

Influence of L1 Use on Vocabulary Learning, Class Engagement, Enjoyment, and Anxiety among Iranian EFL Learners

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Research Paper

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Abstract: The present study investigated the impacts of the use of L1 on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning, class engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety. This study employed a quasi-experimental design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies, and was conducted at Pазhooohesh language Institute in Isfahan, Iran. Participants consisted of 40 beginners (Male, female) who were randomly selected following a homogenization process administered by the institute. Then, they were divided into two experimental and control groups. The experimental group received their main instruction in their L1, while the control groups' teacher totally used English as the medium of communication and instruction. To signify if there existed any difference between the experimental and the control group, a pre-test and posttest of vocabulary and three questionnaires, class engagement, anxiety and enjoyment were administered. Finally, some experimental group learners were interviewed to investigate the participants' attitudes toward using L1 in their classes. A MANCOVA test was used to analyze the data (SPSS version 27). The results revealed a significant difference in scores between the experimental group, which used L1 (Persian) for instruction, and the control group, which used only English, with the experimental group demonstrating better vocabulary learning, higher class engagement, lower anxiety, and greater enjoyment, indicating that L1 use enhances learning outcomes and creates a more effective and supportive environment for EFL learners. The findings suggest that the strategic incorporation of L1 as an instructional tool significantly enhances learning outcomes, thereby enabling students to achieve higher levels of academic proficiency and cognitive engagement. This underscores the pedagogical value of leveraging learners' native language as a scaffold to facilitate comprehension, retention, and overall educational success.

Keywords: Anxiety, Class Engagement, Enjoyment, First Language, Vocabulary Learning

Introduction

Language acquisition is an intricate process involving cognitive, emotional, and social factors. The role of the first language (L1) in learning a second language (L2) has been widely debated, with perspectives ranging from the strict use of immersion-only strategies to the incorporation of L1 as a scaffold for learning. Research has demonstrated that the judicious use of L1 can significantly enhance vocabulary acquisition and engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Bhooth et al., 2014).

In vocabulary acquisition, L1 plays a pivotal role in the retention and retrieval of words, especially when translation and lexical support are provided (Masrai & Milton, 2015; Camó & Ballester, 2015; Laufer & Girsai, 2008). Furthermore, studies highlight that incorporating L1 in classroom settings can reduce anxiety and foster enjoyment, which are critical to sustaining learners' motivation and participation (Wang et al., 2023; Cook, 2001; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

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Iranian EFL learners face specific challenges due to the structural and lexical differences between Persian (L1) and English (L2). These learners often struggle with vocabulary retention, classroom engagement, and high levels of anxiety during language tasks (Heidari-Shahreza & Tavakoli, 2016). Despite evidence supporting the benefits of L1 in facilitating these processes, Iranian classrooms largely emphasize immersion techniques, leaving a gap in understanding the practical implications of L1 use in such contexts.

The emotional aspect of language learning, including enjoyment and anxiety, has emerged as a critical area of research (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Positive emotional states, like enjoyment, enhance classroom engagement and vocabulary learning, while anxiety significantly hampers these processes (Shakki, 2023; Horwitz et al., 1986). These dynamics underscore the importance of exploring instructional strategies that leverage L1 to create a supportive and productive learning environment (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Cook, 2001; Wang et al., 2023).

The current study addresses gaps in the role of L1 in language learning, particularly its impact on vocabulary acquisition, engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety among Iranian EFL learners. While emotions like enjoyment and anxiety are recognized as critical, their interplay with L1 use in non-Western contexts remains underexplored. Existing research often isolates cognitive or emotional aspects, lacking a holistic understanding of L1's dual influence. Additionally, context-specific insights, especially in Iranian EFL settings, are scarce. By examining these dimensions, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of L1's cognitive and emotional benefits, contributing to EFL pedagogy.

Literature Review

The role of vocabulary learning (VL) in foreign language acquisition has been widely acknowledged as a critical component of language proficiency. Researchers have consistently emphasized the strong relationship between VL and foreign language learning, noting that vocabulary knowledge is a key predictor of success in language acquisition and reading motivation, whether in the first language (L1) or second language (L2) (Wang et al., 2023; Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010).

However, VL is a complex process that requires motivation, engagement, and adherence to instructional standards to achieve desired outcomes (Stahl & Nagy, 2007). Learners who focus solely on the meaning of individual words without considering contextual meaning often struggle to comprehend texts, even when they recognize each word (Oxford, 1999). This highlights the need for effective strategies that support vocabulary acquisition, particularly in contexts where learners face linguistic challenges.

The psychological dimensions of language learning, including emotions such as enjoyment and anxiety, play a significant role in shaping the learning process. Positive emotional states, such as foreign language enjoyment (FLE), enhance engagement and facilitate vocabulary retention, while anxiety, particularly foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), can hinder learning outcomes (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz et al., 1986; Sakran Alkemi et al., 2024). Anxiety, a situation-specific trait, manifests as emotional arousal and negative self-related cognition, disrupting behaviors essential for language learning (Brown, 1994). This is particularly evident in adult learners, who often fear making mistakes in public settings, leading to reduced fluency and confidence (Dong et al., 2022). FLCA, which includes communicative apprehension, exam anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, has been shown to negatively correlate with academic achievement, underscoring the need for strategies to mitigate its effects (Botes et al., 2020; Zhang, 2016; Mousapour Negari, 2023).

