## A. Smagul

Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, Budapest
e-mail: saidanam@student.elte.hu

# PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS OF L1 AND TRANSLATION USE: THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF A FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH KAZAKHSTANI SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL TEACHERS

From the latter half of the 20th century to the present day, monolingual or English-only teaching has been conventionally considered the optimal approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) literature and research. Nevertheless, there is a growing acknowledgement that mainstream ELT theory may offer a less precise portrayal of classroom dynamics than the actual observed reality. Consequently, this paper aims to explore teachers' practices and perceptions regarding the use of learners' first language (L1) and translation in EFL classrooms. A focus group interview (FGI) was conducted with in-service secondary school EFL teachers from Kazakhstan who were selected through non-probability sampling to achieve this goal. Thematic analysis was applied to scrutinize the interview data. The results revealed three primary themes: teaching English through L1, learners' English level and L1 use, and drawbacks of monolingual teaching. Each theme and sub-theme is substantiated by quotations from the interview and discussed in connection with ELT theory and relevant studies.

**Key words:** L1 in ELT, translation in language teaching (TILT), translanguaging, multilingual teaching, teachers' practices, focus group, thematic analysis.

### А. Смағұл

Еотвош Лоранд университеті, Будапешт қ., Мажарстан
e-mail: saidanam@student.elte.hu

### Ана тілі мен аударма тапсырмаларын қолдану тәжірибесі және қабылдауы: қазақстандық орта мектептердегі ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерімен фокус-топтық сұхбаттың тақырыптық талдауы

Монолингвалды оқыту әдісі XX ғасырдың екінші жартысынан бастап қазіргі уақытқа дейін ағылшын тілін оқыту (ELT) әдебиеті мен ғылыми зерттеулерінде дәстүрлі түрде оңтайлы әдіс ретінде қарастырылып келді. Дегенмен, кейінгі кезде басым ELT теориясы ағылшын пәні сыныптарында бақыланатын шынайы оқу үдерісін әрдайым дәл бейнелей бермейтіні туралы хабардарлық артып келеді. Сондықтан, бұл мақала ағылшын тілі сабағында оқушылардың ана тілін (L1) және аударма тапсырмаларын қолдануға қатысты мұғалімдердің тәжірибелері мен қабылдауларын зерттейді. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін Қазақстанның орта мектептерінде жұмыс істейтін ағылшын тілі мұғалімі мақсатты іріктеу әдісі арқылы таңдалып алынып, олармен фокус-топтық сұхбат жүргізілді. Сұхбат деректерін талдау үшін тақырыптық анализ әдісі қолданылды. Тақырыптық анализ үш негізгі тақырыпты анықтауға және егжей-тегжейлі сипаттауға мүмкіндік берді: (1) ана тілі арқылы ағылшын тілін оқыту, (2) оқушылардың ағылшын тілін меңгеру деңгейі және мұғалімнің ана тілін пайдалануы, сондай-ақ (3) монолингвалды оқытудың кемшіліктері. Әрбір тақырып пен ішкі тақырыптар сұхбат дәйексөздерімен расталады және ағылшын тілін оқыту әдістемесі мен тиісті зерттеулерге сүйене отырып талқыланады.

**Түйін сөздер:** ағылшын тілін оқытуда ана тілі рөлі, аударма тапсырмалары, транслингвалдылық, көп тілді оқыту, мұғалімдер тәжірибесі, фокус-топ, тақырыптық талдау.

### А. Смағұл

Университет им. Еотвоша Лоранда, г. Будапешт, Венгрия
e-mail: saidanam@student.elte.hu

### Практика использования и восприятие родного языка и перевода: тематический анализ фокус-группового интервью с учителями английского языка в казахстанских средних школах

Со второй половины 20-го века до настоящего времени монолингвальное преподавание традиционно рассматривалось как оптимальная методика в литературе и научных исследованиях в области преподавания английского языка (ELT). Однако наблюдается растущее осознание того,

что доминирующая теория ELT может предоставлять менее точное представление о динамике в классе, по сравнению с тем, что можно увидеть на практике. Поэтому, данная статья исследует практики и восприятия учителей относительно использования родного языка учащихся (L1) и перевода на занятиях по английскому языку как иностранному. Для достижения этой цели было проведено фокус-групповое интервью с работающими учителями английского языка в средних школах Казахстана, отобранными по методу целенаправленной выборки. Тематический анализ данных интервью выполнялся вручную, что позволило выявить и подробно описать три основные темы: (1) преподавание английского через родной язык, (2) уровень владения английским языком учащихся и использование родного языка, а также (3) недостатки монолингвального обучения. Каждая тема и подтемы подкреплены цитатами из интервью и обсуждены в контексте методик преподавания английского языка и соответствующих исследований.

