Azerbaijani Turkic speaking English language teachers' attitudes towards the use of their students' mother tongue in English classes

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Abstract

This study investigated the attitudes of a group of Azerbaijani teachers towards the use of L1 in their teaching process. For these purpose 40 Azerbaijani-Turkic EFL teachers of different high schools in Eastern Azerbaijan, Iran was randomly selected. The teachers were from both male and female gender groups. Some of them held BA and some of them held MA degrees in TEFL. Their ages varied from 25 to 50 and their teaching experiences varied from 6 to 25 years and their places of teaching were either in cities or villages in Eastern Azerbaijan. A questionnaire with two main parts was used to collect data. The data was analyzed by using the Excel worksheets and descriptive analysis method. The results of the study showed that although some of the teachers in this study were reluctant to use L1 in their teaching process, most of them believed that it is acceptable to use L1 in EFL teaching and recognized the important role of L1 in various occasions in ELT.

Keywords: EFL; EFL learners; mother tongue; attitudes of EFL teachers; mother tongue using

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, English is being used as the common means of communication among people whose national languages may not be English. In such countries the English language must be learnt via formal instruction and with the help of EFL teachers who are non-native themselves. For some time the assumption was that English ought to be learnt through English and not by the use of L1 (e.g. Wright, 1964; Howatt, 1984; Auerbach, 1993; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, the use of L1 when teaching EFL is one of the major issues that have dominated the area of EFL acquisition for the last few decades(e.g. Atkinson, 1993; Weschler, 1997; Cole, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nation, 2003; Miles, 2004).

This study has partially been motivated by the complaints of Azerbaijani-Turkic-speaking, particularly, high school students, about their failure to attain the desired level of proficiency in English. These students are not so eager to learn English, so, they are weak in it. In exploring the reasons, one may come to answers such as: they don't have positive attitudes towards learning English because they cannot learn it well for the reason that either their teacher is not knowledgeable enough or even if s/he is knowledgeable s/he cannot communicate the related matter effectively to students for different reasons; one of which can be the language of communication. EFL students in Azerbaijani-Turkic-speaking community in Iran face an additional problem when they learn English through a language other than their mother tongue. In such a context to decrease the amount of difficulty, teachers may resort to L1 in their teaching process.

Up to the present time, different studies have been carried out to determine: the permissible amount of MT which can be used in EFL classes, the role of positive attitudes and the importance of motivation in EFL learners, as well as their direct interrelationship, also the importance of the context and the cultural background of the students. There do exist studies having investigated: the role of MT in EFL classes, the attitudes of students and teachers in various contexts concerning the ratio, the place of the use of MT in EFL classes, and the degree of its appropriateness; yet the teachers' attitudes towards using L1 in classes where the learners are native speakers of Azerbaijani-Turkic is an important aspect of this debate, in need of exploration.

Some current EFL studies do endorse foreign language teachers' recourse to the students' mother tongue, when necessary (e.g. Anton & Dicamilla, 1999; Cook, 2001; Kahraman, 2009; Jingxia, 2010). Furthermore, a survey of the literature on the relevance of benefiting from the learners' MT in FL teaching, has suggested the hypothesis that appropriate use of MT in FL teaching can help Azerbaijani learners of English overcome their weakness in FL, and heighten their motivation, as a result of a more direct contact with English, at the points where only the learners' MT can bridge the gap. In this connection, teachers' attitudes can play an important role in helping them make decisions about when, why, and how to use L1 in language teaching. Therefore, what follows is a study to investigate the attitudes of a number of Azerbaijani EFL teachers regarding the role of the students' mother tongue in learning English. The goal of this study was to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards the use of L1 in their teaching process in order to increase the positive attitudes of students towards learning English, so that they can attain the desired level of proficiency in English. More specifically, the present study sought answer to the following question: What are the teachers' attitudes towards the use of mother tongue in teaching English as a foreign language in Azerbaijani context?

2. Review of the Related Literature

For much of the past century, foreign language education has been dominated by the idea that foreign languages are best learned and taught through the foreign language itself (e.g. Schweers, 1999; Cook, 2001;

Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005). A closer look at the development of language teaching methods indicates that except Grammar Translation Method, almost all language teaching methods 'since the Reform Movement of the 1880s, whether the Audio Lingual Method, the Communicative method, or the Silent Way, have insisted that teaching techniques should not rely on L1' (Cook, 1999, p. 201).

