= Sometimes, R= Rarely, N= Never

The table above shows that teachers who are L1 native speakers use L1 in varying degrees.

III.2.2. Usefulness of using L1 in the English classroom

Table 7 below shows that the majority of students 86.95% think that it is useful to use L1 in the EFL classroom, but teachers are divided over this issue. Table 8 below shows that 63.63% of the teachers who are native speakers of L1 think that it is useful to use L1 in the EFL classroom, whereas only 28.57% of the teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 support this idea.

Table (7): Students' opinions regarding the usefulness of using Arabic in the English classroom

College	Yes	%	No	%
Computer (011)	40	83.33	8	16.66
Computer (012)	37	77.27	7	15.90
Engineering (013)	40	86.95	6	13.04
Engineering (014)	36	83.72	7	16.27
Arabic (015)	47	97.91	1	2.08
Shari'a (015)	46	100	0	0
Sciences (016)	26	86.66	4	13.73
Medical Sciences (019)	28	70	12	30
	300	86.95	45	13.04

The table above shows 30% of medical students think that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is useless, whereas 100% of students from Faculty of Shari'a think that L1 is useful.

Table (8): Teachers' opinions regarding the usefulness of using Arabic in the English classroom

Teachers	Responses			
	Yes	%	NO	%
Native speakers of L1	7	63.63	4	36.36
Non-native speakers of L1	8	28.57	20	71.42

It is clear from the table above that teachers are divided over the usefulness of using L1 in the classroom,

III.2.3. Preference of teachers who know learners mother tongue

Table 9 below shows that 82.09% of the students prefer to have teachers of English who know their mother tongue. As for teachers, table 10 below shows that 63.63% of teachers who are native speakers of L1 and 64.28% of teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 think that it is preferable that teachers of English know the students' mother tongue.

Table (9): Whether students prefer teachers of English who know their mother tongue.

College	Yes	%	No	%
Computer (011)	38	79.16	10	20.83
Computer (012)	35	79.54	9	20.45
Engineering (013)	38	82.60	8	17.39
Engineering (014)	38	88.37	5	11.62
Arabic (015)	41	85.41	7	14.58
Shari'a (015)	46	100	0	0
Sciences (016)	20	66.66	10	33.33
Medical Sciences (019)	30	75	10	25
	286	82.09	59	17.90

As shown in the table above, most students especially those with limited proficiency prefer teachers of English who know their mother tongue.

Table (10): Whether teachers think it is preferable to know the mother tongue of learners

Teachers	Responses			
	Yes	%	NO	%
Native speakers of L1	7	63.63	4	36.36
Non-native speakers of L1	18	64.28	10	35.71

The table above shows that teachers (native and non-native speakers of L1) think that it is preferable to know the mother tongue of the learners.

III.2.4. Purposes of using L1 in the English classroom.

Table 11 below shows that 45.84% of the students always use L1 for the purposes of making casual queries to fellow-students and teachers, making some special/difficult query to the teacher, discussing an activity with his partner in a group, and confirming comprehension. Also, 31.88% of the students sometimes use L1 for these purposes.

As for teachers, both native and non-native speakers of L1 almost have the same opinion regarding the purposes of using L1, 26.78% of them strongly agree and 44.34% of them agree that L1 may be used for the stated above purposes (Table 12).

Table (11): Students perspectives regarding purposes of using L1 in the English classroom

College	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Computer (011)	24	50	15.75	32.81	5.25	10.93	3	6.25
Computer (012)	21.75	49.43	14.25	32.38	5.25	11.93	2.75	6.25
Engineering (013)	27	58.69	13.5	29.34	5	10.86	0.5	1.08
Engineering (014)	21	48.83	13.75	31.97	5.75	13.37	2.5	5.81
Arabic (015)	18	37.50	15.25	31.77	7.5	15.62	7.25	15.10
Shari'a (015)	17.75	38.58	14.25	30.97	7.25	15.76	6.75	14.67
Science (016)	15	50	8.5	28.33	4.5	15	2	6.66
Medicine (019)	13.5	33.75	15	37.50	5.75	14.37	5.75	14.37
Average		45.84		31.88		13.48		8.77

The above table shows that students use L1 for certain purposes in varying degrees.