**Ключевые слова:** родной язык в преподавании английского языка, перевод в преподавании языка, транслингвальность, полилингвальное обучение, практики учителей, фокус-группа, тематический анализ.

## Introduction

From the latter half of the 20th century to the present day, monolingual or English-only teaching has been conventionally considered the optimal approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) literature and research. However, the globalization of society and the rise of multilingual educational practices have necessitated a re-evaluation of traditional English-only instruction. This shift, often called the "multilingual turn" (for reference, see Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014), challenges the monolingual approach to foreign language teaching and has stimulated a great deal of research within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Advocates of this shift emphasize the importance of connecting the second language (L2) with learners' first language (L1) and their broader linguistic repertoire.

Despite the increased emphasis on multilingualism in educational research, its practical implementation in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms remains limited (Burner & Carlsen, 2023). Studies across various contexts, including Kazakhstan, indicate a strong preference for English-only instruction (for a review, refer to Burner & Carlsen, 2023; Goodman & Manan, forthcoming), highlighting the monolingual bias and adherence to native-speaker standards influencing English language teaching globally (Zhunussova, 2021).

To understand the factors influencing this strong preference for English-only instruction, a questionnaire study was conducted to investigate the attitudes of Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers towards L1 and translation use and the factors influencing these attitudes (Smagul, 2024). The results revealed that teachers displayed a mixed attitude towards using L1 and translation in the classroom. While they recognized the benefits of strategically using L1 for lower-level learners and translation

tasks for teaching vocabulary and culture-specific expressions, they generally favored English-only instruction. In addition, the survey results indicated a correlation between teachers' use of L1 and learners' English proficiency levels. Lower proficiency levels often led to more frequent classroom use of L1 and translation, whereas higher proficiency levels demonstrated a preference for English-only instruction.

To gain a deeper understanding of these findings and explore them further, the present focus group interview (FGI) study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers perceive and implement L1 and translation in the English classroom?

2. How do Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers relate learners' English proficiency levels to their use of L1 in teaching?

These questions will guide the FGI and provide deeper insights into the perceptions, practices, and influencing factors regarding L1 and translation use among Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers.

## Literature review

The theoretical framework for this study encompasses critical themes related to the application of L1 and translation in ELT. It starts by defining L1, recognizing its complexities in multilingual contexts, and highlighting its role in Kazakhstani secondary schools. The concept of translation is explored within language teaching paradigm. The section delves into historical shifts in ELT methodologies and debates about L1 and translation, offering arguments for and against these practices. It also reviews prior international empirical studies to gain insights into teachers' attitudes towards L1 and translation use. The research identifies a notable gap in Kazakhstan,

where existing studies have mainly focused on tertiary-level teachers' views on the use of L1, leaving translation tasks underrepresented.

### The Notion of First Language

In applied linguistics, the term "first language" or mother tongue is defined as either the language of full fluency (Thornbury, 2006) or that acquired during early childhood (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). This definition is sometimes challenged in multilingual contexts, prompting some scholars to propose the term "own language" (see, Cook, 2010) to reflect diverse linguistic realities. However, in Kazakhstan, where secondary education is predominantly conducted in either Kazakh or Russian (Goodman & Manan, forthcoming), the multilingual environment does not complicate the use of traditional terms. Here, both learners and teachers generally share a primary language, facilitating straightforward communication and making the term L1 clear and effective in educational settings.

### The Notion of Translation

In language teaching, translation plays various educational roles, as outlined by Howatt & Widdowson (2004). This includes using a learner's L1 to aid comprehension of texts in L2, incorporating both glossing and the more pedagogically significant activity of converting L1 texts into L2 while maintaining the original meaning (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004, p. 191). This study specifically focuses on the latter–text conversion. Translation activities, which can be implemented as classroom tasks or homework assignments, are conducted in both directions: from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1, reflecting the comprehensive approach to language acquisition.

### L1 and Translation in English Language Teaching: Advocacy and Opposition

The role of learners' L1 and translation in ELT has not been static, but has evolved significantly over time, influenced by changing pedagogical trends (Topolska-Pado, 2010). In the early days, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was the dominant approach, where L1 and translation were extensively used in foreign language classrooms. This method was centred around grammar instruction and reinforced grammar concepts by translating carefully constructed sentences to illustrate specific language rules (Malmkjær, 2010, p. 186).

However, by the mid-20th century, the educational landscape shifted with the rise of communicative language teaching methods. These methods advocated for monolingual or English-only instruction, arguing that it promoted a more immersive learning environment and discouraged the use of L1 and translation in classrooms (Cook, 2010; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

However, in recent times, there has been a notable resurgence in the acceptance of L1 use and translation, driven by the 'multilingual turn' in language education. This new approach advocates for the integration of learners' L1 and broader linguistic repertoires into L2 acquisition. It underscores the advantages of multilingual approaches in bi/multilingual educational settings, fostering a more inclusive pedagogical framework (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May,2014).

