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Exploring the Effect of Learners' Age Variation and Their Perceptions on the Responses about Mother Tongue Use in L2 Learning

Abstract:

The purpose of the current study was to explore the effect of learners' age variation and their perceptions on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 learning at degree level. To find out an obvious understanding of this subject matter, the study focused on 577 L2 learners, for the sake of data collection questionnaire war used as a research tool. The data were analyzed through SPSS (statistical package for social sciences). Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, Analysis of variance (ANOVA), T-Test and Cronbach's alpha. The results of the study indicated that the undergraduate learners showed highly positive perceptions regarding the use of mother tongue in the L2 classroom. The majority of the undergraduate respondents preferred using mother tongue in certain situations for specific reasons such as while learning about grammar rules and its usage in the target language classroom, discussing course policies, attendance, and other administrative information, explaining some difficult concepts, to give directions about exams and in introducing the aim of the lesson, to discuss tests, quizzes, and other assignments appropriately

Key Words: Learners, Teachers, Mother Tongue, Proficiency

Introduction

The topic of the use of students' first language (mother tongue) in the target language (L2) classroom has been discussed for several years. Steven Krashen, with his Natural Approach to Language Acquisition, proposed that students learn their second language much in the similar way that they learn their first, and that L2 is best learnt through immense amounts of exposure to the language with the limited time consumed using mother tongue (Tang, 2002). Though, in recent years, the emphasis has been shifting toward inclusion of mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. It is easy to trace back to the old days when the idea of entirely avoiding mother tongue use in classrooms was indisputably accepted according to the belief of the intervention of the native language on the target language: the learners were expected to depend on their mother tongue once they were to produce the second language by writing or speaking (Bhela, 1999). Mother's tongue was reflected negatively inside a second language classroom. With this notion, the mother tongue was deliberately sidestepped by most of the teachers of foreign languages. Besides this, it was believed that extensive use of the target language in a classroom could facilitate students' communication skills (Crichton, 2009). This belief is then obviously united into a famous teaching approach called Communicative Language Teaching. This methodology supports the idea to make the best use of the target language in a classroom which indisputably encourages minimizing mother tongue use. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) believes that the target language should be used not only during communicative activities but also for clarifying the activities to the students or in conveying homework (Freeman, 2000). This view was broadly accepted; the target language has been extensively promoted in its use in the classroom. Mother tongue, therefore, has been desperately forced to vanish. In recent times, this kind of belief still plays its role wide-reaching among students. It is found that they sometimes hold a negative attitude and