Table (12): Teachers perspectives regarding purposes of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

Teachers	SA		A		NS		DA	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Native Speakers of L1	3.00	25	5.50	45.83	1.50	12.5	2.00	16.66
Non-native Speakers of L1	8.00	28.57	12	42.85	4.50	16.07	3.50	12.50
Average		26.78		44.34		14.28		14.58

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, DA= Disagree

Also most of the teachers, as shown in the table above, think that L1 is used for certain purposes in the EFL classroom.

III.2.5. Advantages of using L1 in the English classroom:

Table 13 below shows that 46.69% of the students strongly agree and 31.75% of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has a number of benefits , such as, L1 gives input to students with more clarity; it facilitates learning for the students; it leaves a good impression about the effectiveness of the teacher; it allows students to relate what they already know to the learning of L2; it facilitates communication and interaction between teacher and students; it helps teachers to use time effectively, it increases student's motivation and confidence and decreases student's anxiety.

As for teachers, Table 14 below shows that 37.17% disagree and 26.21% of them are not sure of these benefits, whereas 33.73% of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom can bring the benefits mentioned above.

Table (13): Student responses concerning the advantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

College	SA		A		NS		D	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Computer (011)	26.60	55.41	14.00	29.16	5.60	11.66	1.80	3.75
Computer (012)	25.20	57.27	12,60	28.63	5.40	10.22	1.70	3.86
Engineering (013)	21.10	45.86	16.90	36.73	4.80	10.43	3.20	6.95
Engineering (014)	21.00	48.83	15.30	35.58	4.90	11.39	1.80	4.18
Arabic (015)	22.50	46.87	12.50	26.04	9.50	19.79	3.50	7.29
Shari'a (015)	22.30	48.47	11.70	25.43	9.00	19.56	3.00	6.52
Science (016)	12.40	41.33	10.20	34	5.00	16.66	2.40	8
Medicine (019)	11.80	29.50	15.40	38.5	6.40	16	6.40	16
Average		46.69		31.75		14.46		7.06

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, DA= Disagree

It is clear from the table above that most students think that the use of L1 in the classroom has a number of advantages.

Table (14): Teacher responses concerning the advantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

Teachers	SA		A		NS		DA	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Native Speakers of L1	0.36	3.27	3.81	34.36	3.27	29.72	3.54	32.18
Non-native Speakers of L1	0.54	1.92	9.27	33.10	6.36	22.71	11.81	42.17
Average		2.59		33.73		26.21		37.17

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, DA= Disagree

The table above shows that teachers are not sure of the advantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

III.2.6. Disadvantages of using L1 in the English classroom

As shown in Table 15 below, 17.8% of the students strongly agree and 21.10% of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has a number of disadvantages such as, the use of L1 brings in a dependence on L1 among students; it brings in L1 interference to L2 use; L1 minimizes the use and exposure to L2; there is no benefit from using L1 in learning English; L1 impedes the acquisition of L2; the use of L1 decreases communication and interaction between teacher and students and wastes the time of students and teachers; and the use of L1 decreases student's motivation and decreases student's confidence.

As for teachers, Table 16 below shows that 23.68% of the teachers strongly agree and 31.70% of them agree that the use of L1 in EFL classroom may lead to the disadvantages listed above.

Table (15): Student responses concerning the disadvantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

College	SA		A		NS		DA	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Computer (011)	6.44	13.41	8.88	18.5	8.66	18.04	24	50
Computer (012)	5.66	12.86	7.88	17.90	7.66	17.40	22.66	51.5
Engineering (013)	6.22	13.52	8.88	19.30	14.33	31.15	16.55	35.97
Engineering (014)	6.55	15.23	9.33	21.69	9.44	21.95	17.66	41.06
Arabic (015)	11	22.91	11.22	23.37	8.88	18.5	16.88	35.16
Shari'a (015)	10.11	21.97	10.55	22.93	8.44	18.34	16.88	36.69
Science (016)	6	20	6.88	22.93	8.88	29.6	8.22	27.4
Medicine (019)	9	22.5	8.88	22.2	8.66	21.65	13.44	33.60
Average		17.8		21.10		22.07		38.92

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, DA= Disagree

The table above shows that students are divided over the disadvantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

Table (16): Teacher responses concerning the disadvantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

Teachers	Responses							
	SA	%	A	%	NS	%	DA	%
Native Speakers of Arabic	1.11	10.09	3.66	33.27	3.66	33.27	2.55	23.18
Non-native Speakers of Arabic	10.44	37.28	8.44	30.14	4.22	15.07	4.88	17.42
		23.68		31.70		24.17		20.3

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, NS= Not sure, DA= Disagree

As it is the case with students, the table above shows that teachers are also divided over the disadvantages of using L1 in the EFL classroom.