The insistence that teachers use English-only in EFL classrooms was a reaction to earlier methodologies such as Grammar Translation Method. The methods developed under the influence of behaviorism strictly refused the use of L1 as one of the principles of The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching. The Audio Lingual Method, the American twin of The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, also rejects the use of L1 in FL classrooms by advocating the idea that the use of FL in the learning of FL is more effective if everything is taught in FL, and this method avoids the use of L1 at all costs and argues that it would cause the formation of bad habits and would interfere in the teaching of FL. Because of being a 'focus on behavior control method', Harmer (2007) sees it as the methodology banishing all forms of language processing including the use or referencing of L1.

However, there have been many debates over the role of L1 in foreign language education. From those methods strictly forbidding L1 there emerge other traditional methodologies with different levels of tolerance towards the use of L1. The use of L1 in the other traditional methods ranges from using it to give instructions as in the Silent Way, to explaining the dialogue in Suggestopedia, to increasing learner's security in Community Language Learning or to reasonable using it in Communicative Language Teaching.

Various empirical studies have shown that L1 is a valuable and beneficial resource in classrooms and can facilitate FL learning (Nation, 2003; Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005). Pedagogically, L1 may be a cognitive bridge to FL by helping learners to analyze language and work at a more demanding level than using FL only (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

By using L1, a teacher provides a way for FL learners, which may enable them to produce the teacher's expected linguistic output in FL and participate in classroom activities and interactions. Also, learners can use L1 to ask for explanations (Wigglesworth, 2003) and there has been evidence showing that some learners achieve more rapid progress in a bilingual program. Learners' L1 may also function as a psychological tool (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). It creates a 'social and cognitive' space in which learners can help each other. L1 may also provide a sense of security and enable learners to build their self-esteem (Murray & Wigglesworth, 2005). Not only the learners benefit from L1 use but also teachers do as Wigglesworth (2003) found that the presence of a bilingual teacher or a bilingual assistant reduced the frustration of both teachers and learners.

L1 use is of practical advantage because it attracts drop-outs to re-enroll in bilingual programs. Some learners avoid enrolling in any English program because of their low language proficiency and their inability to follow the lessons. However, some drop-outs re-enroll when they realize that bilingual classes are available. Another practical advantage of L1 use is the efficient management of class time, which is the most frequent justification teachers give for using L1. Valuable class time can be saved for more productive activities rather than for lengthy explanations of vocabulary and grammar in TL which may still leave learners confused. (Wigglesworth, 2003).

Some researchers like Nunan (1991) believe that preventing the use of L1 in foreign language classes limits the work of teachers where they can use different available methods for their teaching. Some other researches show that complete deletion of L1 in foreign language classes is not appropriate (Schweers, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nation, 2003; Butzkamm, 2003).

Both teachers and students may inevitably resort to mother tongue and many researchers have begun to examine teachers' use of mother tongue in foreign language classrooms from different perspectives (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). The positive impact of recourse to mother tongue in foreign language instruction is also confirmed by the fact that many students find the exclusion of their mother tongue to be degrading to that tongue (Tang,

2002).

Nation (2003) considered L1 as a useful tool as well. He even claimed that 'it is foolish to arbitrarily exclude this proven and efficient means of communicating meaning' (p. 5). The teacher who says, I forbid the use of L1 in my English classes is deceiving himself. He has forgotten one thing. He cannot control what goes on in the minds of students. When he faces an English word unfamiliar to him, the pupil inevitably searches in his mind for its equivalent in his own language, finding of which makes him feel happy, satisfied, and successful. Accordingly, he doesn't need to resort to translation. There are words and phrases, in any language, expressing abstract ideas, which cannot be easily conveyed in FL to the student. In such cases, recourse to the MT of the student is unavoidable. For example, the meaning of such words and phrases as 'ago, quite, neat, once upon a time, in spite of, by means of' cannot be conveyed except by benefiting from the MT of the student. Also, from the view-point of time and energy consumption, it would be more economical to benefit from the MT of the student in teaching the future or the past tenses. Also it is more reasonable to convey the meaning of the English words 'yesterday, sometime ago, tomorrow, next week' by direct reference to the words in MT than by attempting to do so through action or some other device.

Once the meaning has been put over there is no need to use the MT of the learner. It is noteworthy that even in Direct Method occasional use of MT can reinforce the teaching. Explanations in MT are useful, too, when dealing with points of grammar and structure. Sometimes major likenesses and major differences between MT and English can advantageously be pointed out using the MT of the learners (French, 1963, pp. 110-111).