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reject L1 use (Nazary, 2008). This is because, in their view, the mother tongue is just a language learning barrier rather than a facilitating tool. One group of the students in this learning did not believe in mother tongue advantages; therefore, mother tongue meant nothing to their language learning. Taking deeper thought of the result, there is something more than just their belief that affects this phenomenon. It is illuminated that the opposition to mother tongue arrives from the advanced students. Consequently, whether or not effectively use students' native language also depends on students' language proficiency (Kavaliauskiene, 2009). In other words, if teachers make use of mother tongue in a class of high language proficiency students, they may unexpectedly find the students unhappy and bored. On the other hand, there are several studies on foreign/second language learning that attempt to consider mother tongue from a diverse viewpoint. A lot of research studies demonstrate that mother tongue use plays an imperative role in language teaching and learning for several aspects (Brooks, 2009; Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Simsek, 2010). It appears like mother tongue was given one other chance to shine its positive light into the language learning process. Findings from numerous studies disclose progressive feedback from students toward mother tongue use. For example, it is said that university students in Lithuania mainly use their mother tongue in helping them learning English (Kavaliauskiene, 2009). Later on, it is set up that most university students in Turkey also have progressive attitudes toward the use of mother tongue (Turkish) in the classroom (Saricoban, 2010). These show the other side of students' awareness toward mother tongue use in language classes. Speaking of advantages of mother tongue, language teachers cannot deny that the outstanding one is its benefits on learning grammar and vocabulary. Cook (2001) is one who supports this educational phenomenon as he describes that students learn grammar and vocabulary superior and faster through their first language. This intensely supports the idea that the mother tongue should have its own place anywhere in language classes. In addition to grammar and vocabulary, some teachers use mother tongue for instructional purposes. It is established that qualified teachers most often use mother tongue for activity instructions and personal comments (Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Mother's tongue was also studied and proved that it is suitable within teaching L2 among low proficiency English as a Second Language students in writing class (Stapa & Majid, 2006). Even teaching vocabulary to low English proficiency level students is more operational with the use of mother tongue (Bouangeune, 2009). Learners with lower language proficiency need mother tongue to help them to master the target language. Mother tongue, in this case, is consequently agreeably accepted because it is the language that they best comprehend. If the language employed in the classroom is the only response for students, it is vital that the students understand it. Allwright (1994) indicated that if the input is somewhat more progressive than the learners' level, this will support their learning. We also should not forget that students generally depend on their current language knowledge or their mother tongue to understand and learn logic and organization principles behind the target language (Gabrielatos, 2001). This is an additional strong belief supporting why mother tongue is beneficial. To conduct classes without the students' mother tongue may be possible; however, L1 still plays a significant role inside the learners' cognitive process during their L2 learning (Kahraman, 2009). L1 has now been repeatedly studied as a possible resource in language learning. Besides learning success, L1 also has an important role in reducing students' affective filters and giving them a more operational way to learn. Ford (2009) stated in his interview that most university teachers in Japan agree to use English only policy; they sometimes use Japanese for producing a relaxed atmosphere, giving instructions and directing tasks. Even students, as well as teachers, come back to their L1 from time to time as they need to deal with students' misunderstanding, discipline problems, lack of time and building understanding with students (Bateman, 2008). Students' feelings are the issue that teachers should not oversee. Their feelings about themselves and what they are studying, inevitably upset the quality of their learning (Arnold, 1999). If students sense blissful and unworried, they are much more ready to learn. If not, sitting in classes for them just means being there but getting little or nothing from the lesson. Once this miserable situation arises, it is destructive to the students' motivation. In this case, the mother tongue is a substitute for it is normally observed as a tool to

increase students' motivation (Cianflone, 2009). As learners will better accomplish their learning objectives if they have high motivation; teachers sometimes employ students' first language for this reason.

All the offered facts above are like two lenses for us to look at the mother tongue. While the first lens rejects the first language and deliberately encourages the target language in classes; the other lens provides the opposing view. However, both aim to lead all language learners to their uppermost goal. Consequently, the investigation of the better or at least the friendlier lens to our learning context will positively help language learning. The present research is consequently to examine whether mother tongue use is acknowledged or refuted among college and university students and teachers in Pakistan, a country with English as its foreign language. Although teachers and students may appreciate that the first language/L1 is observed and proved to facilitate students' learning and teachers' teaching, particularly in most foreign language contexts where grammatical and lexical explanations are involved; voices from students and teachers are significant and should not be ignored.

The Balance between Mother Tongue and L2 Use in the EFL Classroom

Gardner and Lambert (1972) Suggest that once mother tongue fulfils its role in the lesson, it has to stay in the backward and the focus must be moved on to the target language. This account also warns the teachers that mother tongue should not be the prevailing language in L2 lesson. On the other hand, using only L2 might not be the most excellent way as well. Davies and Pearse (2002) in the same line of thought confirm the idea when they say "If you plainly speak English all the time you will swiftly drive beginners, and even more advanced learners, to despair". From the earlier parts of the literature review, it is obvious that using a restricted amount of mother tongue in the target lesson can be beneficial, but English ought to be the dominating teaching language. But the issue is how big should that control be and what is the exact proportion between mother tongue and the target language. No one is competent to give the correct answer for the reason that it does not exist, at least not yet. For example, Atkinson suggests the best possible ratio of 5% to mother tongue and 95% to the target language (Atkinson, 1989). But this proposition can be viewed as highly individual, and somebody else can disagree with him. A number of views state that we are unable to give an exact percentage because it depends on many factors which can change at the different stages of foreign language teaching. Atkinson (1993) presents some of them:

