EFL teachers’ perceptions on the use of L1 in a primary and secondary classroom in Belarus

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British Council ELT Master’s Dissertation Awards: Commendation
Dissertation Title:

EFL teachers' perceptions on the use of L1 in a primary and secondary classroom in Belarus

Word count: 16250

This dissertation is presented in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in TESOL

2013/2014
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Abstract

This paper investigates teachers’ use of the L1 in primary and secondary classrooms in a town in Belarus. It measures teachers’ actual use of the L1 and explores their reasons for using it. It then compares their use of the L1 with their attitudes towards it. The study considers several factors that influence teachers’ use of the L1, including type of school (comprehensive/grammar) and the length of teaching experience. With few formal investigations of this type in the Russian L1 classroom, this paper therefore widens the scope of the empirical literature. Reflecting the range and complexities of teacher beliefs and behaviour, this research employs Explanatory Sequential Design (ESD), combining a questionnaire with follow-up semi-structured interviews. All local EFL primary and secondary teachers were invited to complete the questionnaire. Convenience sampling then selected seven semi-structured interview participants, based on type of school and teaching experience. Similar to past studies, the research found that the majority of teachers used the L1 at some point, although the extent of use varied. Teachers cited student proficiency as influencing the frequency of their use of the L1 for language purposes and their preference for doing so. Teacher training also influences attitudes. Nonetheless, in common with past findings, all teachers tended to use the L1 more than they would like to and they compromised their beliefs more often for non-language functions. Classroom experience equips teachers with tools to substitute scaffolding techniques without using the L1. The study concludes that a range of endogenous and exogenous factors influence teachers' use of and attitudes towards the L1. Teachers in this town find the L1 has a role in the classroom, especially in helping deliver effective language learning.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the academic and administrative staff at my university for providing me with the opportunity to deepen my knowledge of TESOL and better understand my own strengths and weaknesses. I would also very much like to thank my supervisor for the valuable advice and friendly support throughout the course and the project. Lastly, a special thank you to my family for their patience, kindness and encouragement.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the research topic

Like a troublesome relative, a student's first language (L1) can never be sure of its welcome in a foreign or second language classroom. Since the late 1800s, the use of the L1 has often been out of favour among second language theorists and practitioners (Hall & Cook, 2012; Thompson, 2006). Even during the long Grammar-translation period, which naturally includes the L1, theorists at best ignored its presence. Yet it is better to be ignored than asked to leave, and the emergence of a communicative approach promoted near-exclusive use of the target language (TL). Related approaches such as the Natural approach attempted to expel the L1 from the classroom. Whether they were successful 'on the ground', we can never know, as there were few formal studies of teachers' actual use of the TL or L1 in the classroom (Thompson, 2006).

When the literature did begin formal investigation, notably by Duff and Polio (1990), it discovered that teachers used the L1. Since then, a body of empirical literature has evolved attempting to quantify and understand the reasons for teachers and students' use of the L1. The results of the research have been positive. First, because they revealed teachers found the L1 practical (Macaro, 2001) and, second, a consensus among academics has developed that the L1 has a role in the classroom, as long as it is not overused and promotes effective language learning (e.g., Cook, 2001; Hall & Cook, 2012; Harbord, 1992; Turnball, 2001).

Despite this largely positive development, formal empirical investigations into teachers' L1 use arguably remain limited (Thompson, 2006). Most studies focus on the L1 of the major global languages spoken by learners (including Mandarin, Spanish, English, French, and Japanese). There have been fewer published studies investigating teachers' use of the L1 in former USSR countries. While there are notable exceptions, especially in the case of EU A8 accession countries, in particular Nikolov's (1999c) study in Hungary and Kovacic and Kirinic's (2011) in Croatia, the number of published studies of countries where Russian is an official language are few. Yet according to the 2007 edition of Nationalencyklopedin, Russian is the eighth most common language spoken by native speakers, ranking above Japanese, Korean and French, all languages that have received considerably more academic attention (Wikipedia, n. d.).
This provides an opportunity to extend the body of research into teachers' L1 use. This study occurs in a town in Belarus, a former member of the USSR and an independent country since 1991. The town has a population of 27,000 and belongs to the administrative region of Minsk, the regional and national capital. The participants are the EFL teachers of this town, 43 in total, who work in the five schools providing either primary, secondary or both types of education. Three of the schools are comparable to comprehensive schools. They are non-selective and are required to provide education to children who live in the town. The remaining two schools are gymnasia, or schools that select students on academic ability (comparable to English grammar schools). They have strict academic expectations. Both types of school are in the state sector.

1.2 Foreign language teaching in Belarus

The Belarusian foreign languages syllabus mandates that children start learning a foreign language at the age of eight or nine (Year 3). The school has to provide classes in at least one of the following foreign languages: English; German; French; Spanish; and Chinese. English is the most frequently taught (MERB, 2012).

The aims of the foreign languages syllabus are similar to many western European countries. Among the central aims are to provide learners with the confidence to communicate with native speakers at levels consummate with their ability and to develop social competence. The syllabus states that this includes promoting awareness of differences between Belarusian and foreign social customs and norms. Again similar to many European languages syllabi, it promotes student autonomy (ibid, p. 4).

The syllabus had adopted a Communicative approach in early 2000s. However, despite a communicative focus, foreign language instructors (especially those whose formal teacher training finished many years ago) may still rely on Grammar-translation and Audio-lingual methods. Until recently, there was no definitive steer towards the amount of the TL teachers should use in the classroom.

However, in 2012, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the National Education Institute, issued an official document with some important changes and clarifications, including:

- L2 to be the 'main' language of instruction in a foreign language classroom;
- Students sit a compulsory foreign language end-of-school exam (NIE, 2012).
Although the content of the syllabus remained broadly the same, these changes are likely to influence teachers' use of the L1 in the classroom. The reference to 'main' language for instruction in the classroom remains unquantified. However, the Ministry of Education states that teachers could refer to the L1 when explaining complex grammar or abstract notions (NIE, 2012).

Lastly, these changes and clarifications led to an increase in the number of hours of foreign language classes across all ages, smaller class sizes (6-8 students per teacher) and an increase in training for FL instructors.

1.3 Rationale and brief outline of the key literature

The absence of a formal body of literature into teachers' L1 use in the classroom for native Russian speakers provides the foundation for this research. Additionally, this study tries to measure teachers' use of L1 and the reasons and functions for using it, which may vary depending on a range of factors. These include internal factors such as length of teaching experience, students' proficiency level, teachers' own classroom experience or their beliefs. External factors include the teacher's formal teacher training, the curriculum and school policy.

A related issue is whether there is a difference between teachers' use of the L1 and their attitudes towards using the L1. In particular, whether the practical demands of the classroom, or other factors, cause teachers to compromise so they use the L1 more (or less) than they would like.

Exploring these issues requires an understanding of the current literature in a number of distinct areas. This includes the theoretical, in particular understanding the historical and contemporary arguments both for and against teachers using the students' L1 in the classroom (e.g., Atkinson, 1993; Asher, 2012; Howatt, 1984; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Macaro, 1997; MacDonald, 1993).

It also involves a review of empirical research into teachers' L1 use in the foreign or second language classroom (Duff & Polio, 1990; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Turnbull & Anett, 2002). This includes quantifying L1 use and examining the contextual reasons for its use in the classroom. Other studies examine the difference between teachers' L1 use and their attitudes towards using it. These too provide important insights what factors may influence teachers' use of the L1, including age and/or language proficiency of the students, the type of school or length of teaching experience, as well as factors exogenous to the classroom. Lastly, it
requires an understanding of the insights gained from qualitative research examining the contextual or psychological influences on teachers' L1 use.

It is hoped this research will not only broaden the literature to include native Russian speakers, but also deepen the literature by extending the general understanding of the extent of the L1 use in this town, the reasons teachers use or do not use it as well as their attitudes towards the L1.

The outline of the paper is as follows. Chapter 2 examines the theoretical and empirical literature on second or foreign language acquisition. Chapter 3 explores methodological issues, specifically the benefits and limitations of combining quantitative with qualitative data. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis, combined with a detailed discussion of the findings in the context of past research. Chapter 5 concludes by summarising the key findings, presenting theoretical and pedagogical implications, highlighting research limitations and suggesting areas for future research.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Although the use and role of learners' L1 in the classroom has a long history in the literature, Littlewood and Yu (2011) identify that there is still a lack of agreement on whether the student's L1 has a place in the classroom or, if it does, what that role is:

"Positions range from insistence on total exclusion of the L1, towards varying degrees of recognition that it may provide valuable support for learning, either directly (e.g. as an element in a teaching technique or to explain a difficult point) or indirectly (e.g. to build positive relationships or help manage learning") (Littlewood & Yu, 2011, p. 64).

This chapter briefly reviews the history of second or foreign language acquisition and explores the reasons for the dominance and legacy of the Monolingual approach. It then highlights the recent re-emergence of the Bilingual approach in both theory and practice. This entails exploring the theory of teachers' L1 use in the classroom. From the practitioner's perspective, teachers want students to succeed, so their goal is pedagogic. Yet an important addition or qualification to this is the definition of what effective language learning entails. For example, since the 1970s, developments in theoretical pedagogy widened, first to include elements of social-cultural skills such as communicative competence and more recently the socio-political, i.e., to facilitate the development of empowered and active citizens - Critical Pedagogy. These wider pedagogic and social developments play an important role in second or foreign language teaching and are explored briefly here.

There is a difference between the theory of teachers' functional use of the L1 and its actual use in the classroom. This chapter examines both developments in the theory of monolingualism and bilingualism in the language classroom and previous empirical studies. These empirical studies have attempted to quantify the amount of teachers' L1 or TL use and for what function. More recently, a number of case studies have examined the influence of teachers' beliefs in their use of the L1.

Turning briefly to terminology, where possible, this study uses the phrase teachers' L1 or target language instead of alternative such as monolingual or bilingual. Although Hall and Cook (2012) make a justifiable claim that terms including L1 or 'mother tongue' or 'native
language' are "unsatisfactory" as in many situation there is no commonality of 'L1', that is not the case in this study (p. 274). All the participants and population speak Russian or Belarusian as a native language so they share a common L1.

### 2.2 History of the Monolingual language classroom

Since the late nineteenth century, the default position in the theory of second or foreign language acquisition has been for near or total exclusivity of the TL. The dominance of the *monolingual position* (Howatt, 1984) as the most effective way of teaching has survived evolution and occasional revolution in teaching approaches (e.g., Hall & Cook, 2012). However, more recently, a number of research papers have begun to question that dominance. These studies have both observed teachers' use of the L1 in the classroom and theorised a functional role for it.

Although second or foreign language learning in Europe extends back centuries, the formal promotion of monolingualism as a language learning approach expanded towards the end of the nineteenth century (Hall & Cook, 2012). For example, the Direct method, Berlitz's belief that foreign languages teaching should replicate "... the way that children learn their first language", seeks to avoid the use of the L1 and maximises exposure to the L2 or TL (Yu, 2001, p.176). The Direct movement had a strong influence on successive methods (Cummins, 2007, p. 233). Later, in the early 20th century, the Reform movement further advocated a Monolingual approach. Both were arguably proto-communicative approaches, focusing on speaking ability and fluency (Hall & Cook, 2012). The cognitive rationale was to encourage students to 'think' in the TL. Howatt (1984) argues that the 'Monolingual approach' "... remains the bedrock notion from which the others ultimately derive" (p. 289). Certainly most methods from the 1950s to the 1980s tried to limit students' exposure to the L1, with increasing intensities of intention. These include various Communicative methods, including the Natural approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), as well as other approaches such as the Total physical response method (Asher, 2012).

Part of the rationale for the Direct method and the Reform movement was to oppose the output-driven approach of the Grammar-translation era (Hall & Cook, 2012). Although a consequence was the minimising of L1, Hall and Cook (2012) state the Direct method was "... by no means dogmatically opposed to the use of students' own languages" (p. 275). Maximising students' exposure to the TL remained the framework for subsequent Monolingual-based approaches that developed from the Natural method. This includes Krashen's Comprehension Hypothesis that advocates an acquisition of the language through
maximising students' exposure to the TL. It is also central to Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural approach to target language acquisition. Similar to the Direct method, it stresses the communicative aspects of language. The rationale is that language acquisition develops fastest when it is enjoyable and the benefits are clear, in this case the ability to communicate in a non-native language. Another example is Total immersion, with French teaching in Canada often cited as an approach that combines language acquisition with content learning. The pedagogic benefits are that students' best acquire a foreign or second language when their exposure to the TL is maximised through content learning in a natural, communicative, environment.

