Students' Attitude and Perceived Needs towards the use of L1 in English Classes

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate learners' perspectives on language of teaching in English classrooms at the University of AJK, Jhelum valley campus. It is an attempt to ascertain the learners' perceptions about the need of first language (L1) in classrooms. The research study was designed to be a case study in which quantitative data gathering methods were used. The participants were 98 students randomly selected from the English department except first semester. A learners' questionnaire was used to gather information. The outcomes of study have revealed learners supported the use of Urdu in English classrooms. Students thought that Urdu could be used often in English classrooms.

Introduction

The English language has become a mandatory element for many individuals during the processes of the Azad Jammu Kashmir accelerating out-the-window and encountering tremendous growth. To confront issues, the leading government University of the state has made several endeavors to fix up and improve the system of English language education in the English department. However, according to the researcher's informal observations during his experience as ESL instructor and his communicative exchange with colleagues, lot of learners are struggling in learning to speak English at University level even in English department. It could be the result of a variety of reasons, including the use of first language (L1) in second language (L2) classes, that's been a contentious subject in the history of language education because of its impact on L2 acquisition. The usage of L1 in L2 teaching and learning, as well as whether it has a good or detrimental influence upon L2 teaching and learning, has really been thoroughly debated in the literature. Numerous researchers, for instance, provide numerous

reasons and arguments for avoiding L1 use (e.g., Krashen 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1995; Eldridge, 1996; Cook, 2001, 2008;) and maximizing L2 usage in L2 classes (e.g., Krashen & Terrell, 1995; Eldridge, 1996; Cook, 2001, 2008;) and maximizing L2 usage in L2 classes (e.g., Krashen & Terrell (Cameron, 2001; Ellis, 2005, 2012). Cook, (2008) listed a few points for reducing the usage of L1 and performing the greater part of the class in L2. To commence with, learners learning their first language don't even have access to an L2. Secondly, rather of combining two incompatible languages, learners should split them up in their brains. By and by, mostly in language classes L1 use is avoided because of practical reasons, like students with different first languages or the teacher's ignorance of students' L1. Moreover, Eldridge (1996) is in opposition of usage of L1 in L2 classrooms, stating that "it is a strategy that yields short-term benefits to the second language learner, but with a risk of hampering long-term acquisition" (p-310).

Teachers' and learners' perceptions about the usage of L1 in L2 classrooms have been broadly examined in many scenarios, with inconsistent and often paradoxical results. According to the research, instructors had a negative perception about employing L1 in L2 classrooms, whilst learners had a good attitude towards it (Taşkn (2011) with Turkish preparatory EFL learners and teachers; Hashemi and Sabet (2013) with Iranian university learners and teachers). Oppositely, the findings of Kalanzadeh et al. (2013) study with Iranian high school EFL students and teachers indicated that students were supporting the extensive use of L2 (English) whereas the teachers were supporting the extensive use of L1 (Persian). Nazary's (2008) study with Iranian University Students illustrates that most of the participants had negative perception towards the use of L1 English classes. Alternatively, Al-Nofaie's (2010) study with Saudi teachers and students and

Jingxia's (2010) study with Chinese undergraduate students and teachers showed the positive perception towards the use of L1 (Arabic) in L2 (English) classes.

Due to the obvious aforementioned causes and issues, the primary goal of the current study is to find out how learners and instructors at the University of AJK, Jhelum valley campus believe about using L1 (Urdu) in L2 (English) classrooms. Importantly, this research looked at when and where instructors' and learners' employ L1 in L2 classrooms, as well as why they do so. Thirdly, it enquires about the perceived requirements of instructors and learners to employ L1 in English classrooms.

Research Question

This study aims at answering the following research question: What are the students' perceptions and perceived needs towards the use of L1 in ESL classes?

Literature Review

The function of L1 in L2 learning has been the subject of several discussions and disputes. While some reasons advocate for a monolingual or L2-only approach to language training in which no L1 is employed, many others advocate for a bilingual method in which L1 is employed. On the other side, certain arguments have been made against significant L1 usage, with L1 use being advised to be limited and L2 use being pushed to be maximized. There hasn't been any agreement on whether to utilize it or not.

