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# Reasons for EFL Teachers' L1 Use in Classrooms: Teachers' Versus Students' Perceptions

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## Abstract

This article reports on a study examining the reasons for teachers' codeswitching from both teachers' and students' perspectives. To tap into participants' cognitions regarding this issue, data were collected from 83 EFL teachers and 160 students of English through a questionnaire developed based on the reasons reported in previous studies. An exploratory factor analysis was run to find the underlying constructs. The results eventually unveiled five factors including pedagogical delivery, limitation in resources, learner variables, establishing rapport, and compensating for low proficiency. A set of independent samples t-tests were run so as to compare teachers' and students' views and the results revealed statistically significant differences in all the five identified factors. Pedagogical delivery seemed to be the most acceptable reason for codeswitching since it had the highest mean score in both groups. At the same time, teachers' and students' mean scores regarding establishing rapport showed their very different perceptions about this justification for the teachers' L1 use. The lowest mean scores for teachers and students were observed to be related to limitation in resources and learner variables, respectively. The findings of the present study draw attention to the teachers' and students' different cognitions on L1 use and the urgent need for more comparative studies in order to provide more satisfying and effective learning environments.

*Keywords:* L1 use, EFL, teachers' attitudes, students' attitudes

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## 1. Introduction

Neokleous (2017) has defined codeswitching (CS) as the process in which alternation happens between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) if the students and the teacher have a shared mother tongue. Using the students' L1 in English as a foreign/second language (EFL/ESL) contexts has been a controversial issue among policy makers and language instructors for years. As Littlewood and Yu (2011) pointed out, there are different opinions regarding the possible role L1 can have in the EFL/ESL classrooms. And positions range from insisting on an L2-only teaching approach towards varying degrees of L1 use acceptance. As Crawford (2004) stressed, teachers are expected to use the L2 as much as possible since the teachers are considered as the main source of live scaffolded input for the learners and must be L2 users themselves at the first place. On the other hand, some teachers believe that varying degrees of L1 use can support learning directly or indirectly, for example, to explain complicated concepts or to build up a positive relationship with students (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

After years of being underappreciated, especially in the communicative approaches which insisted on total exclusion of the L1, the role of L1 in L2 instruction has been revisited and received some attention over the last two decades (Wach & Monroy, 2020) and recent studies have tried to find out when and how CS can be effectively used so as to improve students' L2 learning. This significant shift in researchers' and teachers' perceptions about the role of students' L1 in EFL/ESL classrooms is probably due to the results of the previous studies and has two reasons. First, previous studies that have focused on the amounts of L1 use have reported that L1 has been present to various degrees; for instance, an average of 6.9% in Macaro's (2001) study and an average of 11.3% in De La Campa and Nassaji's (2009) research. Therefore, it can be said that L1 use is inevitable if there is a shared L1 to be used in EFL/ESL contexts. Second, a growing number of studies have measured students' improvement in target language (TL) acquisition and have supported L1 use (Bruen & Kelly, 2017; Fakher Ajabshir, 2022; Navidinia et al., 2020; Zhao & Macaro, 2016). Thus, there is a lack of research in support of an English-only policy while the beneficial effect of occasional L1 use has been reported in a large number of studies (Kerr, 2019).

The number of studies focusing on different aspects of using students' L1 in L2 instruction has considerably increased and, to advance the understanding of this topic, various studies have been done to focus on possible justifications teachers

provide for their L1 use (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Duff & Polio, 1990; Edstorm, 2006; Kang, 2008; Macaro, 2001; Samar & Moradkhani, 2014). As Kerr (2019) argued, teachers' attitudes toward L1 use are reflected in their teaching practices. Therefore, due to the significance of the impact of teachers' beliefs on their "instructional decisions" (Borg, 1999, p. 22), many studies have focused on examining teachers' cognition in respect of using the students' L1 and research on students' beliefs about CS is generally scarce. Considering the role of multiple interacting factors on teachers' decision to use a medium of instruction (Turnbull, 2001), paying attention to students' learning needs and interest is another significant and determinant factor related to the teachers' CS practices (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Kang, 2008). Furthermore, based on Neokleous (2017, p. 21), there are conflicting views between teachers and students and "student opinion on issues relating to the way a lesson is structured should not be neglected". Therefore, the present study is aimed at investigating both teachers' and students' attitudes toward the possible reasons for the teachers' L1 use in EFL classrooms.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Teachers' Opinions with Respect to the Reasons for Their L1 Use