Despite renewed advocacy for multilingual education, the practical implementation of these practices in EFL classrooms, especially in places like Kazakhstan, remains limited. This is often due to enduring preferences for English-only approaches and native-speaker norms (Zhunussova, 2021). Interestingly, these observations primarily apply to higher education settings (e.g., Akhmetova, 2021; Kuandykov, 2021; Tastanbek, 2019). There remains a significant gap in understanding how secondary school EFL teachers in Kazakhstan perceive and apply L1 and translation in their classrooms. Addressing this gap is crucial for bridging the divide between multilingual research and its practical application in education.

### Materials and methods

The study utilized empirical data from the FGI conducted on the Zoom platform with Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers. According to Ho (2012), a focus group is defined as a "small structured group with selected respondents normally chaired by a moderator" (p.1). Following established practices in qualitative research, typical focus group sizes range from 4-12 participants, with 6-8 being common to ensure manageable and effective discussions (Galloway, 2020; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Langford et al., 2002; Krueger & Casey, 2000). This study employed a focus group of six participants, a number selected based on the guidelines to allow all members to contribute meaningfully without overwhelming the group dynamics.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim to prepare for qualitative analysis. The analytical method employed was thematic analysis, which involved identifying primary themes that encapsulate the key

insights from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process was crucial in summarizing the content effectively. The data was collected in a two-hour session, and participation was voluntary.

### *Participants*

Participants were selected through non-probability sampling, specifically quota sampling, where teachers were chosen based on specific non-random criteria, including their willingness to participate as indicated in a prior quantitative survey. This method aimed to create a sample representative of the target population. Teachers varied in terms of years of experience, academic levels, types of schools, and the educational levels at which they taught English.

Six female English language teachers from secondary schools in Kazakhstan participated. Their experience ranged from 1 to 38 years, and their academic levels varied from BA to MA degrees in ELT. They taught in diverse school settings, including state, private, international, and specialized schools offering polylingual education. Additional details are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1** – The characteristics of the participants

| Participants | Teaching experience (year) | Academic level | Workplace (school) | Educational level of learners | English proficiency (teacher) | English proficiency (learners) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T1 | 35 | Soviet Institute (5 years: BA+MA) | State | Upper-secondary | Upper-intermediate | Intermediate |
| T2 | 38 | Soviet Institute (5 years: BA+MA) | Specialized school with polylingual education | Lower-secondary | Near-native speaker | Beginner |
| T3 | 13 | BA | State | Lower-secondary | Advanced | Intermediate |
| T4 | 5 | MA | State | Lower-secondary | Upper-intermediate | Intermediate |
| T5 | 5 | MA | Private | Upper-secondary | Near-native speaker | Upper-intermediate |
| T6 | 1 | BA | International | Lower-secondary | Advanced | Intermediate |

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The FGI was conducted online and chosen for its cost-effectiveness and ease of organization. The researcher moderated the session, ensured adherence to ethical guidelines set out by British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024), and facilitated the discussion. Participants consented to the recording and subsequent use of their data for research purposes. At the start, the moderator welcomed the participants, outlined the purpose of the discussion, reviewed the rights of participants, emphasized anonymity, and introduced ground rules. Participants were informed that the discussion would focus on personal views and experiences, emphasizing that there were no right or wrong answers (Dörnyei, 2007, p.129).

The initial discussion broadly covered participants' experiences using L1 in EFL classrooms and the factors influencing their decisions to use or avoid L1. Questions regarding the use of trans-lation followed. Inspired by findings from a prior questionnaire study, follow-up questions probed connections between learners' English levels and L1 use, opinions on L1 and translation as teaching methods, and effective techniques for incorporating these into language teaching. For specific questions, see the Appendix. The focus group concluded with participants discussing what they found most significant in the discussion and any topics related to L1 and translation use in EFL classrooms that they felt strongly about but had yet to be covered. All participants were thanked for their active participation and valuable insights.

Data analysis commenced immediately following the focus group session, utilizing the thematic analysis described by Howitt and Cramer (2014). The process began with transcribing the focus group discussions from the video recording. The researcher then undertook a comprehensive familiarization with the data to gain a thorough understanding. This

step was critical to accurately identify overarching themes and relevant sub-themes that succinctly summarized the data content. Once these emergent themes were identified, they were aptly named and refined for clear presentation in the final paper.