Proponents of the TL approach also point to practical benefits. MacDonald (1993) argues that students are more motivated when exposed to the TL as it helps them understand the practical benefits of acquiring another language. For many advocates, the subconscious become an important justification. Terrell (1977) argues that external factors can subconsciously promote language acquisition, for example tasks that maximise exposure to new ideas in the target language. Similarly, Asher (2012) believes the brain is neurologically hard-wired to learn best through oral stimuli. These all share a common concern that using the L1 is a 'slippery slope', that could lead to a significant underexposure to the TL, which would likely lead to poor learning outcomes (Macdonald, 1993; Polio & Duff, 1994; Wells, 1999).

2.3 Rise of the Bilingual approach

It was during this period, when Monolingual methods were so dominant, that a body of literature began to emerge questioning the exclusion of the students' L1 from the classroom. These include Anton and DiCamila (1998), Atkinson (1987), Auerbach (1993), Belz (2003), Blyth (1995), Burden (2000), Castellotti (2001), Cook (2001), Franklin (1990), Tang (2002) who argued for what Levine (2003) calls a "sanctioned role" for L1 use in the classroom (p. 344).

These scholars opened the door for a systematic and judicious use of the L1 to enter the language classroom. Some, such as Cook (2001), Turnbull (2001), and Moore (2013) argue for the "limited", "controlled" or "principled" use of the L1, while Macaro (2001) observes that excluding it, is not only impractical but unnecessarily deprives learners and teachers of an important tool for language learning and teaching. For example, Edstrom (2006) worries that the "...unqualified assumption that avoidance of the L1 is synonymous with good teaching" (p. 276). Yet, researchers, wary of L1 use for its alleged hindrance of L2 learning, suggest that
instructors can use alternative ways to aid students understand meaning, for example through gestures, other visual aids or contextualisation (Schmidt, 1995).

This development is important as the Bilingual approach accepts and considers the practical demands of the classroom as well as pedagogic benefits. There are also wider cognitive benefits. For example, Skinner (1985), argues that the, "... sole use of L2 for instruction abstracts the rapid connection of words with thoughts, and thereby it slows acquisition of meaning in L2" (p. 383). In other words, once a learner passes the language acquisition stage, he/she naturally has a greater depth of thought in the L1. Denying the use of the L1 would limit ability to translate as well as transfer these thoughts, ideas or beliefs to the L2. Kern (1994) supports a similar position, arguing that the ability of memory to think in two languages is limited and that targeted L1 use can enhance metalinguistic awareness.

Researchers also advance sociocultural benefits of L1 use. For example, Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) highlight that using the L1 during collaborative tasks enhances learners' language proficiency moving through the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This interpersonal aspect of the L1, where peer interaction using the L1 provides a scaffold that accelerates progression through the ZPD, stretches back to the Vygotsky and finds favour in many contemporary theorists (e.g., Bhooth et al., 2014; Carless, 2008; Morahan, 2010). Indeed, several researchers report on the benefits the L1 use could bring to the classroom, including: facilitating non learning-related (administrative) classroom vocabulary; grammar instruction; empathy/solidarity; classroom and behaviour management; unknown vocabulary; richer comprehension and interaction involving students' use of English (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 1997, 2001; Medgyes, 1999; Polio & Duff, 1994; Qian, Tian, & Wang, 2009). Therefore, "...it is not only impractical to exclude the L1 from the classroom but it is also likely to deprive students of an important tool for language learning" (Jingxia, 2010, p. 12).

According to Macaro (1997), teachers can take three positions when considering the value of teachers' L1 use in the classroom: the virtual; the maximal; and the optimal. The 'virtual' position argues that teachers should exclusively use the TL. The 'maximal' posits that frequent L1 use can aid classroom communication, especially where learners have insufficient proficiency. Lastly, an 'optimal' position acknowledges that, as a naturally occurring phenomenon, occasional, targeted L1 use for specific contexts and functions could optimise effective language learning. Nation (2003) advises to employ a "Balanced approach", which "sees a role for the L1 but also recognises the importance of maximising L2 use in the classroom" (p. 7).
However, Levine (2003) argues that both camps failed to provide robust empirical evidence for their respective positions, instead relying on "intuitions", "anecdotal evidence" and "personal classroom experience (p. 344). Consequently, while informative, the literature is not adequate for designing pedagogic policy or even providing confidence in best practice guidelines, a challenge Macaro (2001) sets researchers the challenge to resolve.

2.4 Empirical studies of L1 use in the EFL classroom

2.4.1 Amount of teachers L1 use in different contexts

A number of empirical studies, conducted in various contexts, have attempted to quantify the amount of teachers’ L1 use. Guthrie (1984) is an early, small-scale research study, involving six French language instructors at university-level. He observed that five of the six instructors used the TL, ranging from between 83% to 98% of the time, implying they used the L1 from 2%-17% of the lesson.

Later, Duff and Polio (1990) found a wider range of the TL use, with instructors using it from 10% to 100% of the time, with a mean TL use of 67.9% and a median of 79%. Like Guthrie's research, language instructions were at university-level. The range of variation was similar in research conducted over a decade later when the quantity of the TL used ranged from 9-89% in a Canadian school (Turnball, 2001) and 7-70% by a Spanish teacher in a US university (Edstrom, 2006).

Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) also found evidence of the L1 use, although its range was much narrower. Their project, involving four university-level instructors of beginner French, revealed that the four teachers' use of the L1 ranged from 0-18.2%. This amount is similar to Macaro's research (2001) of six student teachers, which ranged from 4-12%. In addition, Grim explored the L1 use of three French high school teachers and eight college instructors and confirmed the L1 was not overused (except for one high school instructor); high school and college teachers used the L1 between 0.1- 24.96% of the time, with a median at 3.75 and a mean at 15.28. The median showed that teachers, regardless of academic levels, would naturally lean towards the TL, switching to the L1 for occasional instances (p. 204).

What these and other studies demonstrate is there is a wide range of the amount of the L1 that teachers use.

However, the extent and context of instructors' use of the L1 or the TL may depend on other factors. Quantifying the use of the L1 does not explore these differences. Indeed, the research
that explores these micro factors reveals greater consistency in instructors' use of the L1. For example, Edstrom (2006) highlights that although the quantity of the L1 varies considerably within classrooms, the reasons and purposes for its use are quite common across various contexts. These contexts include instructors' classroom experience, age, proficiency or attitude of students, teacher training or some pre-determined or strategic objective.

Indeed, several researchers report on the benefits the L1 use could bring to the classroom, including: facilitating non learning-related (administrative) classroom vocabulary; grammar instruction; empathy/solidarity; classroom and behaviour management; unknown vocabulary; richer comprehension and interaction involving students' use of English (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 1997, 2001; Medgyes, 1999; Polio & Duff, 1994; Qian, Tian, & Wang, 2009).

2.4.2 Functions of L1 use

Polio and Duff (1994), using their 1990 data to research the context and functions for which teachers are more or less likely to use the TL, found teachers tended to use the L1 for both language and non-language purposes. Non-language reasons include classroom management, administration, to empathise with learners and during communicative breakdowns. Language functions include grammar instruction and translation of unknown vocabulary.

De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) distinguished 14 functional categories with respect to purposes of the L1 use and measured its frequency of both an experienced and a novice instructor. The researchers claimed that the L1 was used for "...important instructional purposes" as well as for various reasons (p. 742). Moreover, teachers believed that the L1 was a necessary tool to facilitate the L2 learning. Rolin-Lanziti and Brownlie (2002) also found evidence of purposeful or strategic L1 use, where the teacher used the L1 over half the time during a grammar task yet not at all during a listening one.

In the case of Grim (2010), the functions for the L1 use were explored in teacher's speech. She established that teachers exploited the L1 for "...metalinguistic explanation, class/management/discipline, empathy/solidarity, task instruction ...and immediate and delayed translation" (p. 193). In addition, Grim (2010) found that high school teachers and college instructors shared some common L1 usage in "...empathy/solidarity, immediate translation and delayed translation". Yet, they differed in "...metalinguistic explanations, task instructions and class management/discipline" (p. 203).

Cook (2001) explores the implications further, suggesting that the infrequency of the L1 use suggests that it has a purpose when it is used. Banning the L1 would be limiting, reducing
classroom and learner efficiency. Therefore, Maraco (2001) argued for a framework "… that identifies when reference to the L1 can be a valuable tool" (p. 545).

**2.4.3 Factors influencing L1 use**

Empirical research reveals that the functions of L1 use can be categorised. Ellis (1994), Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) separate functions into "medium-oriented goals", i.e., reasons related to teaching language, and 'framework goals', i.e., those connected with classroom management or events. Other researchers find and use similar categorisations. Moreover, Kim and Elder (2008) separate the function of the L1 use, although they include 'social goals', such as showing empathy. This is echoed by Littlewood and Yu (2011) who emphasise an interpersonal aspect in the use of the L1 as a means of providing reassurance.

Additionally, the themes and aims of Critical Theory are influencing research into L1 use. In particular, researchers and practitioners are more aware that to exclude learners' native language from the classroom could cause learners to feel disempowered. This may be especially the case with adult learners. The L1 use could therefore lower stress and create a more inclusive and effective learning environment (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Levine, 2003). In addition, it also helps develop class unity (e.g., Camilleri, 1996; Cromdal, 2005). For Edstrom (2006), the L1 use has a moral benefit, in addition to language and classroom management. It helps identify learners as individuals. Ellis (2007) further advocates the L1 as a component of identity. These factors should not be considered separate from the learning process. Mutual respect and enhanced identity should create a more effective learning environment. Derrida (1998) explores in depth the theme of language as identity, providing a political imperative for including the L1 in the classroom.

The extent and context of instructors' use of the TL more often depends on classroom experience than a pre-determined or strategic objective. In this sense, the conditions that determine the L2 use are usually localised, subjective and interpersonal rather than influenced by teacher training, or school, or government-set curriculum guidance (Levine, 2003).

Nzwanga (2000) found that the L1 had a purpose in the classroom, even if official policy required exclusive TL use. Instructors often switched to the L1 during breaks between class sections, for example during a presentation stage.

Concurrent research began to explore the reasons behind instructors' decisions to use L1. Notably, Macaro (2001), investigated the role of teacher training and policy, whether governmental or institutional, in teachers' decision to use the L1. When instructors referred to
the L1, they tended to do so for non-pedagogic purposes, such as efficiency, classroom management and discipline. The policy implication was that with little evidence of extensive L1 use there is little necessity to mandate its exclusion.

In short, there is still a lack of consistency from both the theoretical literature about L1 use and it appears this is translated and amplified in the language classroom. As Grim (2010) states: "The lack of agreement on the role and amount of teachers' L1 contributes to variability in teachers' practices. They are not often aware of what research suggests and base their decisions on deduction instead of evidence" (p. 193).

2.4.4 The application of theory into practice

Those concerned that L1 use will hinder L2 learning suggest that instructors find alternative ways to aid students understand meaning, for example through gestures, other visual aids or contextualisation (Schmidt, 1995). Schmidt (1995) also highlights that there is often a difference between instructor's belief about the desirability or optimality of L1 and its actual use.

Applied research into L1 use also began to identify the importance of teacher's belief as a determining factor. Crawford (2004) found that instructor's belief about the desirability or optimality of the L1 use identified lower support for the TL than expected. For example, Crawford (2004) found that only 26% of primary teachers agreed with the statement that language instruction should occur in the TL. The proportion agreeing did rise with the age of students, with 78.8% of instructors of years 11 and 12 agreeing. Nonetheless, the researcher expressed surprise that the proportions agreeing with the TL use were not higher across all years.

Other research has found no discernable difference between instructor's belief and actual use of the L1. Sabbari (2008) found that teachers who most "valued" the L1 also used it the most frequently, and vice- versa. They stress the importance of separating teacher beliefs from actual classroom behaviour. Understanding beliefs can help identify instances when teachers may refer to the L1, not for pedagogic, language or even classroom management purposes but to save time. There are potentially significant differences between those teachers who use the L1 because they believe it has a place in the classroom and those that feel compelled to use it due to time pressures. This may be sub-optimal, as it will lower students' exposure to the TL and their proficiency.
Hall and Cook (2012, p. 294) mention the pedagogically worrying finding of "…teachers' sense of guilt" about using the L1, which Macaro (2006, p. 69) states is an unhealthy outcome. Yet research finds teachers' attitudes of L1 use are complex. First, empirical research suggests that the vast majority of teachers believe the TL should be the predominant, but not exclusive form for language instruction (Hall & Cook, 2012).

A number of factors influence teacher beliefs. These include endogenous factors, such as teacher's own experience, either as learners or practitioners and their own proficiency (Hall & Cook, 2012; Sabbari, 2008). Exogenous factors include the attitudes and practice of their peers, managers, policy makers, academic research. Other research found that cultural factors influence attitudes (Hall & Cook, 2012; Meij & Zhao, 2010). Although given the cultural homogeneity in Belarus, this is not explored here.