The integration of L1 in L2 classrooms has emerged as a potential solution to address both cognitive and emotional challenges in language learning. Research suggests that L1 use can reduce anxiety, which leads to better learning of languages and communication skills, foster enjoyment, and enhance comprehension, particularly for beginners or learners with lower proficiency levels (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Cook, 2001; Sadeghi & Ganji, 2020). For instance, L1 translation and lexical support provide a familiar cognitive framework, enabling learners to map new L2 vocabulary onto existing

linguistic knowledge (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). Additionally, L1 can scaffold complex tasks, reduce frustration, and promote a more inclusive classroom environment, thereby supporting both engagement and emotional well-being (Wang et al., 2023). Empirical studies further demonstrate that code-switching and L1 use in the classroom improve clarity, comprehension, and participation, particularly in contexts where learners face linguistic barriers (Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020; Zhang & Annual, 2008).

Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding the holistic impact of L1 on vocabulary acquisition, engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety, particularly in specific contexts such as Iranian EFL learners. While existing research highlights the cognitive benefits of L1 use, its emotional and motivational implications are underexplored, especially in non-Western settings. Furthermore, the interplay between L1 integration and psychological factors such as FLE and FLCA requires deeper investigation to develop effective pedagogical strategies. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how L1 can be leveraged to create a supportive and productive learning environment, contributing to ongoing debates in EFL pedagogy.

Empirical Studies

Studies have shown that including the use of learners' native language during communication, known as code-switching, may enhance the clarity and speed of information exchange, leading to more effective learning. Researchers have discovered that having a strong vocabulary is an important factor in predicting success in learning a foreign language and in motivating individuals to read, whether it is their first or second language (Lervåg & Aukrust, 2010). Zhang and Annual (2008) conducted a study on the association between vocabulary knowledge and foreign language acquisition, revealing a substantial and robust relationship between the two factors. Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020) further demonstrate that using the first language (L1) in the classroom has favorable outcomes in learners' comprehension of the subject matter and their participation in discussions.

In this study, Bhooth et al. (2014) demonstrate that students may use their first language (L1) as a scaffolding technique to support their learning. Additionally, teachers can employ L1 as a pedagogical tool to improve the learning process and increase student engagement in the classroom. Sulis (2022) highlights the concept of engagement as a continuous and dynamic process that occurs across various periods of time, showing that the pursuit of engagement may follow several paths depending on the selected degree of analysis and granularity used to study the construct. Wang and Xu (2023) have shown that using L1-based techniques, such as Translation-Based Learning and Code-Switching, may effectively decrease students' anxiety levels and enhance their willingness to actively participate in the learning process, emphasizing the potential advantages of integrating these tactics into language learning settings.

There is a scarcity of research that has investigated the precise impact of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) on second language (L2) attainment. Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) discovered that in two separate groups of L2 learners in London (ages 12–18) and Saudi Arabia (ages 18–40), foreign language enjoyment had a positive impact on foreign language achievement, while foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) had a negative impact. Furthermore, the study revealed that the predictive influence of foreign language enjoyment was stronger than that of foreign language classroom anxiety in both groups. Li et al. (2018) conducted research on Chinese senior secondary learners (with a mean age of 16.61 and a standard deviation of 0.75), discovering that foreign language classroom anxiety had a negative correlation with academic accomplishment, while foreign language enjoyment had a positive correlation with academic achievement. They also observed that the negative impact of foreign language classroom anxiety was greater than that of foreign language enjoyment, indicating that the correlations between emotions and achievement may alter in various settings.

In their study, Dewaele et al. (2019) highlighted a moderate negative correlation between foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety. Participants who were taught by a native English speaker as their first language reported experiencing higher foreign language enjoyment and less foreign language classroom anxiety compared to those who were taught by a non-

native English speaker. Teacher characteristics accounted for around 20% of the variation in foreign language enjoyment but only 8% of the variation in foreign language classroom anxiety. A teacher's friendliness was the most influential factor in predicting foreign language enjoyment, whereas a teacher's foreign accent had a less significant negative impact. Zhang and Tsung (2021) stated in their study that foreign language enjoyment of Chinese as a Second Language learners studying in China aimed to find the distinctive features of their language learning enjoyment and its main components. The findings suggest that while sharing certain similarities with other foreign language learners in previous studies situated in Chinese or global contexts, the foreign language enjoyment of adult Chinese as a Second Language learners in China has a positive impact on their language learning development.

Preliminary studies have found negative correlations between anxiety levels measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and learners' grades in their second language courses. These studies have also determined that anxiety accounts for approximately 25% of the variation in learners' second language grades. Furthermore, researchers have utilized the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to examine the association between anxiety and various language outcome measures. For instance, research has shown substantial inverse relationships between the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and second language course grades (Aida, 1994), as well as between learners' second language listening comprehension and second language speaking abilities (Elkhafaifi, 2005). Additionally, it has been observed that degrees of second language anxiety vary across different levels of second language competence. According to Cheng (2002), there is a direct relationship between the amount of time spent studying and a rise in second language writing anxiety. Zabihi (2018) discovered that learners' writing self-efficacy directly influences their second language writing abilities, and this influence is also indirectly mediated by writing anxiety (Soleimani, Hamasaid, & Saheb, 2020).

Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) illustrated in their study that a majority of students showed a preference for the use of the first language to perform classroom management. Also, for respondents, the first language and target language have an impact on anxiety and motivation. While first language use may alleviate classroom anxiety, it may also be a demotivating factor. In their research, Shingisbek and Bibiruz (2021) demonstrated that while teaching English, instructors tend to use the learners' native language in order to overcome psychological obstacles. They concluded that the usage of the first language produces a less anxious environment for both learners and teachers. In their study, Rezaee et al. (2021) found that there is a direct correlation between the use of code-switching in the foreign language classroom and the anxiety levels of English as a Foreign Language learners. The researchers believe that practicing code-switching might increase anxiety among learners during language acquisition. Additionally, code-switching may function as a beneficial linguistic technique to reduce learners' anxiety throughout the process of acquiring a new language. The results of the present research have consequences for practitioners of English as a Foreign Language.

The reviewed studies highlight the significant role of the first language (L1) in second language (L2) learning, showing that L1 use, through strategies like code-switching, can enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and foster engagement and enjoyment (Bhooth et al., 2014; Wang & Xu, 2023). Research also underscores the interplay between emotions like foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and anxiety (FLCA) and their impact on L2 achievement, with FLE positively correlating with success and FLCA negatively affecting performance (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li et al., 2018). However, there is a gap in understanding L1's precise impact on specific outcomes like vocabulary acquisition and emotional well-being in beginner-level EFL learners. To address this, the present study investigates the effects of L1 use on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning, engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety, employing a quasi-experimental design to provide insights into how L1 can enhance learning outcomes and emotional well-being in EFL classrooms.

Research Question One: Does the use of L1 affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning?

Research Question Two: Does the use of L1 affect Iranian EFL learners' class engagement?

Research Question Three: Does the use of L1 affect Iranian EFL learners' enjoyment?

Research Question Four: Does the use of L1 affect Iranian EFL learners' anxiety?

Research Question Five: What are the learners' attitudes toward the effect of using L1 on vocabulary learning, class engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety?

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study employed a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design, combining quantitative and qualitative data to examine the role of L1 in language learning. The independent variable was L1 use, while the dependent variables included vocabulary learning (VL), class engagement (CE), enjoyment, and anxiety. Two classes were selected: the experimental group, where L1 was incorporated, and the control group, which used only L2. Both groups completed pretests and posttests, including vocabulary tests and questionnaires, to measure the impact of L1. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with learners from the experimental group to gather qualitative insights. This mixed-methods approach allowed for both statistical analysis of outcomes and a deeper understanding of learners' experiences and perceptions.

Participants: Beginner-Level Iranian EFL Learners

The participants of this study were 40 male and female (equal in number) Iranian EFL learners at Pazhooesh language institute in Isfahan, Iran. All participants were at the beginner level, with their ages ranging from 10 to 15 years. Their first language (L1) was Farsi, and their second language (L2) was English. The homogeneity of the participants was ensured through the institute's placement test, which was based on a testing and evaluation book by Oxford Press. After confirming homogeneity, the participants were randomly assigned to either a control group or an experimental group, with each group consisting of 20 learners (10 males and 10 females). It is worth noting that all participants provided informed consent by filling out Farsi-translated consent forms (Appendix A).

Instruments

The first instrument used in this study was a vocabulary test, which consisted of 25 multiple-choice items selected from Oxford Primary Skills, a supplementary book used by the students. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the vocabulary test was 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. The second instrument was a class engagement (CE) questionnaire, comprising 14 items adapted from Pöysä et al. (2019). This questionnaire also demonstrated high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.9. The third instrument was a foreign language enjoyment (FLE) questionnaire, which included 14 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This questionnaire was adopted from Dewaele and Macintyre (2014), and its reliability, as determined in the pilot study, was 0.93. The fourth instrument was a foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) questionnaire, also using a five-point Likert scale. Adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), this questionnaire consisted of 14 items and had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.88. Together, these instruments provided reliable measures for assessing vocabulary knowledge, class engagement, enjoyment, and anxiety in the study. The final data collection tool employed in this study was a semi-structured interview, conducted with participants in the experimental group to enhance the depth and quality of the research. Semi-structured interviews are a widely used qualitative research method in social sciences, psychology, and related fields, as they combine the structure of predetermined questions with the flexibility of open-ended queries and follow-up prompts. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives while maintaining consistency in data collection. To ensure the validity of the research instruments, all questionnaires and the vocabulary test were reviewed and validated by two university professors from the Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) branch. The reliability of these instruments was further confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, which are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1*Reliability Statistics of Vocabulary Test, FLE, FLC and, CE*

Item No.	Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Vocabulary test	.895
2	CE	.901
3	FLE	.936
4	FLCA	.888

Date Collection Procedure

First, permission was obtained from Pazhooesh Institute to conduct this study. To investigate the effect of L1 on Iranian EFL learners' VL, CE, FLE, and FLCA, data was collected from two classes at Pazhooesh Institute in Isfahan, Iran. All participants had taken placement tests and were at the same proficiency level. The study began with the administration of a pretest, which included a vocabulary test consisting of 25 items and questionnaires on CE, FLE, and FLCA, totaling 42 items (14 items each). The vocabulary test was piloted first, and the reliability coefficients for the vocabulary test, CE, FLE, and FLCA were .895, .901, .936, and .888, respectively, indicating good reliability. It took learners approximately 60 minutes to complete the questionnaires and vocabulary test. All questionnaires were translated into Persian.

Following the pretest, the treatment phase began. Vocabulary instruction was conducted over eight sessions, as outlined in Table 2. In the experimental group, the teacher used L1 to teach vocabulary (telling their meanings in Persian), while in the control group, only L2 was used (conventional method). The same EFL teacher taught both groups, with classes held twice a week for three hours each. After eight sessions of vocabulary instruction, spanning approximately 45 days, the same vocabulary test, CE, FLE, and FLCA questionnaires were administered as a posttest. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in the experimental group to gather their perspectives on the impact of L1 use on VL, CE, FLE, and FLCA.