Among the studies that have focused on justifications for CS, Duff and Polio's (1990) study was one of the first attempts to examine the reasons of teachers' CS through audio-recording two sessions and interviewing 13 teachers. Teachers referred to lack of enough time and teaching methodology guidelines to justify their L1 use. Facilitating students' deeper comprehension and considering their proficiency level in an EFL context were also reported. The difference between the L1 and L2 and the content/activities of a particular lesson were the other main reasons for CS. In another attempt, Macaro (2001) asked six pre-service teachers to have a discussion about CS, attend an L2-only class as students learning French, and then teach French classes for 14 weeks. The results of stimulated recall interviews indicated that national curriculum guidelines influenced one of the teacher's decisions to use L1. The other teachers mentioned trying to avoid communication breakdown and increasing students' comprehension of semantic and syntactic equivalents.

Crawford (2004) also tried to advance the understanding of this topic using a questionnaire collecting data from 581 teachers. The results indicated that teachers'

highest agreement was observed in their responses to two of the reasons for L1 use. First, using the TL makes coverage of culture superficial. Second, using the L1 is more effective for teaching grammar. As both researcher and participant of the study, audio-recording 24 sessions of her Spanish class and keeping a reflective journal, Edstorm (2006) conducted another study. The teacher's laziness to use all Spanish especially at the end of semester and her concerns about her students' feelings influenced her CS. Avoiding stereotypical ideas about the target culture and helping students recognize the difficulty of learning a language and understand the relationship between language and the realities it describes were the other reasons that the researcher identified for her L1 use.

Kang (2008) examined a Korean EFL teacher's L1 use in an elementary school and conducted three interviews with her before, in the middle, and after this period of observation and audio recording and the results revealed that the students' inability to comprehend the teacher's TL inputs, the teacher's lack of proficiency in L2, and her attention to the students' interest were the reasons for the teacher's use of the students' L1. De La Campa and Nassaji (2009) also tried to investigate German instructors' justifications for L1 use in two second-year conversation courses at a university in Canada. Examining three sets of data which included video and audio recordings of the classes, instructor interviews, and stimulated recall sessions indicated that the instructors mentioned a number of general (the students' level of L2 skills) and specific (the types of materials) reasons for their L1 use.

Using an online survey including six open-ended questions, McMillan and Rivers (2011) tried to determine the degree to which the beliefs of teachers at a private Japanese university specializing in foreign languages about an English-only approach has changed. The researchers grouped the teachers' comments regarding the benefits of judicious L1 use into nine categories and a successful teacher-student interaction was the most-cited reason. In his study, Yavuz (2012) interviewed 12 experienced English teachers about the use of L1 in their classes. The results indicated that structural-based activities, physical condition of the classroom, education system, insufficient course material, and students' lack of confidence and interest in the course were some of the reasons for L1 use. Teachers also reported that they used L1 to teach abstract words, to check for comprehension, and to explain the activity.

In another study, with the aim of investigating three secondary school EFL

teachers' use of the students' L1 in pre-intermediate classes in Turkey, Sali (2014) collected data through audio-recorded observations and semi-structured interviews. Teachers mentioned the learners' proficiency levels and the type of classroom activities (what they teach). They also referred to accelerating and improving learners' comprehension, alleviating learners' anxiety over learning English, and helping learners complete tasks successfully. Samar and Moradkhani (2014) tried to inspect the reasons behind four full-time EFL teachers' L1 use in a private language institute. The researchers in this study used the stimulated recall technique to tap into teachers' thought processes when they switched to L1. The analysis of the data revealed that 40% of all the reasons mentioned by the participants were related to students' comprehension.

