The Effects of Using Arabic (L1) in English Classes (L2) on Students' Performance in Exams at the University of Jordan

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the accumulative grades of adult native Arabic-speaking students in their mandatory, university-level, English classes. Using the quantitative descriptive method, the study aims at exploring the effect of using the students' L1 in their L2 classes on passing the course compared to using English (L2) exclusively. Also, it examines whether or not the use of L1 can help students achieve a higher grade-average in their exams which were provided by the English language specialists teaching these courses at the university. The study's findings would empower FL teachers to employ more effective approaches in their university-level L2 classes in order to help their students not only pass their foreign language classes, but also get better grades. The findings of this study were very revealing as they have indicated that contrary to the common belief that using the students' L1 in L2 classes will diminish the students' learning experience, the use of L1 could actually increase the students' grades especially in advanced levels. However, the research findings also reveal that students in beginner levels at the university benefited more from the exclusive use of L2 in their classes and has in fact helped them achieve higher grades.

Keywords: (L1), English (L2), FL classes, The University of Jordan, exams, performance.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In Jordan, students start studying English as a foreign language (L2) in first grade, yet most still struggle with it at the university level. The university-level EFL/ESL courses are simplified courses aimed at providing the students with the basic knowledge of English needed for their future studies in their various specialties. These university-level English courses merely reinforce the knowledge the students have already accumulated during school years. However, it still forms a challenge many of them fail to handle. Moreover, their passive attitude towards the language creates another huge obstacle as they hit a wall when it comes to learning an L2. This, in turn, stops them from practicing their L2 and hinders improvement. It also means that they struggle with answering exam questions in L2 as the pressure compounds.

A solution for these problems may have been introduced by Carless (2007), who noted that "in order to maintain students' attention, interest or involvement, contributions in the MT [mother tongue] needed to be permitted." Thus, if such an approach was appropriately used as a tool for boosting the students' confidence, decrease students' anxiety in L2 classes and exams, and increase their chances at not only passing their university's L2 courses, but also at achieving a higher grade-average on the letter-grade scale the university uses.

1.2. POSITIONALITY

The advocacy for the exclusive use of L2 in language classes is still the dominant approach in second language teaching. Following the dominant stream, the majority of language teaching approaches advocate the sole use of L2 as the main instructing medium in L2 classes and believe that the use of L1 in L2 classes, if accessible, should be kept to minimum (Turnbull, 2001). At the University of Jordan, this very teaching approach was implemented. The rationale behind choosing this teaching approach was based on the researcher's notion that using L2 solely, for instructing and negotiating, will subject the students to the L2 as much as possible which will ultimately force the students to use it to

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communicate during class time. Under the influence of researchers such as Koch who believed that the L1 in the classroom should be totally banned and is considered a 'last refuge for the incompetent' (Koch, 1947), the researcher upheld that meaning should be related through the target language directly, and that language rules could be deduced from examples and illustrations without using the L1 (Arabic) at all.

However, some language specialists adopt a different point of view on the use of L1 in L2 classes. For instance, Cummins (2007) suggests that the use of L1 in L2 classes has been viewed with less rigidity in the recent years. Arnaiz and Guill´en (2012) found that the level of anxiety the students experience was closely related to course grades and that female students were more anxious than male students during exams. On the other hand, there is new evidence suggesting that the L1 could provide a useful tool for learning the L2 and an excellent tool to lower the students' level of stress in certain instances (Cook, 2010; Park, 2013) including, the acquisition of new vocabulary in intentional lexical texts and contexts (Tian & Macaro, 2012). Thus, after lengthy deliberations with the university's language instructors on the different theories and practices, the researcher found it imperative to start thinking on a local level. If using the students' L1 in their L2 classes would be proven to be beneficial, even if only in lowering the students' level of anxiety during exam taking, it should be considered as a "last refuge" in the university's teaching strategies. After all, teaching locally is directed towards improving the students' grades in English in any way possible, be it adapting from different teaching approaches or using different "frowned upon" teaching techniques. That caused the researcher to develop the thesis for this study, in an attempt to explore whether or not the use of L1 is actually beneficial for L2 students.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to form a clear and objective view on the matter, a careful study of the nature and purpose of L2 classes at the University of Jordan was needed. The University of Jordan offers two different types of L2 mandatory classes: English 100 and English 99. These courses are pre-graduation requirements for all the students regardless of their field of study. Hence, they are taught under the umbrella of the Language Center at The University of Jordan and do not belong to a specific faculty. The number of students in each of our L2 classes is enormous and the particularities of a language class aren't observed at the slightest.