Given the influence of teachers experience towards L1 use, it is useful to briefly explore the literature of newly qualified teachers. One study found that student teachers quickly discovered new positive insights of L1 use. This included rapport or relationship building in addition to the factors outlined above. Macaro (2001) also found new teachers used their L1 for established reasons that are perhaps not strictly 'language' focused, such as discipline, classroom management and relaying instructions.

2.5 Summary and Research Questions

Given the depth and breadth of the literature, this study reduces its focus to four research questions. Their rationale is to first identify teachers' use of the L1 in the classroom and explore the reasons and contexts for its use. In both cases, the research tries to establish areas where the teachers in this study support previous research and areas where they do not. It then explores whether there are differences between teachers use of the L1 and their attitudes or belief towards it in the classroom. Lastly, in common with a growing body of recent empirical literature, it tries to determine where and for what reasons there may be a difference between teachers' use of the L1 and their attitudes towards it. Specifically, the research questions are:

RQ1. How common is the use of L1 in the primary and secondary EFL classroom in the case of one town in Belarus?

RQ2. What are the teachers' purposes and reasons for using Belarusian/Russian in the primary and secondary EFL classroom?
RQ3. What differences and/or similarities exist between teachers’ views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it at both primary and secondary levels?

RQ4. What factors influence teachers' views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it?
CHAPTER 3

Research Design

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and the rationale for its inclusion. It then presents the methods of data collection, including pilot studies and the process of quantitative data collection. After that, it explores issues of sampling in social research and explains how the qualitative data component of the research was constructed and implemented. Section four outlines how the data was analysed. The final section explores in some detail key ethical issues. This is particularly important as locating the research in Belarus creates some specific ethical considerations.

3.2 Rationale for Research Design

This study employs an increasingly popular approach called Explanatory Sequential Design (ESD), which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). The quantitative method and data analysis use a statistical, positivistic, approach, recording and measuring participant responses. The qualitative component provides a different type of data, investigating participants' perceptions in more depth that helps enrich and explain the statistical results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011). The rational for combining both methods is to maximise the chance that the data captures the complexities of the circumstances. Combined, each method provides additional data and the researcher can take advantage of the strengths of both (Green & Caracelli, 1997; Huberman & Saldana, 2013; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006; Miles, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This sub-section attempts to offer informed and systematic justification for this approach. The next sub-section provides details of the characteristics of ESD.

Within the context of this research, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods seems the best approach to answering the research questions. First, the quantitative approach provides a general understanding of the research questions. The approach is 'explanatory' in that it is to identify or measure teachers' use of the L1 in the EFL classroom. The question is clear and 'answerable' in that it is possible to quantify. However, while using quantitative analysis is epistemologically rooted in the positivist tradition, that does not mean that the researcher rejects social constructivism or accepts the positivist position that the entire social world is measurable or immutable from change or context (e.g., Neuman, 2012). The
researcher simply takes a pragmatic approach, which favours using "qualitative research to inform the quantitative portion of research studies, and vice versa" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 383).

Although epistemological purists argue that the foundational philosophical positions of the two paradigms may be irreconcilable (Bryman, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), combining the two approaches has a number of advantages. The location of the research is the classroom, a social space. The research questions encompass complex phenomena, including teachers' beliefs, as well as political, cultural, social and psychological issues such as the curriculum, school ethos, experience, training etc. as the research questions are open to interpretation they require an interpretative approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Additionally, the qualitative approach should enhance and explain the statistical results by investigating participants' opinions in detail (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011). It also increases the chance of uncovering unexpected themes or relationships that may be overlooked or missed when using just one method (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). If conducted systematically and thoughtfully, it should increase the likelihood that the data is balanced, maximising the strengths of each while minimising weaknesses. In short, by combining the two methods, the researcher recognises "the existence and importance of the natural or physical world, as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human institutions and subjective thoughts" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18).

However, it can be time consuming as the design contains several stages of data collection and analysis. In addition, it requires knowledge and understanding of both methods. But, as Robson (2011) argues, pragmatists are more likely to "have a positive attitude to both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (p. 171).

3.3 Data Collection

The collection of data followed Creswell and Plano-Clark's (2011) sequential route. The first stage collects and analyses the quantitative data, the second stage the qualitative data. The results of stage one informs the content of the interview questions. The researcher used semi-structured interviews and adjusted Creswell and Plano-Clark's (2011) two-phased ESD model by drawing out a third stage, called an interpretation stage, where both sets of data are combined and examined for predetermined and emerging themes as well as for consistency.
3.3.1 Pilot Study

The researcher completed two pilot studies with non-research participants, increasing the likelihood of "the high quality (in terms of reliability and validity) of the outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 75). Following Dörnyei (2007), this stage of the research also underwent several steps. First, the researcher constructed candidate questions, followed by initial piloting, which helped assess questionnaire length, avoided leading questions and provided participant feedback. The third stage was a final pilot to test the revised questions for comprehensibility. It was also a way of checking whether the questionnaire would answer the research questions (provide usable findings). Finally, a mini-analysis of the results checked for missing responses and consistency of scaling.

Similarly, there were two pilot semi-structured interviews. Like the questionnaire pilots, their purpose was partly to test whether interviewees could understand the questions and provide answers consistent with the question. The pilots also measured the expected length of a typical interview.

The pilots tested two additional functions. The first was the researcher's technical capability of using internet-recording software. The second was to allow the researcher to practise important communication skills such as clarity of questions, effective listening and establishing a safe and open environment to maximise effective data (Dörnyei, 2007; Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011).

3.3.2 Quantitative stage of research (questionnaires)

The researcher adapted Kothari's (2009) stages of questionnaire design and implementation. The adapted stages are:

a. Listing data or information required to answer the research questions;
b. Positioning questions so responses fit within a usable scale of measurement;
c. Drafting a questionnaire and piloting it;
d. Agreeing a final draft of the questionnaire;
e. Distributing questionnaires to the representative sample.

Although questionnaires are an efficient method of collecting large amounts of data, they can struggle to penetrate a theme deeply or identify emerging themes. However, using qualitative data should reduce this risk.
In total, 43 questionnaires were distributed to all primary and secondary EFL teachers in three comprehensive schools and two gymnasia in the Belarusian town. Using the largest number of participants within a specific area should maximise responses, increasing result validity and reliability (Punch, 2009; Robson, 2011; Thomas, 2009). It should also provide a 'safety margin' of responses (Dörnyei, 2007). One school in the town was excluded because it does not teach foreign languages. Therefore, the sample includes all schools that teach English and all teachers of English in those institutions.

Analysis of the related literature helped inform the questions. All teachers received both a paper copy and an electronic version of the questionnaire and the choice of which method to complete it. The majority (76%) chose to complete the manual form. Participants also received a letter (written in Russian) introducing myself and briefly describing the research topic and purpose. The letter also explained the ethical considerations, in particular the guarantee of participant anonymity.

The final number of valid questionnaires was 40. Participants returned 41 questionnaires, but one was too inconsistent to be reliable.

3.3.3 Sampling

The research used a convenience sampling procedure, a common form of sampling in education research (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 98). It is non-probabilistic, i.e. the researcher determines or chooses the sample participants.

The researcher's personal relationship with some of the participants was important for this research. The researcher used to live in the town sampled and worked alongside a few of the participants. These participants provided the link that was vital to secure participation. This is explored in the ethics section.

Therefore, it is a non-random sample. This is the compromise between the practical necessity of acquiring the data versus a loss of statistical reliability and validity (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 97). This will affect generalisability and the implications and scope of the research. Therefore, this research is "careful about the claims we make about the more general relevance of our findings" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99).

However, including all English teachers as participants should eliminate the risk of self-selection. Such a wide, if localised, sample should also reduce other risks normally associated
with non-probabilistic sampling such as a skewed sample composition. It could also reduce the risk of researcher bias in choice of individual participants, whether conscious or not.

3.3.4 Qualitative stage of research (semi-structured interviews)

The interviews were semi-structured and took place using Skype© software as the researcher was based in Scotland. Analysis of the quantitative data informed the main themes of the interview questions.

The research used maximum variation sampling when choosing which participant to ask for interview. After two pilots interviews (outlined above), the researcher chose seven EFL teacher, based on the number of years of teaching experience and by type of school (comprehensive or gymnasium).

The participants were divided into two categories, gymnasium vs. comprehensive school. Further, each of the two categories were organised into three groups (teachers with low, medium and high levels of experience). There were 18 comprehensive teachers (45% of the total) and 22 gymnasia teachers (55%) in the total sample (Table 3.1). To reflect the proportion in the total sample, four of the seven interviewees taught at a gymnasium (57%) and three taught at a comprehensive (43%). All seven participants invited for an interview agreed to take part.

Table 3.1: Categories for maximum variation sampling and number of participants chosen for interview (in parenthesis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of teaching experience</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2: Characteristics of semi-structured interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Formal qualification (teaching English as a foreign language)</th>
<th>The length of teaching experience (in categories of 0-5; 6-20; 21+)</th>
<th>Type of Educational establishment employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olga (T1)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena (T2)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6-20 (14)</td>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria (T3)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6-20 (8)</td>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton (T4)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina (T5)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna (T6)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamara (T7)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6-20 (9)</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-structured interviews offered a number of advantages that were important for the research. In addition to being more suitable to this inductive data gathering, a few participants were concerned about discussing some of the issues, so it was important for the interviewer to establish an informal, naturalistic setting that provided a versatile means of obtaining data. Semi-structured interviews are an established way of helping achieve this. They also allow the interviewer to control the pace and direction of the interview.

Interviewer-bias might affect the trustworthiness of the results. However, it can be minimised if the researcher is conscious of its potential impact on the data. Another issue is the loss of data accuracy through transcription coupled with translation from Russian to English. However, the researcher, being fluent in both languages, should reduce this risk.

3.4 Data analysis

The quantitative data from the questionnaire was inputted by hand into Microsoft Excel 2010 software. This was in a 'flat-file' format with each participant assigned a numerical value ranging from 1-40. The variables were either assigned a value of 0 or 1 or for category data, a code ascribed (e.g., agree, disagree, unsure). Consistency, accuracy and error checks were completed (e.g., that variable totals matched the number of participants etc.). Then initial descriptive analyses were performed, such as measures of central tendency, data ranges and
standard deviations where appropriate (including means, medians and modes, percentage of respondents by category etc.). These were followed by more advanced data analysis, including cross tabulation (e.g., use of L1 by type of institution and experience) and statistical significance testing (Pearson's Chi-squared tests).

The qualitative interviews were audio-visually recorded using Skype software and then transcribed and translated from Russian/Belorussian to English. The English transcriptions were uploaded onto QSR NVivo 10 software to aid data storage, coding and thematic analysis of the interviews.

The qualitative data analysis employed key elements of the structure and sequence of the framework approach. This method codes and then categorises the data based on an *a priori* framework and is better suited to researching specific questions. The categories are pre-determined by the research questions and this framework "creates a new structure for the data" (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013, p. 1). Despite being framed within a deductive approach, it allows for 'open coding' and emerging themes (Gale et al., 2013).

The framework analysis process was as follows:

- familiarisation with the data (transcribing, translating and initial reading);
- Identification of themes for a thematic framework (initial coding);
- A closer examination of the text and coding based on the framework: a descriptive analysis;
- Examine thematic framework: merging, filtering and categorising;
- Mapping and interpretation of the data, looking for thematic patterns within the data, ideas, associations, explanations (e.g.; love of English, L1 is a 'Positive' or 'negative' influence);

(Gale et al., 2013; Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls & Ormston, 2013; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

### 3.5 Ethical issues

The protection of research participants is paramount (Berg, 2008; Marshal and Rossman, 2011; Pring, 2000a; Punch, 2009). All participants signed a consent form. Before agreeing, the researcher informed the participants of their rights and the ethical and behavioural treatment they could expect from the researcher and the research. They could refuse to answer any question and were free to withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher knows
some of the participants as previous work colleagues. Because of this, it was important that the participants should expect and demand that the relationship between the researcher and participants was to be professional at all times.

The researcher took care to ensure participant anonymity and that participants were fully cognizant with this knowledge. For instance, the researcher explained that each participant's identity would only be available to the researcher and that the collected data would be stored securely and destroyed when the research was completed. Participants were also offered the chance to complete the interviews though voice recording, if they so wished (Bell, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007; Iphofen, 2011; Thomas, 2009). Two chose to do so.