Learners' Previous Practices

Several instructors from time to time have to solve this state of affairs. They get hold of new learners at the beginning of the school year; previously, they were taught by another teacher. The techniques and methods of the previous teacher were different, and the mother tongue was used a lot. The new instructor wants to use the target language as much as possible, but the problem arises because learners are habituated to use chiefly mother tongue and also hear it from their teachers in the classroom discussions. It is not a good idea to change the techniques entirely in one moment. Students should find a chance of getting used to. Atkinson (1993) recommends this growing amount of the target language gradually.

Level of the Students

Atkinson (1993) believes that with beginners, it is impracticable to use the target language for most of the time because of their little knowledge of vocabulary. Teachers can imitate sometimes, but this does not work every time, so the use of mother tongue in a larger amount is to be expected. At higher levels, the teacher can use most of the time L2 in the target classroom settings. Atkinson suggests reducing the mother tongue and using it chiefly for class management at higher levels. Cole (1998) also admits that the mother tongue can check many difficulties during the work with beginners. He says: "If students have little or no knowledge of the target language, mother tongue can be used to introduce the foremost differences between mother tongue and L2, and the major grammatical characteristics of L2 that they should be aware of. This gives them a head start and

saves a lot of guessing". Similarly, Elridge (1996) strengthens the views made by Cole and Atkinson that avoiding the mother tongue in the beginner lessons can cause a lot of suffering for both teachers and students.

Phase of the Ongoing Course

This aspect also corresponds to the first one. Atkinson (1993) says that it takes learners some time to accept a new teacher and adapt themselves to the new methods and techniques. Only when they manage this, it will be easier for the teacher to use mainly L2 in most of the tasks and activities.

The Stage of the In-progress Lesson

Atkinson (1993) is of the opinion that the use of mother tongue during the lesson also depends on its various stages. In some tasks and activities, it can be constructive or even necessary to use the mother tongue, but during other activities, it could be counter-productive and every now and then it should not be used at all. Cole (1998) recommends the use of mother tongue for giving instructions or correcting mistakes, for doing communicative exercises or games but when doing listening activities or pronunciation drills, the use of mother tongue should be avoided. All the teachers should think about these numerous points before they go to teach new students. Even if it does not help them out to find the right percentage between the mother tongue and the target language at least, they will be able to come to a decision whether the use of mother tongue in the target classroom settings is justified. The rationale of the study is to analyze the perceptions and views of undergraduate (13 to14 years) students regarding the use of mother tongue in L2 classroom at degree level and to evaluate the effect of age variation of graduate (15 to 16 years) students on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 leaching.

Research Questions of the Study

- What are perceptions and views of undergraduate (13 to14 years) learners regarding the use of mother tongue in the L2 classroom at degree level?
- Is there any effect of age variation of graduate (15 to 16 years) learners on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 leaching?

Methods and Materials

Since the objective of the present study was to find out the effect of students' age variation and their perceptions on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 learning. For this purpose questionnaire was used as the main research tool. According to Beale (2002), research methodology should include a description of participants, target institutions, sampling plan, data collection procedures and instruments. The research was designed to use a mixed-method type. A mixed-method type is a research design that uses both quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular question or set of questions (Biber, 2010). The data collection procedure, therefore, was of twofold: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative part investigated colleges and universities students' opinions in general about mother tongue use in English classrooms and the qualitative tool explored in more detail their beliefs and opinions as to why they agree or disagree with mother-tongue use. The quantitative measurement assisted in collecting the massive data from a large group of participants while the qualitative approach appropriately dealt with the data that could be simply obtained from the questionnaire. The selected approach offered the tool to get information from inside and to explore in more detail each issue from the participants. Thus a mixed-method type was the best possible way to answer all of the queries in this study. The selected site of this study was government colleges and universities located in the home division of the researcher and two other divisions like Multan and Bahawalpur, so it would be considered easy to build a good connection with the respondents. There English in daily communication is rarely found. The students' life outside the class is mainly based on their mother tongue only. Participants' number consisted of at least 577 college and university students: 445 were 17 to 19 years old, and 132 were 20 to 22 years of age, studying