Table 2*Taught Vocabulary in Eight Sessions*

Sessions	Items Taught
Session One	Healthy food, Unhealthy food, Fruit, Apricot, Strawberries, Cherise
Session Two	Vegetables, Lettuce, Broccoli e, Pease, Cucumber, Chap, Mix, Add, Sugar
Session Three	Seasons, Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
Session Four	Snowman, Cloudy, Stormy, Freezing, Sunny, Warm
Session Five	River, Clean, Dirty, Pick up, Muddy
Session Six	Sidewalk, Trash can, Path, Messy
Session Seven	Captain, Fishing boat, Sailor, Cook, sleep
Session Eight	Cabin, Deck, Sea, Beach, Fishing net, Rope

Data Analysis

The qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights into participants' experiences with L1 use in the classroom. This approach provided a detailed understanding of how L1 influenced vocabulary learning (VL), class engagement (CE), foreign language enjoyment (FLE), and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA).

For the quantitative data, the FLE, FLCA, and CE questionnaires were scored on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree = 5, strongly disagree = 1), and the vocabulary test was scored with one point per correct answer. Total scores for both pretest and posttest were calculated for the control and experimental groups. Data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics and MANCOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Covariance) to examine the relationships between L1 use (independent variable) and VL, CE, FLE, and FLCA (dependent variables). MANCOVA allowed for the analysis of

multiple dependent variables while controlling for covariates, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the treatment's effects.

This integration of qualitative and quantitative analyses provided a robust understanding of the impact of L1 use on language learning outcomes.

Results

According to Tables 3 and 4 engagement, vocabulary and enjoyment scores have increased in the post-test, while anxiety scores have decreased in the post-test

Table 3

MANCOVA Results for Vocabulary and Engagement

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Post-test Vocabulary	136.567	5	27.313	67.135	0.000
	Post-test Engagement	1446.132	5	289.226	5.172	0.001
Intercept	Post-test Vocabulary	8.149	1	8.149	20.03	0.000
	Post-test Engagement	16.445	1	16.445	0.294	0.591
Pretest Vocabulary	Post-test Vocabulary	12.137	1	12.137	29.831	0.000
	Post-test Engagement	66.955	1	66.955	1.197	0.282
Pretest Engagement	Post-test Vocabulary	1.279	1	1.279	3.143	0.085
	Post-test Engagement	4.98	1	4.98	0.089	0.767
Group	Post-test Vocabulary	102.234	1	102.234	251.28	0.000
	Post-test Engagement	1283.692	1	1283.69	22.954	0.000
Error	Post-test Vocabulary	13.833	34	0.407		
	Post-test Engagement	1901.468	34	55.926		
Corrected Total	Post-test Vocabulary	150.4	39			
	Post-test Engagement	3347.6	39			

Table 4

MANCOVA Results for Anxiety and Enjoyment

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Post-test Anxiety	2110.411	5	422.082	16.382	0.000
	Post-test Enjoyment	2622.636	5	524.527	21.007	0.000
Intercept	Post-test Anxiety	10.65	1	10.65	0.413	0.525
	Post-test Enjoyment	109.32	1	109.32	4.378	0.044
Pretest Anxiety	Post-test Anxiety	0.125	1	0.125	0.005	0.945
	Post-test Enjoyment	474.064	1	474.064	18.986	0.000
Pretest Enjoyment	Post-test Anxiety	8.978	1	8.978	0.348	0.559

	Post-test Enjoyment	971.07	1	971.07	38.89	0.000
Group	Post-test Anxiety	1366.099	1	1366.09	53.023	0.000
	Post-test Enjoyment	900.705	1	900.705	36.072	0.000
Error	Post-test Anxiety	875.989	34	25.764		
	Post-test Enjoyment	848.964	34	24.97		
Corrected Total	Post-test Anxiety	2986.4	39			
	Post-test Enjoyment	3471.6	39			

The MANCOVA results in Table 3 indicate significant effects of L1 use on both vocabulary learning and class engagement. For post-test vocabulary, the corrected model was highly significant ($F = 67.135$, $p < .001$), with the group variable showing a strong effect ($F = 251.284$, $p < .001$). This suggests that the experimental group, which received L1-supported instruction, outperformed the control group in vocabulary acquisition. Similarly, for post-test engagement, the corrected model was significant ($F = 5.172$, $p = .001$), with the group variable also showing a significant effect ($F = 22.954$, $p < .001$). These findings support H1 and H2, indicating that L1 use significantly improves both vocabulary learning and class engagement.

The MANCOVA results in Table 4 reveal significant effects of L1 use on anxiety and enjoyment. For post-test anxiety, the corrected model was significant ($F = 16.382$, $p < .001$), with the group variable showing a strong effect ($F = 53.023$, $p < .001$). This indicates that the experimental group experienced significantly lower anxiety levels compared to the control group. For post-test enjoyment, the corrected model was also significant ($F = 21.007$, $p < .001$), with the group variable showing a significant effect ($F = 36.072$, $p < .001$). These results support H3 and H4, demonstrating that L1 use significantly reduces anxiety and increases enjoyment in the classroom.