III.2.7. Situations where L1 might be used

L1 can be used in situations like explaining difficult words and phrases; explaining ideas and concepts; exemplification; giving further elaborations; and responding to questions asked by students and giving feedback to students about their performances. Table 17 below shows that 3.86 % of the teachers suggest that L1 can always be used in these situations, whereas 35.85 % of them suggest L1 can sometimes be used in these situations.

Table (17): Teacher suggestions concerning the situations where L1 might be used

TEACHERS	A		S		R		N	
	A	%	A	%	A	%	A	%
Native Speakers of Arabic	0.85	7,72	3.85	35	4.28	38.90	2	18.18
Non-native Speakers of Arabic	0	0	10.28	36.71	8.28	29.57	9.42	33.64
Average		3.86		35.85		34.23		25.91

A= Always, S= Sometimes, R= Rarely, N= Never

The table above shows that teachers are divided over the situations where L1 might be used.

In addition, two groups of students were selected from the Faculty of Computer Sciences. One of these groups (group 1) studied English grammar with frequent use of L1 in the classroom, whereas the second group (group 2) studied the same course but L1 was not used at all; as the teacher of this group was a non-native speaker of L1. Results of students in the final examination were compared. The comparison showed that there was no statistically significant difference, as shown in Table 18 below, between these two groups in terms of achievement in grammar.

Table (18): A comparison of students' achievement in grammar in the cases using and the non use of the L1

Sig. (2-tailed)	T Value	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Group	Variable
		14.26	77.42	35	1*	Achievement in Grammar
0.799	0.256	16.22	76.50	36	2**	

*= L1 is frequently used in the EFL classroom by the teacher who is a native speaker of Arabic .

**= L2 is only used in the EFL classroom by the teacher who is a non-native speaker of Arabic .

IV- Conclusion

Opinions vary about when, how and how often L1 should be used. In teaching methods, the use of L1 ranges from using it most of the time in the classroom, as in case of the Grammar-Translation Method, to the judicious use of L1, as in case of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, this study comes to a number of conclusions:

First, this study shows that students use L1 in varying degrees; 41.44% of them always use L1 and 45.79% of them sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom. Also this study shows that students who are very weak in English use L1 more frequently; 78.26% of the students from the Faculty of Shari'a always use L1 in learning English. Concerning teachers, 72.72% who are native speakers of L1 sometimes use L1 in the EFL classroom.

Second, the majority of students (86.95%) think that it is useful to use L1 in the EFL classroom, but teachers are divided over this issue. 63.63% of the teachers who are native speakers of L1 think that it is useful to use L1, whereas only 28.57% of the teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 support this idea.

Third, the majority of students (82.09%) prefer to have teachers of English who know their mother tongue. As for teachers, 63.63% who are native speakers of L1 and 64.28% of the teachers who are non-native speakers of L1 think that it is preferable that teachers of English know the students mother tongue.

Fourth, 45.84% of the students always use L1 for the purpose of making casual queries to fellow-students and teachers. If students make some special/difficult query to the teacher or discuss an activity with their partner in a group to confirm comprehension, 31.88% of the students sometimes use L1 for these purposes. As for teachers, both native and non-native speakers of L1 almost have the same opinion regarding the purpose of using L1, 26.78% of them strongly agree and 44.34% of them agree that L1 may be used for the mentioned purposes (Table 12).

Fifth, 46.69% of the students strongly agree and 31.75% of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has a number of benefits, such as, L1 gives input to students with more clarity. It facilitates learning for our students and leaves good impression about the effectiveness of

the teacher. It allows students to relate what they already know to the learning of L2 and facilitates communication and interaction between teacher and students. It helps teachers to use time effectively, increases student's motivation and confidence and decreases student's anxiety. As for teachers, (37.17%) disagree and (26.21%) of them are not sure of these benefits, whereas (33.73%) of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom can bring the benefits mentioned above.