at their third and fourth year BA, BSc, B.Com and BS in the 2015 academic year. Since to respond to the questions of the current study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed, and they would be having a questionnaire with the subjects. With a view to determining the subjects' judgment of the use of mother tongue in their L2 classes, the researcher constructed Students' questionnaire was the first and last data collection technique used in this study. The questionnaire was developed from the studies by Elmetwally (2012), Husna Suleiman Al-Jadidi (2009), Maniruzzaman (2003) and Rahman (2006) as models with slight modification on the grounds of researcher's personal seven years of teaching experience and these few adaptations and modifications were also supported by Johnson (1992) who noted that "what makes a high-quality questionnaire is building on theory and earlier research; building on preceding work not only assists in improving the quality of tools but allows researchers to share the findings of similar studies to one another". The ended form of the questionnaire was the product of my own readings in the literature, joint with my own manifestations and understanding of the subject. Similarly, one of the most important purposes of these necessary modifications and adaptations was to appeal to the Pakistani context. The questionnaire had two parts, i.e. demographic information and 75 statements which were based on the format of a typical five-level Likert item.

Description of the Proposed Questionnaire

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Age Group of the Partakers

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
17-19 (years)	445	77
20-22 (years)	132	23
Total	577	100.0

Table 1 indicates data about the frequency and percentage of the age group of the participants (students). The data of 577 respondents (male and female) were divided into two categories of age groups. In the first category of age group (17-19 years), there were 445 participants who were 77% of the total number. In the second category of age group (20-22 years), there were 132 respondents who were 23% of 577 respondents.

Table 2. Mean Score Criteria

Frequency	Criteria
High	Strongly Agree
	4.5 to 5.0
	Agree
	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometime used
	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Disagree
	1.5 to 2.4
	Strongly Disagree
	1.0 to 1.4

Table 2 leads toward the mean score; criteria adopted from Oxford (1990) having the object of enhanced comprehension of the overall scale use and use of all categories. Such type of taxonomy has been a well-liked statistical analysis of the scale with all its categories. Hence the same criterion is adopted to enhance comprehension of the results current data analysis.

Table 3. Reliability of the Scale = .939

Scale Category	Reliability
Perception & Belief of Mother Tongue use in L2 Pedagogy	0.805
Impact of Mother Tongue Use in L2 Pedagogy	0..742
The reasoning of Mother Tongue use in L2 Pedagogy	0.764
Situation & Atmosphere of Mother Tongue use in L2 Pedagogy	0.825
Contribution of Mother Tongue use in L2 Pedagogy	0.869

Table 4. Frequency of Learners' Reported on Overall Scale of Mother Tongue Use in L2

	No. of students	Mean	SD
Overall scale Mother Tongue Use	577	3.47	0.71

In table 4 descriptive statistics indicated that the participants responded a high degree of mother tongue use in L2 learning but overall near to the medium having the value (M=3.47, SD=0.71).

Table 5. Showing Frequency of Learners' Reported on Five Categories of the Scale

Scale Categories	No. of students	Mean	SD	Frequency of Category
Perception & Belief of mother tongue use in L2	577	3.44	0.51	Medium
Impact of mother tongue use in L2	577	3.41	0.55	High
The reasoning of mother tongue use in L2	577	3.39	0.54	Medium
Situation & Atmosphere of Mother Tongue use in L2	577	3.53	0.53	High
Contribution of Mother Tongue use in L2	577	3.57	0.61	High

Table 5 showing all five scale categories in the present study were used as High to medium range the most preferred category reported was Contribution of mother tongue use in L2 Pedagogy (M=3.57, SD=0.61), Situations of mother tongue use in L2 Pedagogy (M=3.53, SD=0.53), Perception & Belief of mother tongue use in L2 Pedagogy (M=3.44, SD=0.51), Impact of mother tongue use in L2 Pedagogy(M=3.41 SD=0.55) and the medium Reasoning of mother tongue use in L2 Pedagogy (M=3.39, SD=0.54).