Miri et al. (2016) also tried to investigate ten EFL teachers' cognitions about L1 use before and after a teacher education program in Tehran. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine teachers' general opinions regarding codeswitching and their specific attitudes with respect to their L1 uses. Based on the participating teachers' words, after the teacher education program the reasons for their L1 use were lessening the learners' stress, facilitating interaction and learning, saving time, taking care of beginners' feelings, and increasing students' willingness to be active. Bozorgian and Luo's (2018) study was carried out in order to investigate Iranian EFL teachers' attitudes toward CS in the EFL classroom. The researcher used a semi-structured follow-up interview to elicit information from ten selected respondents about the responses observed through the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire. They identified increasing students' understanding of the content and objectives of the lessons as a possible reason. One third of the respondents confirmed that they used codeswitching more often while teaching basic-level classes. Regarding establishing the psychological and interpersonal relationship with the students, respondents demonstrated a neutral to positive attitude in the questionnaires and interviews respectively.

### 2.2. Students' Attitudes toward the Reasons for Teacher Codeswitching

Among the previous studies that have tried to focus on students' views with respect to teacher CS, Levine (2003) and Van Der Meij and Zhao (2010) investigated students' estimated and desirable amount/frequency of teacher L1 use. In a recent attempt, Neokleous (2017) focused on students' perspectives on their teachers' L1

use and the purposes students believed their teachers' L1 should serve. Among the other published studies on language learners' opinions about teachers' use of the L1, some researchers (e.g. Brevik & Rindal, 2020; Macaro & Lee, 2013) have examined students' attitudes toward teachers' choice of language (L1/TL) in general and some others (e.g. Lee & Macaro, 2013) have tried to provide information regarding EFL learners' preference for L1/TL instruction, for instance, for vocabulary learning. As the review of the related literature demonstrated, there are not enough large-scale studies investigating teachers' possible reasons for L1 use thoroughly in EFL contexts. Moreover, the majority of publications in this regard have only investigated the reasons assigned by teachers to their CS practices in the classroom. Consequently, investigating both teachers' and students' attitudes toward the possible reasons for teachers' L1 use in EFL classrooms, the present study tries to answer two research questions.

1. What are teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the reasons for teachers' L1 use?

2. Is there any significant difference between EFL teachers' and students' perceptions about the reasons for teachers' L1 use?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

Eighty-three Iranian EFL teachers (19 males and 62 females) teaching general English courses in private language institutes participated in this study. The participants' age ranged from 20 to 61 years (M = 31.2). Their academic degrees in different English majors varied from BA to PhD. Thirty-four teachers held a bachelor's degree, 44 had a master's degree, and three of them were PhD holders. Their teaching experience varied from one to 25 years (M = 8.03).

A total number of 160 EFL students (83 males and 76 females) from different private language institutes also participated in this study. The students' age ranged from 13 to 56 years (M = 18.8). The students were from four language proficiency levels. Eighty-one and forty-four students were from A1 and A2 language proficiency levels, respectively. Twenty-eight students' language proficiency level was B1 and the B2 language proficiency level group had only one participant.

### 3.2. Instrument

Data were collected through a closed form questionnaire, which had two sections and was written in Persian (the teachers' and students' shared L1) to avoid any comprehension problems. The questionnaire items were developed based on the reasons reported in previous studies for the teachers' L1 use. The questionnaires only differed slightly in the preliminary section on the first page and the first section which provided the researchers with the demographic information of the participants. The questionnaire's preliminary section on the first page provided information concerning the aim of the research and assured the participants that the information they provided would remain confidential. The questionnaire consisted of 53 items distributed in two different sections. The first section, gathering the demographic information of the participants, included 10 questions in both the teacher and student version of the questionnaire. The 43 items in the second section of the questionnaire targeting teachers' and students' attitudes towards the reasons for teachers' L1 use were the same for both students and teachers and the options were based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The first draft of the questionnaire was piloted in hard copies. Twenty teachers and 20 students participated and based on their feedback some of the items were modified with respect to their content and language so as to make them more understandable.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed among Iranian EFL teachers and students in the form of hard copies and two hundred and seventy of them accepted to answer the questions voluntarily. The participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. Both teachers and students were requested to keep the questionnaire, answer the questions at home, and hand it to the researchers the following session to make sure that they had enough time to read and answer the questions carefully. The number of completed questionnaires was 240 excluding the ones that were incomplete or carelessly completed.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Participants' responses on the Likert scale were imported into a statistical software

package (IBM SPSS v.25.) and the internal consistency of the items was calculated by employing Cronbach's alpha. Normality of the teachers' and students' responses was examined with skewness and kurtosis and the data revealed to be normally distributed. Exploratory factor analysis was run to find the underlying constructs. Then, a series of independent samples t-tests were run to compare teachers' and students' responses.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Reliability and Validity of the Developed Questionnaire