English 99 is an elementary course that addresses basic structures of English via the use of simple themes, and it is designed to provide the students with the basic skills and structures they will later need for their next mandatory L2 level, English 100. English 99 is a requirement for students who have either missed or failed their Efficiency English Test, which all students are required to take in their first year upon admission to the university. After the completion of English 99, students have to take one more L2 course called English 100. English 100 is designed to provide the students with enough language to help them with their future studies in their different faculties; therefore, it is significantly harder than English 99 and requires the students to have basic knowledge of English as well as a wide range of linguistic skills. The ones who pass their efficiency test in their Freshman-year are required to take only English 100 at any time during their four years of study at the university. These two courses are each three credit hours. English 99 is a pass/fail course, while English 100 is calculated in the students' GPA; i.e. their Grade Point Average. Thus, it is scale-based and uses the Letter Grading System. The passing grade for both courses is 45 out of a 100. During the semester, the students sit for two computerized exams; a Midterm for which the students are awarded 30 points of a 100, and a Final, which is credited 50 points. 20 points are assigned for class quizzes, participation, attendance, and an oral presentation in L2. The teacher is generally the one determining the distribution of those 20 points in his/her classes, even though the university has a general policy that teachers are advised to observe. The completely multiple-choice exams questions test the students' knowledge of the new material they study, as well as the linguistic skills necessary to be able to deduce and analyze aspects of the language. This, however, is not fully reflected in the university's teachers' lesson plans nor is it stressed by the administration. The university doesn't require its teachers, lecturers, and professors to use a specific or unified teaching strategy or lesson plan. Each teacher is responsible for choosing the teaching techniques that work best for his/her classes, or that suit his/her own teaching preferences. Moreover, students' differences and limitations, backgrounds, and mixed abilities are not a determining factor in grading them.

It was only logical then to pose the questions which this study attempts to answer. Would the use of L1 in L2 classes under the above-mentioned conditions increase the students' chances at passing the course, or would the sole use of L2 prepare them for the exam in a better way? What difference would either way of teaching make to their grades, and would it be reflected in the general average of the students' achievement? Additionally, can the teaching approach we use in our classes ensure better outcomes in the area that matters most to our students; i.e. their grade average?

3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In such courses as the ones used for this study, the students' previous knowledge is an important factor in determining their average which makes the findings in this particular type of class indecisive no matter how controlled the sample was. The function and purpose of using L1 in those types of classes pose another question. Was the L1 used for the right purposes and to the right extent in the classes selected for this study? In order for the findings of this study to be indisputable, a clear understanding of what the "right" purpose and what the "right" amount are for using L1 in L2 classes needs to be established. So, what are exactly the "right" functions and what is the "exact" extent for the use of L1 in order to achieve a higher grade-average? It is crucial that such questions are answered for the results to be scientifically proven. However, answers for such questions are still a matter of dispute in the academic circles. Thus, until researchers agree on a definite parameter by which the extent of use, functions, and appropriate levels for the use of L1 in L2 class are measured, this study, as well as other similar ones, will always have an inconclusive factor to them.

Other challenges this study faced relate to the fact that each university class has its own particularities. This made every class different no matter how hard the researcher tried to unify the sample. The questions the students sat for during their Midterm and Final exams are also varied due to the fact that they are generated randomly by the computer from a huge question bank which all the different teachers have contributed to and could not be unified even though they are all based on the same skills which could suggest that some students may have dealt with types of questions that are not only different, but are also ones they are completely unfamiliar with. Also, the number of students in each of the examined classes was slightly different which might not provide very accurate statistics. Additionally, the margin of difference between the students' "real" grades (i.e. grades the students have earned) and their "given" ones (i.e. the teachers' attempt at helping the students for various reasons such as favoritism or graduation purposes) could pose another limitation to this study. Moreover, no matter how meticulous both teachers were in distributing the in-class participation mark, some exceptions or compromises may have occurred which would also affect the findings of this study.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The debate regarding the use of L1 in L2 classes and its necessity, functions, and tolerability has been going on for decades. Krashen (2003) stated that the proficiency of second language learners is related directly to the teaching approach used in the classroom. However, the approach considered "the right one" is still a subject of heated discussion in the academic circles. New views and opinions are formulated continually in support of one argument or the other. Many researchers have set out trying to answer extremely controversial questions such as: Is the use of L1 in L2 classes beneficial? Should it be an option to use L1, and if yes, to what extent and to what purpose?

Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2005) suggest that all the Western language Pedagogy revolutions of the 20th century have not succeeded in changing the argument that the use of L1 should be avoided in FL classes. Cook (2009) stated that "From the end of the nineteenth century onwards almost all influential theoretical works on language teaching have assumed without argument that a new language (L2) should be taught without reference to the student's first language (L1)." Additionally, there is a general agreement among cognitive theorists that the greater part of a child's vocabulary is shaped through exposure to the target language rather than direct teaching (Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985; Nation & Coady, 1988; Sternberg, 1987). Some researchers such as Kayaoglu (2012) and Cagri (2013) believe that L1 doesn't play a role in L2 proficiency and, therefore, advocated teaching the L2 classes using solely the target L2 language as it offers more language exposure and hence would enhance and accelerate the learning process. Reinforcing that point of view, Tsui and Tollefson (2006) said that students learn the target language only through being fully immersed in it, which would only happen through "massive amounts of exposure to L2 with limited time spent using L1."