Proponents of L2-only perspective have offered arguments for the monolingual approach to language teaching, which avoids the usage of L1. Cummins (2005) demonstrates several common principles that underlie monolingual education, despite the fact that they are unsupported by research. The principles are that (a) teaching should be given only in the L2, with no reliance on the students' native language; (b)

bilingual dictionaries ought not be utilized; (c) translation should be avoided; and (d) the L₁ and L₂ should indeed be kept strictly separate. Cook (2001, 2008) also lays out three theoretical grounds for avoiding L₁ in L₂ classrooms based on second language acquisition (SLA) research. The whole first point is that L₂ learning must not be dependent on that other language because children being taught their L₁ do not have access to it.

After nearly all of the opinions against L₁ usage in L₂ learning were rejected for not being supported by research, there have been some shifts in opinions about the utility of L₁ in L₂ learning. Auerbach (1993) defends L₂-only courses, claiming, "the rationale used to justify English only in the classroom is neither conclusive nor pedagogically sound" (p.15). No substantial study was done to back up assertions that dismiss the necessity of L₁ or that eliminating L₁ from L₂ classes will automatically boost learning efficiency, according to Eldridge (1996), Macaro (2001), Jones (2010), and others. Furthermore, it has been discovered that limiting L₁ in L₂ courses has negative consequences. Cook (2001) notes that using L₁ in L₂ classes is common in contexts when learners interact with the same L₁, and therefore suggests that "it is time to open a door that has been firmly shut-in language instruction for over 100 years, namely the systematic use of the first language (L₁) in the classroom" (p.402).

Including the numerous reasons for incorporating and removing L₁ from L₂ courses, some strategies have been proposed to restrain and organize it so that L₁ is not abused. If employed consistently, L₁ will become a barrier to maximum L₂ interaction, although learning of L₂ requires a considerable proportion of L₂ input in the classroom, particularly in FL cases where learners have little prospect for L₂ exposure beyond the classroom. "Overuse leads to insufficient L₂ exposure and reliance on the L₁," Jones explains (2010). (Page 9) As a result,

Swain and Lapkin (2000, p. 268, referenced in Hamze, 2010) advise that L₁ be used as an addition to L₂ rather than as a replacement for it.

Even if most language instructors and academics seem to acknowledge that prudent usage of L₁ can help L₂ learning and instruction, there is no consensus on what prudent usage of L₁ means. Contrary, the main topic of disagreement is whether and how L₁ should be employed in L₂ classrooms, rather than whether it should be used at all.

If L₁ should be used, Cook (2001, p. 413) recommends taking into account the following aspects: efficiency (Can something be done more effectively in the L₁?), learning (Will using the L₁ as well along with the L₂ aid L₂ learning?), effortlessness (Do the participants feel more comfortable with some functions or topics in the first language rather than the second?), and external relevance (Will using both languages help the students master specific L₂ uses that they may need in the future? Further, no universally accepted number of instructors who should be using L₁ has been established.

Research Methodology

The research has been carried out in an ESL setting at the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Jhelum valley campus, which is in the district Jhelum Valley, Azad Kashmir. The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has three campuses in different three distinct districts but in this study only one campus is selected for the collection of data from students and teachers.

The researcher had to choose the Learners randomly from different semesters of BS English as he had to find out why learners use L₁ in English classes. There's also a purpose underlying for picking the learners randomly over other semesters for this research. Because the study's goals were to evaluate learners' perceptions about the usage of L₁ in L₂ classrooms, the study

recruited samples from different semesters so that there can be a space between the levels to have true representation of the population. Learners in the first semester were not included because, initially, they are relative novice students who, according with literature study, require greater L1 usage in L2 courses, and secondly, they may just be too new to comprehend the purpose of questionnaires and reply to them. Learners from 2nd semester to 8th semesters are preferred because surely in these semesters they are introduced by the management of courses as well as the grading system at university level. The grading system and somehow the paper pattern is different. As a nutshell, the level of these 2nd to 8th semester students were picked in order to further assess the variations among them in their usage of Urdu within English classrooms. They were used because these students are well aware of use of language. They are much confident in their dealings as they learnt a lot about first and second language. The information and the results taken from the students of 2nd to 8th semesters can help the teachers as well as students in their next semesters and for it can also be useful for the teachers and students of eight semester.