The researcher took anonymity very seriously. Belarus is not an open society in a Popperian sense (Popper, 2011) and both participants and the researcher are aware of the overt political considerations when discussing education in Belarus. The research touches on curriculum requirements, in particular any difference between the requirements from the Ministry of Education and classroom practice. There are a number of risks, for the individual and for the research. The researcher is aware of the risk that some participants may be tempted to answer questions in particular ways, for example supporting official education policy.

The researcher, a native Belarusian, was acutely sensitive to these concerns and offered anonymity and assurance of security of storage. In addition, the researcher ensured that the questions were attuned to the political sensitivities and were open and non-leading.
CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Chapter introduction

This section combines the research findings with discussion. To keep the content structured and easier to follow, the chapter addresses each research question separately.

4.2 RQ1: How common is the use of L1 in the primary and secondary EFL classroom in the case of one town in Belarus?

All teachers at both primary and secondary schools used the students' L1 at some point, although the extent of use varied. In primary schools, 45% relied heavily on the L1, with 15% of teachers using it "always" and 30% "often". The majority of secondary teachers also used the L1, although less frequently. While 83% of secondary teachers used the L1, none used it 'always' and only 15% used it 'often'. The majority (68%) used it 'sometimes' (Table 4.1).

This supports recent empirical literature that suggests that teachers use L1 (e.g., De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009). It also finds that although teachers tend to use the L1 more frequently than that supported or recommended by L2 proponents, in general they tend not to 'overuse' it (e.g., Polio & Duff, 1994; Grim, 2010; Hoff, 2013; Macaro, 2001; Thompson, 2006).

Table 4.1 Teachers' use of L1 at primary and secondary level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N(%)</td>
<td>N(%)</td>
<td>N(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, always</td>
<td>5 (15.2)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, often</td>
<td>10 (30.3)</td>
<td>6 (15.0)</td>
<td>16 (21.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, sometimes</td>
<td>18 (54.5)</td>
<td>27 (67.5)</td>
<td>45 (61.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, almost never</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>7 (17.5)</td>
<td>7 (9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, never</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33 (100.0)</td>
<td>40 (100.0)</td>
<td>73 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that just over two-thirds of secondary teachers used the L1 sometimes provides support for more recent foreign/second language theories that recommend targeted or optimal use of L1 (e.g., Cambra & Nussbaum, 1997; Castelotti & Moore, 1997; Cook 2001b; Duff &

Of course, the classification was subjective. Unlike studies including Duff and Polio (1990); Macaro (2001); and Thompson (2006), this research did not observe and quantify classroom language use. Nonetheless, it appears the interviewees gave reasonably consistent and ordered interpretations of the categories. For instance, at primary level "always" meant L1 accounted for around half of the class-time, "often" meant L1 use ranged from a third to 44% of the class, "sometimes" usually meant using L1 between 20-33% of the time. The judgement is similar among secondary teachers. However, 'sometimes' generally meant less frequently for secondary teachers, ranging from 15% to 25% of the spoken class-time.

For two teachers, the definition of "sometimes" depended on the reason they were using L1. It was far shorter for non-language purposes than for language functions.

"Well, on average, it's about from 5 to 10 minutes [11-22% of a 45 minute class] in case I need to explain something, students do not understand what they have to do. As for grammar classes, since for primary school these notions or phenomena are quite difficult, to understand the grammatical structure of English, mother tongue is used more often, up to 15-20 minutes [33-44%]." Maria

"At secondary school when students have some knowledge, words, vocabulary, it's about 10 minutes [11% of the class] at different stages of the class, but in general it may vary, because when we do reading, speech practice, even listening comprehension, we try to use the foreign language. When we deal with grammar, we use more mother tongue, of course". Olga

The relative consistency of categories allows for general comparisons with other studies. While aware of the limitations of quantifying time spent using the L1, around half of primary teachers use the L1 between 20%-33% of the time and half use it more than a third of the time. Secondary teachers used the L1 less frequently, with 67.5% using it sometimes, which equates to about 10% to 22% of the lesson.

This is consistent with Polio and Duff (1994) who found teachers' use of the L1 ranging from 0-90%, Turnbull (2001) where teachers used the L1 11-91% of the time and Macaro's (2001) smaller study that found teachers' use ranged from 4 to 12%.
4.3 RQ2: What are teachers' purposes and reasons for using Belarusian/Russian in the primary and secondary EFL classroom?

At least one teacher used the L1 for at least one function. However, the quantitative data reveals that teachers were more likely to use the L1 for specific purposes. At least four in five teachers at both levels used the L1 to *Explain grammar*, and *Translate*, while 82% of primary-level teachers and 63% of secondary-level teachers used the L1 to *Define new vocabulary*. In contrast, just 33% of secondary-level teachers used the L1 to *Manage the classroom* and 43% to *Develop a relationship with the students*. A table showing these results is Appendix 5.

This research joins the growing body of empirical evidence that finds teachers use the L1 for different functions (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990; Macaro, 2001, Thomson, 2006). Teachers used the L1 for both language and non-language purposes, e.g., to teach grammar, and vocabulary, as well for interpersonal reasons and classroom management. This supports Duff and Polio (1990), Polio and Duff (1994), Castelotti and Moore (1997) and Cambra and Nussbaum (1997).

During the interviews, teachers cited grammar and vocabulary as reasons for using the L1. Many felt that there were significant grammatical differences between the students’ L1 (Russian/Belarussian) and English. Teachers' perceived difference between the L1 and the TL might increase their L1 use (Tang, 2002). Teachers' responses during the interviews support this notion.

"Well, there are such grammatical phenomena that we do not have in Russian. It is something new for our kids. For example, the gerund. There is no gerund in Russian. This grammatical phenomenon can be very difficult for our kids to understand, so, when explained in Russian, it's OK, the process is more concise, easier and mastering goes faster". Elena

Following Duff and Polio (1990), Macaro (2001) and others, this analysis categorises functions into language and non-language. The categorisation is as follows. The questionnaire asked respondents to assess their use of L1 for eight functions. Five were labelled 'language functions' (explain grammar, define new vocabulary, translate, check comprehension, and explain complex notions of language and culture) and three labelled 'non-language functions' (manage the classroom, develop a relationship with the students and provide feedback). Figure 4.1 shows the results.
Both primary and secondary teachers were more likely to use L1 for language purposes. Statistical significance testing using a 4x2 Pearson Chi-Squared test strongly rejects the null hypothesis that this happened by chance, $\chi^2(3,566)$ p-value = 0.007. All Chi-squared tests presented assume a uniform distribution for the expected values.

This differs from some research (e.g., Macaro, 2001) which tends to find that teachers are more likely to use the students' L1 for non-language purposes. One reason may be the role or influence of cultural/contextual factors. Tang (2002) explores the issue of L1 use in relation with cultural and linguistic identity and finds that some students may find total exclusion of their L1 unsettling. Derrida (1998) provides a powerful socio-political argument supporting this. Tang adds that students may be more open to leaning the TL if they sense their L1 is valued and involved in the learning process.

The interviews added insight on why teachers felt less reliant on L1 for non-language functions such as classroom management, developing teacher-student relationships and providing feedback. While some proposed that classroom management was unnecessary because the lessons were "interesting", others managed the class through either non-verbal language/tone of voice or by equipping students with the necessary English phrases at the start of the year.

"Because all notices, all thoughts and wishes of how a student should behave at the class you can express in English by gesture, facial gesture, raising tone. I think, even if a student does not understand what exactly you want to say, he/she, nevertheless, will respond by his/her play". Elena
Teachers expressed similar reasons for their preference of using English to *develop a relationship with students*, i.e., they kept phrases of social dialogue in simple English introduced at the beginning of the year and that using English demonstrated their love of the language. One interviewee did not consider it appropriate to use L1 to develop a relationship, stating that they should use English. Perhaps they believed the inclusion of an 'other' language created a 'neutral' environment.

The non-language function that teachers were most likely to use the L1 was to *provide feedback*, with 71% of primary school teachers and 60% of secondary school teachers using it for this purpose. Teachers' reasons for using L1 to provide feedback were more practical. They wanted to maximise understanding, either before or after the task. One teacher said it avoided problems. However, some also mentioned the comfort-factor of L1 use.

"*It [Russian] would be more understandable, more comfortable for them perhaps*". Anna

Some studies have found teachers' preference for using the L1 for language purposes. For example, Thompson (2006) found that teachers used L1 for both purposes, with fewer teachers (just 25%) using the L1 for classroom management and none at all using to help establish or build "solidarity" with students (p. 179).

The preference for teachers to use the L1 for language purposes suggest, following Coste (1997), it has a functional role, especially if teachers use the L1 as a reference point to help construct knowledge about the TL.

One of the wider implications of this research is that it supports Levine calls a "sanctioned role" for L1 classroom use (Levine, 2003, p. 344). Both Skinner (1985) and Macaro (2005) argue that L1 provides cognitive benefits, allowing for greater understanding of meaning such as connecting concepts and, therefore, its purpose is pedagogic. For example, Grim (2010) finds instructors using L1 for both educational reasons, such as for promoting metalinguistic understanding as well as practical ones, including classroom management.

Figure 4.2 shows whether there were clear preferences in teachers' use of L1 for different purposes. The most common reasons given by both primary and secondary teachers in their decision to use the L1 were, *based on student's needs* (94% of primary-level teachers and 95% of secondary level teachers) and *based on the lesson content* (73% of teachers at both levels). In this case, a Chi-Squared test rejects the hypothesis that the higher likelihood of teachers who used the L1 based on student's needs and based on the lesson content happened by chance $\chi^2 (5, 195), p\text{-value}<0.0001$. Additionally, there was little difference between
primary and secondary level teachers in their reasons for using the L1. A Chi-Squared test strongly supports the hypothesis that primary and secondary-level teachers do not differ in how they decide to use L1, $\chi^2(5, 195), p\text{-value}=975$.

**Figure 4.2: Reasons why teachers decide to use L1 at primary and secondary level (per cent of respondents).**

These findings suggest a number of issues:

- Teachers at both primary and secondary schools are more likely to use the L1 for language functions.
- Localised, classroom conditions help determine the use of L1.
- Teachers find L1 has a role even if exogenous factors, such as the curriculum, suggest they should not use it.
- Students' ability influences teachers' decisions.

The role of students' proficiency in the TL is amongst the most explored factors determining L1 use. Mouhanna (2009) finds that L1 has a greater role for new second or additional language learners, with students themselves demanding L1 use at least some of the time. This suggests L1 has a language function, at least for students who are less proficient in the TL. In particular, L1 can provide support as a scaffold in developing students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Mouhanna, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Additionally, students found the L1 valuable for discussing and arguing issues as well as for tasks involving meaning. As outlined in the literature review, it appears that for novice language learners especially, effective or targeted L1 use is a scaffold that extends their ZPD (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).
One of the interviewees had a strong opinion on the role of L1 according to students’ proficiency level.

*I think it is impossible to learn a foreign language effectively without reliance on mother tongue and a student's intellectual 'storage'. I think, the lower the initial level of the language competence is, the more applicable is this rule, that mother tongue should be used. Just at the advanced level, when certain degree of language competence is achieved, the time to be used ... the time, assigned for the use of mother tongue, can be reduced*.

Olga

Another raises an interesting issue, whereby topics can be introduced in the foreign language classroom before the native one.

"*I believe that it is advisable to use a small amount of Russian when teaching English. Sometimes foreign language curriculum is ahead of other subjects' curriculum (especially at primary level), so students do not possess the necessary concepts even in Russian*".

Tamara

Butzkamm (2003) takes a more practical approach, arguing that "monolingual lessons without the help of the mother tongue are extrinsically possible; however, monolingual learning is an intrinsic impossibility". For new learners especially, the L1 is the elephant in the monolingual classroom, present even in its absence. If that is the case, proponents of targeted L1 use recommend using it effectively.

The interviews revealed that some teachers felt the L1 was indispensable for some aspects of EL teaching. One stated that, "*Translation is impossible without mother tongue*", Anton while another argued: "because when you explain meanings of the words, it is not always possible to find words to describe it in English". Olga

One teacher proposed non-cognitive benefits of using English, stating that using English demonstrated their love of the language that they hoped would motivate the students. However, another teacher argued that the L1 provided non-cognitive or psychological benefits, stating that Russian "...can create an atmosphere of psychological comfort".

Anna

The teacher's own TL proficiency may also be a factor shaping teachers' use of L1. From the teachers' position, Thompson (2006) finds that native English-speaking teachers in a Spanish language class used the TL the least, while the least proficient English-speaking teacher
exclusively used the TL. Thompson (2006) suggests the "possibility that English proficiency does play an important role in TL and L1 use in the classroom" (p. 35).

All interviewees believed a teacher's job was to engage and educate all the students, which required using L1 more frequently for less proficient students. Echoing Turnbull (2001), one teacher was concerned that less proficient students would be unable to participate without using some L1 and they would have failed as a teacher.