These theories are all based on the 'L1 = L2 acquisition hypothesis' which suggests that the mechanisms of learning an L2 are similar to those used in the learning, or rather the acquiring, of L1 (Dulay & Burt, 1974). The hypothesis' supporters argue that L2 learning for adults should, and in fact does, occur in the same way that a child's L1 learning occurs. That is to say that L2 is ''largely acquired rather than consciously learned, from message oriented experience of its use'' (Mitchell, 1988, as cited in F. Chambers, 1991). Atkinson (1993) explains that the belief that only the L2 should be used in L2 classrooms is originated from the belief that acquisition is better than learning. Thus, most of the literature dealing with language teaching and learning until today is based on the DM (Direct Method) which calls for a complete prevention of the L1 in the L2 classrooms and in which the exclusive use of the L2 is regarded as optimum (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Valdés, 1998). In fact, various renowned approaches to FL teaching suggest that using the L1 may even be harmful to the acquisition process; for example, Hadley (2001), Lee and VanPatten (2003), and Shrum and Glisan (1994). Moreover, FL teachers' success is measured according to these approaches by their ability to conduct the whole class using only the target language (Koike & Liskin-Gasparro, 1999; Vald´es, 1998).

However, studies have not yet been able to establish a clear relationship between the exclusion of the L1 and enhanced L2 learning (Macaro, 2001). What is certain, however, is that many researchers such as Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, and Daley (2003), and Young (1999) were able to prove through their studies that students' level of L2 anxiety has a clear, definite negative impact on retention in L2. Their studies showed that students who exhibit higher levels of anxiety show lower performance and achievement levels in L2. It is clear, thus, that the interest in academic circles has evolved from supporting the use of the L1 to enhance the learning and teaching of the L2 to an interest in studying the effect of using the L1 on maximizing learning in L2 (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Butzkamm, 2003). Some researchers have called for finding a balance between the use of L1 and the teaching of L2 (Demir, 2012). For instance, Chavez's (2002) study showed that students found classroom speech that included both the L1 and the L2 to achieve learning goals much preferable to that which only uses L2. In fact, the use of the L1 can function as a 'psychological tool' (Cook, 2001; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003) that can provide the learners with the cognitive support they need in order to prevent cognitive overload that might occur during completing tasks in L2. Therefore, such an approach would supposedly help in reducing the students' L2 anxiety level which will ultimately improve their L2 performance and achievement levels (Levine, 2003).

Not only would the use of L1 in class help increase the students' achievement in L2 through reducing their anxiety levels as indicated from the above studies, but also it might have important functions in the classroom. Grim (2010) examined the most common functions for which teachers of L2 use L1. He found that teachers generally used L1 for metalinguistic explanation, class management, discipline, empathy, and giving instruction for the various tasks their L2 class requires. His study attested that these strategies have an important influence on the students' level of L2 comprehension and proficiency. The study by Storch and Wigglesworth (2003), for example, stated that the students reported that when they used their shared L1s, it was useful for task management and clarification, determining meaning and vocabulary, and explaining grammar. Therefore, modern studies suggest that the use of the L1 in L2 classes may actually be a useful tool for learning the L2 in particular situations, Furthermore, it could be used to fulfill specific functions that will ultimately facilitate L2 acquisition (Ant´on & DiCamilla, 1998; Artemeva, 1995; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Cook, 2010; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Park, 2013; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

In an interesting argument that Cook (2002) presented, she claimed that the L1 and the L2 (and the L3, etc.) are all related. She based her argument on the belief that both languages exist in the learner collaboratively. She suggests that the L2 learner is a multicompetent language user who actively works to connect new concepts to preexisting knowledge (Cook, 1999, 2001) rather than being a passive receiver of language. In a similar study conducted by Bruen and Kelly (2014), they proved that the language learner is a multicompetent, plurilingual individual who is capable of using a combination of his or her language(s) in a positive way to influence their language learning. It becomes clear then that the learner's L1 has a significant effect on the acquisition of the L2 as skills, concepts, and ideas learned in L1 can be transferred to the other language(s) which provides for better chances for language learning success (Cummins, 1983, 2000). Therefore, more and more research is advocating the use of the L1 in classrooms stating that it plays a crucial role

in the regulation of thinking and in the enabling of learners to acquire new knowledge (Brooks & Donato, 1994). From here, and although much of the discussion around the use and purpose of L1 in the language classroom remains theoretical, a complete avoidance of the L1 seems to contradict the reality of classroom practice. Macaro (2005) noted that all of the studies he had examined indicate that the majority of teachers are actually opposed to the complete exclusion of L1 in their classes. Some researchers such as Paradis (2010) had gone as far as to argue that children, in particular, cannot achieve L2 proficiency without the use of their L1. Additionally, Levine (2003) stated that rejecting the role of L1 is a waste of time as it is inevitable. Brooks and Donato (1994) believe that L1 use "is a normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production and allows the learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one another." Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) contend that the use of the L1 can help in sustaining the interest of learners in L2 tasks, including the most complex ones, and facilitate their accomplishment. Thus, using L1 becomes an unavoidable process that students will pass through in language learning, in spite of teachers' efforts to prevent them (Harbord, 1992).