Participants

The present research comprised of 98 students randomly selected from English department, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Jhelum valley campus. The learners were between the ages of 18 and 26.

Data Collection Procedures

After requesting permission from the head of Department of English at the University of Azad Jammu, Jhelum Valley campus, to visit some classes for the purpose of data collection. It enabled the researcher to visit any English department class and request cooperation from their teachers in the data

collection process. The data gathering process began with the students' questionnaire, which was conducted by the researcher in 20 minutes for faster learners and 25 minutes for slower students. Furthermore, students were assured verbally that their instructors and administrators would be unaware of their comments, and they'd have no bearing on their marks.

Data Analysis

The information gathered was quantitatively evaluated. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20.0, was used to analyse the quantitative data obtained out from questionnaires. The very first section of the learners' surveys yielded demographic information, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which produced numerical findings in the form of tables. In the second part of the questionnaires, descriptive statistics were used to compute frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for each response to questions.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The current study aims to demonstrate the perception and perceived needs of students towards use of L1 in L2 classes in the department of English, Jhelum valley campus, UAJK. The study's results and discussions have been presented in light of the research questions.

The student questionnaire's questions 1-6 were designed to obtain information regarding students' perceptions on the usage of Urdu in English classrooms. Tables illustrate the outcomes of the students' replies to these questions, which are followed by thorough explanations of the results. The replies of students to Questions 1-4 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Question 1-4 in the Students' Questionnaire

Questions	Never (1)%	Rarely (2)%	Sometimes (3)%	Often (4)%	Always (5)%	M	SD
Question1	6.1	21.4	49.0	15.3	8.2	2.98	0.97
Question2	9.2	35.7	34.7	12.2	8.2	2.74	1.06
Question3	8.2	24.5	12.2	38.8	16.3	3.31	1.24
Question4	2.0	38.8	32.7	15.3	11.2	2.95	1.04

In response to Question 1, (49) percent opted *sometimes* (21.4) percent opted *rarely,* (15.3) percent opted *often,* (8.2) percent opted *always* (6.1) percent opted *never*. To put it another way, they feel that English instructors should not completely ignore Urdu, nor should they use it substantially; rather, they prefer that English teachers employ it sometimes.

In respect to Question 2, (37.5) answered rarely, (34.7) percent opted sometime 12.2 percent opted often, just (9.2) percent opted never, and (8.2) percent chose always. It demonstrates that they aren't opposed to learners using Urdu; relatively, they feel that students should employ it sometimes. Yet, in contrast to their responses to Question 1, they favor instructors to employ Urdu more than learners.

Regarding Question 3, (38) percent opted often, while (24) percent opted rarely, (16)

percent claimed always and (12) percent said sometimes, additionally just (8) percent opted never. It implies that students felt that using Urdu might sometimes help them learn.

Regarding Question 4, (38) percent opted rarely, (32.7) percent sometimes, (15.3) percent often, and (32.7) percent. never, (2) percent opted always. This is in line with and confirms their responses to questions in which they thought that teachers and students should employ Urdu in English classrooms on sometimes.

Question 5 dealt with students' opinions regarding instructors' use of Urdu in particular contexts, such as explaining the meaning of new words, explaining grammar, organizing classrooms, and so on, with 19 sub-parts (Question 5A-Question 5S). Table 2. followed by the total or overall response to Question 5.