Sixth, 17.8% of the students strongly agree and 21.10% of them agree that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has a number of disadvantages such as bringing in a dependence on L1 among students. Moreover, it brings in L1 interference to L2 use and L1 minimizes the use and exposure to L2. Thus, there is no benefit from using L1 in learning English and L1 impedes the acquisition of L2. The use of L1 decreases communication and interaction between teachers and students and wastes the time of students and teachers. The use of L1 decreases students' motivation and decreases student's confidence. As for teachers, 23.68% of the teachers strongly agree and 31.70% of them agree that the use of L1 in EFL classroom may lead to the disadvantages listed above.

Seventh, L1 can be used in situations like explaining difficult words and phrases; explaining ideas and concepts; exemplification; giving further elaborations; responding to questions asked by students and giving feedback to students about their performances. This study shows that (3.86 %) of the teachers suggest that L1 can always be used in these situations, whereas (35.85 %) of them suggest that L1 can sometimes be used in these situations.

Eighth, the comparison between students who use and do not use L1 in class shows that there is no statistically significant difference between them in terms of achievement in English grammar. On the other hand, Stapa and Abdul Majid (2006) argue that the use of the first language helps students to generate ideas before writing in the second language and " they recommend the use of L1 for L2 writing as it can trigger background knowledge among the learners" (Stapa and Abdul Majid, 2006, 11). This leads us to the conclusion that we are in need of experimental studies to identify in which language skill the use of L1 is most effective.

Finally, the use of L1 in the EFL classroom has benefits and drawbacks. Whether to use or not to use L1 in the EFL classroom has

been hotly debated, and since this debate seems to be endless, it is a good idea for teachers " to search for an ideal level of L1 use in each individual class –maybe changing its use as the class progresses in level or changes in other ways." (Case, 2008).

Furthermore, L1 can be used as an effective teaching aid in the EFL classroom. L1 should be used when needed and it should not be overused. We can use it with beginners or with students who are very weak in English. Also, we can use L1 to give instructions, to explain an activity or to give feedback to students about their performance. But we have to keep in mind that our main objective is to teach the target language; therefore we should maximize the use of L2 in the EFL classroom as much as we can. This can be achieved by using simple L2 and if students can express themselves in English, they should not use L1. In addition, as the course progresses, the amount of L1 use should decrease.

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Appendix (1)

Dear Student,

The attached questionnaire has a number of questions related to your opinion regarding the use of L1 (Arabic) in learning L2 (English). Please read the questions carefully before you write down your answers.

Thanks

I- Personal Information:

- Name (optional):
- College:

II- General Information about the Use of L1

1- How often do you use Arabic in your English classroom?

Always	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

2- Do you think it is useful to use Arabic in the English classroom?

Yes No

3- Do you think it is preferable that teachers of English should know the learner's mother tongue?

Yes No

III- Purposes of Using L1 by Students

4- For what purposes do students use Arabic in English classroom? You can give more than one answer. Please rate them on the basis of their frequency, where A=always, S= sometimes, R= rarely, and N= never.

	A	S	R	N
a. For making every casual query to fellow-students and teachers.				
b. For some special/difficult query to the teacher.				
c. For discussing an activity with his partner in the group.				
d. For confirming my comprehension.				
e. Other(s):				

IV- Advantages of Using L1

5- In your opinion, what are the advantages of using L1 in learning English? Read the following statements and put (✓) mark next each statement in the column that expresses your opinion. Where SA= strongly agree, A= agree, NS = not sure, and D = disagree.

	SA	A	NS	D
a. The use of L1 gives input to students with more clarity.				
b. The use of L1 facilitates learning for our students.				
c. The use of L1 leaves a good impression about the effectiveness of the teacher.				
d. The use of L1 allows students to relate what they already know to the learning of L2.				
e. I benefit from using L1 in learning English.				
f. The use of L1 facilitates communication and interaction between teacher and students.				
g. The use of L1 helps teachers to use time effectively.				
h. The use of L1 increases student's motivation.				
i. The use of L1 increases student's confidence.				
j. The use of L1 decreases student's anxiety.				