Finally, Copland and Neokleous (2011) suggest that a teacher's language choice in class is complex and is determined by two factors: cognitive and affective. In their study, Copland and Neokleous stated that teachers involved in the study considered the use of translation in class to be unbeneficial at all. They, however, maintain that the power of translation in the learning process is being improperly judged by these teachers because they have completely neglected the affective factor in using L1 and were instead more inclined to use L1 for cognitive purposes - turning input into intake - which undermines the true value of using translation in class. Noor H. (2007) conducted a study examining the effect of the use of L1 on L2 writing assignments. The study yielded that the use of L1 leads to a better performance in the students' writings in L2. When students first write in their L1 then translate their writing into L2, the content of the composition itself is also improved. Gass (1997) and Schmidt (1990) both stressed that although L2 input is absolutely necessary, it is not however the only condition for intake to occur. They suggest that, in some cases, converting input into intake requires other intervening factors that may relate directly to the learner's cognitive or affective prerequisites. Gass (1988) observed that what is most important for L2 learners is not the comprehensibility of the input which is 'controlled by the person providing the input', but rather whether or not this input is comprehended by them. That's probably why Scott and de la Fuente (2008) and Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) all argue that allowing the students to use their L1 during group work makes the completion of more complex tasks easier and more possible for them. It also increases their ability to produce the final outcome using the L2 (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Additionally, tiresome and time-consuming tasks such as the explanation of complex grammatical forms and structure, the negotiation of a task completion, or even giving instructions, would all be made a lot easier if done in L1. Thus, the use of L1 for such functions will save time which will provide a more satisfactory class experience not to mention the affective factor represented in lowering the level of stress and anxiety students usually experience in L2 classes which makes the learning process more effective (Copland & Neokleous, 2011). Nonetheless, the study conducted by Rabab'ah and Al-Yasin (2017) suggests that the necessity for code switching between the students' L1 and L2 in class mainly depends on the students' level. Their study shows that when the class level is advanced, code switching appears on a much lesser degree than it does in lower levels. But, would this "switching" affect the students' performance on L2 exams?

5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

For the purpose of this research, the final total grades of students in both types of classes were analyzed to see if using a mixed approach in teaching that combines L1 and L2 creates any difference in the students' passing percentage and in their cumulative average than teaching exclusively in L2. To achieve readings that were as objective as possible, the research used a sample that is both relevant and as controlled as possible. Six English 100 classes and six English 99 classes were chosen as a sample for this study. Three classes of each level were taught by one teacher using a mix of L1 and L2. The other three classes of each level were taught by a different teacher exclusively in L2 where English was used exclusively with the students in and outside class. The sample studied consists of 261 participants in English 99 and 271 participants in English 100 bringing the total number of participants in the study to 532 students.

Since the sample used in this study consists of university students who study different majors, have different linguistic

abilities, and share no common grounds other than their need to pass the course, the researcher tried to minimize the margin of difference created by this wide variety of students as much as possible in the selection of the classes for the study. The researcher also wanted to eliminate other external factors, such as the teacher's involvement, as much as possible. Thus, all the classes involved in the study were made sure to be similar as much as possible. Therefore, the chosen classes for the sample were taught at around the same time of day, at the same faculties, and under the same conditions be it location, number of students in each class, or season. Also, those sections were chosen because their students study similar specializations which means they would, more or less, have similar linguistic abilities.

In the classes where only L2 was used, the Direct Method (DM) was utilized which advocates approaching language learning through the target language (L2). It does so in a way similar to the way in which a first language is acquired (Krashen, 1985, 1988). The other classes where both L1 and L2 were used followed the Grammar-Translation (GT) method which approached language learning through the language learners' mother tongue (L1) (Krashen, 1985, 1988). Both teachers agreed to use similar scales for the distribution of the in-class participation mark. They had a very close teaching style and often shared material preparation for classes. Moreover, they shared the same work ethics and values which ensured keeping their involvement in the grade distribution minimal, controlled, and objective throughout the study. Once the 20 points were added to the grading system, the teachers' role in the study ended and an analytical and a statistical analysis of the students' grades started.

6. PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study are university students who range from first-year freshmen to fourth-year seniors of different majors, faculties, interests, and backgrounds. The age group of the participants in this study ranges between 19 and 24. They all take English as a compulsory-requirement-for-graduation course. They all speak Arabic as their first language. Moreover, they all have had 13 years of exposure to English during their school years since, in Jordan, schools start teaching English in first grade. The majority of these students were taught English (L2) in their L1 (Arabic) in their various schools, as it seems to be the norm of teaching English in Jordan's public schools. A few went to private schools in which English was taught using a mixture of L1 and L2; however, the percentage of usage of each language differs depending on the particular policy for each school system. Most of the students have admitted being phobic of English and have had negative experiences with English at school. When asked about their preference, the students indicated that they prefer studying L2 using L1 as much as possible.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this study, the cumulative grades of the students in the three sections of English 100 and the three sections of English 99 where English was exclusively used were compared with the grades of the students in their counterpart six sections where a mixture of Arabic and English was used. The comparison revealed interesting data about the two types of classes. In the lower level classes, English 99, the grade average percentage seems to be better in the classes where only English was used as opposed to the classes where both L1 and L2 were used simultaneously. On the other hand, the English 100 students' grades were better in the mixed classes than that of their counterpart in the L2 only classes. This suggests that at the beginner's levels of L2, students would actually get better grades if only L2 was used than they would in the case of using a mixture of L1 and L2. These findings would, therefore, refute the theories claiming that the use of L1 in L2 classes is necessary in early levels. Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain (2009), for example, suggested that the use of the L1 has cognitive benefits in learning contexts particularly where the learners' L2 is limited; i.e.at beginner's levels. Consider the following tables and their related figures:

Table 1a. The percentage of students passing/failing in English 99 classes taught in L2

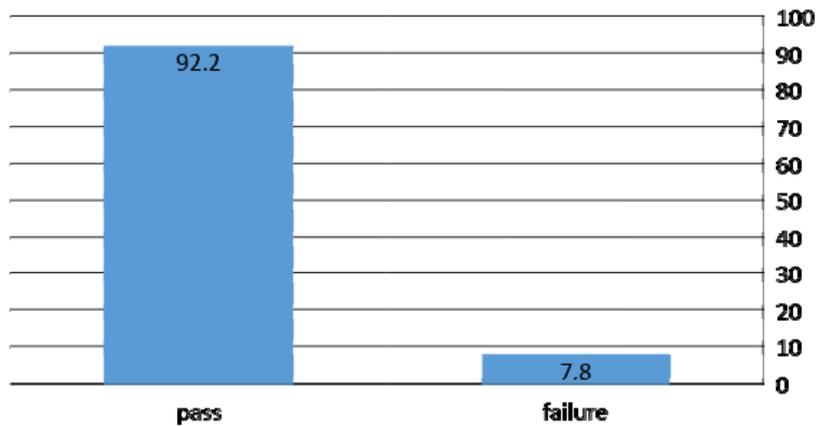|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Failure	10	7.8
Pass	119	92.2
Total	129	100.0

Figure 1: This figure represents the percentage of the passed and failed students in the English 99 classes where only English (L2) was used.

Table 1b. The percentage of students passing/failing in English 99 classes taught in L1 and L2

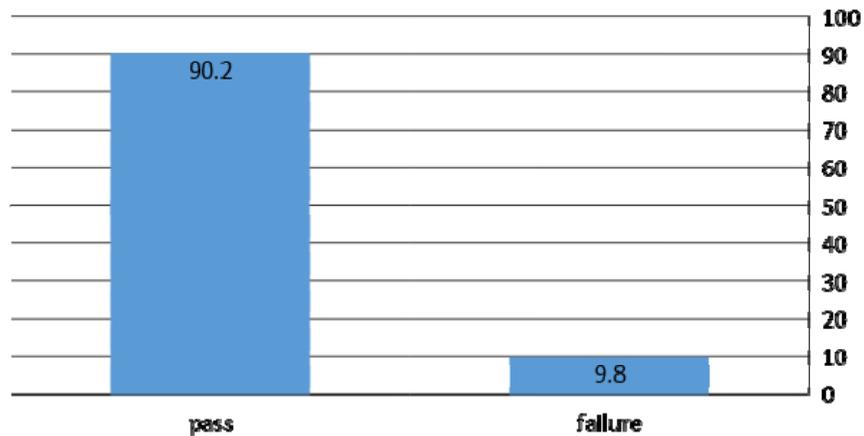|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Failure	13	9.8
Pass	119	90.2
Total	132	100.0

Figure 2: This figure represents the percentage of the students who passed and failed in the English 99 classes in which a mixture of English (L2) and Arabic (L1) was used.