"I mean, a person is uninterested when he/she does not understand, cannot participate in the process. That is wrong. For example, if just some good students understand you, you are not worth a brass farthing as a teacher. Each student should understand you. So it's wrong to use too little of mother tongue, and at the same time it's wrong to use too much, because if you use much it won't be an English class, it will be a Russian class or just an hour of chatting with students but in no way an English class. So, ideally, one should aim at using as little mother tongue as possible". Olga

A low proportion of teachers stated that either current methodology or school policy influenced their decision. Less than a quarter of teachers at either level thought these purposes influenced their decision to use the L1. This suggests that factors influencing L1 are more likely to occur within the classroom, rather than 'outside' or exogenous to the teachers' real-time, localised, experience of teaching. This supports Levine (2003) and Song (2009) who found the importance of localised and contextual factors in teachers' L1 decision-making.

4.4 RQ3: What differences and/or similarities exist between teachers' views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it at both primary and secondary levels?

Edstrom (2006) finds that teachers' beliefs or attitudes towards using L1 in the classroom can differ from how often and when they actual use it. She further comments that these differences are an area worthy of further exploration.

This study also found that teachers at both schools used the L1 in practice more than they ideally thought they should (Figure 4.3). However, primary and secondary level teachers differed on whether they should use the L1 in the classroom, with 88% of primary school teachers agreeing they should use L1 compared with 38% of secondary school teachers. As there was little difference between beliefs and use at primary level, they had to compromise less frequently than secondary school teachers did.
This finding aligns with other evidence suggesting that teachers tend to use L1 more than they feel they should (Edstrom, 2006; Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; Macaro, 1997). Kovacic and Kirinic (2011), using a similar questionnaire to this research in an English language classroom in Croatia, found that 45% of teachers thought they should employ the L1 "sometimes" in the classroom versus 65% who actually did use it. This is similar to secondary teachers in this research (39% who agreed they should use the L1 and 68% who used it "sometimes"). Likewise, Crawford (2004) found 54% of primary teachers had reservations about using the TL as the main language of instruction. Crawford (2004) also finds support for the TL grows with students' age.

Macaro (1997), researching teachers' beliefs and attitudes, found an overwhelming majority of teachers thought that it was not possible to use the TL exclusively. As Panjas (1992) and others highlight, it is difficult to accurately measure 'beliefs'; i.e., what teachers really believe rather than what they say (Song, 2009). Nonetheless, external factors like peer group and school policy can influence teachers' actual use of the L1 (Nagy & Robertson, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Alternatively, something may be happening within the classroom that is causing secondary teachers to employ the L1 more then they wish to, as suggested by Macaro (1997). The data does show that secondary teachers were more uncertain, with 23% unsure whether they should use the L1.

1 Excludes respondents who were unsure
Echoing the actual use of the L1, both primary and secondary level teachers are more likely to believe they should use it for language purposes than non-language purposes. Over half of secondary level teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they should use the L1 for language purposes, while just 16% thought they should for non-language purposes and 73% disagreed (Figure 4.4). A Chi-square test also rejected the hypothesis that the difference between the use of L1 for language and non-language functions could happen by chance, $\chi^2(2,72)$ p-value <.0001).

**Figure 4.4: Per cent of teachers agreeing they should use L1 for language and non-language functions at primary and secondary level.**

The data also reveals that the compromises teachers make between their attitudes towards using the L1 and their actual use occur most often in managing non-language aspects of teaching. Figure 4.5 shows the difference between teachers' views on the L1 and their actual use, by function. The bottom of the arrows show the percentage of the teachers agreeing they should use the L1 for that function, while the top of the bar show the percentage who actually employ it for that purpose. This adds support to the viewpoint, discussed earlier, that language proficiency appears to influence teachers' L1 use. Teachers were more likely to agree that the L1 should be used for language purposes, so it could be that language purposes are related to students' TL proficiency, a finding others have made (Mouhanna, 2009; Upton & Lee- Thompson, 2001).

As the participants were more likely to believe in using the L1 for language purposes, they had to compromise their beliefs most often for non-language functions. Non-language functions account for three of the four largest differences between teachers' beliefs and their use of the L1. The difference is widest in providing feedback. Just 23.3% of teachers at least
agree they should employ the L1 to provide feedback to students, yet 63% actually use it for this purpose. Managing the classroom has the third widest difference and developing a relationship with the students the forth. Yet teachers also compromised their views for language purposes. Thirty-seven per cent of teachers agree they should use the L1 to define new vocabulary, yet 71.2% actually did it, the second largest difference (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: The difference between teachers' views on L1 and their actual use, by function.

![Diagram showing differences between teachers' views and actual use of L1 for various functions.](image)

**Note:** The bottom of the arrows show the percentage of teachers agreeing they should use L1 for that function, while the top of the bar shows the percentage who actually use L1 for that purpose.

The research shows that, in general, teachers' disfavour using the students L1 for relational reasons, yet they still do so. For many interviewees, the practical demands of the classroom means teachers naturally rely on using Belarusian/Russian more in practice than they ideally believed they should. A common belief was that using the L1 saved time. One teacher also said it reduced their class preparation time. Another highlighted the pressures both teachers and students are under to complete the curriculum. This passage is worth showing in full:
"You know, when we speak English we spend more time and, in general, I don’t see that we do not keep up with the curriculum, with the scope of material to be processed. It's quicker in Russian. There is a good deal of questions when we speak English, and we just don't have time. Perhaps, the quality reduces to some extent". Anton

From a practical perspective, it is not surprising that teachers were more likely to compromise using L1 for non-language purposes. A classroom is relational environment. Additionally, teacher/student interaction and teachers' interpersonal skills serve important emotional, class-management and pedagogic functions. Nonetheless, in remains the case that teachers attitudes towards and use of L1 favoured a limited role of L1 for non-language purposes.

As Freeman (1989) argues, teachers are likely to learn and benefit from knowledge of their own behaviour in the classroom. This research begins this process for Belarus by identifying when and where teachers are more likely to use the L1 than they feel they should.

4.5 RQ4: What factors influence teachers' views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it?

4.5.1 Gymnasium vs. Comprehensive School

To investigate the role of student proficiency, the analysis examines teachers' use of and attitudes towards the L1 by type of school. This assumes that gymnasium students either have, or are capable of acquiring, higher language proficiency, on average. The author acknowledges that is an assumption that is not evidenced-based. Type of school can only at best be a first approximation of a students' language proficiency.

Whether the school was academically selective or not had no statistically significant difference in the teachers' use of the L1. At least nine in ten teachers at both types of school employed the L1 at least sometimes. Teachers' attitudes towards the L1 use were similar. A Chi-squared test could not rule-out that the small differences between teachers at the two types school could happen by chance $\chi^2(1,73), p$-value=.9.

The results also find that teachers at both gymnasium and comprehensive schools were far more likely to use L1 for language purposes (81% and 82% respectively). This suggests that the type of school alone (either primary/secondary or comprehensive/gymnasia) cannot help us understand why teachers in this Belarusian town are more likely to use the L1 for language rather than non-language functions.
There was one function where the difference between comprehensive school and gymnasia teachers in their use of L1 was statistically significant. Teachers at comprehensive schools were more likely to use L1 to 'develop a relationship with the students' (64% versus 43%, $\chi^2(1,71)$, $p$-value=.03). This supports the empirical literature where teachers tend to use students' L1 for non-language (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990; Castelotti & Moore, 1997; Cambra & Nussbaum, 1997; Polio & Duff, 1994).

A number of other factors could be driving this difference. For example, the role of peers and/or school policy may discourage L1 use. However, the evidence is mixed. Gymnasia teachers were more uncertain about whether they should use L1 for non-language functions (23.1% of gymnasia teachers vs. 8.1% at comprehensive schools). Again, a Chi-squared tests shows that the difference in uncertainty is significant, $\chi^2(5,580)$, $p$-value=.009. Perhaps something external to the classroom, for example uncertainty concerning current education policy, is causing gymnasia teachers to be uncertain in the classroom.

Table 4.3: Comprehensive school and gymnasiun teachers' views on the use of L1 for language and non-language functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreeing/strongly agreeing</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagreeing/Strongly disagreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Non-Language</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. School</td>
<td>98 (59.8%)</td>
<td>29 (29.3%)</td>
<td>22 (13.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>121 (60.5%)</td>
<td>19 (16.2%)</td>
<td>39 (19.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further independence testing shows that the function that gymnasia teachers were most uncertain whether they should use the L1 or not was to 'Manage the classroom'. Although 22.5% of gymnasia teachers were unsure if they should use L1 for this purpose, no teachers at comprehensive schools were uncertain. A Chi-squared test showed that this was unlikely to happen by chance, $\chi^2(2, 73)$, $p$-value=.002. The differences for the other functions were not statistically significant. Similarly, gymnasia teachers were less likely to agree with using the L1 to manage the classroom. Just 8% of gymnasia teachers thought they should use L1 to 'Manage the classroom', compared with 30% of teachers at comprehensive schools. In support of this, during the interviews comprehensive school teachers tended to find reasons
for using Russian for relational and class-management purposes, while gymnasium teachers found reasons for using English.

"Well, from my point of view, if you do it in Russian…ehm, you can create an atmosphere of psychological comfort. If you use Russian you become a little bit closer to them". Anna (Comprehensive School Teacher)

"For these purposes I really do not use mother tongue, because students do understand what…what I want from them when I say it in English. And to keep… I think I can keep discipline in the classroom…ehm…with the help of some phrases or gesture, or some…some new interesting games and methods …as for development of relationship with students, I do not consider it appropriate to use mother tongue here, because English suits here perfectly. Some jokes, some quotations… can…ehm…relieve tension in the classroom and make it more favourable and interesting". Maria (Gymnasium Teacher)

To summarise, there is some evidence that type of school influences the use of, and attitudes towards, the L1. Gymnasia teachers take a less favourable attitude towards L1 for non-language purposes than teachers do in comprehensive schools. However, the reasons for this are uncertain and the evidence is mixed. Gymnasia teachers are more uncertain about using the L1 and for which specific functions it may be acceptable to use it. It could be that attitudes towards the L1 among their peers (i.e., localised sociocultural factors) are influencing their behaviour. Yet teachers themselves are unsure if this conforms to their own attitudes or beliefs. Another possible explanation is that gymnasia teachers are simply more uncertain or feel they lack sufficient knowledge or training on whether or not to use the L1 for non-language purposes. This suggests a role for teacher training and/or a role for establishing environments for sharing and discussing professional best practice.

4.5.2 Length of Teaching Experience

Less experienced teachers may be more likely use the L1 to manage the classroom (Macaro, 2001). In the same paper, Macaro (2001) also finds that student teachers implicitly and explicitly used official policy to frame at least some of the rationale for their using L1.

However, in this study the number of years of teaching experience does not appear to influence teachers' use of the L1 or their attitude towards it. For all cohorts of experience (less-experienced 0-5 years, experienced 6-20 years and very experienced teachers with 21+ years), almost two-thirds of teachers agreed that they should use the L1.
This research was also unable to find evidence supporting the literature that inexperienced teachers were more likely to use the L1 for non-language purposes. Although 65% of less experienced teachers used the L1 for non-language reasons compared with 48% of very experienced teachers, a Chi-squared test could not reject the hypothesis that the results are independent, $\chi^2(2, 209), p\text{-value}= .132$. A similar test concludes the same for teachers' beliefs towards using L1 for non-language purposes $\chi^2(2, 213), p\text{-value}= .258$. Therefore, we cannot conclude that less experienced teachers were either more or less likely to use the L1 for non-language purposes. Nor did experience appear to influence beliefs towards the L1 for non-language purposes.

However, 90% of teachers with 0-5 years' experience used the L1 for language functions, compared with 73% of teachers with 6-20 years' experience and 78% of teachers with 21+ years' experience. These results are statistically significant, $\chi^2(2, 359), p\text{-value}= .0058$.

Therefore, a teacher's classroom experience is a statistically significant factor in shaping teachers' use of the L1 for language purposes. Newly qualified teachers in Belarus are more likely to have undergone professional training when the Department of Education stated that teachers should use the L1 only for language purposes. Therefore, this analysis lends support to the literature that inexperienced teachers are more likely to respond to either their teacher training or external (to the classroom) policy guidelines.