Table 2. Results of Question 5 (Students' Questionnaire)

Question5	Never (1)%	Rarely (2)%	Sometimes (3)%	Often (4)%	Always (5)%	M	SD
Question5A	00	5.1	22.4	37.8	34.7	4.02	0.89
Question5B	3.1	9.2	20.4	48	19.4	3.71	0.98
Question5C	1	18.4	25.5	34.7	20.4	3.55	1.05
Question5D	4.1	12.2	11.2	34.7	37.8	3.90	1.16
Question5E	3.1	7.1	18.2	27.6	43.9	4.02	1.09
Question5F	4.1	12.2	26.5	33.7	23.5	3.60	1.10
Question5G	00	9.2	17.3	29.6	43.9	4.08	0.99
Question5H	3.1	17.3	33.7	24.5	21.4	3.44	1.10
Question5I	9.2	6.1	18.4	30.6	35.7	3.78	1.26
Question5J	12.2	28.6	36.7	13.3	9.2	2.79	1.12
Question5K	1	5.1	18.4	35.7	39.8	4.08	0.94
Question5L	3.1	4.1	19.4	35.7	37.8	4.01	1.01
Question5M	1	2	14.3	31.6	51	4.30	0.86

Question5	Never (1)%	Rarely (2)%	Sometimes (3)%	Often (4)%	Always (5)%	M	SD
Question5N	4.1	17.3	25.5	34.7	18.4	3.46	1.11
Question5O	13.3	9.2	15.3	32.7	29.6	3.56	1.36
Question5P	12	6.1	17.3	33.7	40.8	4.05	1.01
Question5Q	00	8.2	20.4	33.7	37.8	4.01	0.96
Question5R	3.1	10.2	24.5	34.7	27.6	3.73	1.07
Question5S	3.1	10.2	20.5	32.7	33.7	3.84	1.10
Q5Total	3.71	10.41	21.36	32.61	31.91	3.79	0.49

Eventually, when all the sub-parts in Question 5 (Question 5A-Question 5S) were taken into account, the students' net answers to instructors' use of Urdu in the classroom for all of the scenarios indicated in Question 5 were favorable. In all, 32.61 percent of students agreed that instructors should use Urdu often for all reasons; 31.91 percent said always, and 21.3 percent sometimes, but 10.41 percent said rarely, and just 3.71 percent said never.

Furthermore, Question 6, which included eight sub-parts (Question 6A-Question 6H), addressed students' perceptions on their usage of Urdu in English classrooms for distinct goals. Table 3 illustrates the outcomes of the students' responses to each of the sub-parts and then to Question 6 as a whole.

Table 3. Results of Question 6 (Students' Questionnaire)

Question6	Never (1)%	Rarely (2)%	Sometimes (3)%	Often (4)%	Always (5)%	M	SD
Question6A	(8.2)	(14.3)	(24.5)	(32.7)	(20.4)	(3.43)	(1.20)
Question6B	(11.2)	(11.2)	(25.5)	(33.7)	(18.4)	(3.3)	(1.23)
Question6C	(5.1)	(16.6)	(26.5)	(32.7)	(19.4)	(3.45)	(1.13)
Question6D	(2.0)	(4.1)	(22.4)	(32.7)	(38.8)	(4.02)	(0.98)
Question6E	(5.1)	(11.2)	(32.7)	(31.6)	(19.4)	(3.49)	(1.09)
Question6F	(4.1)	(13.3)	(19.4)	(25.5)	(37.8)	(3.80)	(1.20)
Question6G	(2.0)	(7.1)	(13.3)	(34.7)	(42.9)	(4.09)	(1.02)
Question6H	(3.1)	(7.1)	(23.5)	(36.7)	(29.6)	(3.83)	(1.04)
Question6 (Total)	(5.1)	(10.57)	(23.47)	(32.53)	(28.33)	(3.68)	(0.66)

When all of the subitems in Question 6 (Question 6A-6H) were taken into account to determine the extent to which students feel they can use L1 in various settings, the students' overall responses were similar to their replies to Question 5. Only 5 percent opted never, 10 percent rarely, 32 percent often, 28 percent always, and 23 percent sometimes. This demonstrates that students' opinions on the usage of Urdu in English classrooms are overwhelmingly favorable.