In order to find the underlying constructs and see how scale items would group together, principal component analysis with promax rotation was run. To assess multicollinearity the determinant of the correlation matrix was examined and Field's (2018) threshold was met, with the determinant being greater than .00. The statistically significant result from the Bartlett's test of Sphericity ($p < .001$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy (.91) indicated that the data were factorable. To make the table of factor loadings easier to read, a loading criterion of .40 (in absolute value) was set as recommended by Pituch and Stevens (2016). We forced a 7-factor solution with promax rotation on the 43 items of the data and the seven identified factors with eigenvalues greater than one accounted for 52% of the total variance. Factor one with six items on facilitating and ensuring students' comprehension accounted for 30% of the variance. The five items which loaded on factor two explained 5% of the variance and were related to the teachers' lack of required energy, knowledge, and skill or the environment's distracting situation and lack of time. The four items on the role of age and gender on the teachers' decision making to resort to L1 loaded on factor three and accounted for 4% of the total variance. Factor four, which comprised six items, explained 3% of the variance and was about improving students' emotional states and their willingness to be more active in class. The four items on issues related to initial stages of learning a foreign language in general loaded on factor five and accounted for 3% of the variance. The sixth and seventh factors were not included since less than three items were loaded on these factors. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented in Table 1 and the content of the loaded items is presented in the appendix. The internal consistency of the identified factors was calculated by employing Cronbach's alpha, with the values ranging from .62 to .86 (Table 2). Cronbach's alpha for the entire questionnaire (excluding the items that did not load

on any of the five factors) was .90.

**Table 1**
*The Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis*

| factors | Items | Eigen values | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 | Factor 5 |
| pedagogical delivery | Q 3. | .56 | | | | |
| | Q 10. | .50 | | | | |
| | Q 16 | .50 | | | | |
| | Q 18. | .64 | | | | |
| | Q 25. | .46 | | | | |
| | Q 33. | .44 | | | | |
| limitation in resources | Q 4. | | .41 | | | |
| | Q 5. | | .76 | | | |
| | Q 20. | | .65 | | | |
| | Q 22. | | .61 | | | |
| | Q 42. | | .53 | | | |
| learner variables | Q 27. | | | .58 | | |
| | Q 28. | | | .68 | | |
| | Q 29. | | | .88 | | |
| | Q 30. | | | .74 | | |
| establishing rapport | Q 11. | | | | .41 | |
| | Q 13. | | | | .79 | |
| | Q 14. | | | | .58 | |
| | Q 15. | | | | .70 | |
| | Q 17. | | | | .60 | |
| | Q 23. | | | | .40 | |
| compensating for low proficiency | Q 19. | | | | | .84 |
| | Q 21. | | | | | .58 |
| | Q 26. | | | | | .67 |
| | Q 38. | | | | | .47 |

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
 Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]
a.   Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

**Table 2**
*Cronbach's alpha Values for the Emerged Factors*

| Group | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers | 0.72 | 0.71 | 0.86 | 0.80 |
| Students | 0.64 | 0.62 | 0.83 | 0.79 |

### 4.2.   Independent Samples T-test

A set of independent samples *t*-tests were conducted so as to see if the teachers' and students' attitudes towards the possible reasons for the teachers' L1 use were

significantly different. Significance level (*p*) for all statistical analyses was .05. The options for the 43 items targeting teachers' and students' attitudes were based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, with 2.5 mean score being considered as our cut-off point, i.e. mean scores higher than 2.5 indicate respondents' positive attitudes. Normality of the sample's responses to the identified factors was tested with skewness and kurtosis and all the values were in the acceptable -1 to +1 threshold. Descriptive statistics were calculated, too. The results of descriptive statistics and normality tests are presented in Table 3. This section is organized based on significant themes which emerged from the results of factor analysis.