Statistical testing also concludes that experience can influence teachers' attitudes to L1 use for language reasons. Table 4.4 shows the p-values for Chi-squared tests on whether experience could influence teachers' beliefs for a number of functions. The main results are that less experienced teachers are far more likely agree that they should use the L1 for 'defining new vocabulary', 'Explaining Grammar' and 'Managing the classroom'. This is interesting in reference to the current literature. Although Carson and Kashihara, (2012) suggest "… a need for L1 support at beginner levels" (p. 46), they add that students find support to be most effective for emotional or non-language reasons. They argue that the need for the L1 (both teacher and student) declines with student proficiency. Nonetheless, the study also concludes that an effective method for developing students' cognitive awareness of the L2 is to establish connections between the two languages. This occurs principally through connections in language functions such as grammar, new vocabulary and identifying comprehension. Teaching experience also influences teachers' attitudes towards using the L1 to 'Explain complex notions of language and culture', which was significant at the 5% level.
Table 4.4: Functions where, statistically, experience influences teachers' views on whether they should use L1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Language/Non-language Function</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explain Grammar</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define new vocabulary</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the classroom</td>
<td>Non-Language</td>
<td>0.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a relationship with the students</td>
<td>Non-Language</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translate</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check comprehension</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td>Non-Language</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*= ss at 5%, **= ss at 1%.

The role of experience in influencing teachers' attitudes towards the L1 raises an interesting question. Gymnasia teachers were more experienced, on average. One-third of the teachers at comprehensive schools had experience of 0-5 years compared with 18% of gymnasia teachers. Similarly, one-half of teachers in gymnasia had 21 years or more experience compared with 22% of comprehensive teachers (Table 4.5). Therefore, the dominant factor that may explain differences in teachers' use of the L1 may be due to teacher experience and not educational establishment. Therefore, it may not be that gymnasia teachers are more uncertain (as the previous section found out). Rather, teacher experience is the dominant behavioural factor.
Table 4.5: What is your teaching experience in full years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience in Years</th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>8 (44%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>8 (44%)</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>7 (32%)</td>
<td>11 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
<td>15 (38%)</td>
<td>15 (38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most interviewees believed that experience influenced a teacher's use of L1. Experience was associated with "understanding", which was often context-specific. Experienced teachers were felt to have acquired non-language skills that equipped them with 'techniques' to avoid the L1 unless necessary. It was felt that less experienced teachers require the L1 more often. This was not because they do not have the necessary teaching skills or education but because experienced teachers were able to draw on acquired knowledge or practical human-capital skills that enabled them to adapt more quickly. For example:

"Undoubtedly, an experienced teacher, to my mind, may try not to use mother tongue, but an experienced teacher even seeing that students do not understand this or that word can always replace it by the word the students are able to understand from the context or make it possible for them to understand it from the context. A less experienced teacher, in spite of their good university education, faced with difficulties in working with students, namely, in speaking the foreign language because he or she may not know how to replace a hard word by a simpler one. That is the problem I am faced with". Anton (0-5 years of teaching experience)

And:

"A teacher with more experience feels when it is necessary or unnecessary to use Russian in order to achieve a better result. It is impossible to know all the nuances of teaching when studying the theory of foreign language teaching. Everything is learnt through practice and gained with experience". Tamara (6-20 years of teaching experience)

However, two of the seven interviewees did not think experience influenced teachers' L1 use. One believed that teachers modified their use of L1 not because of experience but based on students' proficiency in English. The other, while acknowledging that experienced teachers
have more practical experience, argued that less experienced teachers are generally closer in age to their students and so are better placed to develop a relationship though using English and not Belarusian/Russian.

"It is a difficult question … I think it is not the length of teaching experience that influences the use of either language, but the level of students' proficiency. The greater their proficiency, the more senior the class, the more intellectually mature they are, the less mother tongue should be used". Olga (21 + years of teaching experience)

A tentative conclusion could be both internal and external factors shape teachers attitudes towards L1 and its use. Internal factors include practical classroom experience, learning and judging 'what works'. Second, based on the interviews, it also includes student proficiency. Yet external factors also play a role. These include teacher training, which may explain why newly qualified teachers were more likely to agree that they should use the L1 for language purposes, as the curriculum promotes this approach. It may also help explain why more experienced teachers, who are less likely to have recently revived formal training, may be more uncertain about where, when and if to use the L1. However, it is not easy to separate these factors. For example, the interviews suggested that less experienced teachers have had fewer opportunities to discover different ways to explain new or difficult words or concepts, which may force them to rely more on the L1. Therefore, two factors, one internal (experience) and one external (training) may be pushing them in the same direction - to use the L1. There may be no single 'dominant' influence but a confluence of them.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter summarises the findings in relation to the both theoretical and pedagogic concerns. It explores implications for the general theory of second/foreign language learning, especially for the teachers of this Belarusian town. The chapter ends by outlining limitations to this study and provides some suggestions for future research.

5.2 RQ1: How common is the use of L1 in the primary and secondary EFL classroom in the case of one town in Belarus?

Following several influential papers (Duff & Polio, 1990; Polio & Duff, 1994; Macaro, 2001; Macaro, 2005), this research established that teachers used the L1 and that the extent of use varied. Based on the interviews, it seems likely that almost half of primary school teachers use the L1 for at least a third of the lesson. The remaining teachers used it for over 10% of the lesson. Secondary teachers used the L1 less often - 67.5% used it sometimes, which equates to about 10% to 22% of the lesson. These numbers are indicative. Therefore, although common, teachers' use of L1 was not demonstrably extensive. Only 15% of primary teachers' used the L1 'always'.

Therefore, there was little evidence that teachers 'over used' the L1, supporting related literature that finds teachers rarely over-rely on the L1 (e.g., De la Campa and Nassaji, 2009; Duff & Polio, 1994; Grim, 2010; Hoff, 2013; Macaro, 2001; Thompson, 2006). It also supports the research that defends a limited role for the L1 and that concerns over the L1 reducing students' exposure to the TL may be overplayed (e.g., Auerbach, 1993; Macaro, 2001; Voicu, 2012).

5.3 RQ2: What are teachers' purposes and reasons for using Belarusian/Russian in the primary and secondary EFL classroom?

This research found evidence that teachers' use of the L1 was not random and that teachers employed the L1 for specific functions. This suggests the L1 has a role in the language classroom (Grim, 2010; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2005; Skinner, 1985).

Teachers displayed a preference for using the L1 for both language and non-language purposes (Grim, 2012; Polio & Duff, 1994). More specifically, they tended to use L1 to teach
grammar and vocabulary, as well for interpersonal reasons and classroom management (Cambra & Nussbaum, 1997; Castelotti & Moore, 1997; Duff & Polio, 1990; Polio & Duff, 1994). In discussion, some of the teachers justified their use of the L1 by highlighting grammatical differences between Russian and English. This supports the literature that finds teachers employing L1 for grammatical aspects of language when the perceived difference between the TL and the students' L1 is large (Tang, 2002). Additionally, it also supports Ellis' (2008) position of L1’s sociocultural role helping equip students for the TL.

However, this study differed from the body of established literature when the functions where categorised into clear 'language' and 'non-language' functions. In a major contribution to the literature, Macaro (2001) found that teachers were more likely to use the students' L1 for non-language reasons. In contrast, this analysis found that teachers were far more likely to use the L1 for language reasons. This result was strongly statistically significant. Although there were exceptions, interviewees tended to feel that there were other ways to manage non-language functions rather than use the L1.

Students' needs and lesson content strongly influenced teachers' use of L1. These factors were broadly shared among teachers sampled. It shows that the reasons for using L1 were not only likely to be language-based but were also local and classroom-based. This is in contrast to teachers using the L1 for policy or other reasons originating outside the classroom.

Although the decision to use the L1 can be quite narrow - i.e., the role of student proficiency, the influencing factor can still vary. Some teachers used the L1 because students' thoughts were more developed in the L1, whereas for others it was vocabulary - new learners knew fewer words, so it was more communicative. For one it was relational.

This research found that teachers thought a lack of experience could force a teacher into using the L1, for example, by not knowing the right word in English or an alternative scaffolding technique. It was felt that this was often down to classroom experience - practical experience rather than formal knowledge. The L1 can be a (temporary) alternative scaffold for less experienced teachers and/or for less proficient learners.

5.4 RQ3: What differences and/or similarities exist between teachers' views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it at both primary and secondary levels?

As commonly found in the literature, teachers tended to use the L1 more than they believed they should. Therefore, 'something' happens in the classroom that forces teachers to use the
L1 more than they would wish to. This compromise is greater at secondary level because fewer teachers believe they should use the L1 or they should use it less frequently.

Despite being more likely to use the L1 for language reasons, teachers have to compromise more often for non-language functions. Teachers are quite strong in their beliefs that they can use the L1 for language purposes and tend to use it for language purposes. Yet they also use the L1 for non-language purposes, where they are less certain they should use it. This is not surprising. A classroom is a social environment and the literature tends to find teachers using the L1 for relational reasons. The fact that teachers tended to use the L1 more than they would like for non-language functions are likely to be driven, in part, by the social aspects of teaching.

5.5 RQ4: What factors influence teachers' views on the use of L1 and their actual use of it?

This study found no evidence that type of school influenced teachers' quantity of L1 use. Teachers at both types of schools were more likely to use the L1 for language purposes. However, there was some evidence that teachers at comprehensive schools were more likely to use the L1 for non-language reasons, specifically to 'develop a relationship with the students'. This is more in common with the literature, which finds teachers more likely to use the L1 for non-language reasons (Cambra & Nussbaum, 1997; Castelotti & Moore, 1997). Additionally, gymnasia teachers were more uncertain about whether to use the L1 for non-language functions, specifically within the context of classroom management. When the issue is clearly not language-specific, gymnasia teachers are unsure which language to use. In this way, the language decision is contextual and localised within the classroom. The interviews supported this view. Attitudes of teachers from comprehensive schools differed from gymnasia teachers. The former were more comfortable using the L1 for relationship reasons, whereas the latter believed they could manage this better in English.

This analysis could find no evidence that length of teaching experience influenced teachers' use of, or attitude toward, the L1. However, it supports past studies that found less experienced teachers tend to use the L1 to manage the classroom. For example, Macaro (2001) found that student teachers used the L1 sparingly, at least not enough to "warrant concern" (p. 544) but when they did use it, they tended to do so for classroom management and discipline. Similarly, this research found that less experienced teachers were more likely
to favour using the L1 for classroom management and explaining complex notions of language and culture.

The research also found less experienced teachers were more likely to use L1 for language purposes and agree that they should it for these reasons. In broad terms, this supports a number of research studies that find that teaching experience lowers reliance on the students' L1.

A further possibility is the role of teacher training and policy. Newly qualified teachers are more likely to have concluded their training under current policy guidelines that promote using the TL except for specific language reasons. Although, like Macaro (2001), this study found little evidence that training influences a new teacher's use of the L1, we cannot rule out the possibility that exogenous factors, including curriculum guidelines, influence newly qualified teachers' use of L1 and their attitudes towards it.

In conclusion, it seems that localised, endogenous factors as well as exogenous ones influence teachers' use of the L1, and their attitude towards it. Endogenous factors include context-specific or localised issues such as student motivation or ability and the relationship between teacher and students, whereas exogenous includes government or school policy and formal teacher training. In short, a number of distinct factors are likely to influence a teacher's use and beliefs about using the students' L1.

5.6 Implications of the research

The present study has contributed to the general understanding of English language teaching. It has introduced a new context of foreign language teaching in Belarus and deepened our understanding of the use and role of L1 in the classroom. It found that teachers with a wide range of teaching experience use the L1. The L1 has a place in different types of classroom, including primary and secondary level as well as students across a range of perceived academically ability. Teachers tend to use the L1 purposefully, supporting the literature that questions the exclusion of L1 from the classroom. Indeed, although teachers used the L1 for a range of functions, they displayed a consistent preference for using the L1 for language functions. Given the language-based context for using L1, we can conclude that teachers see L1 as a tool or form of scaffolding. Teachers perceive that the L1 enhances effective language learning. It is noteworthy that the majority of the sampled teachers had many years teaching experience, so it would have been many years since they completed their formal teaching training. Nonetheless, their targeted use of the L1, especially for introducing vocabulary and
complex grammar are in line with recent curriculum guidelines. In other words, there is little difference between teachers' use of the L1 gained through experience or through official policy. This raises the issue of cause and effect, whether policy is adopting effective teaching practice. If policy makers assume it is the other way round, then it appears that teachers already use a broadly similar approach.

Nonetheless, it was fortuitous for future research that this study occurred during the first academic year of the shift in official policy. A transition period provides an opportunity to test empirically the impact of a policy change. This study examined teachers' current use of L1 and the reasons for its use. Future research will be able to judge whether that use has changed and perhaps judge the impact that policy may have had on any potential change. Few empirical research studies in the literature have been able to examine this issue.