Many teachers find that the use of some L1 helps assign more time to practicing FL because understanding is achieved much more rapidly. The justification for using L1 is that it is used for clarification purposes, after an attempt has been made to communicate the point in FL and students still appear to be confused. The idea is that L1 serves a 'supportive and facilitating role in the classroom' (Tang, 2002), and not that it is the primary language of communication. L1 use also allows students to become more aware of the similarities and differences between cultures and linguistic structures, and thus may improve the accuracy of translations.

According to Cook (2005), four ways, in which L1 could be used effectively in the classroom, were: as a way of conveying foreign language meaning, as a shortcut for explaining tasks and test requirements, as a way of explaining grammar, and for practicing foreign language user structure as code-switching. Research has shown that L1 use can serve important cognitive, communicative, and social functions in foreign language classrooms (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). To sum up teachers often use L1 in beginning and intermediate classes to:

➢   give instructions

➢   explain meanings of words

➢   explain complex ideas

➢   explain complex grammar points (Tang, 2002)

Teachers' previous knowledge and attitudes should not be ignored in language teaching and the best efforts should be made to reveal their attitudes. As Freeman and Johnson (1998) reported, teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms (p. 401). The attitude survey of McMillan and Rivers (2011) with 29 native-English speaker teachers at a Japanese university provides support for the positive role of L1 in that it has the power to enhance cognition, communication, and social functions in language classrooms. Although there are some studies in the literature on the use of L1 in EFL classes and on the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers towards this behaviour in classrooms, none of the studies has been done particularly in the EFL context of Azerbaijan of Iran. The present study has tried to find out the attitudes of EFL teachers towards the use of L1 in classrooms and how much L1 they actually employ in their teaching process.

3. Methodology

In the formal, Iranian junior and senior high school education-curriculum English is a required subject. According to the curriculum standards issued by the Ministry of Education in Iran, after finishing the first stage of secondary school,(i.e. junior high school), students are expected to continue their English study as a compulsory subject in high school. Thus, in this phase, the students have acquired the initial phases of language learning, formerly and are required to learn more complex issues of the FL, i.e. English. At both junior high school and high school students are required to learn English through formal instruction and it has become one of the important subjects in Iranian education system.

This study was an attempt to investigate the attitudes of high school teachers in Iranian Azerbaijan towards the use of MT in enhancing the FL learning. This study was conducted in Azerbaijan, Iran. The teachers were non-native speakers of English and shared the same MT, Turkic, with their students. In the context of Iran, EFL teachers for some reasons switch to the MT of the students while teaching the TL.

3.1 Participants and Instruments

40 Azerbaijani-Turkic-speaking EFL teachers (10 males and 30 females) were randomly selected for investigation of their attitudes and implementations of mother tongue in EFL. They held BA or MA, they were speakers of the same mother tongue as their students; and they varied in terms of their ages from 25 to 50, and in terms of teaching experience from 6 to 25 years and taught in Eastern Azerbaijan cities and villages including Tabriz (Madani-I, Alameh Tabatabey), Maragheh (Rahmani, Sama, Azadegan, and Imam Khomeini), Shabestar (Nemune Dolati) and some other cities and villages in Azerbaijan.

In order to probe into teachers' attitudes regarding the use of L1 in classroom, also, to fully understand the amount of L1 which is used in foreign language classrooms and for what purposes, data was collected by distribution of a questionnaire, which is common practice in literature (e.g. Horwitz, 1985; Peacock, 2001, as cited in Dornyei, 2003). By administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of what would have been needed for interviewing the same number of people" (Dornyei,2003, p. 9).

The questionnaire in this study was the Teacher Talk Survey (Warford & Rose, 2003; see Appendix A) which classifies forty-four areas of foreign language teacher talk under six major categories (i.e., macro-functions) of language functions: Procedural, Instructional, Feedback, Secondary acquisition, Rapport-building, and Management/Discipline; under each macro-function there existed several sub-functions to search more extensively into the areas of teacher language used in the classroom.

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts A and B, each including a total of forty-four items, through which investigate and explore one matter from two perspectives: of the teachers' attitudes towards L1 and of the teachers' implementations of L1 in their classrooms respectively; as a sample item of the questionnaire we may cite '*Facilitating class discussions*' which is to be responded with regard to the attitudes of the teachers:

> '*I believe that L1 should be used for facilitating class discussions in the classroom.*'

The same function was also used to explore teachers' personal use of L1 in their classroom.

> '*In my classroom I use L1 for facilitating class discussions.*'

There were five choices to each question item, on a five-point Likert scale, ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' in part 'A' and from 'always' to 'never' in part 'B' and choices were given marks from 1 to 5. Teachers were asked to tick one of the five boxes by each statement, as appropriate.