**Results and discussion**

The analysis of the focus group data identified three primary themes: (1) Teaching L2 through L1, (2) Learners' English Level and L1 Use, and (3) Drawbacks of Monolingual Teaching. These themes are visually represented in Figure 1. For clarity, the quotations included in this discussion have undergone minor edits, such as the removal of filler words like "ums," "uhs," and "like." The editing ensured that the quotes were concise and focused on the relevant content. Additionally, to enhance the reliability of the thematic analysis, a co-coder was engaged to verify the themes identified. This collaborative approach helped to ensure the thematic integrity and the accuracy of the theme identification process.
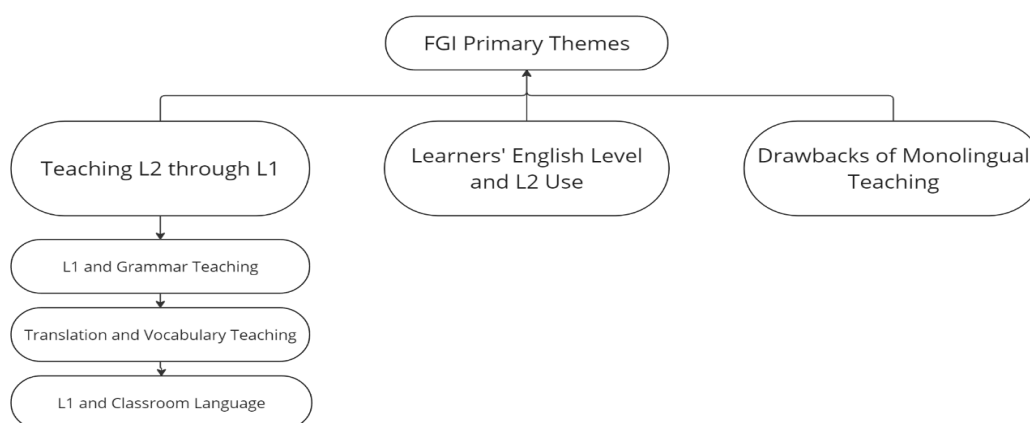


**Figure 1 –** Primary themes as emerged during FGI

***Theme 1: Teaching L2 through L1***
Teachers shared their experiences of using L1 and translation in the EFL classroom. All six teachers acknowledged that they have used both L1 and translation at least once in their teaching practices and continue to use them as necessary. The ways, purposes, and reasons for using L1 and translation varied, including explanation through first-language commentary, comparing Kazakh and English to highlight similarities and differences, and using translation for more precise descriptions for language learners. These methods were frequently discussed by several teachers. Within this broad category, three distinct sub-types of teaching L2 through L1 were identified, each labelled as separate sub-themes due to their independence and distinctiveness. Each sub-theme was illustrated with examples from the interview transcripts and discussed in relation to ELT theory.

***Sub-theme 1: L1 and Grammar Teaching***
Teachers strongly support the use of the learners' L1 in teaching English grammar. They find it beneficial to clarify complex grammatical concepts, provide clearer explanations, and directly compare L1 and English. One teacher stated, *"Learners better understand new grammatical categories when I compare them with those in Kazakh or Russian, providing examples from these languages."*

Another teacher highlighted the instructional value of linguistic similarities: *"Explaining English grammatical gender in reference to Kazakh, a non-gendered language like English, aids understanding. For third person singular pronouns, I refer to Russian, as Kazakh uses a single pronoun for all three English equivalents."*

A third teacher shared the broader educational benefits:

*Teaching foreign language grammar through comparison with the learners' mother tongue enhances analytical skills. This approach facilitates linguistic analysis and cultural comparison. For instance, one learner became so intrigued by the concept of money in Kazakh and English cultures that she researched the topic and won a regional competition.*

The comments align with the Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Contrastive Grammar theories, widely popular among SLA studies in the 1950s. Practitioners of contrastive linguistics at that time mainly aimed at improving foreign language teaching based on a pairwise grammar comparison. However, with the arrival and total dominance of communicative methodologies, the use and even the reference to L1 has withered away from language teaching (Kaye, 2014). Consequently, CA is rarely practised in ELT today. A participant in the discussion also mentioned this rejection of L1 and deductive grammar teaching: *"Sometimes, inspectors monitor our classes to assess the quality of language teaching delivery. The common remarks are related to the use of Kazakh or Russian in the English language class. They also question the time allotted to grammar teaching".*

### Sub-theme 2: Translation and Vocabulary Teaching

Teachers viewed translation as a vital tool for teaching vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and culture-specific phrases in line with Samardali and Ismael (2017). They emphasized its importance in conveying the nuances of new language constructions and homonyms: *"If you do not provide a translation for a new linguistic construction, learners might misinterpret it. For example, without proper context, the construction 'I want you to…' can be misunderstood."*