The findings from Table 3 and Table 4 collectively support all four hypotheses. The use of L1 in vocabulary instruction led to significant improvements in vocabulary learning, class engagement, and emotional outcomes (reduced anxiety and increased enjoyment). These results align with previous research highlighting the cognitive and affective benefits of L1 integration in L2 learning contexts (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz et al., 1986).

For example, the significant reduction in anxiety ($F = 53.023$, $p < .001$) and increase in enjoyment ($F = 36.072$, $p < .001$) in the experimental group suggest that L1 use creates a more supportive and less stressful learning environment. Similarly, the improvements in vocabulary learning ($F = 251.284$, $p < .001$) and engagement ($F = 22.954$, $p < .001$) underscore the pedagogical value of leveraging learners' native language to scaffold complex tasks and enhance comprehension.

These findings have important implications for EFL pedagogy, particularly in contexts where learners face linguistic and emotional challenges. By strategically integrating L1 into instruction, educators can foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment, ultimately promoting both academic and emotional success.

Result of the Interview

The results of the interview were obtained based on the opinions and ideas of the learners. After the learners had taken the post-test, 10 learners from the experimental group were interviewed. The semi-structure interview consisted of five oral questions asking the learners whether or not the L1 had a positive effect on their learning and feelings. The 5th question of this research is answered after analyzing the interview with learners in experimental group.

Table 5*The Results of Experimental Group Learners Interviews*

Themes	Frequency of Comments out of 9
L1 leads to better understanding	9
L1 cause to improve participation and better Comprehension	9
L1 cause to feel relaxed and wonderful	9
L1 lead to reduce my anxiety	8
L1 makes class more enjoyable	9

Discussion

In the following, the results of the study are discussed and supported by both theoretical and empirical findings. The analysis showed that the use of L1 significantly affected Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning (VL), with the experimental group outperforming the control group in this regard. In summary, the research question proposing whether the experimental group would perform better than the control group in terms of VL was confirmed by the study's findings. These results align with Gulli (2022), who indicated that Norwegian pupils commonly use Norwegian during English foreign language lessons, finding it both useful and natural for L1 to be applied in specific contexts, such as receiving non-subject-related information, understanding teacher instructions, working on new vocabulary or grammar, and collaborating in pairs or groups. Similarly, the findings align with Surjowati and Siswahjudioko (2020), who demonstrated that the use of L1 in the classroom positively benefits learners' understanding of the subject matter and their responses during discussions.

These results could be justified in this way that the use of L1 can affect Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' VL in several ways:

Firstly, L1 is the learners' native language, which means they have a better understanding of its grammar, vocabulary, and cultural nuances. When learners encounter new vocabulary in English, they can often relate it to a similar word or concept in their L1. This familiarity helps them comprehend and remember new English words more easily (Guimard & Florin, 2007; Zhang & Annual, 2008).

Secondly, transfer of vocabulary in L1 can act as a bridge for vocabulary transfer between languages. When learners encounter a new word in English, they can use their knowledge of similar words in their L1 to guess its meaning or make connections. This transfer of vocabulary can facilitate faster acquisition and retention of new English words, as evidenced by research on cross-linguistic influence in vocabulary learning (Bhooth et al., 2014; Zhang & Annual, 2008).

Thirdly, English can sometimes contain complex concepts or abstract ideas that might be challenging to grasp. L1 can help learners understand these concepts more easily by providing alternative explanations or examples in a familiar language. This comprehension support allows learners to make connections and deepen their understanding of English words and expressions, as highlighted in studies on the role of L1 in scaffolding L2 learning (Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020; Wang & Xu, 2023).

Fourthly, using L1 in the classroom can help learners feel more confident and comfortable. Learners might hesitate or feel anxious when trying to express themselves solely in English. The use of L1 can provide a supportive environment where learners can express their ideas more freely. This confidence boost encourages participation and active engagement, leading to better vocabulary learning outcomes, as demonstrated in research on the affective benefits of L1 use in EFL classrooms (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Shingisbek & Bibiruza, 2021).

Overall, it is important to note that while L1 can positively impact vocabulary learning, balanced and strategic use of English should also be emphasized to avoid over-dependence on L1 and promote overall English language proficiency. The analysis showed that use of L1 affected Iranian EFL learners' CE. The results suggest that the experimental group, significantly outperformed the control

group in terms of CE. In summary, the research question, which proposed whether the experimental group would perform better than the control group in terms of CE, was confirmed based on the findings of the study.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior research of Bhooth et al., (2014) Which illustrated in their findings that L1 can be used as a scaffolding strategy by students in facilitating their learning and can be used as a pedagogical tool by the teacher to enhance learning experience as well as maximize engagement in the classroom.

Also, the result of this study is in accordance with the study conducted by Wang and Xu (2023) which demonstrated the positive impact of L1-based strategies, specifically Translation-Based Learning (TL) and Code-Switching (CS) on reducing students' anxiety levels and increasing their motivation to engage with the material. This finding highlights the potential benefits of incorporating these strategies into language learning environments.

These studies suggest that incorporating L1 in the language classroom can enhance learners' class engagement (CE) by fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Recognizing and valuing learners' L1 helps create a space where they feel more comfortable, confident, and motivated to actively participate in class activities, thereby increasing engagement and interaction. While these findings highlight the potential benefits of L1 use for CE, further research is necessary to explore its effects more comprehensively across diverse educational contexts.