**Table 3**
*Descriptive Statistics and Normal Distribution of the 5 Identified Factors*

| Factor | Group | Mean | SD | skewness | kurtosis |
|--------|-------|------|------|----------|----------|
| Factor 1 | Teachers | 2.55 | 0.49 | -0.24 | 0.03 |
| | Students | 3.01 | 0.45 | -0.37 | -0.09 |
| Factor 2 | Teachers | 1.69 | 0.46 | 0.09 | -0.75 |
| | Students | 2.16 | 0.55 | 0.05 | -0.14 |
| Factor 3 | Teachers | 1.75 | 0.59 | 0.61 | -0.38 |
| | Students | 2.06 | 0.69 | 0.37 | -0.49 |
| Factor 4 | Teachers | 1.95 | 0.47 | -0.14 | -0.04 |
| | Students | 2.47 | 0.58 | 0.13 | -0.29 |
| Factor 5 | Teachers | 2.26 | 0.61 | -0.42 | -0.47 |
| | Students | 2.76 | 0.55 | -0.30 | 0.33 |

Note: SD = Standard Deviation.

### *4.2.1. Pedagogical Delivery*

An independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the mean scores of the teachers and students and to see if there is a significant difference between these groups' attitudes towards facilitating and ensuring students' comprehension as an acceptable reason for the teachers' L1 use. The results of the independent samples *t*-test revealed a significant difference ($t_{(241)} = 7.29$, $p = .000$). Students held more positive attitudes towards this factor ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .45$) than the teachers ($M = 2.55$, $SD = .49$). The teachers' and students' mean scores in relation to this factor was more than the mean score of their responses to all the other four factors.

The teachers' and students' highest mean in response to this factor is similar to the results of Samar and Moradkhani's (2014) study, in which the majority of all the reasons mentioned by the teachers were related to students' comprehension. Both groups' highest mean shows their awareness of the cognitive reality that connecting

new concepts to preexisting knowledge can help the language learning process (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Considering Teachers' reports from a learner standpoint (Woll, 2020) of the effect of translanguaging on deepening understanding, and the percentage of students' positive answers (84.4%) regarding item 18 (a teacher can use the students' L1 to compensate for students' lack of comprehension.), the significant difference and the students' higher mean score is probably due to the low language proficiency level (A1) of half of the students participating in the present study and consequently, their preference to receive more explanations in their L1.

### 4.2.2. Limitation in Resources

The five items within the second factor were related to the teacher's lack of required energy, knowledge, or skill to provide input in English and the environment's distracting situation and lack of time. To identify differences between mean scores of the teachers and students, an independent samples t-test was conducted and the results revealed a significant difference ($t_{(241)}$ = -6.66, p = .000). Both groups responded negatively, but disagreement was found more widely among teachers (*M* = 1.69, *SD* = .46) than among the students (*M* = 2.16, *SD* = .55). Regarding factor two, it can be said that teachers in the present study do not find these reasons acceptable at all. Although teachers' lack of required proficiency (Kang, 2008) has been referred to as one of the reasons for teacher CS, the results of Bozorgian and Luo's (2018) study showed that EFL teachers with higher degrees had a greater tendency towards CS than their lower-degree counterparts, and even the highly proficient native speakers of the target language have been reported to rely on students' first language (Crawford, 2004). As the nature of the three reasons related to the teachers' teaching features indicates, the reason for the teachers' lower mean score for this factor, even the lowest among the other identified factors, may be losing their status among colleagues (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2007).

### 4.2.3. Learner Variables

With regard to the third identified factor, an independent samples *t*-test was run and the results indicated a significant difference between teachers' and students' attitudes to this factor ($t_{(241)}$ = -3.47, *p* = .001). Despite the negative reactions

towards the effect of learners' age and gender on teachers' decision making to use L1 in both groups, teachers (*M* = 1.75, *SD* = .59) disagreed to a larger extent than the students (*M* = 2.06, *SD* = .69) did. Among the items loaded on this factor, similar percentages of teachers (79.5%) and students (73.8%) disagreed with item 28 (a teacher can use the students' L1 when s/he teaches the adult language learners), implying that both teachers and students agree that adult language learners do not need much support in L1. This attitude toward adult language learners might be because of teachers' and students' belief in older learners' metacognitive strategies (Tragant & Victori, 2006), which can help them deal with greater quantities of English-only explanations through strategic behavior (Lee & Macaro, 2013).