The necessity of translation for clarity and efficiency was also highlighted: *"We cannot avoid translation because some words have multiple meanings that learners cannot deduce on their own. Especially with idioms and phrases, providing the correct translation is crucial."* One teacher mentioned the practical benefits of translation in the classroom: *"I opt for translation when simple definitions fail. It saves time, and I believe learners also learn new words through translation at home, so using it in the classroom makes sense."*

### Sub-theme 3: L1 and Classroom Language

This sub-theme examines how L1 is utilized to praise, encourage, and console learners during their language learning journey and in their achievements, extending to classroom behaviour management. Karabassova and San Isidro (2020) note that some teachers prefer using L1 to maintain discipline. In contrast, one teacher in the study explained that she does not switch to Kazakh to discipline learners but instead uses it when addressing lack of progress or interest: *"… if they show no progress or interest in learning, I switch to Kazakh to express concerns about their attitude and performance. I find that the native language has a stronger impact on motivating them."*

Another teacher described using L1 for positive reinforcement: *"I use L1 to praise my learners. Praise in their native language resonates differently and tends to be more encouraging."* This method aligns with Edstrom (2006), who suggests that using L1 to commend learners can reinforce the authenticity of the praise. Furthermore, Bruen and Kelly (2017) note that L1 can help reduce learner anxiety in the classroom.

To conclude, Theme 1: Teaching L2 through L1 can be summarized by the words of a participant: *"There is no single method for using L1 in ELT–it should be employed as necessary and can be adapted in various ways."* This statement underscores the flexibility and situational appropriateness of using L1 in English Language Teaching.

### Theme 2: Learners' English Level and L1 Use

The relationship between the use of learners' L1 and translation methods in the classroom and the learners' language proficiency was a key point of discussion during the focus group interview. This topic served as the foundation for the second theme of our analysis. Teachers' practices align with the findings of Goodman et al. (2022), who note that learners' proficiency level often determines the extent to which L1 is used. Some teachers emphasized that L1 is especially beneficial for beginners and lower-level learners, pointing out that these learners often require more explicit grammar instruction, which can be more effectively provided through L1 for more straightforward explanations and direct comparisons with L2. In contrast, with more advanced learners, the focus shifts towards enhancing speaking and communication skills, reducing reliance on explicit grammar teaching and L1 usage.

However, some teachers advocate for an English-only approach, even with beginners, using simple teaching materials and engaging methods such as games, songs, and pictures. One teacher noted:

*A monolingual approach is practical with first and second-grade learners. However, it falls short with older learners whose language proficiency often does not align with the curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. To ensure comprehension, I resort to using L1.*

Another teacher shared a practical example: *"I attempted an English-only class with lower-level*

*learners, which was unsuccessful. The less proficient learners remained silent, while the more fluent ones dominated the conversation."*

These experiences underscore that the extent of L1 use in EFL classes should be tailored to the learners' educational levels, age, preferences, learning styles, and prior experience. This flexibility allows for necessary clarifications, where both learners can request and teachers can provide explanations using L1 and translation, as noted by Cook (2010, pp. 129-131).

### Theme 3: Drawbacks of Monolingual Teaching

The third theme critiques the prevailing assumption that English is best taught without using the learners' mother tongue. In the focus group, all six teachers expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of monolingual or English-only teaching in Kazakhstani schools. They speculated that ELT theorists might soon reconsider and recognize the advantages of connecting the language taught to the learners' L1.

One teacher, currently pursuing her PhD, shared a revealing example involving her scientific supervisor from Slovakia. Although her supervisor is fluent in English, he does not speak Kazakh or Russian:

*Initially, many learners were eager to join his English classes due to his foreign status. However, the lack of L1 usage led to widespread confusion and demoralization, causing about 80% of learners to drop out. Only those with higher English proficiency or a specific interest in improving their speaking skills remained.*

Another teacher highlighted a fundamental flaw in monolingual teaching:

*This approach fails the primary goal of language teaching – enabling learners to learn. Speaking only in English, I would see learners struggling to understand and unable to express their confusion in English, which slows their progress and reduces their motivation to learn.*

Furthermore, the teachers criticized the monolingual strategy for ignoring the contextual realities of language learning, such as limited classroom exposure and lack of English practice opportunities outside of school. Additionally, one teacher emphasized the disregard for learner identity, stating, *"We are a nation with our own language and identity. Forbidding the use of mother tongue in the classroom is wrong."* This point resonates with Cook's (2010) observations that while communicative language teaching is considered learner-centred, it often fails to acknowledge a crucial aspect of learner identity – their mother tongue.