3.2 Procedure of Data Analysis

The data was gathered through distributing questionnaires among 40 Azerbaijani-Turkic-speaking EFL teachers. The purpose of the questionnaires was to investigate the general attitudes of Iranian Azerbaijani-Turkic-speaking EFL teachers towards the use of students' MT in EFL classes.

According to Yildirim and Şimşek's (2011, p. 224) model, descriptive analysis was performed on the qualitative data in four steps: (I) A framework for descriptive analysis was designed on the basis of the research questions and the conceptual structure of the study, and the themes were identified for the subsequent classification of the data; (II) The data organized according to the thematic framework were read, combined in a meaningful and logical way, and the irrelevant data was omitted; (III) The previously organized data was defined and supported by using direct quotations from the responses of the participants; and (IV) The findings identified were finally explained, related and interpreted in the fourth stage.

The collected numerical data was analyzed by using the Excel worksheets and descriptive analysis method. Comments made in the last part of the questionnaire were summarized and used wherever needed to provide answers to the research question from a qualitative perspective.

4. Results

4.1 Relationship between Teachers' Attitudes and Implementations on the Use of L1 in HS English Classes

From the attitudes aspect, among all the subcategories of the head function of 'Procedural'; implementations such as Roll calling, Attention signals, Calling on students, etc., only 1.5% of participants completely agreed with the use of L1 and 35.5% disagreed strongly with it. However, from the use aspect, 12% of teachers always used L1 and 34% rarely used it which was the highest percent in this part (see Table 1).

Table 1

Procedural Functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	1.5	Always	12
Agree	13.75	Often	1.5
Neither agree nor disagree	24.75	Sometimes	22.25
Disagree	24.5	Rarely	34
Strongly disagree	35.5	Never	30.25

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions I.1- I.10.

For the second section, the results showed that teachers believed in the importance of L1 in explaining new vocabulary. With regard to the introducing and reviewing vocabulary, 15% of participants were in favor of L1 use both in attitudes and use aspect. However 40% of participants completely disagreed with the use of mother tongue in teaching and reviewing vocabulary (see Tables 2 & 3).

Table 2

Introducing vocabulary (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	6	15	Always	6	15
Agree	5	12.5	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	7	17.5	Sometimes	7	17.5
Disagree	6	15	Rarely	13	32.5
Strongly disagree	16	40	Never	14	35

Table 3

Reviewing vocabulary (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	6	15	Always	6	15
Agree	0	0	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	11	27.5	Sometimes	6	15
Disagree	7	17.5	Rarely	14	35
Strongly disagree	16	40	Never	14	35

About grammar explanation, from the attitudes aspect, 15% of participants strongly believed in L1 use and 70% of them agreed with using L1 in teaching but this amount decreased to 35% in the same column from the use aspect which shows a lack of consistency among the views of the participants; however, 15% of the participants chose strongly agree, and this choice remained the same in use aspect (see Table 4).

Table 4

Grammar explanation (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	6	15	Always	6	15
Agree	28	70	Often	14	35
Neither agree nor disagree	6	15	Sometimes	20	50
Disagree	0	0	Rarely	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	Never	0	0

The overall relationship between the attitudes and the use of L1 among the teachers on the instructional macro-function is depicted in Table 5 which mostly shows the negative views of the participants towards native language from both attitudes and use aspects.

Table 5

Instructional Functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	6.56	Always	15.17
Agree	21.87	Often	4.06
Neither agree nor disagree	18.59	Sometimes	24.53
Disagree	32.19	Rarely	27.03
Strongly disagree	20.79	Never	29.21

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions II.1- II.16.

The underlying functions of Feedback macro-function indicated that the participants mainly disagreed with the use of L1 in teaching from the attitudes aspect (45.27%) but it did not correspond to their views in use aspect (28.05%). On the other side, as it is seen in Table 6 the results revealed that in feedback functions about 27.78% from the attitudes aspect and 31.66% from the use aspect demonstrate the neutral attitudes of the participants towards native language when they did not want to show a certain view towards a function.

Table 6

Feedback functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	3.33	Always	5
Agree	9.17	Often	8.63
Neither agree nor disagree	27.78	Sometimes	31.66
Disagree	45.27	Rarely	28.05
Strongly disagree	14.45	Never	26.66

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions III.1- III.9.

The more noticeable points in the results of the subparts of the secondary acquisition macro-function (Table 7) were the responses of the participants in items IV.1, IV.2, and IV.3 which showed that about half of the participants (44.16%) agreed with the use of L1 whereas their responses for the same questions in use aspect were completely negative, and again in this macro-function the high percents belonged to the third response where the participants had neutral views.