Tables 1a and 1b show that 92.2% of the students in the classes where L2 was used exclusively passed the course compared to only 90.2% in the classes where L1 and L2 were used simultaneously. This 2% difference may not be large, but it becomes more significant when the grades are further analyzed as shown in tables 2a and 2b below. These tables show the percentage difference between the classes where L2 was exclusively used and those where both L1 and L2 were used. These two tables show the percentage of students' grades in four main categories:

● Below Average students who failed the course by getting either F or D- scoring an accumulative grade average between 0 – 44.

- Average students whose letter grades were between D & C+ and whose cumulative grade average in the course ranges between 45 – 63.
- Above Average students who scored a grade average between 64 – 78 and who are distributed over B- & B+ levels on the letter scale.
- Distinction students who got either A- or A and scored 79 or more in their L2 classes.

Consider the following tables and their related figures:

Table 2a. The percentage of students' grade achievement in English 99 classes taught in L2

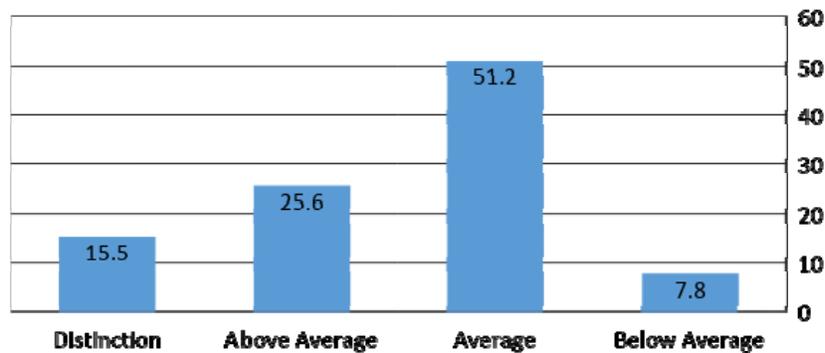|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Below Average	10	7.8
Average	66	51.2
Above Average	33	25.6
Distinction	20	15.5
Total	129	100.0

Figure 3: This figure represents the percentage of the students' grades in the English 99 classes in which only English (L2) was used divided based on achievement into four categories: below Average (F & D-), average (D, D+, C-, C, and C+), above Average (B-, B, and B+), and distinction (A- & A).

Table 2b. The percentage of students' grade achievement in English 99 classes taught in L1 and L2

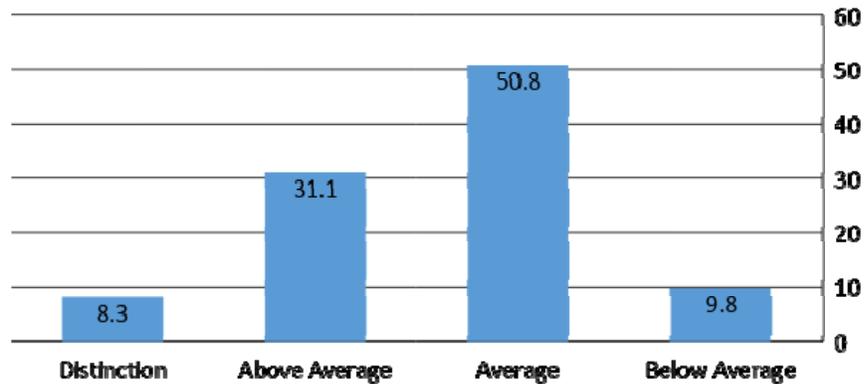|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Below Average	13	9.8
Average	67	50.8
Above Average	41	31.1
Distinction	11	8.3
Total	132	100.0

Figure 4: This figure shows the percentage of the students' grades in the English 99 classes in which a mixture of English (L2) and Arabic (L1) was used divided based on achievement into the four categories.

Tables 2a and 2b show the difference in achievement between the two types of classes. As apparent from these tables, 7.8% of the students in the English 99 classes where only the L2 was used failed the course and scored 44 or less in their overall cumulative grade average compared to a 9.8% in the mixed class where both L1 and L2 were used. The percentage of the students who scored between 45 and 63 in their cumulative grade, rendering them as the Average students were 51.2% of the classes where L2 was exclusively used, compared to the percentage of 50.8% in the mixed class. The percentage of students who scored between 64 and 78 rating Above Average is 25% in the English only classes and 31.1% in the mixed classes while the percentage of those who got 79 or more rating Distinction is 15.5% in the English only classes. This is 7.2% higher than the one scored in the mixed classes with a percentage of only 8.3%.