Table 4 highlights general perceptions about the use of Urdu in English classrooms.

Table 4. Overall results of Question 1-6 in the Students' Questionnaire (Students' overall perception towards the usage of Urdu in English classrooms)

Questions	Never(1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)	M	SD
TOTAL	4.4%	13%	23.3%	31%	28.3%	3.66%	0.48%

According to the Table 1.4, 31percent of students thought Urdu should be used often in English classes, 28.3percent always, 23.3 percent thought sometimes, and 4.4 percent never, while13 percent rarely. In summation, the results of the learners' survey revealed that learners had a friendly perception concerning the usage of Urdu in English classrooms.

Table 5 illustrates the replies of the students to the sub-parts.

Table 5. Results of Question 7 (Students' Questionnaire)

Question7	Never (1)%	Rarely (2)%	Sometimes (3)%	Often (4)%	Always (5)%	Mean	SD
Question7A	(5.1)	(7.1)	(28.6)	(28.6)	(30.6)	(3.7)	(1.1)
Question7B	(8.2)	(15.3)	(26.5)	(27.6)	(22.4)	(3.4)	(1.2)
Question7C	(6.1)	(14.3)	(27.6)	(32.7)	(19.4)	(3.4)	(1.1)
Question7D	(5.1)	(17.3)	(13.3)	(23.5)	(40.8)	(3.7)	(1.2)
Question7E	(6.1)	(14.3)	(11.2)	(31.6)	(36.7)	(3.7)	(1.2)
Question7F	(14.3)	(7.1)	(27.6)	(24.5)	(26.5)	(3.4)	(1.34)
Question7G	(3.1)	(11.2)	(14.3)	(36.7)	(34.7)	(3.8)	(1.1)
Question7H	(5.1)	(5.1)	(13.3)	(36.7)	(39.8)	(4.01)	(1.1)
Question7I	(2.0)	(6.1)	(13.3)	(35.7)	(35.7)	(4.1)	(0.99)

The learners' reactions towards the explanations and arguments mentioned as sub-parts under Question 7 were generally positive; the averages of their replies varied from 3.4-4.1. That really is, they each have their own valid reasons for returning to their native tongue in English lectures. However, the most common replies were connected to how practicing Urdu helps them understand and recall the content being learned in class, particularly vocabulary items. Each class's explanations were inconsistent, and their replies to various causes differed.

Discussion

Findings from student's questionnaire displayed positive response of learners for the implication of Urdu, by students and teachers, but they appeared to be opposed in excessive use of it. They claimed that learners can apply Urdu in English classes occasionally. This can be described by their possible attentiveness in knowing benefits of keenly using first language. This assumption is maintained by the study of Kalanzadeh et al. (2013), and Juárez and Oxbrow (2008). Though, the learners of this study showed somehow more positive perceptions of instructors for using first language than students' usage of it. They preferred to perform more pronouncements in the second language and less in Urdu, and to put what they learned from their instructors into practice. This is in line to Willis and Willis (2007)'s concept of "using it to understand it" (p. 220). The students also assumed that using Urdu can sometimes contribute towards learning English. This belief is in similar with the results of Schweers' (1999) and Brooks-Lewis' (2009) studies, but it is totally different with Hamze's (2010) study where learners supposed that first language usage does not help students' learning. The cause for this assumption tends to be that

they believe that using first language does not help in learning of second language; instead they may claim that it helps learning if used only when it is required.

In terms of the teachers' use of Urdu, the students had extremely highly positive perceptions toward teachers' use of Urdu in giving suggestions on how to converse in second language, due to inadequate skills of communication and their desire to enlarge it. They were positive to teachers' use of Urdu when explaining difficult concepts and topics. It may happen because of less command in second language and facing problems in digesting difficult contents without using Urdu code for their explanation. This is similar with the findings of Schweers' (1999) study.