This study found that endogenous factors (e.g., student's needs, lesson content) were the dominant influence on teachers' use of the L1 in the classroom. Language use in the classroom is a complex issue crossing social, cultural, psychological factors as well as effective language learning. Policy guidelines can address only part of this. The study found that experienced teachers were uncertain whether to use the L1 for non-language-related functions. While policy or additional teacher training can provide support for teachers, the localised, social aspect of teaching means exogenous support is limited. Teachers have to make many decisions, often instantaneously, 'on the ground'. The mandatory end of year exam may create additional uncertainty for teachers. Teachers do not necessarily achieve the legitimate aims of developing students' social and communicative competence by banishing L1 from the classroom. As Macaro (2001) observed, it is often simply not practical to do so. However, the observation, common in empirical studies, that teachers tend to employ the L1 more then they ideally would like to, suggests there is a place for aligning attitudes to actual use. Therefore, there is a place for teachers to develop teaching skills, knowledge and training.

5.7 Limitations

This research contains a number of limitations requiring consideration when assessing its contribution to the literature. The use of qualitative data, despite adding richness, means the research is not generalisable to wider contexts of teachers' L1 use. The findings may not reflect teachers L1 use across Eastern Europe or even Belarus, although it could be representative of teachers within the Minsk region. Therefore, the research aims at 'petite' generalisability (Stake, 1995).
Additionally, similar empirical studies that quantify teachers' L1 use tend to employ direct observation of teachers' use of either the L1 or the TL (e.g., Duff and Polio, 1990; Edstrom, 2006; Macaro, 2001; Polio and Duff, 1994). In this study, quantifying the L1 use is subjective, based on the participants' own judgement. Although these answers are then analysed for consistency and appeared consistent, they were not objectively measured.

Further, it was challenging to persuade the participants to attend an interview, as some teachers were concerned about engaging in a discussion on particular issues. Even though the researcher reassured the participants about their anonymity, some might have been concerned about their answers, tailoring them to align with what they expect the Belarusian authorities want to hear. As noted earlier, these concerns are legitimate. However, there was little evidence that the participant did tailor their responses. Their answers tended to be consistent and the participants appeared engaged and answered the questions openly.

5.8 Further Research

The empirical literature on teachers' L1 use in the classroom in Belarus is limited. A potentially important issue is the role of motivation for teaching and learning English in the Belarussian classroom. Teachers' salaries in Belarus are relatively low, comparable to low skilled work. Future research could explore the reasons why teachers choose to teach English. A related issue is that unlike the majority of research papers exploring the issue of the bilingual classroom, Belarus does not have or aims to have, significant economic ties to global markets. There is no free movement of people across its borders (excluding with Russia). Belarus has no official ambition to be part of the EU. This raises the question of what motivates the learning of English. Although this question applies at all levels, including official policy, its inclusion here is intended more for students. English is not widely used, whether socially or in business. Yet the desire to learn English is strong, particularly among the young. Learning a foreign language at school is compulsory. Recently, students must sit a mandatory exam at the end of each year. Most schools and students choose to teach and learn English. Why is that? Diplomatic and social ties between Belarus and 'the West' are limited. This raises the possibility that global English, as the _lingua franca_, can reach localities (both political and cultural) denied to more formal channels of influence. This too could be explored.
References


Ellis, E. M. (2007). Discourses of L1 and bilingual teaching in adult ESL. *TESOL in Context*, 16(2), 5-10.


https://www.academia.edu/2473394/1_Teachers_Beliefs_and_Practices_about_the_Use_of_the_L1


http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/bitstream/10150/194958/1/azu_etd_1705_sip1_m.pdf


Appendix 1

Questionnaire

(please try to answer all the questions applicable to your situation)

1. Please indicate your gender:
   - Male
   - Female

2. Where do you teach?
   - School
   - Gymnasium

3. What is your teaching experience in full years?
   - 0-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 16-20
   - 21 or more

4. Have you received a formal qualification in teaching English as a foreign language?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Currently studying for one

5. What age groups do you teach?
   - Primary only
   - Secondary only (please go to question 11)
   - Both: primary and secondary

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

   "Belarusian/Russian should be used in the English classroom at primary school"

   - Yes, strongly agree
   - Yes, agree
   - Unsure
   - No, disagree
   - No, strongly disagree

7. Do you agree that Belarusian/Russian should be used at primary level to:
(please mark boxes with an "X")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Unsure Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Explain grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define new vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manage the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop a relationship with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Translate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Check comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other (please, write in this box)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Do **you use** Belarusian/Russian in the English classroom at **primary** level?
   - Yes, always
   - Yes, often
   - Yes, sometimes
   - No, almost never
   - No, never

9. How often do **you use** Belarusian/Russian in the English classroom at **primary** level to:
   (please mark boxes with an "X")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Explain grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define new vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manage the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop a relationship with students</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Translate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Check comprehension</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other (please, write in this box)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. How do you decide to use or not to use Russian/Belarusian in the English classroom at primary level?

(select all that apply)

- Intuitively
- Based on the lesson content
- Based on experience
- Following the current thinking in methodology
- Based on an established school/gymnasia's policy
- Based on students' needs
- Other (please, specify)

11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Belarusian/Russian should be used in the English classroom at secondary school"

- Yes, strongly agree
- Yes, agree
- Unsure
- No, disagree
- No, strongly disagree

12. Do you agree that Belarusian/Russian should be used at secondary level to:

(please mark boxes with an "X")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Explain grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Define new vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Manage the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Develop a relationship with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Translate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Check comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Provide feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Other (please, write in this box)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Do you use Belarusian/Russian in the English classroom at secondary level?

- Yes, always
14. How often do you use Belarusian/Russian in the English classroom at secondary level to:

(please mark boxes with an "X")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Explain grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define new vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manage the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Develop a relationship with students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Translate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Check comprehension 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other (please, write in this box)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. How do you decide to use or not to use Russian/Belarusian in the English classroom at secondary level?

(select all that apply)

- Intuitively
- Based on the lesson content
- Based on experience
- Following the current thinking in methodology
- Based on an established school/gymnasia's policy
- Based on students' needs
- Other (please, specify)
16. How would you assess your English proficiency using a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1= not at all proficient; 10= totally proficient)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. How do you keep your language competence up to date?

(e.g.; accompanied pupil visits or exchanges to English-speaking countries; visiting English-speaking countries for training/study purposes; reading literature, non-fiction, newspapers and/or magazines; watching films or television; communicating with native English-speaking friends/acquaintances/colleagues; attending workshops/seminars/conferences, etc.).

Thank you very much!
## Appendix 2

### Proposed Interview questions (BEFORE PILOT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section/Question</th>
<th>Question Theme</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>L1 use and patterns</td>
<td>The definitions of how often you use B/R are subjective. You answered x, can you describe how long that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are there patterns/usual times during the class when you are more likely to use the L1?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Could you explain why you think you use Belarusian/Russian at those times?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>If the teacher did not use L1</td>
<td>You stated that you did not use the L1. Does that mean that you never use the L1 or still use it a tiny amount?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>If never</td>
<td>Please can you explain why you do not use the L1 in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary Level</td>
<td>Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you describe or explain why that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Teacher's Views</td>
<td>The questionnaire results show that teachers, on average, use Belarusian/Russian more often that they ideally would like to. Is that your experience? If so, can you explain or give reasons why you use Belarusian/Russian more than you feel you should ideally would?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
<td>What is your opinion on the use of B/R in the English classroom? In particular:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think there is an optimal use of L1 (can you use too little or too much)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2b</td>
<td></td>
<td>What are the drawbacks (negative consequences) of using too little or too much)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2c</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Questionnaire results show teachers are more likely to use Belarusian/Russian to aid pedagogic/language learning and less likely to use Belarusian/Russian for non-language purposes (i.e., develop a relationship with the students, manage the classroom and provide feedback). Do you agree and why do you think this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2d</td>
<td>Teacher's Experience</td>
<td>Please tell me if you think that the experience of a teacher may influence the use of B/R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Guidelines and Training</td>
<td>Does the school/gymnasium/department provide guidelines on how you should teach English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td></td>
<td>If so, what kind of information are you given? For example, in guidebooks, or training seminars, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are there specific guidelines on the use of L1? If yes, what are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Would you like more on-the-job training, for example to keep up-to-date with current academic thinking on teaching and learning a foreign language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any thoughts/views you would like to share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section/Question</td>
<td>Question Theme</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>L1 use and patterns</td>
<td>The definitions of how often you use B/R are subjective. You answered x for primary level and y for secondary level. Can you describe how long that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>L1 use and patterns</td>
<td>Are there patterns/usual times during the class when you are more likely to use the L1?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>L1 use and patterns</td>
<td>Could you explain why you use Belarusian/Russian at those times?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>If teacher did not use L1</td>
<td>You stated that you did not use the L1. Does that mean that you never use L1 or only use it a tiny amount?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>If never</td>
<td>Please can you explain why you do not use the L1 in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Primary and Secondary Level</td>
<td>Use According to what you have said at the beginning of the interview, your use of the L1 differs/does not differ in frequency when teaching primary and secondary level students. Can you describe or explain why that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Views</td>
<td>What is different about teaching secondary level that makes you feel you should ideally use the L1 less?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 a</td>
<td>Teacher's Views</td>
<td>The questionnaire results show that teachers, on average, use Belarusian/Russian more often than they ideally would like to. Is that your experience? If so, can you explain or give reasons why you use Belarusian/Russian more than you feel you should ideally would?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1 b</td>
<td>Teacher's Views</td>
<td>You have a view on how and when you should use the L1. Can you tell me where your views on the use of the L1 come from (e.g., methodology, experience etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>What is your opinion on the use of B/R in the English classroom? In particular:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 a</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Do you think there is an optimal use of L1 (can you use too little or too much)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 b</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>What are the drawbacks (negative consequences) of using too little or too much)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Teacher's Experience</td>
<td>Are there specific functions where the use of B/R has a more positive impact on learning/teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 c</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Why do you think that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 d</td>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>You mentioned in your questionnaire that you used/did not use the L1 to manage the classroom/develop a relationship with the students/provide feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Teacher's Experience</td>
<td>Please tell me if you think that the experience of a teacher may influence the use of B/R,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Guidelines and Training</td>
<td>Why do you think that is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Guidelines and Training</td>
<td>Does the school/gymnasium/department provide guidelines on how you should teach English?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Are there specific guidelines on the use of the L1 set by the Government? If yes, what are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Would you like more on-the-job training, for example to keep up-to-date with current academic thinking on teaching and learning a foreign language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Are there any thoughts/views you would like to share?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3
Title: EFL teachers' perceptions on the use of L1 in a primary and secondary classroom in Belarus

Researcher (in CAPITALS):

Research Project description:

The research aims to investigate further the use of Belarusian/Russian (L1) in a primary and secondary EFL classroom in the selected town in Belarus. It follows and develops the teachers' questionnaire results. The research involves conducting semi-structured interviews in Russian/Belarusian, the native language of the participants. These will take place using special 'skype™ software, which records the interview. The data collected will be transcribed and translated into English. It will be stored securely and deleted on the completion of the research project. The names and identities of all participants will never be known to anyone except the researcher and they will never be used in any document, publication or presentation that may result from the research.

Participant's name (in CAPITALS):

1. I have read and understood the information above.

2. The researcher has explained the purpose of the project. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions related to the project, including my involvement in it.

3. My consent is entirely voluntary and I understand that I am able to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

4. I understand that the data gathered during this project may be included in the report or other form of publication or presentation.

5. I understand that my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation, and that every effort will be made to protect my identity.

Participant's signature: ______________________ Date: __________

Researcher's signature: ______________________ Date: __________


Appendix 4

**Researcher:** Hello!

**Olga (T1):** Hello!

**Researcher:** Today is 26\textsuperscript{th} August, 2013. Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the interview. The topic of our conversation is the use of mother tongue at the English classes. The interview is going to be recorded in Russian, using Skype software. The names of the interview participants will be known to me only, so anonymity is guaranteed. The record will be stored securely while working on the project and deleted upon the completion of the study. Are you ready to start our conversation?

**Olga:** Yes, I am.

**Researcher:** Can you introduce yourself, please.

**Olga:** [...]. I am an English teacher in gymnasium No.2 of Vileyka in Belarus. Work experience is over 21 years.

**Researcher:** Thank you very much. Now, let us proceed directly to our questions. I would like to make a more detailed analysis of the following question from your questionnaire: "Do you use mother tongue at your English classes?" By mother tongue I mean Russian or Belarusian. You indicated that you use mother tongue "sometimes" both at primary and secondary level. The concept "sometimes" is subjective in itself. Could you explain, how much time within a 45 minute English class you meant by "sometimes"?