Table 6. Frequency (%), Mean and Standard Deviation about Perception & Belief of Mother Tongue Use in L2

Item No.	Perception & Belief	Mean	SD	Frequency categories
1	I perceive that in order to learn English thoroughly, I must use only English in the EFL classroom.	3.20	1.394	Medium
2	I expect my teacher to use only English while discussing course policies, attendance, and other administrative information in and outside the class.	3.38	1.302	Medium
3	I feel that regardless of how much my English teacher chooses to use English, the students must use English at all times in the classroom	3.39	1.357	Medium
4	I think the use of mother tongue/L1 in English classroom helps me to cultivate a positive attitude toward L2 learning.	3.77	1.133	High
5	I think the use of L1 helps me to become autonomous English language learner.	3.62	1.213	High

6	I think that the use of L1 in the English language classroom helps me to develop as bilingual/multilingual learner.	3.73	1.155	High
7	I believe that I will become more proficient in English when L1 is used in the classroom.	3.52	1.277	High
8	I believe that the incorporation of L1 can, therefore reduce my classroom shock.	3.36	1.168	Medium
9	L1 should be used to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks.	3.70	1.159	High
10	I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses only English when checking our comprehension, short questions, summaries, letter writing and paraphrasing the text.	3.50	1.287	High
11	I think that teachers should discuss with students the decision of using students' L1 in English language classrooms.	3.60	1.183	High
12	I believe that students' L1 should be allowed during English lessons.	3.37	1.294	Medium
13	I prefer my teacher to use L1 in correcting students' written work.	3.27	1.330	Medium
14	I prefer my teacher to use notes in L1 as comments on students' writings.	3.15	1.290	Medium
15	I prefer my teacher to use L1 in explaining the topic that the students are going to write about.	3.57	1.228	High
16	I prefer my teacher to train students to take notes in L1 about the subject that they will write about.	3.28	1.331	Medium
17	It is preferable for me when my teacher writes notes in L1 on the whiteboard while teaching writing.	3.19	1.325	Medium
18	It is preferable for me when my teacher uses instructions in L1 to correct students' mistakes in pronunciation.	3.43	1.303	Medium
19	I believe that it is useful for me to watch movies about L2 courses presented in Urdu dubbing.	3.38	1.343	Medium
20	I prefer my teacher to use L1 in tests, for example, in translating questions.	3.34	1.317	Medium
21	I prefer my teacher to use L1 in dividing the class into groups.	3.23	1.280	Medium
22	I prefer my teacher to use L1 in explaining some new words to my class.	3.61	1.206	High

The received descriptive data in table 6 shows that the learners responded regarding 'perception & belief of mother tongue/L1 use in L2 pedagogy from high to medium degree values. This is the first category in the five scale categories and this category is further divided into 22 statements and the most preferred statement reported was Item No: 4 'I think use of L1 in English classroom helps me to cultivate a positive attitude toward L2 learning' (M= 3.77, SD= 1.133), Item No: 6 'I think that use of L1 in English language classroom helps me to develop as bilingual/multilingual learner' (M=3.73. SD= 1.155), Item No:9 'L1 should be used to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks' (M=3.70, SD=1.159), Item No:5 'I think the use of L1 helps me to become autonomous English language learner' (M=3.62' SD=1.213), Item No:22 'I prefer my teacher to use L1 in explaining some new words to my class' (M=3.61, SD=1.206), Item No:11 'I think that teachers should discuss with students the decision of using students' L1 in English language classrooms' (M=3.60, SD=1.183)' Item No:15 'I prefer my teacher to use L1 in explaining the topic that the students are going to write about' (M=3.57, SD=1.228), Item No:7 'I believe that I will become more proficient in English when L1 will be used in the