The use of L1 in the classroom can positively affect learners' class engagement (CE) for several reasons:

Firstly, when learners are able to use their L1 to clarify instructions, explanations, or concepts, it can enhance their understanding of the material being taught. This can lead to higher levels of engagement as learners feel more confident and connected to the content, as demonstrated by research on the role of L1 in scaffolding comprehension and fostering engagement (Bhooth et al., 2014; Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020). Secondly, allowing the use of L1 can encourage learners to actively participate in classroom discussions and activities. It provides a familiar and comfortable medium for expressing ideas and opinions, leading to increased engagement and involvement in the learning process, as highlighted in studies on the affective and cognitive benefits of L1 use in EFL classrooms (Wang & Xu, 2023; Shingisbek & Bibiruz, 2021). Thirdly, for learners who are not yet proficient in the target language, using L1 can help alleviate the anxiety and pressure associated with trying to express themselves in an unfamiliar language. This sense of comfort and confidence can positively impact learners' willingness to participate and engage in class activities, as supported by research on the relationship between L1 use, reduced anxiety, and increased engagement (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Rezaee et al., 2021).

The analysis showed that use of L1 affected Iranian EFL learners' enjoyment. The results suggest that the experimental group, significantly outperformed the control group in terms of enjoyment. In summary, the research question, which proposed whether the experimental group would perform better than the control group in terms of enjoyment, was confirmed based on the findings of the study.

The study's findings are in accordance with Dewaele et al., (2019) that in their research emphasized that there is a moderate negative relationship emerged between FLE and FLCA. Participants who had an L1 English speaker as a teacher reported more FLE and less FLCA than those with a foreign language user of English. Teacher characteristics predicted close to 20% of variance in FLE but only 8% of variance in FLCA. The strongest positive predictor of FLE was a teacher's friendliness while a teacher's foreign accent was a weaker negative predictor.

The study's findings go along with Zhang and Tsung (2021) which stated in their study that foreign language enjoyment of Chinese as a Second Language learners studying in China to find the distinctive features of their language learning enjoyment and its main components. The findings suggest that while sharing certain similarities with other FL learners in previous studies situated in Chinese or

global contexts, the FLE of adult CSL learners in China positively impacts their language learning development.

The use of L1 in language learning can positively impact learners' enjoyment for several reasons:

First, when learners are allowed to use their L1 to understand instructions, explanations, or concepts, it can enhance their comprehension of the material. This increased understanding can lead to a greater sense of enjoyment as learners feel more confident.

Second, for learners who are not yet proficient in the target language, using L1 can help reduce the anxiety and stress associated with trying to express themselves in an unfamiliar language. This sense of comfort and ease can contribute to a more relaxed and enjoyable learning experience.

Third, allowing the use of L1 enables learners to express their thoughts, opinions, and emotions more accurately and effectively. This personal connection to the content and the ability to fully express themselves can lead to a greater sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in the learning process.

The analysis showed that use of L1 affected Iranian EFL learners' anxiety. The results suggest that the experimental group, significantly outperformed the control group in terms of anxiety. In summary, the research question, which proposed whether the experimental group would perform better than the control group in terms of anxiety, was confirmed based on the findings of the study.

Although research specifically addressing the positive impact of L1 use on learners' anxiety is limited, a few studies provide valuable insights into this area. These studies indicate that incorporating L1 in language learning can help reduce learners' anxiety by offering a familiar and comfortable mode of communication. Allowing learners to use their L1 to support comprehension and expression can alleviate the stress and pressure associated with exclusive reliance on the target language for communication.

The findings of this study align with previous research on the role of L1 in language learning. For instance, Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) demonstrated that a majority of students preferred the use of L1 for classroom management, noting that L1 and the target language (TL) influence both anxiety and motivation. While L1 use can alleviate classroom anxiety, it may also act as a demotivating factor in certain contexts. Similarly, Shingisbek and Bibiruzza (2021) found that teachers often prefer using L1 in English language teaching to break psychological barriers, concluding that L1 creates a low-anxiety atmosphere for both learners and teachers. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Rezaee et al. (2021), who highlighted a positive relationship between code-switching in foreign language classrooms and reduced anxiety levels among learners. Their study suggested that code-switching can serve as a supportive language strategy to decrease anxiety during foreign language learning. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of L1 use in reducing anxiety and fostering a more supportive learning environment, offering valuable implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) practitioners.

The use of L1 in language learning can have a positive impact on learners' anxiety for several reasons:

First, enhanced comprehension and understanding: When learners are allowed to use their L1, it can enhance their comprehension and understanding of the material. This increased understanding can reduce anxiety as learners feel more confident in their ability to grasp the content and participate in classroom activities, as supported by research on the role of L1 in scaffolding comprehension and reducing cognitive load (Bhooth et al., 2014; Wang & Xu, 2023).

Second, reduced linguistic pressure: For learners who are not yet proficient in the target language, using L1 can help alleviate the linguistic pressure and anxiety associated with trying to express themselves in an unfamiliar language. By allowing the use of L1, learners can communicate more effectively and accurately, reducing the fear of making mistakes and the associated anxiety, as demonstrated in studies on the affective benefits of L1 use in EFL classrooms (Shingisbek & Bibiruzza, 2021; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018).

Third, increased confidence and self-esteem: Using L1 allows learners to express themselves more comfortably and confidently. This increased confidence can help reduce anxiety levels as learners feel more empowered to actively participate in class discussions and activities without the fear of being misunderstood or judged, as highlighted in research on the relationship between L1 use and emotional well-being (Rezaee et al., 2021; Surjowati & Siswahjudioko, 2020).