Lastly, teachers emphasized the relevance of the focus group topic, reflecting on their daily dilemmas about whether to use their learners' L1 and translation methods in teaching. They also expressed difficulties reconciling the monolingual policies promoted during in-service teacher training events, such as webinars and conferences, with their classroom experiences. Despite anticipating a shift from monolingual teaching methods towards strategies that recognize the multilingual realities of our globalized world, teachers were surprised to learn that the academic field already strongly supports these multilingual approaches, often referred to as the "multilingual turn" in SLA as discussed in the Introduction. This revelation highlights a significant gap in teachers' awareness of current academic trends. This misconception underscores a critical issue identified by Burner and Carlsen (2023): despite strong academic support, the practical implementation of multilingual education in EFL classrooms remains limited. This disparity underscores the urgent need for improved communication between researchers and educators to effectively bridge this gap and better integrate multilingual methodologies into teaching practices.

### Conclusion

The FGI revealed three primary themes: (1) Teaching L2 through L1, (2) Learners' English Level and L1 Use, and (3) Drawbacks of Monolingual Teaching. Kazakhstani secondary school EFL teachers widely recognize the benefits of incorporating L1 and translation into EFL classrooms, particularly for grammar and vocabulary teaching. Additionally, L1 is used for classroom management to offer praise and encouragement and make learners feel more comfortable and motivated. However, teachers adapt their use of L1 based on learners' English proficiency levels. Beginners and lower-level learners may require more explicit grammar instruction and direct comparisons with their L1, leading to the frequent use of L1 and translation for clarity. Conversely, for advanced learners, the focus shifts towards enhancing speaking and communication skills and reducing the reliance on L1. Despite these benefits, challenges posed by monolingual teaching policies still influence classroom practices.

Overall, the findings indicate a need for flexible, context-sensitive teaching approaches tailored to learners' proficiency levels and individual needs. Moreover, the discrepancy between academic theory and classroom practice underscores the

necessity for improved communication between researchers and educators to integrate multilingual methodologies more effectively into EFL teaching practices.

### *Limitations and recommendations*

This study was subject to certain limitations that impacted the results. Notably, the "dominance effect" (Ho, 2012) was observed during the focus group discussions. Teachers with substantial experience (35 and 38 years) predominantly led the initial discussion, emphasizing the positive aspects of using the L1 and translation in the EFL classroom. This dynamic potentially influenced group-think, leading the less experienced participants to conform to these views for group cohesion, as described by Nyumba et al. (2018). Due to time constraints and the moderator's limited experience, the discussion did not pivot sufficiently to explore the criticisms or negative perspectives of L1 and translation use.

These observations underscore the necessity for further research that explicitly examines the negative perceptions of L1 and translation use in EFL settings. Additionally, there remains an unresolved question about the appropriateness of L1 use across different educational levels and age groups, warranting more comprehensive studies.

### *Implications for researchers and teachers*

The insights gained from this focus group discussion can serve to support the arguments in favor of multilingual teaching and the use of translation in language teaching (TILT). This research is particularly relevant for secondary school teachers considering the integration of L1 and translation into their pedagogical approaches. Importantly, the findings provide English language teachers with novel perspectives on multilingual instruction, enhancing their understanding of its practical implementation in the EFL classroom.

This study highlights the need for tailored approaches that consider the specific context and learner demographics within each educational setting. For practical applicability, researchers and teachers are encouraged to explore how these findings can be operationalized to improve language teaching methodologies and outcomes, potentially leading to more engaging and effective language learning experiences.

**Әдебиеттер**

1. Conteh J., Meier G. The multilingual turn in languages education: Opportunities and challenges. – Multilingual Matters, – 2014. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092246.
2. May S. The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education. – Routledge, – 2014.
3. Burner T., Carlsen C. Teachers' multilingual beliefs and practices in English classrooms: A scoping review. – Review of Education, – 2022. – Vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 3407. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3407.
4. Goodman B., Manan S. A. Translanguaging beliefs and practices in Kazakhstan: A critical review. – In: da Silva K. A., Makalela L. (Eds.). Handbook on translanguaging in the global south. – Routledge, – forthcoming.
5. Zhunussova G. Language teachers' attitudes towards English in a multilingual setting. – System, – 2021. – Vol. 100, pp. 1–11. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102558.
6. Smagul A. L1 and translation use in EFL classrooms: A quantitative survey on teachers' attitudes in Kazakhstani secondary schools. – System, – 2024. – Vol. 108, 103443. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103443.
7. Thornbury S. An A-Z of ELT. – Macmillan, – 2006.
8. Richards J. C., Schmidt R. W. Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics. – 4th ed. – Routledge, – 2010.
9. Cook G. Translation in language teaching: an argument for reassessment. – Oxford, – 2010.
10. Howatt A. P. R., Widdowson H. G. A history of English language teaching. – 2nd ed. – Oxford, – 2004.
11. Topolska-Pado J. Use of L1 and translation in the EFL classroom. – Glottodidactic Notebooks, – 2010. – Vol. 2, pp. 11–25.
12. Malmkjær K. Language learning and translation. – In: Gambier Y., Doorslaer L. (Eds.). Handbook of Translation Studies. – 2010. – pp. 185–190. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1075/hts.1.
13. Akhmetova I. Practitioners' views on translanguaging in Kazakhstani EFL classrooms. – Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University, – 2021. – URL: http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/5623.
14. Kuandykov A. EFL teachers' translanguaging pedagogy and the development of beliefs about translanguaging. – Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University, – 2021. – URL: http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/5608.
15. Tastanbek S. Kazakhstani pre-service teacher educators' beliefs on translanguaging. – Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University Repository, – 2019. – URL: http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/4328.
16. Ho D. G. E. Focus groups. – In: Chapelle C. A. (Ed.). The encyclopedia of applied linguistics. – Wiley-Blackwell, – 2012. – pp. 1–7. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0418.
17. Galloway N. Focus groups. Capturing the dynamics of group interaction. – In: Rose H., McKinley J. (Eds.). Handbook of research methods in applied linguistics. – Routledge, – 2020. – pp. 290–301.