classroom.' (M=3.52, SD=1.277), Item No=10 'I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses only English when checking our comprehension, short questions, summaries, letter writing and paraphrasing the text' (M=3.50, SD=1.287), Item No:18 'It is preferable for me when my teacher uses instructions in L1 to correct students' mistakes in pronunciation' (M=3.43, SD=1.303), Item No:3 'I feel that regardless of how much my English teacher chooses to use English, the students must use English at all times in the classroom' (M=3.39, SD=1.357), Item No:2 'I expect my teacher to use only English while discussing course policies, attendance, and other administrative information in and outside the class ' (M=3.38, SD=1.302), Item No: 19 'I believe that it is useful for me to watch movies about L2 courses presented in Urdu dubbing' (M=3.38 ,SD=1.343), Item No:12 'I believe that students' L1 should be allowed during English lessons' (M=3.37, SD=1.294), Item No:8 'I believe that the incorporation of L1 can therefore reduce my classroom shock.' (M=3.36, SD=1.168), Item No: 2O'I prefer my teacher to use mother tongue in tests, for example, in translating questions' (M=3.34, SD=1.317), Item No:16 'I prefer my teacher to train students to take notes in mother tongue about the subject that they will write about' (M=3.28, SD=1.331), Item No: 13 'I prefer my teacher to use mother tongue in correcting students' written work' (M=3.27, SD=1.330),Item No: 21 'I prefer my teacher to use mother tongue in dividing the class into groups' (M=3.23,SD=1.280), Item No:1 'I perceive that in order to learn English thoroughly, I must use only English in EFL classroom' (M=3.20, SD=1.394), Item No:17 'It is preferable for me when my teacher writes notes in mother tongue on the whiteboard while teaching, writing' (M=3.19 , SD=1.325), Item N0:14 'I prefer my teacher to use notes in mother tongue as comments on students' writings' (M=3.15, SD=1.290).

Table 7. Showing Learners' Age T-test in Relation to Age on Five Categories

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P
Perception	17-19	445	72.2444	11.69710		
	20-22	131	71.6541	12.50863	1.088	.297
Impact	17-19	445	44.2398	7.55661		
	20-22	131	44.7317	8.43643	.466	.495
Reasoning	17-19	445	37.7208	7.32736		
	20-22	131	38.0299	8.18038	.864	.353
Situation & Atmosphere	17-19	445	42.5891	8.26711		
	20-22	131	42.7064	8.61411	.004	.952
Contribution	17-19	445	46.5469	9.58447		
	20-22	131	46.6690	9.74333	.608	.436

*The mean difference is significant at the (0.05) level.

Table 7 demonstrates results of the T-test with relation to students' age category. The interaction of age with the sub-categories of the main scale category reveals statistically non-significant correlation of perception and belief of mother tongue use in L2 with F= 1.088 and P=.297, the impact of mother tongue use in L2 with F=.466 and P=.495, reasoning of mother tongue use in L2 with F=.864 and P=.353, situation and atmosphere of mother tongue use in L2 with F=.004 and P=.952 and the Contribution of mother tongue use in L2 with F=.608 and P=.436 which also showed non-significant relationship.

Discussions on the Findings

The answers to the research questions and the discussion on those answers are as under:

RQ 1: What are perceptions and views of undergraduate (13 to 14 years) students regarding the use of mother tongue in the L2 classroom at degree level?