Fourth, supportive learning environment: Allowing the use of L1 acknowledges and respects learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This recognition creates a supportive learning environment where learners feel valued and understood, leading to a decrease in anxiety and an increase in their overall comfort and well-being, as evidenced by studies on the role of L1 in fostering inclusive and supportive classroom dynamics (Wang & Xu, 2023; Dewaele et al., 2019).

Learners in sum, stated in their interview that, L1 enhances comprehension, participation, and feelings of relaxation. It also reduces anxiety and makes the class more enjoyable. This finding is in line with Galali and Cinkara (2017) which stated that by referring to current theories of TL acquisition and reviewing recent literature, it can be inferred that learners' L1 has a necessary and facilitating role in acquiring a foreign language under certain conditions.

L1, not only enhances comprehension but also more importantly improves participation and fosters a sense of relaxation among learners. By using L1, learners are more likely to understand the content being taught, as they can make connections with their prior knowledge and experiences. When learners are encouraged to communicate and express themselves in their native language, it creates a safe and inclusive learning environment, fueling active participation. Language barriers are reduced, and learners feel more comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas, leading to increased engagement and interaction amongst peers. Moreover, incorporating L1 into the classroom can have a profound impact on learners' emotional well-being. By allowing learners to use their native language, they are at ease and more relaxed, leading to a more positive classroom atmosphere. This relaxation helps to alleviate anxiety and stress that might be associated with language barriers or struggling to comprehend the content. Notably, reducing anxiety plays a significant role in promoting effective learning. When learners are less anxious, they are more open to learning, taking risks, and actively participating in class discussions or activities. This increased confidence can lead to greater retention of information and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. In addition, the utilization of L1 can make the class more enjoyable for learners. When learners can fully grasp the content being taught and can express themselves freely, their overall experience during the class becomes more positive. They are more likely to find enjoyment in the learning process, which has numerous benefits, such as improved motivation and a higher likelihood of pursuing further studies in the subject area.

In conclusion, incorporating L1 in the classroom has numerous advantages. It enhances comprehension, boosts participation, and fosters a sense of relaxation among learners. Additionally, it reduces anxiety, leading to a more enjoyable and effective learning experience. By recognizing and valuing learners' native language, educators can create an inclusive and engaging learning environment that benefits all learners.

Conclusion and Implications

The study on the effects of using the native language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Iran found that incorporating L1 in the classroom can improve learners' VL, CE, enjoyment, and anxiety levels. Strategic use of L1 can enhance learners' understanding and retention of new words, increase their motivation and active participation in classroom activities, and contribute to a sense of enjoyment among learners. Additionally, incorporating L1 can alleviate anxiety levels among learners, making the process more enjoyable and meaningful.

The findings suggest that incorporating L1 in EFL classrooms can improve learners' VL, CE, enjoyment, and anxiety levels. This can be beneficial for learners, teachers, and administrators, as it allows them to understand and clarify new vocabulary, participate more actively in discussions, and feel less frustrated and more motivated. Additionally, incorporating L1 can help alleviate anxiety among

learners, as it reduces anxiety and makes them feel more comfortable and confident in the learning process. Recognizing and valuing learners' L1 in language classrooms can create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environment.

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Appendix A

Ethical issue

Physical and emotional safety measures were taken to ensure that the study activities did not pose any physical or emotional harm to the participants not only informed to students, but also, more importantly to their parents. The research design and interventions were conducted in a supportive and non-threatening manner. Steps were taken to minimize any potential anxiety or stress experienced by the participants during the study. Supportive environments and clear instructions were provided to create a comfortable learning atmosphere. Participants were assured that their personal information and data would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Any identifiable information was anonymized to protect their privacy. These ethical issues appendix demonstrates the commitment to upholding ethical standards and ensuring the well-being of beginner-level participants in the study. By obtaining informed consent, prioritizing participant well-being and protecting confidentiality of the study aims to maintain ethical integrity and contribute to the field were obtained.

Dear Participant

The purpose of this ethical issues appendix is to outline the ethical considerations taken into account in the research study titled "Effects of Using L1 on Iranian EFL Learners' Vocabulary Learning, Class Engagement, Enjoyment, and Anxiety." The study focuses on beginner-level students participating as participants.

Form of consent:

Hereby, I confirm that, I was provided with a clear and comprehensive explanation of the research objectives, procedures, and the potential benefits and risks involved. Also, I was informed that participation was entirely voluntary, and I confirm that, I had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I, also, confirm that all further ethical issues were provided clearly by the instructor, Mrs. Maral Gharibian, and her phone number was provided in case of any questions and I overwhelmingly accepted with utmost contest to participate in the study.

Name

Date

Signature

Appendix B

Vocabulary Test

Choose the correct answers for the following questions.

1) There are four..... in a year.

- a) days
b) weeks
c) months
d) seasons

2) Which season usually has the coldest weather?

- a) spring
b) summer
c) fall
d) winter

3) People go out and make in snowy days.