18. Johnson R. B., Christensen L. B. Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches. – Allyn and Bacon, – 2004.

19. Langford B. E., Schoenfeld G. A., Izzo G. Nominal grouping sessions vs focus groups. – Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, – 2002. – Vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 58–70.

20. Krueger R. A., Casey M. A. Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. – Sage, – 2000.

21. Braun V., Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. – Qualitative Research in Psychology, – 2006. – Vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 77–101. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

22. British Educational Research Association [BERA]. Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research. – 5th ed. – 2024. – URL: www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2024.

23. Dörnyei Z. Research methods in applied linguistics. – Oxford, – 2007.

24. Howitt D., Cramer D. Introduction to research methods in psychology. – 4th ed. – Pearson, – 2014.

25. Kaye P. Translation activities in the language classroom. – Teaching English, – 2014, December 22. – URL: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/translation-activities-language-classroom.

26. Samardali M., Ismael A. M. Translation as a tool for teaching English as a second language. – Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, – 2017. – Vol. 40, pp. 64–69.

27. Karabassova L., San Isidro X. Towards translanguaging in CLIL: A study on teachers' perceptions and practices in Kazakhstan. – International Journal of Multilingualism, – 2020. – Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 556–575. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1828426.

28. Edstrom A. L1 use in the L2 classroom: One teacher's self-evaluation. – The Canadian Modern Language Review, – 2006. – Vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 275–292. – DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.63.2.275.

29. Bruen J., Kelly N. Using a shared L1 to reduce cognitive overload and anxiety levels in the L2 classroom. – The Language Learning Journal, – 2017. – Vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 368–381. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2014.908405.

30. Goodman B., Kambatyrova A., Aitzhanova K., Kerimkulova S., Chsherbakov A. Institutional supports for language development through English-medium instruction: A factor analysis. – TESOL Quarterly, – 2022. – Vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 713–749. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/TESQ.3090.

31. Nyumba T. O., Wilson K., Derrick C. J., Mukherjee N. The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. – Methods in Ecology and Evolution, – 2018. – Vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 20–32. – DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860.

**References**

Akhmetova, I. (2021). *Practitioners' views on translanguaging in Kazakhstani EFL classrooms* (Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University). http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/5623

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

British Educational Research Association [BERA]. (2024). *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (5th ed.). www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2024

Bruen, J., & Kelly, N. (2017). Using a shared L1 to reduce cognitive overload and anxiety levels in the L2 classroom. *The Language Learning Journal*, *45*(3), 368–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2014.908405

Burner, T., & Carlsen, C. (2022). Teachers' multilingual beliefs and practices in English classrooms: A scoping review. *Review of Education, 11*(2), 3407. https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3407

Conteh, J., & Meier, G. (2014). T*he multilingual turn in languages education: Opportunities and challenges*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092246

Cook, G. (2010). *Translation in language teaching: an argument for reassessment.* Oxford.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford.

Edstrom, A. (2006). L1 use in the L2 classroom: One teacher's self-evaluation. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *63*(2), 275–292. http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.63.2.275

Galloway, N. (2020). Focus groups. Capturing the dynamics of group interaction. In H. Rose, & J. McKinley (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in applied linguistics* (pp. 290–301). Routledge.

Goodman, B., & Manan, S. A. (forthcoming). Translanguaging beliefs and practices in Kazakhstan: A critical review. In K. A. da Silva & L. Makalela (Eds.), *Handbook on translanguaging in the global south*. Routledge.

Goodman, B., Kambatyrova, A., Aitzhanova, K., Kerimkulova, S., & Chsherbakov, A. (2022). Institutional supports for language development through English-medium instruction: A factor analysis. *TESOL Quarterly, 56*(2), 713–749. https://doi.org/10.1002/TESQ.3090

Ho, D. G. E. (2012). Focus groups. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1–7). Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0418

Howatt, A. P. R., & Widdowson, H. G. (2004). *A history of English language teaching* (2nd ed.). Oxford.

Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2014). *Introduction to research methods in psychology* (4th ed.). Pearson.

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen L. B. (2004). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Allyn and Bacon.

Karabassova, L., & San Isidro, X. (2020). Towards translanguaging in CLIL: A study on teachers' perceptions and practices in Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *20*(2), 556–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1828426

Kaye, P. (2014, December 22). Translation activities in the language classroom. Teaching English. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/translation-activities-language-classroom

Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Sage.

Kuandykov, A. (2021). *EFL teachers' translanguaging pedagogy and the development of beliefs about translanguaging* (Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University). http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/5608

Langford, B. E., Schoenfeld, G. A., & Izzo, G. (2002). Nominal grouping sessions vs focus groups. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 5* (1), 58–70.

Malmkjær, K. (2010), Language learning and translation. In Y. Gambier & L. Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies* (pp. 185–190). https://doi.org/10.1075/hts.1

May, S. (2014). *The multilingual turn: Implications for SLA, TESOL, and bilingual education*. Routledge.

Nyumba, T. O., Wilson, K., Derrick, C.J., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution, 9*(1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/2041-210X.12860

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2010). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Samardali, M., & Ismael, A. M. (2017). Translation as a tool for teaching English as a second language. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, 40,* 64–69.

Smagul, A. (2024). L1 and translation use in EFL classrooms: A quantitative survey on teachers' attitudes in Kazakhstani secondary schools. *System, 108*, 103443. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103443

Tastanbek, S. (2019). *Kazakhstani pre-service teacher educators' beliefs on translanguaging* (Master's thesis, Nazarbayev University Repository). http://nur.nu.edu.kz/handle/123456789/4328

Thornbury, S. (2006). *An A-Z of ELT*. Macmillan.

Topolska-Pado, J. (2010). Use of L1 and translation in the EFL classroom. *Glottodidactic Notebooks, 2*, 11–25.

Zhunussova, G. (2021). Language teachers' attitudes towards English in a multilingual setting. *System, 100*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102558

## Appendix

### Focus Group Interview Guide

**Welcome and Instructions**
Dear teachers,

Welcome to our session. Thank you for agreeing to participate in a discussion about L1 and translation use in the EFL classroom. My name is Aidana Smagul. I am a PhD candidate in the Language Pedagogy and Applied Linguistics program at BTK, ELTE, Budapest, Hungary. I am researching Kazakhstani teachers' practices and perceptions of L1 and translation use in the English language classroom.

I will ask you some questions about your experiences and views on L1 and translation use in the EFL classroom, which will stimulate discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, just differing points of view. Please share your perspective, even if it differs from what others have said. While your views are highly valued, your identity will remain confidential. I will be recording this discussion for research purposes, but no one will have access to the file or transcript.

I will not contribute to the discussion but will moderate the session to ensure that all the topics of interest are covered. You can ask me to repeat a question if needed, but other than that, I will contribute as little as possible. I will now introduce the topic, and then we will introduce ourselves before starting with the first question.

**Topic:** *The use of L1 and translation in the EFL classroom*
**Opening Question:**
1. What are your experiences using learners' L1 in your EFL class?
**Introductory Question:**
2. Who or what influences your decision to use or avoid learners' L1?
**Transition Question:**
3. What are your experiences using translation in your EFL class? Who or what influences your decision to use or avoid it?
**Key Questions:**
4. Do you see any connection between learners' English level and the teacher's use of L1?
5. What are your thoughts on L1 and translation as a language teaching and learning method?
6. What techniques are appropriate for incorporating L1 and translation in language teaching?
**Ending Questions:**
7. Of all the things we have discussed, what is most important to you?
8. Finally, is there anything related to L1 and translation use in the EFL classroom that we have yet to discuss but that you feel strongly about and would like to bring up now?

*Авторлар туралы мәлімет:*

*Смагұл Айдана* – «Тіл педагогикасы және ағылшын қолданбалы лингвистикасы» білім беру бағдарламасының докторанты, Еотвош Лоранд университеті (Будапешт қ., Мажарстан, эл.пошта: saidanam@student.elte.hu )

*Information about authors:*

*Aidana Smagul* – PhD candidate in educational program «Language pedagogy and English applied linguistics», Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Doctoral School of Linguistics (Budapest , Hungary, e-mail: saidanam@student.elte.hu )

*Сведения об авторе:*

*Смагұл Айдана* – докторант образовательной программы «Педагогика языков и прикладная лингвистика английского языка», университет имени Еотвоша Лоранда (г.Будапешт, Венгрия, e-mail:saidanam@student.elte.hu)