Table 3a. The percentage of students passing/failing in English 100 classes taught in L2

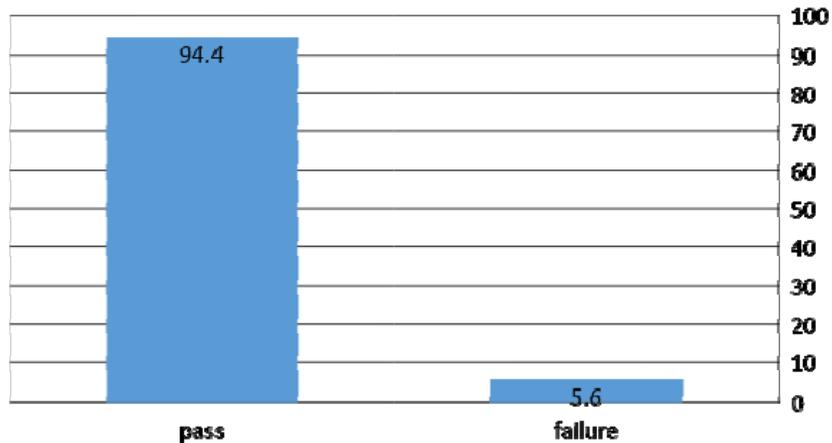|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Failure	7	5.6
Pass	118	94.4
Total	125	100.0

Figure 5: This figure represents the percentage of the passed and failed students in the English 100 classes where only English (L2) was used.

Table 3b. The percentage of students passing/failing in English 100 classes taught in L1 and L2

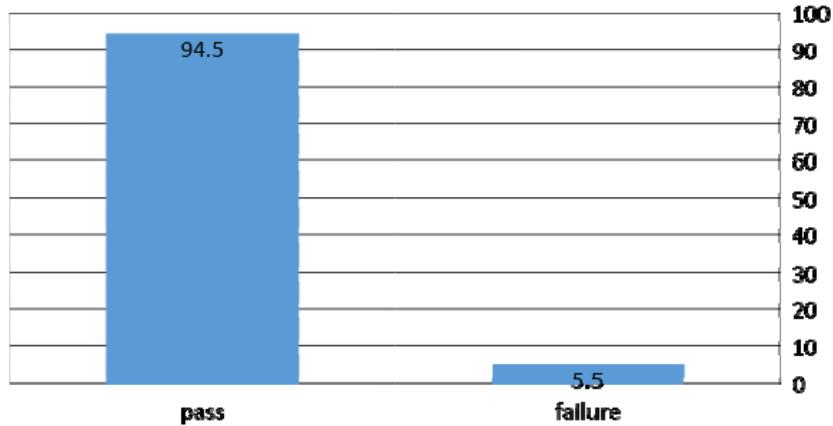|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Failure	8	5.5
Pass	138	94.5
Total	146	100.0

Figure 6: This figure represents the percentage of the passed and failed students in the English 100 classes in which a mixture of English (L2) and Arabic (L1) was used.

As mentioned before, English 100 is a more advanced course that builds mostly on the students' previous knowledge of the language, and its exams and tests are more than just the linguistic proficiency of its students. Therefore, these exams are harder than the ones for English 99, and the distribution of the points becomes more significant.

Tables 3a and 3b and their related figures show that 94.4% of the students in the class where L2 was used exclusively passed the course compared to 94.5% in the classes where L1 and L2 were used. This might indicate that in higher levels of the language, the use of L1 may not have any effect at all on the percentage of students passing the course, which is contrary to the findings of the beginner levels discussed above. Additionally, tables 4a and 4b below show the percentage of students' performance distributed in four main categories: Below Average students who got either F or D- scoring an accumulative grade average between 0 – 44, Average students whose letter grades were between D & C+ and whose cumulative grade average in the course range between 45 – 63, Above Average students who scored a grade average between 64 and 78 and who scored between B- & B+ on the letter scale, and finally Distinction students who scored over 78 and got A- or A. Consider the following tables and their related figures:

Table 4a. The percentage of students' grade achievement in English 100 classes taught in L2

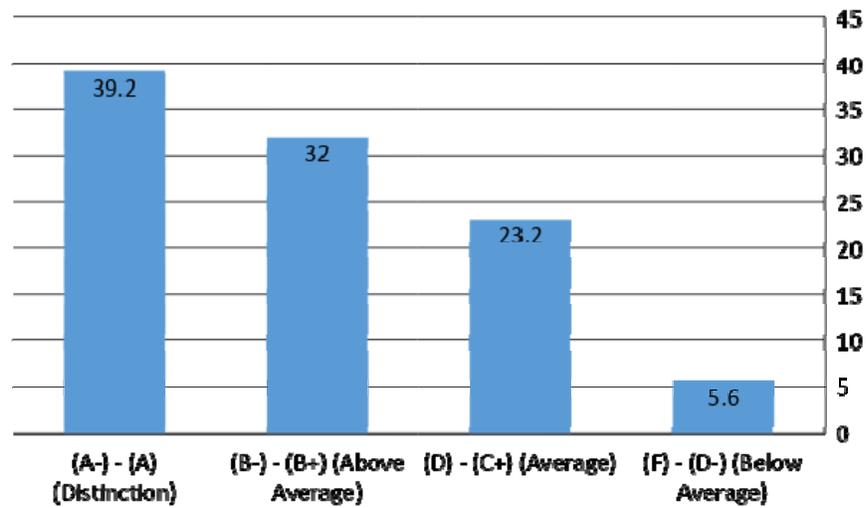|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Below Average	7	5.6
Average	29	23.2
Above Average	40	32.0
Distinction	49	39.2
Total	125	100.0

Figure7: This figure shows the distribution of the students' grades in the English 100 classes in which only English (L2) is used.