V- Disadvantages of Using L1

6- In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using L1 in learning English? Read the following statements and put (✓) mark next each statement in the column that expresses your opinion. Where SA= strongly agree, A= agree, NS = not sure, and D = disagree.

	SA	A	NS	D
a. The use of L1 brings in a dependence on L1 among students.				
b. The use of L1 brings in L1 interference to L2 use.				
c. The use of L1 minimizes the use and exposure to L2.				
d. I do not benefit from using L1 in learning English.				
e. The use of L1 impedes the acquisition of L2.				
f. The use of L1 decreases communication and interaction between teacher and students.				
g. The use of L1 wastes the time of students and teachers.				
h. The use of L1 decreases student's motivation.				
i. The use of L1 decreases student's confidence.				

Appendix (2)

Dear Colleague,

The attached questionnaire has a number of questions related to your opinion regarding the use of L1 (Arabic) in learning L2 (English). Please read these questions carefully before you write down your answers, and keep in mind that the results of this questionnaire will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation

I- Personal Information:

- Name (optional):
- Qualifications:

- Experience in Teaching:

1- 5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

II- General Information about the Use of L1

1- Are you a native speaker of Arabic?

Yes No

- **If your answer is "no", please go to question (3).**

2- How often do you use Arabic in your English classroom?

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

3- Do you think it is useful to use Arabic in the English classroom?

Yes No

4- Do you think it is preferable that teachers of English should know the learner's mother tongue?

Yes No

III- Situations Where L1 is Used

5- In what situations do you use or do you suggest the use of Arabic in the English classroom? You can give more than one answer. Please rate them on the basis of their frequencies, where A=always, S= sometimes, R= rarely, and N= never.

Situation	A	S	R	N
a. For explaining difficult words and phrases.				
b. For explaining ideas and concepts.				
c. For exemplification.				
d. For further elaborations.				
e. For wit and humor in the classroom.				
f. For responding to every question asked by students.				
g. For giving feedback to students about their performances.				

IV- Purposes of Using L1 by Students

6- For what purposes do students use Arabic in the English classroom? You can give more than one answer. Please rate them on the basis of their frequency, where A=always, S= sometimes, R= rarely, and N= never.

Purpose	A	S	R	N
a. For making every casual query to fellow-students and teachers.				
b. For some special/difficult query to the teacher.				
c. For discussing an activity with his partner in the group.				
d. For confirming their comprehension.				
d. Other(s):				

V- Advantages of Using L1

7- In your opinion, what are the advantages of using L1 in learning English? Read the following statements and put (√) mark next to each statement in the column that expresses your opinion. Where SA= strongly agree, A= agree, NS = not sure, and D = disagree.

Items	SA	A	NS	D
a. The use of L1 gives input to students with more clarity.				
b. The use of L1 facilitates learning for our students.				
c. The use of L1 leaves a good impression about the effectiveness of the teacher.				
d. The use of L1 allows students to relate what they already know to the learning of L2.				
e. Most students benefit from using L1 in learning English.				
f. The use of L1 serves to validate different learning preferences and styles.				

Items	SA	A	NS	D
g. The use of L1 facilitates communication and interaction between teacher and students.				
h. The use of L1 helps teachers to use time effectively.				
i. The use of L1 increases students' motivation.				
j. The use of L1 increases students' confidence.				
k. The use of L1 decreases students' anxiety.				

VI- Disadvantages of Using L1

8- In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using L1 in learning English? Read the following statements and put (√) mark next to each statement in the column that expresses your opinion. Where SA= strongly agree, A= agree, NS = not sure, and D = disagree.

Items	SA	A	NS	D
a. The use of L1 brings in a dependence on L1 among students.				
b. The use of L1 brings in L1 interference to L2 use.				
c. The use of L1 minimizes the use and exposure to L2.				
d. Most students do not benefit from using L1 in learning English.				
e. The use of L1 impedes the acquisition of L2.				
f. The use of L1 decreases communication and interaction between teacher and students.				
g. The use of L1 wastes the time of students and teachers.				

Items	SA	A	NS	D
h. The use of L1 decreases students' motivation.				
i. The use of L1 decreases students' confidence.				