The difference between the teachers' and students' mean scores (*M* = 1.92, *SD* = .71; *M* = 2.33, *SD* = .80, respectively) for item 27 (a teacher can use the students' L1 when s/he teaches the teenage language learners) was more than the other three items and a majority of teachers (80.7%) disagreed that teenagers might need more L1 input, while from students' point of view, teaching teenager language learners requires more L1 use from teachers. The lowest mean score for the teachers' group was in response to item 30, (a teacher can use the students' L1 when s/he teaches the male language learners), and only a small percentage of teachers (10.8%) were in agreement with the students' gender as a reason for teachers' L1 use, although the students' mean score in response to this item is the second highest mean among their answers to the items of this factor. Teachers' attitudes toward the effect of gender on teacher CS in the present study are somehow similar to the results of Bozorgian and Luo's (2018) study, in which gender was not identified as an influential factor for CS. This significant difference in teachers' and students' views with regard to factor three is probably due to the teachers' strict nature. In other words, teachers expect students to work hard and be responsible for their own learning regardless of their age and gender, whereas in students' point of view teaching younger and male language learners might require more L1 use from teachers.

### 4.2.4. Establishing Rapport

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare teachers' and students' opinions about improving students' emotional states and increasing their willingness to be more active in class as possible justifications for teachers' CS

practices. The results revealed a significant difference ($t_{(197)}$ = -7.40, $p$= .000). Students' mean score in response to this item (M = 2.47, SD = .58) does not reach the cut-off point of 2.5; however, considering the significant difference and teachers' mean score (M = 1.95, SD = .47), it shows students' positive attitude towards this factor. Comparing the mean scores indicated that the mean score difference between the teachers' and students' groups for this factor is more than that in the other factors. The teachers' minor attention to this factor is similar to the results of the study conducted by Miri et al. (2016). Although developing a good teacher-student rapport can positively affect students' L2 engagement (Shakki, 2022), the participating teachers in Miri et al.'s (2016) study were mostly considering cognitive aspects of language learning and even the only teacher who supported L1 use before the teacher education program did not justify his choice on affective needs and wants of his students. Regarding the single items of this factor, the teachers' lowest mean score and a dramatic difference between the teachers' (M = 1.78, SD = .62) and students' (M = 2.46, SD = .85) mean scores was observed in their responses to item 17 (a teacher can use the students' L1 as a tool to reduce his/her social distance as a teacher with the students). Among the items loaded on this factor, students' highest mean was observed in response to item 13 (a teacher can use the students' L1 as a tool for building a better relationship with students). The percentage of positive responses to item 13 suggests that the students (53.7%) were more interested in building a better relationship with their teachers than were the teachers (26.5%). Therefore, a possible reason for the teachers' lower mean score for this factor can be related to their fear of losing control of the classroom. They might think that paying attention to students' emotional states can lead to lessening their social distance with the students.

### 4.2.5. Compensating for low Proficiency

To compare the teachers' and students' views about the fifth identified factor, which is concerned with a few issues related to the initial stages of learning a foreign language in general, an independent samples *t*-test was performed and the results indicated a significant difference ($t_{(241)}$ = -6.47, $p$ = .000). Students held more positive attitudes towards considering the initial stages of learning a language as a teachers' reason for L1 use (*M* = 2.76, *SD* = .55) than teachers (*M* = 2.26, *SD* = .61). The learners' low language proficiency level has been one of the frequent

justifications for teachers' reference to the students' L1 in many studies (Bozorgian & Luo, 2018; Kang, 2008; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Samar & Moradkhani, 2014). With item 19 (a teacher can use the students' L1 when the teacher teaches basic-level students), the teachers' mean score was the highest in comparison with their mean scores in response to the other three items loaded on this factor. A reason for the teachers' agreement with basic-level students' need to receive input in L1 can be because of their experience as the participant teacher in Kang's (2008) study reported. Based on her words, after working as an EFL teacher for a few years, teachers know that understanding English-only inputs on certain occasions is difficult for students with low levels of English proficiency. Comparing the percentage of positive answers showed that more students (72.5%) than teachers (53.0%) were in agreement with the beginners' need for the teachers' L1 use. The students' point of view regarding this issue is in line with the results of the studies conducted by Lee and Lo (2017) and Qian et al. (2009). However, the teachers and students in the Van Der Meij and Xiaoguang's (2010) research believe that teacher/student proficiency plays no role in CS and this difference in their attitude might be related to their age as university students and their major (English).