Table 7

Secondary acquisition Functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	5	Always	10
Agree	44.16	Often	0
Neither agree nor disagree	31.67	Sometimes	71.67
Disagree	19.17	Rarely	5.83
Strongly disagree	0	Never	12.5

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions IV.1- IV.3.

The items from number V.1 to number V.3 showed that in rapport-building macro-function the high percent belonged to disagree column both in attitudes and use of L1 among the participants (see Table 8).

Table 8

Rapport-building Functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	15	Always	20
Agree	25.83	Often	5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.83	Sometimes	28.33
Disagree	44.17	Rarely	38.33
Strongly disagree	4.17	Never	8.34

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions V.1- V.3.

The results of the last macro-function, i.e., management/discipline macro-function, revealed that again the share of the third column, where the participants showed the neutral view, was more than the other parts, although about 42.5% of the participants indicated that they had negative views towards the use of L1 in teaching (see Table 9).

Table 9

Management/Discipline Functions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	10	Always	20
Agree	12.5	Often	0
Neither agree nor disagree	27.5	Sometimes	35.83
Disagree	42.5	Rarely	28.34
Strongly disagree	7.5	Never	15.83

Note. The numbers indicate the percent of the information which have been received through the choices for the questions VI.1- VI.3.

4.2 The Highest Percent in the Data Gathered through the Questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire suggested that teachers had the highest amount of neutral attitudes towards using L1 (55%) in their classroom in General announcements (item No.I.2; Table 10) in procedural functions and in answer to student question (item No.III.6; Table 11) in feedback functions.

Table 10

General announcements (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	6	15	Always	6	15
Agree	0	0	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	22	55	Sometimes	15	37.5
Disagree	12	30	Rarely	14	35
Strongly disagree	0	0	Never	5	12.5

Table 11

Answer to student question (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	0	0	Always	0	0
Agree	13	32.5	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	22	55	Sometimes	26	65
Disagree	0	0	Rarely	9	22.5
Strongly disagree	5	12.5	Never	5	12.5

In use aspect L1 use was found sometimes optimal by 87.5% of the participants in the area of facilitating class discussions (item No.IV.1; Table 12) in secondary acquisition function which is the highest percent all through the questionnaire; the next 87.5% belonged to the item No.III.6 (Answer to student question) in feedback functions from the attitudes aspect in which the participants disagreed with the use of L1 (see Tables 11 & 12).

Table 12

Facilitating class discussions (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	6	15	Always	0	0
Agree	16	40	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	7	17.5	Sometimes	35	87.5
Disagree	11	27.5	Rarely	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	Never	5	12.5

The highest amount in strongly disagree column in attitudes aspect belonged to the item No. I.5 (Table 13) in which 70% of participants strongly disagreed with the use of mother tongue and this record in use aspect belonged to the item No.II.13 (Table 14) with 67.5% which was related to the form-focused oral practice such as substitution drills or, question and answer.

Table 13

Giving directions, page numbers, etc. (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	0	0	Always	0	0
Agree	6	15	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	6	15	Sometimes	6	15
Disagree	0	0	Rarely	13	32.5
Strongly disagree	28	70	Never	21	52.5

Table 14

Form-focused oral practice (N=40)

Choice	Attitude		Choice	Use	
	f	P		f	P
Strongly agree	0	0	Always	6	15
Agree	7	17.5	Often	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	Sometimes	7	17.5
Disagree	18	45	Rarely	0	0
Strongly disagree	15	37.5	Never	27	67.5

4.3 Comparison and Contrast among Different Sub-functions of Macro-functions in the Questionnaire

Teachers' responses in this study indicated that teachers' attitudes and implementations matched among several cases of the items of the macro-functions in the questionnaire, e.g., in calling roll, in procedural functions, when the choice was either agree or strongly disagree; in addition, there were some cases where teachers' declared attitudes about the use of L1 were in strong contrast with their practices e.g., in calling on students, in procedural functions, when they disagreed. Similar phenomena have been reported in Karavas-Doukas (1996).

The data showed that the teachers recognized the importance of using L1. The analysis of the attitudes and implementations of the EFL teachers on the use of L1 revealed that the EFL teachers used noticeable amount of L1 in their classrooms. Although the results of the current study revealed that the use of mother tongue was not approved by 33.75% of the participants and it showed that large numbers of teachers did not have positive attitudes towards L1 use in English classes (see Table 15), the highest amount in use part was 30.39% which indicated that teachers sometimes did use mother tongue as a last resort in their classes, even though they claimed that they used a certain amount of L1; the finding coincides with the findings of another study carried out by Copland and Neokleous (2011) who reported that teachers may not be aware of the amount of L1 they use in the classroom.