According to the research findings of undergraduate (13 to 14 years) students' perceptions and beliefs regarding the use of mother tongue in L2 pedagogy, responses are in high and medium degree frequency. It means that the students want to use their mother tongue in their EFL classroom. Students' age categories are in two groups, one 17-19 years (undergraduate) and second 20-21 years (graduate). Findings of the current study indicated that undergraduate students have highly positive thoughts and feelings towards the use of mother tongue in the L2 classroom. The same kind of approach was proposed by Burden (2001) with respect to teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of the mother tongue. The findings of my study also resemble the study conducted by Schweers (1999) that showed that Arabic has a vital and facilitating role in learning English as a Foreign language. The findings of the present study revealed that the undergraduate learners perceived the use of mother tongue in English classroom as necessary because of their very limited background of English language and the low level of students because they cannot cope up with the compactness of the language they are exposed. This study also indicated that allowing undergraduate learners and students to use their mother tongue in L2 atmosphere also helps them to cultivate a positive attitude toward L2 learning, to become autonomous English language learners, to reduce their classroom shock, to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks and to discuss tests, quizzes, and other assignments appropriately.

RQ 2: Is there any effect of age variation of graduate (15 to 16 years) students on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 leaching?

According to the research findings of graduate students' age variation regarding the use of mother tongue in L2 pedagogy, responses are in low and medium degree frequency. It means that the graduate (15 to 16 years) students were not willing to use mother tongue/L1 in their EFL classroom. Students' age categories are in two groups, one 17-19 years (undergraduates) and second 20-21 years (graduates). Findings of the current study indicated that graduate students have highly positive thoughts and feelings towards the use of only English in L2 classroom as the results of the graduate students show that there was no significant interaction with all five sub-categories of the five main scales (perception and belief, impact, reasoning, situation and Contribution of mother tongue use in L2). The findings of the current study revealed that the graduate (15 to 16 years) learners perceived the use of mother tongue in English classroom is not necessary because of their proper background of English language and with this background knowledge of English they can cope up with the compactness of the language they are exposed. This study also indicated that allowing graduate students to use only English in L2 atmosphere also helps them to cultivate a positive attitude toward L2 learning, to become autonomous English language learners.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The findings and results of the current research offer and suggest two promising conclusions. Primarily, it becomes visible from the results that the undergraduate (13 to 14 years) students who participated in this study used too much and show highly positive perceptions toward the use of mother/L1 in the foreign language classroom, which is beneficial for the learners and their learning to some extent. Previously, it was assumed that the use of mother tongue may or may not be a facilitating tool or a language barrier. The maximum use of the foreign language should remain the main goal, and therefore, students should be aware of the superfluous use of the mother tongue only to facilitate their learning activities. Secondly, it also comes into view that it is so easy for the graduate (15 to 16 years) students to use only English as a useful learning technique to solve all difficult concept or situation, but as the main medium of instruction. This type of behavior in the L2 classroom might be proved, constructive students. So, it can be concluded from the above discussion that the target

language should remain the main language to be used in the foreign language classroom, however, with the limited and judicious use of mother tongue in some situations.

Contribution/Originality of the Study

Since this study attempted to reveal the effect of students' age variation and their perceptions on the responses about mother tongue use in L2 learning at Degree level in the Southern Punjab (Multan, Bahawalpur and DG Khan), its impact stanched from the following considerations:

- The current study is significant since it shows and determines whether learners are ready to accept and use their mother tongue in EFL classrooms.
- The current study would assist curriculum developers in designing appropriate syllabi to make EFL learning more beneficial in the Pakistani context.
- The use of mother tongue in L2 situation contributes to students' potential development of meaning.

Limitations of the Study and Research Gaps

- The present study was delimited to find out learners' perceptions toward the use of mother tongue language in learning English as a foreign at degree level. On the contrary, in forthcoming research on this subject can be instigated on school-going and MPhil and PhD L2 learners for outstanding views of the population.
- This study was conducted at the Government colleges/universities of the Southern Punjab (Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan and Bahawalpur Divisions). Opposing this, in future studies sub-campuses of the government sector universities, private universities, their sub-campuses, schools and colleges can also be amalgamated for a heightened understanding of the topic.

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