The biggest difference in mean score between the teachers and students (M = 2.26, SD = .84; M = 2.92, SD = .78, respectively) was observed to be in response to item 26 (a teacher can use the students' L1 when s/he teaches very young language learners/kids). Students' greater agreement with this proposition is somehow similar to the results of Macaro and Lee's (2013) study, in which the mean score of the young learners showed their strong disagreement with the English-only instruction. A possible reason for this difference in teachers' and students' attitudes toward this item might be the students' awareness about the children's limited linguistic knowledge that makes following an English-only speech stream difficult and can lead to cognitive overload (Macaro & Lee, 2013). Another reason could be the language learners' personal experiences. In other words, since they themselves have faced challenges, they seem to be more understanding regarding the importance of the students' first exposure to the language (Inbar-Lourie, 2010).

## 5. Conclusion

This study tried to investigate teachers' and students' ideas to identify the reasons that lead to teachers' L1 use in order to have a more complete picture of the occasions in which L1 use contributes to more success in comparison to a TL

dominated environment. Addressing the first research question, an exploratory factor analysis was run to find the underlying constructs and the results eventually unveiled five factors including pedagogical delivery, limitation in resources, learner variables, establishing rapport, and compensating for low proficiency. Addressing the second research question, the results indicated statistically significant differences in teachers' and students' opinions in terms of the reasons for teachers' CS for all the five identified factors. The analysis of the data showed that students' mean scores were higher than teachers' mean scores for all the identified factors and students had a more positive attitude toward the justifications for a teacher's L1 use than the teachers. Despite the notable differences between teachers and students in terms of their perceptions of acceptable justifications for teacher CS, comparing their mean scores in response to the identified factors and some single items indicated that they had similar ideas in some cases.

Among the five identified factors, the highest mean score for both teachers and students was observed to be in response to the items of the first factor (pedagogical delivery), indicating students' crucial need to receive some L1 input and teachers' agreement with the fact that L1 use contributes to students' better comprehension in spite of their persistency on an L2-only approach. Teachers and students had similar attitudes in respect to adult learners' ability to deal with L2-only input; however, comparing their mean scores showed their opposing ideas about teenagers and kids and only students put emphasis on younger learners' need for teacher CS. In fact, the students' lowest mean score and the smallest difference in mean scores between the teachers and students was exhibited in their attitudes toward the third factor, which was concerned with the language learners' age/gender as a determining factor for teacher CS. The teachers' lowest mean score was observed to be related to the second identified factor, showing their negative perceptions about limitation in resources as the possible reason for teacher CS. The most significant difference in teachers' and students' mean scores was observed to be in relation to factor four. In other words, agreement with establishing rapport as a reason for a teacher's use of the students' L1 was found more widely among students than teachers.

As previously discussed, due to the inevitable nature of L1 use and its beneficial effect on students' improvement in TL acquisition, the English-only policy which considers codeswitching and other bilingual practices as an obstacle to effective language learning needs to be revisited (Gallagher, 2020). The present study might raise some important implications for EFL theoreticians and practitioners. Taking

into consideration the changes in attitudes about the possible role L1 can have in EFL contexts, the results of this study will provide the teacher educators and principals of private language institutes with useful information regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of L1 use in an EFL context. As Sali (2014) pointed out, teachers in her study did not seem to have any specific policies regarding L1 and L2 use. And there is no theoretical framework based on which teachers can make informed decisions in relation to L1 use (Gallagher, 2020). Therefore, considering the importance of teachers' and students' opinions about L1 use, the results of the current study can hopefully help teacher educators reconsider their beliefs about teachers' use of L1 and provide teachers with clear guidelines on when and how to use the students' L1 effectively. Teachers are discouraged from using the students' L1 in many countries (Littlewood & Yu, 2011) and almost all private language institutes in Iran share this same opinion regarding CS (Samar & Moradkhani, 2014).