Table 15

Teachers' Attitudes towards L1 and Use of L1 (N=40)

Choice	Attitude	Choice	Use
Strongly agree	5.45	Always	12.65
Agree	18.58	Often	3.01
Neither agree nor disagree	22.84	Sometimes	30.19
Disagree	33.75	Rarely	28.13
Strongly disagree	19.38	Never	26.02

Note. The numbers indicate the overall percent of the whole information which have been received through the choices for the questions of the questionnaire.

As for the reasons for L1 use, the stated reasons of the teachers for using the Azerbaijani-Turkic from time to time: to present grammar and vocabulary, to check the learners' comprehension, to draw the attention of the students, to manage the classroom, to motivate the students or for revising and summarizing and for error correction coincide with the reasons proposed by Atkinson (1987) and Cook (2001). The attitudes of the teachers who believed that L1 had a positive effect on the learners' success in grasping the points because of the fact that L1 helps the learners to have a quicker understanding of the grammar of the foreign language; are also supported by Miles (2004) who claimed that L1 helps the success of the learners rather than hinders it. The learners feel more secure when L1 is used and they become more successful.

Although no appropriate tables or figures have been provided for this view, when teachers' attitudes were examined with reference to their academic degrees, it was found that teachers with MA degrees had more positive attitudes towards the use of L1 in EFL classes. Similarly, when the attitudes of novice teachers were compared with those of the experienced ones, it was revealed that teachers who were more experienced favored

L1 more and used it in their lessons more often. This finding coincides with the finding of Schweers (1999) who reported that the most experienced teachers in his study used the most L1 in their teaching.

5. Discussion

Although there is still controversy as to whether L1 should be allowed in foreign language classrooms, its pragmatic and practical benefits could not be overlooked.

The survey showed that L1 is commonly used in English lessons, though for a range of purposes and with varying degrees of frequency. Eliciting more student talk in the attitudes aspect and facilitating class discussions in the use aspect were among the most common reasons for using L1. While using L1 to explain grammar was not much in evidence in the attitudes aspect, the questionnaire suggested that teachers use L1 quite often for this purpose (50%, see Table 4). It implied that limited and sensible use of mother tongue in the English classroom does not reduce students' exposure to English, but rather can help in the teaching and learning processes.

Teachers expressed a range of views about the advantages and disadvantages of using L1 in English classes. They also identified different factors which influenced their decisions to use L1. These factors were the time available, the curriculum of the schools, the learners' knowledge of the concepts, their learners' level of proficiency, and their age as well as their social and cultural backgrounds. This suggests that deciding to use L1 is not simply based on a belief about whether it is beneficial for language learning or not; teachers' decisions were also based on a range of information about the specific learners and materials they worked with. These are the points worthy of consideration by language teachers.

The participants believed that one important fact should not be ignored and that is the individual differences. Teachers must be aware of the fact that schools are different, classes are different and students are different. A good teacher must be a flexible person and act differently in response to different situations. In some classes the use of L1 is a waste of time and in some other classes using solely foreign language is so. Therefore a good teacher must be a psychologist too in order to have a good understanding of his or her students.

In the informal interview the teachers explained that they use L1 just randomly. A majority of them justified their L1 using on the grounds of their students' weakness in English; only a few of them attributed it to the students' loss of interest due to their previous learning experiences. Also they mentioned some teacher-related reasons for this random use of L1: the lack of teaching knowledge and the effort to teach through English. When the participants were asked if they supported the use of L1 in teaching foreign language about half of them answered positively, and when they were asked where they preferred to use L1 and if it could be useful, most of them believed that timely benefiting from L1 greatly aided comprehension. They claimed that when used appropriately, L1 could be very beneficial. Also, according to some teachers, when they started using the Azerbaijani-Turkic, their students did the same. Therefore, these teachers concluded that once it became a habit on the part of the learners to hear the mother tongue instead of English, they would be reluctant to listen to the teacher when they used English, and this would deprive them of sufficient exposure to English, resulting in their missing the opportunity to gain the communicative skills in the language.

6. Conclusion

The fact that TL should be the main language of the classroom is indisputable, but whether it should be the only language in the classroom. The quantity of L1 use and the way it is used is inseparably linked to the underlying function or purpose of the program and the teacher.