**Olga:** I think it is impossible to learn a foreign language effectively without reliance on mother tongue and a student's intellectual 'storage'. I think, the lower the initial level of the language competence is, the more applicable is this rule, that mother tongue should be used. Just at the advanced level, when certain degree of language competence is achieved, the time to be used... the time, assigned for the use of mother tongue, can be reduced. Therefore, the need of using mother tongue lessens. The whole class, I think, should be desirably in English, yet grammar and some abstract notions are easier to explain and master when using mother tongue. That is why I use the mother tongue "sometimes" at primary school, "sometimes" at secondary level (middle and high school) to explain complex grammatical phenomena and abstract notions. These are cases when I use mother tongue.
Researcher: Thank you. Would it be ok for you to indicate maybe percentage, for example, how much of mother tongue you use? Which frequency do you mean by “sometimes”? Is it 20 percent, or 50, or 70, in your cases. I just would like to get a feel…

Olga: I think, about 20 per cent in my case, not more than that.

Researcher: 20 percent of the mother tongue.

Olga: In most cases, I even explain grammar in English because I often have students with high academic abilities. I have very few less academically able students, indeed, most of the time.

Researcher: Thank you.

Olga: Therefore, it seems to me the better the student's level is, the higher the student's level is, the less mother tongue should be used.

Researcher: Good. Thank you. Ehm..., you mentioned, ehm..., that you use mother tongue in such cases as to explain grammar and abstract notions. Ehm… Could you explain, why? Why do students find them challenging, ehm…

Olga: Well, there are such grammatical phenomena that we do not have in Russian. It's something new for the students. For example, the Gerund. There is no gerund in Russian. It is a challenge for my students to understand this grammatical phenomenon, so, when explained in Russian, it is OK, the process is more concise, easier and mastering goes faster.

Researcher: You mean, when…

Olga: Just those phenomena that we do not have in our language.

Researcher: Good. Ehm …According to what you said at the beginning of the interview, ehm..., your use of mother tongue, ehm..., does not differ in frequency at primary and secondary school. Could you explain, why? Why does it happen?

Olga: Why does it happen?

Researcher: Yes. Why does your…do you use "sometimes" at primary school and "sometimes" at secondary?

Olga: Well, you know, Russian is used at primary school because students' level of proficiency is very poor. That is the initial stage. You should gradually get them used to a new
linguistic system. They have their own system in their minds, so, relying on your own mother tongue system some new notions should be introduced for young … for students. For example, you can do with them such tasks like reading a text in mother tongue with some new vocabulary in Russian … in …, given, in English, and students have to recognize … to guess the meaning, in this way. Here is your mother tongue, Russian. Reading in Russian and guessing words written in English. This way, or, for example, mm…, reading a text in …, a short text in English with some insertions in mother tongue. Here is some percentage of words, too. Then kids should write these words in the foreign language. Or, for example, you can give secondary level students a verse in English with lines or stanzas unmatched or scattered in the wrong order. Students have to put them in the right order and then translate the verse into Russian, or students have to make some changes. Then check if they have done, matched right. That is another case of using mother tongue. That is it. That is why "sometimes" here and "sometimes" there. This is because various types of tasks are employed.

**Researcher:** Thank you very much for sharing your examples. Eh… The questionnaire results show that teachers, on average, use mother tongue more often than they ideally would like to. Is that the case in your experience?

**Olga:** I try to do my best so that it happens rarely. Even at primary level I try to conduct a class in English, taking into consideration my students' language abilities.

**Researcher:** Uhm…

**Olga:** So…mmm… Maybe just some translations quietly, to a less academically able student, passing him by, I could whisper some hint in Russian. But never for more academically able students.

**Researcher:** Uhm…

**Olga:** That’s why sometimes, sometimes more, and sometimes there can be no mother tongue used during the class at all.

**Researcher:** Eh… I understand. Eh… You are so confident in your decisions to use or not to use mother tongue! What is your decision based on?

**Olga:** I think, in order to create an English language atmosphere in the classroom and motivate students in learning a foreign language, one should use as much foreign language as possible and use Russian to a minimum. Especially, the older students are, the less language should be used … mother tongue. That is why, for my students to gain better knowledge, I try
to create the English language atmosphere, in which they would like to communicate with each other and with the teacher in the foreign language only.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Uhmm… Do you think there is an optimal use of mother tongue, not too little and not too much?

**Olga:** Well, as far as I know, in our country a teacher is allowed, ehm..., to choose how much language to use. But I think effectiveness of the lesson depends on how much...how...ehm...on whether you use as little language as possible. The less mother tongue you use, it implies, the higher your students' language proficiency is.

**Researcher:** So, a teacher decides on the optimal use by him/herself.

**Olga:** Yes. And I think, I believe, that it depends on students' proficiency level, too. The higher your students' language proficiency is, the less mother tongue has to be used. The less able students are, the more hints in mother tongue has to be given, and you should not be afraid or ashamed of it... use it in order to get a better result in future. Maybe some of the students would master the language quicker when the instructions are given in Russian simultaneously.

**Researcher:** Individual differences…

**Olga:** Yes. You should take into account individual differences, psychological traits of each student, because there are students who learn everything quickly, you can repeat once or twice and it's enough, while others need it to be repeated a hundred and twenty times! So, for him or her it would have to be explained both in Russian and in English, and then to be repeated, and to be recalled. So, I think, there is no exact percentage at every class that would...

**Researcher:** It depends on the situation.

**Olga:** Yes. It depends on the situation and proficiency level of a student.

**Researcher:** Good. Ehm… What are the drawbacks (negative consequences) of using too little or too much of mother tongue?

**Olga:** If you use too little mother tongue, I think, students with low proficiency will feel bored, uninterested at the class. I mean, a person is uninterested when he/she does not understand, cannot participate in the process. That is wrong. For example, if just some good students understand you, you are not worth a brass farthing as a teacher. Each student should
understand you. So it's wrong to use too little of mother tongue, and at the same time it's wrong to use too much, because if you use much it won't be an English class, it will be a Russian class or just an hour of chatting with students but in no way an English class. So, ideally, one should aim at using as little mother tongue as possible.

**Researcher:** Thank you.

**Olga:** It is... It is... the direct method supporters ban mother tongue from the EFL classroom, but today it is not realistic, and not everyone supports this method today, the direct one. And... mother tongue should be used in the classroom. But to a minimum.

**Researcher:** Good. Thank you. Are there specific functions where the use of mother tongue has a positive impact on learning/teaching English? By functions I mean: explain grammar, translate and other functions. You have already touched upon this question. But, if we look at... a positive impact...

**Olga:** I have, for example, a grammar course, a grammar audio course with explanations done in Russian. Examples are in English, while all... tables, schemes... all is explained in Russian. And students, by the way, take it well, I mean this course. The English grammar explanations are so concise, clear. That is why, you see, even, ehm... an audio course... is accepted... ehm... an audio course is accepted for study, for the use by students, in Russian.

**Researcher:** So, students take it positively...

**Olga:** Very... very positively, it's so concise and clear for them, so accessible, the whole course explanation. So, some parts of this audio course can be used at our classes.

**Researcher:** Ehm...

**Olga:** Because English grammar is very complex, for a student, isn't it?

**Researcher:** In the questionnaire, you mentioned that you do not use mother tongue to keep discipline in the classroom. Why?

**Olga:** Why, because I don’t need... don’t need any special words to keep discipline in the classroom as I have been working at school for a long time, I’m very fond of English, and I would like my students from the very first class... I try to make them "fall in love" with English. To such an extent that they would not break discipline in the classroom, but just work. I try to make my classes interesting; in this case there is no question of discipline, of managing the classroom. So, the way you pre-plan a lesson will determine the discipline in
the classroom. I just use phrases, in English by the way, to praise my student or sometimes to reproach him/her for preparation, that does not reflect their true abilities. Because, for example, I expect them to have performed better, but actually their result is a little bit worse than I expected. But it's all done in English.

**Researcher:** Thank you.

**Olga:** I also… teach students from the very first class, teach them to use such phrases in order to praise a friend, be happy for him, … for his good deed, good mark. I try to teach students to love their neighbour… And it's all done in English.

**Researcher:** You also mentioned that you do not use the mother tongue to develop a relationship with the students. That is, as far as I understand, ehm… English is not a barrier in your communication with students. You prefer to communicate in English…

**Olga:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If you need, ehm…, to have a chat or to tell something…

**Olga:** Yes. Some new interesting recent events. It happened so that God gave me plenty of good students. Rather, all students, all of my students were good, interesting to communicate with, and I got interesting information from them. I always wanted to share what I saw, heard, where I used to be, to tell about those places, the books and films I watched, or the news I heard. And I always wanted to tell this in English only. That is why I wanted… And most of my students connected their lives with English, or it just seemed to be useful for them.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Ehm… If we take such function as to provide feedback, you indicated that you do use mother tongue sometimes. Ehm… Why is it important? Ehm… this function "provide feedback", why do you use mother tongue sometimes?

**Olga:** Well, sometimes I want to stimulate students for a more successful work, and, I think, maybe, in Russian I find those words that help them improve, maybe, do better their homework or read more stories and books, or watch some film in English. So, I want it higher… the proficiency level to be higher, and their love towards English to be deeper, and the result to be higher.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Ehm… Please tell me if you think that the length of teaching experience may influence the use of mother tongue. If so, in what way?
**Olga:** It is a difficult question… I think it is not the length of teaching experience that influences the use of either language, but the level of students’ proficiency. The greater their proficiency, the more senior the class, the more intellectually mature they are, the less mother tongue should be used. And the… I have a girl in grade three, at primary level, and she said: "Oh! How difficult it is to be an excellent student! You know everything!" That is, this student in the third form understands everything "Oh! How difficult!" That is, she wanted something new, something she did not know or understand. She says: "How difficult it is… You know everything!" There are such students like that girl, but there are others as well who need mother tongue sometimes.

**Researcher:** That is very interesting. Thank you. Does the school, gymnasium in this case, or department provide guidelines on how you should teach English? Are there any in gymnasium or in the English language department? Let us not take into account the guidelines proscribed by the Ministry of Education at the moment. Ehmm… In this case we talk about, about…

**Olga:** Of course, there are. There are some methods, principles we follow when teaching a foreign language. We do not have ad-libbing; of course, we have some scientifically tested methods that have been piloted, some innovational systems we should use. So, we don’t have… The teacher's creativity is obvious. But it is based on some generally accepted principles, recommendations, guidelines.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Are there any recommendations on the use of mother tongue from the Ministry of Education? If so, which ones?

**Olga:** No. No recommendations like that. You rightly mentioned that it can depend on teacher's experience or on students' you work with, on their proficiency. This reason, I think, the main one.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Ehmm… Do you think, or you must know it, I think, the Curriculum. What does it say about mother tongue? If we talk… of the use of mother tongue.

**Olga:** I cannot answer this question right now. I do not have this kind of information. May I leave it with no answer.
Researcher: OK. If you had an opportunity to take some short-term courses, for example, to keep up with the time, ehm…, with methodology and various empirical studies, would you like to take part in them?

Olga: Of course, I am a person who wants to learn all the time. I am interested in new things. If I can I try… Yes… In October I'm going to take a course of advance training to improve my proficiency… my knowledge of teaching methods.

Researcher: So, you have it in Belarus.

Olga: Of course. We… foreign language teachers should improve our skills every three years, once in three years. Previously it was once in five years, now requirements to foreign language teachers are very high, so we take it every three years… All our teachers… once in three years… in Academy of Postgraduate education and in regional Institute of Advance Training, in the Linguistic University. These are three types of courses for further professional development.

Researcher: Are there any thoughts you would like to share?

Olga: Well… Well, I would like to… I would like to read some English language literature on this issue. Maybe you could recommend me some tractates on how foreign languages are taught in the UK, whether mother tongue is used? And if so, in what way it is used.

Researcher: OK. I will certainly share some information with you. Thank you very much.

Olga: Thank you. For conversation. That is it. Good luck.

Researcher: Good Bye. Thank you.
### Appendix 5

Table A.5: Teachers' use of L1, by function and type of school (primary or secondary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Answering &quot;at least sometimes&quot;</th>
<th>Answering &quot;Never or Almost Never&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary (N) (%)</td>
<td>Secondary (N) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary (N) (%)</td>
<td>Secondary (N) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain Grammar</td>
<td>33 (100)</td>
<td>35 (88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define new vocabulary</td>
<td>27 (82)</td>
<td>25 (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the classroom</td>
<td>20 (61)</td>
<td>13 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a relationship with the students</td>
<td>21 (64)</td>
<td>17 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translate</td>
<td>30 (91)</td>
<td>38 (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check comprehension</td>
<td>21 (64)</td>
<td>21 (53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback</td>
<td>22 (67)</td>
<td>24 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain complex notions of language and culture</td>
<td>32 (97)</td>
<td>36 (90)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>