Also, one more result of research work presented that the learners had very positive perceptions regarding teachers' use of Urdu to make students feel more comfortable and confident. Reason could be that they may face huge amount of nervousness when using English and they require teachers' use of Urdu to help them feel at ease. They also asked for teachers' use of Urdu whenever they face problem in accepting and also when teaching a new topic for the first time.

Additionally, in this study, students also conveyed very high positive tendency to use Urdu where they face difficulty in speaking second language and inform to the instructor that they couldn't comprehend. They appeared to be anxious about their inability to grasp second language.

As a whole, learners showed highly positive perceptions (Mean-3.6) for using Urdu in English classes. They are easy going with use of Urdu in the class. This is parallel to the other studies (Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Chavez, 2003; Dujmović, 2007; Břenková, 2007; Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Jingxia, 2010; Al-Nofaie, 2010; Taşkın, 2011; Hashemi & Sabet, 2013; Mahmutoğlu & Kıcır, 2013; Mohammad, 2013;) and opposing to the

findings of others (Qadri, 2006; Nazary, 2008).

Students, like the teacher, presented various explanations for using Urdu in their second language studies, based on their perceived demands for L1 usage in ESL classes. They asserted that they prefer Urdu because it helps them understand a second language better. One of their instructors backed this up by saying that some students employ Urdu for they believe it will benefit them. This seems to be consistent with the explanations given by learners in Brooks-Lewis (2009) and Hashemi and Sabet (2009) investigations (2013). Furthermore, according to Hamze's (2010) study, students had numerous issues comprehending since the use of first language in English classrooms was prohibited, and Martnez and Olivera (2003) stated that employing first language ensures that learners interpret the meanings.

More particular, the students said that employing Urdu made it easier for them to acquire and recall language and challenging topics. They may place an excessive amount of emphasis on vocabulary and do everything possible to make vocabulary understanding simpler, including the usage of first language. They explained that they employ Urdu in classroom as it aids them to understand difficult ideas.

The learners went on to say that they employ Urdu since their English isn't strong enough. Assisted by their instructors when they were enquired regarding use of Urdu by their students. Resultantly, learners are uncomfortable speaking L2, according to Sipra (2007), who claims that learners, particularly those who are less proficient in L2, are uncomfortable while using L2. This can also be explained by their concerns with making mistakes in front of other students and having to fix them. They may be concerned about making an unfavourable mark on their peers and instructors. Students in Khati (2011), for example, stated that they

employ L1 as their peers tease them when they try to speak L2, and they are terrified of feedback from instructors if they make mistakes.

This is supported by Sipra (2007) and Scrinever (2011) who claimed that using first language is easier, for those who are not expert in speaking second language, which prohibit them from uttering everything in L2. Furthermore, the learners in some other studies (Schweers, 1999; Tang, 2002; Al-Nofaie, 2010; Hashemi and Sabet, 2013) given analogous explanations for the usage of L1. They indicated that the usage of first language makes them feel more relaxed, in ease, and confident, as well as less anxious and bewildered.

Conclusion

The present study is done to find out about perceptions of the students of department of English, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Jhelum valley campus towards the usage of L1 (Urdu) in L2 (English The participants were 98 students randomly selected from English department.).

Quantitative approach was applied to collect data, comprised of students' questionnaires.

Equally, learners responded positively to the use of Urdu in English classrooms. Their perceptions were rather higher; they claimed that Urdu is frequently employed in English lessons. The learners also thought that studying English may be aided by employing Urdu. The students show strong preferences for teachers' use of Urdu for giving suggestions on how to interconnect in English more proficiently, discussing difficult concepts and areas, making students more active in quality learning process, and introducing a new topic and teaching them for the first time.

Also, it was revealed that learners wanted instructors to use more Urdu and students to use less Urdu. Students indicated that they employ Urdu in their English classrooms since they are not proficient in English and hence feel more at content using Urdu. They are also more inclined to employ Urdu because they believe it would allow them to better understand and study L2, therefore it will provide satisfaction to them.

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