The study indicated that although the amount is different, mother tongue is used extensively in EFL classrooms. The relationship between L1 use and teachers' attitudes in different functions showed a tendency among language teachers towards L1 use. The results reflected that the attitudes of the teachers and the students about using Turkic were generally positive. The participants preferred using Azerbaijani-Turkic in certain

situations and for specific reasons. The more experienced the teachers get in their profession, the more inclined they become to employ mother tongue systematically in their language instruction.

The study also reveals that there was relationship between teachers' attitudes and implementations among several cases of the macro-functions of the questionnaire and their sub-functions. Furthermore, the results of the study shows that there are some cases where teachers' declared attitudes about the use of L1 were in strong contrast with their practices.

Although little generalization could be made from this single study, it shows the variety of teachers' attitudes about the L1 use. On the whole the results of the study show that L1 can neither be ignored nor overused in language classrooms and it should be benefitted from, in different proportions.

This study does not tell us if the teachers should use L1 in their classes or not, it cannot make any statement about the question of whether or not students' mother tongue should be used in an English language class, it just wants to show what makes the multilingual children's experience of foreign language learning so frustratingly unsuccessful that they abhor learning foreign language for the rest of their lives. Although this is a limited study with limited results, it indicates that teachers have somehow positive attitudes towards benefitting from L1 in their classes.

6.1 Implication of the Study

Every context has a special nature of its own which must be kept in mind when it is studied. The result of this study is limited to the Azerbaijani-Turkic communities in Iran, in other parts of the country even among other Turkic communities, teachers may have different views from the studied group and some factors other than what referred here in this study may influence their implementations. All the findings of this study have to be understood within the limitations of sample size and the research context. The complexity of the L1 issue has illustrated the value and importance of investigating the issues, and more qualitative and quantitative studies need to be undertaken to deepen our understanding of teachers' attitudes about the use of L1 in language teaching.

The relationship between L1 use and some of the language implementations indicates that there is a tendency towards L1 use among teachers in various contexts, for example teachers are more likely to use L1 when overviewing the lessons, explaining grammar and culture, expressing sympathy/concern, facilitating class discussion and disciplining the class. This study shows that examining teachers' use of L1 becomes more productive when their attitudes and uses are studied together. In this way their attitudes will help the researchers to some extent understand the teachers' behaviors towards L1 in FL teaching. This view is derived from this finding that according to the study there is some relationship between teachers' attitudes and their L1 uses in EFL classes and the intuition and initiative of the teachers are good criterions for the use of L1.

Although according to the results of this study, the desired amount of L1 use is mostly based on the teachers' intuition, not on empirical research, and individual teachers should always decide how much L1 or foreign language to use based on their unique situations, the findings of the study may have positive influence on teaching English as a foreign language in Iran, particularly among Azerbaijani students who are weak in learning English with regard to their negative attitudes and lack of motivation.

To facilitate teachers' language use as well as students' language development, curricula and assessment related to the use of mother tongue in Language classes should be revised at both national and local levels then it will affect the teachers' use of the mother tongue and TL at the same time and increase it to the desired level.

7.   References

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Appendix A

Teacher Talk Survey (Warford & Rose, 2003)

A: Teachers' Attitudes towards their students' L1						
I	Procedural	1	2	3	4	5
I.1	I believe that L1 should be used for calling roll.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.2	I believe that L1 should be used for General announcements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Attention signal ('Listen up!'Count down 1 2 3\).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.4	I believe that L1 should be used for Preparation checks ('Everyone ready?').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.5	I believe that L1 should be used for Giving directions, page numbers, etc.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.6	I believe that L1 should be used for Specialized class routines.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.7	I believe that L1 should be used for Time check ('You have three more minutes').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.8	I believe that L1 should be used for Giving homework assignment.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.9	I believe that L1 should be used for Calling on students.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I.10	I believe that L1 should be used for Courtesy marker (i.e. polite behavior).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II	Instructional					
II.1	I believe that L1 should be used for Warm-ups (i.e. date, weather, time, review questions).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.2	I believe that L1 should be used for Anticipatory set (generating prior knowledge of lesson topic).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Overview of lesson (agenda for lesson, goals for the day).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.4	I believe that L1 should be used for Transitions ('Now that we've read the story, I have a worksheet ...').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.5	I believe that L1 should be used for Introducing vocabulary.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.6	I believe that L1 should be used for Reviewing vocabulary.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.7	I believe that L1 should be used for Modeling (miming/acting out use of a grammar feature, vocabulary).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.8	I believe that L1 should be used for Extension scenarios/Providing examples.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.9	I believe that L1 should be used for Grammar explanation.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.10	I believe that L1 should be used for Culture explanation.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.11	I believe that L1 should be used for Book exercises/worksheets.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.12	I believe that L1 should be used for Choral repetition.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.13	I believe that L1 should be used for Form-focused oral practice (substitution drills, question and answer).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.14	I believe that L1 should be used for Interpretive activities (listening, reading, viewing).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.15	I believe that L1 should be used for Check for student comprehension ('Any questions?').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
II.16	I believe that L1 should be used for Closure: ('What did you learn today?').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III	Feedback					
III.1	I believe that L1 should be used for Praise (IRE: Input, Response, Evaluation).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