Surveys of learners' attitudes towards the use of L1 in their classes show that all the learners do not believe in the monolingual approach to language teaching and the majority of them prefer a certain degree of L1 use (Kerr, 2019). Based on Bransford et al. (2000), if a learner-centered teacher perceives teaching as constructing a bridge between the subject matter and the student, s/he needs to keep an eye on both ends of the bridge. In other words, taking care of students' needs is also an important part of every successful language program since everyday more and more emphasis is put on negotiated decisions being made about language learning conditions. Paying attention to the results of this study, private language institute principals may accept that the English-only policy is not favored by all students and, therefore, may change their attitudes to teachers' use of L1. The data for the present study were collected through a questionnaire distributed among Iranian EFL teachers and students in private language institutes. Bearing in mind these students' voluntary attendance at private language institutes to learn a foreign language and their experience as language learners, we can conclude that their views on L1 use may indicate their real concern about improving the language learning process. And as one of the important stakeholders of language learning, their ideas need to be taken into account at least to some level.

English-only policy is doomed to be a failure in classrooms since teachers are the ones who should put educational policies into practice and English-only policy is not accepted by these grassroot practitioners. Given that the teacher participants

in this study opined that L1 can assist with their instructional practices on some occasions, instructors may also accept students' requests to receive some input in their L1 and make better decisions to use the students' L1 when appropriate while thinking of students' preferences. Teachers' and students' different viewpoints about codeswitching can be one of the reasons for both groups' dissatisfaction with a language learning program. Therefore, the results of the present study suggest that this topic requires policy makers', teacher educators', and instructors' urgent attention. The present study offered a comparative analysis of teachers' and students' views on the possible justifications for teachers' CS practices and does not suggest L1 use based on its findings. It is only hoped that the findings of the current study provide an insight into these groups' beliefs in relation to L1 use to be considered by policy makers and future teacher training programs can offer clear guidelines on L1 use.

The only data collection instrument of the present study was a closed-form questionnaire and further studies can add a qualitative data collection technique such as conducting interviews, which provides the researchers with an in-depth understanding of the learners' needs. With respect to validating the developed instrument, it seems pretty valuable if researchers use the same instrument in different contexts so as to see if the same number of variables emerge as a result of running factor analysis. Moreover, considering the difference between private language institutes and public schools in terms of codeswitching in Iran, it would be worthwhile to replicate the same study in public schools. Finally, focusing on the effect of different educational cultures on practitioners' beliefs about L1 use (Wach & Monroy, 2020), it is necessary to do similar studies in different contexts to see if there are significant discrepancies in teachers' and students' beliefs regarding CS.

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**Appendix**

*Questionnaire Items Loaded on the Five Identified Factors*

| Factor | Item | Item content: A teacher can use the students' L1… |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | To avoid the stereotypical ideas about the target culture. |
|  | 10 | To explain the similarities or differences of the first and second language. |
|  | 16 | To tell jokes or personal short stories in order to enliven the class. |
|  | 18 | To compensate for students' lack of comprehension. |
|  | 25 | For teaching some of the new vocabularies. |
|  | 33 | When s/he teaches a special subject that is hard for students to understand in the TL. |
| 2 | 4 | When s/he feels too lazy to talk in the TL. |
|  | 5 | When his/her lack of necessary proficiency prevents her from using only the TL |
|  | 20 | When there is not enough time to teach using only the TL. |
|  | 22 | When the environment's distracting situation makes the understanding of the TL input difficult for the students. |
|  | 42 | When s/he does not have enough teaching strategies to teach something in the TL. |
| 3 | 27 | When s/he teaches the teenage language learners. |
|  | 28 | When s/he teaches the adult language learners. |
|  | 29 | When s/he teaches the female language learners. |
|  | 30 | When s/he teaches the male language learners. |
| 4 | 11 | To reduce the students' stress in the classroom. |
|  | 13 | As a tool for building a better relationship with students. |
|  | 14 | To improve feelings of empathy and solidarity among the students. |
|  | 15 | To promote interaction among learners. |
|  | 17 | As a tool to reduce his/her social distance as a teacher with the students. |
|  | 23 | As a brainstorming tool to elicit more responses from the students. |
| 5 | 19 | When s/he teaches the basic-level language learners. |
|  | 21 | Since it bridges the students' identity as speakers of L1 with the creation of a new self in the TL. |
|  | 26 | When s/he teaches very young language learners/kids. |
|  | 38 | To evaluate the students' learning needs at the beginning of the term. |