- a) sandcastle
b) snowman
c) snowflake
d) sled

- 17) What is next to the beach?
 a) playground
 c) grass
 b) sea
 d) gas station
- 18) After a long day you need to for 8 hours.
 a) watch
 c) eat
 b) play
 d) sleep
- 19) A person who takes control of a ship is
 a) cook
 c) captain
 b) soldier
 d) pilot
- 20) works and helps captain on a ship.
 a) helper
 c) sailor
 b) sweeper
 d) farmer
- 21) Sailors rest in..... on a fishing boat.
 a) bedroom
 c) deck
 b) cabin
 d) tent
- 22) To help the nature we should trash.
 a) pick up
 c) leave
 b) bin
 d) add
- 23) For walking we have go through
 a) bicycle lane
 c) street
 b) side walk
 d) grass
- 24) The opposite of clean is
 a) fresh
 c) pretty
 b) ugly
 d) dirty
- 25) When children play at home. It is very
 a) quiet
 c) shy
 b) messy
 d) clean

Appendix C

Class-engagement Questionnaire

کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	بی نظر	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	Class-engagement	
					برقراری ارتباط در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، برایم رضایتبخش است.	1
					وقتی در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، با معلم و دوستانم در ارتباط هستم، آرامش پیدا می‌کنم.	2
					در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، نظرات من، مفید واقع می‌شود.	3
					در کلاس احساس تنهایی می‌کنم زیرا نمی‌توانم همکلاسی‌های خود را درک کنم.	4
					وقتی در کلاس زبان انگلیسی نظر خودم را می‌گویم، اشفته و بی‌قرار می‌شوم.	5
					بیشتر همکلاسی‌هایم توجهی به کار گروهی در کلاس ندارند.	6
					وقتی در کلاس زبان انگلیسی با استاد صحبت می‌کنم یا سوال می‌پرسم، عصبی می‌شوم.	7
					وقتی در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، نظر خود را می‌گویم، احساس خوشایندی دارم و لذت می‌برم.	8
					دوست دارم در بقیه کلاسهایم نیز مانند کلاس زبان انگلیسی کار گروهی را تجربه کنم.	9
					وقتی همکلاسی‌هایم نمی‌توانند مرا درک کنند، اشفته خاطر می‌شوم.	10
					مطالب درسی کلاس زبان انگلیسی برای من جذاب است.	11

					اکثر مواقع در کار گروهی مشارکت می‌کنم.	12
					در کلاس زبان انگلیسی فضای مشارکت برای یادگیری باز است و اکثر همکلاسی هایم مشارکت فعال دارند.	13
					بیشتر اوقات در کلاس زبان انگلیسی، حواسم جمع صحبت های استاد و درس است.	14

Appendix D
FLE Questionnaire

کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	بی نظر	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	FLE	
					در کلاس زبان می‌توانم خلاق باشم.	1
					من می‌توانم اشتباهات ازار دهنده در زبان خارجی را نادیده بگیرم.	2
					من از کلاس زبان خسته نمی‌شوم و لذت می‌برم.	3
					در کلاس زبان های خارجی احساس می‌کنم آدم دیگری هستم.	4
					در کلاس زبان خارجی یاد گرفتم خودم را بهتر ابراز کنم.	5
					من یک عضو لایق کلاس زبان خارجی هستم.	6
					چیزهای جالبی به زبان انگلیسی آموخته ام.	7
					در کلاس به دستاوردهایم افتخار می‌کنم.	8
					محیط کلاس انگلیسی عالی است.	9
					خطا کردن بخشی از فرآیند یادگیری است.	10
					همکلاسی های من خوب هستند.	11
					معلم مان صمیمی است و ما را تشویق می‌کند.	12
					ما در کلاس کار گروهی انجام می‌دهیم.	13
					ما در کلاس لطیفه می‌گوییم و می‌خندیم.	14

Appendix E
FLCA Questionnaire

کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	بی نظر	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	FLCA	
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				در طول کلاس زبان متوجه شدم که به چیزهایی فکر می‌کنم که هیچ ربطی به درس ندارد.	1
				من معمولاً هنگام امتحانات در کلاس زبان راحت هستم.	2
				من نمی‌دانم چرا بعضی از افراد از کلاس زبان خارجی اینقدر ناراحت می‌شوند.	3
				در کلاس زبان انقدر عصبی می‌شوم که چیزهایی را که می‌دانم را فراموش می‌کنم.	4
				از اینکه معلم زبانم در کلاس اشتباه مرا تصحیح کند می‌ترسم.	5
				هرچه بیش تر برای آزمون زبان مطالعه می‌کنم، بیش تر گیج می‌شوم.	6
				تعداد قوانینی که برای صحبت کردن به زبان خارجی نیاز به یادگیری دارم، من را آشفته می‌کند.	7
				در کنار افرادی که زبان مادری آنها انگلیسی است، احساس راحتی می‌کنم.	8
				در کلاس زبان نسبت به کلاس دیگر بیشتر مضطرب می‌شوم و هرگز از خودم مطمئن نیستم.	9
				از اینکه در کلاس زبان خارجی شرکت می‌کنم بسیار مطمئن هستم و اصلاً مرا آزار نمی‌دهد.	10
				کلاس زبان به سرعت پیش می‌رود و از اینکه از کلاس عقب بمانم و مردود شوم، نگران هستم.	11
				وقتی برای پرسش مرا صدا می‌زنند، اعتماد به نفس کافی برای صحبت کردن را ندارم و تپش قلب پیدا می‌کنم.	12
				من اغلب احساس می‌کنم توانایی اتمام کار را ندارم و لذت نمی‌برم.	13
				من همیشه احساس می‌کنم که سایر دانش آموزان بهتر از من به زبان خارجی صحبت می‌کنند.	14

Appendix F: The questions of the interview:

Interview Question 1: what do you think about using L1 in your classes?

Interview Question 2: Does using L1 in your classes improve your understanding and participation in the classroom?

Interview Question 3: How do you feel when your teacher uses L1 when she teaches English?

Interview Question 4: Do you feel less anxious when your teacher speaks in Persian?

Interview Question 5: Do you enjoy when your teacher speaking Persian?