III.2	I believe that L1 should be used for Praising and repeating correct answer (IRE).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Explicit correction ('It's' not... 'it's').	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.4	I believe that L1 should be used for Encouraging student self- correction (IRE: i.e. you bringed it. ..?).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.5	I believe that L1 should be used for Eliciting more student talk (IRE: you like to ski? Where?).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.6	I believe that L1 should be used for Answer to student question.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.7	I believe that L1 should be used for Individual feedback on performance, progress.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.8	I believe that L1 should be used for Paired/small group feedback on performance, progress.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
III.9	I believe that L1 should be used for Whole class feedback on performance, progress.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
IV	Secondary acquisition					
IV.1	I believe that L1 should be used for Facilitating class discussions.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
IV.2	I believe that L1 should be used for Incidental anecdote.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
IV.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Incidental cultural note(s)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
V	Rapport-building					
V.1	I believe that L1 should be used for Spontaneous conversation (beyond simple Question & Answer personalization).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
V.2	I believe that L1 should be used for Expressing sympathy/concern.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
V.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Expressing humor.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
VI	Management/Discipline					
VI.1	I believe that L1 should be used for Disciplining/Reprimanding/Scolding.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
VI.2	I believe that L1 should be used for Encouraging on-task behavior	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
VI.3	I believe that L1 should be used for Reminder of rules.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

B: Teachers' Use of L1 in their classroom						
I	Procedural	1	2	3	4	5
I.1	In my classroom I use L1 for Calling roll.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.2	In my classroom I use L1 for General announcements.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.3	In my classroom I use L1 for Attention signal ('Listen up!'count down 1 2 3\).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.4	In my classroom I use L1 for Preparation checks ('Everyone ready?').	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.5	In my classroom I use L1 for Giving directions, page numbers, etc.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.6	In my classroom I use L1 for Specialized class routines.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.7	In my classroom I use L1 for Time check ('You have three more minutes').	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.8	In my classroom I use L1 for Giving homework assignment.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.9	In my classroom I use L1 for Calling on students.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I.10	In my classroom I use L1 for Courtesy marker (i.e. polite behavior)	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II	Instructional					
II.1	In my classroom I use L1 for Warm-ups (i.e. date, weather, time, review questions).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.2	In my classroom I use L1 for Anticipatory set (generating prior knowledge of lesson topic).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.3	In my classroom I use L1 for Overview of lesson (agenda for lesson, goals for the day).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

II.4	In my classroom I use L1 for Transitions ('Now that we've read the story, I have a worksheet ...').	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.5	In my classroom I use L1 for Introducing vocabulary.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.6	In my classroom I use L1 for Reviewing vocabulary.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.7	In my classroom I use L1 for Modeling (miming/acting out use of a grammar feature, vocabulary).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.8	In my classroom I use L1 for Extension scenarios/Providing examples.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.9	In my classroom I use L1 for Grammar explanation.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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II.13	In my classroom I use L1 for Form-focused oral practice (substitution drills, question and answer).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.14	In my classroom I use L1 for Interpretive activities (listening, reading, viewing).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.15	In my classroom I use L1 for Check for student comprehension ('Any questions?').	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
II.16	In my classroom I use L1 for Closure: ('What did you learn today?').	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
III	Feedback					
III.1	In my classroom I use L1 for Praise (IRE: Input, Response, Evaluation).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
III.2	In my classroom I use L1 for Praising and repeating correct answer (IRE).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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III.5	In my classroom I use L1 for Eliciting more student talk (IRE: you like to ski? Where?).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
III.6	In my classroom I use L1 for Answer to student question.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
III.7	In my classroom I use L1 for Individual feedback on performance, progress.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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V.1	In my classroom I use L1 for Spontaneous conversation (beyond simple Question & Answer personalization).	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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VI.1	In my classroom I use L1 for Disciplining/Reprimanding/Scolding.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
VI.2	In my classroom I use L1 for Encouraging on-task behavior.	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
VI.3	In my classroom I use L1 for Reminder of rules	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………..………………………………………

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Thank you very much!