Table 4b. The percentage of students' grade achievement in English 100 classes taught in L1 and L2

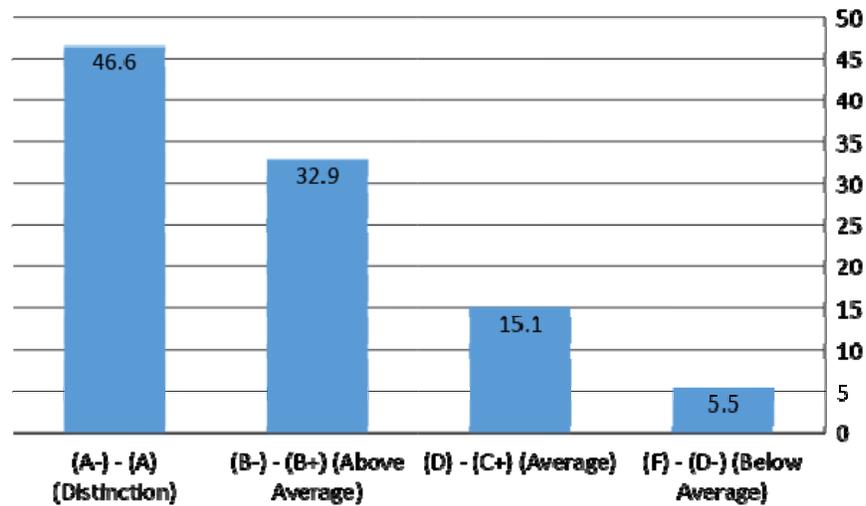|	Frequency	Valid Percent
Below Average	8	5.5
Average	22	15.1
Above Average	48	32.9
Distinction	68	46.6
Total	146	100.0

Figure 8: This figure shows the distribution of the students' grades in the English 100 classes in which a mixture of English (L2) and Arabic (L1) was used.

As the above tables and their related figures indicate, the Below Average and Above Average percentages aren't very

significant as the difference in percentage in both types of classes is only 0.1% and 0.9% respectively in favor of the mixed classes. However, there is a large difference in the grades at the Average and Distinction levels between the two types of classes. As shown, the Average level percentage in the classes where only L2 was used is higher by 8.1% than that in which a mix of L1 and L2 was used. This difference was compensated, however, in the Distinction level where the mixed classes got a percentage of 46.6% compared to 39.2% in English only classes making the difference between the two types of classes a 7.4% in favor of the mixed classes. This could indicate that although using L2 exclusively in a higher level L2 class could increase the percentage of students passing the course, the use of an L1/ L2 mixture, however, would help students achieve higher grades. (For a more detailed view of the students' grade distribution, see tables 5a and 5b in appendices A and B).

8.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was initiated with the hope that the results would help support students in passing their mandatory English classes at the University of Jordan. The purpose was very simple: having students pass their L2 exams and getting a higher average. However, the study uncovered much more. It provided an understanding on how language works in the minds of the students in these contexts and on what works best in language classes in order to facilitate achievement on exams.

8.1. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the figures presented in this study, we note that there is a difference, though slight, in the achievement of students in both types of classes. To sum up the findings in the English 99 (beginner) classes, the study indicated that the number of students who failed in the classes where only English was used was 2% less than that in the mixed classes where L1 was employed. This is interesting as the entire study was conducted to see if using L1 would, in fact, improve the students' passing percentage in their L2 classes. Moreover, when it comes to their Average (the standard measure for achievement), the difference in percentage between the two types of English 99 classes is another 2% in favor of the English only classes. The main differences, however, appear to be in the Above Average and Distinction levels. The percentage difference in those levels is noteworthy. In the classes where only English was used, the Above Average level was 5.5% less than that of the ones where both English and Arabic were used; however, it was 7.2% higher in the Distinction level. This indicates that using L2 only in beginning L2 levels would not only help more students pass the level and achieve the average grade, but more interestingly, it would help improve their achievement and enable them get better grades than their counterparts in the other classes that used L1.

However, the figures in the English 100 part of the study present a different point of view. As noted above, there's a 0.1% difference in the passing percentage in favor of the classes where both L1 and L2 are used. This difference at face value might indicate that neither the use of L1 nor the exclusive use of L2 in L2 classes in advanced levels could actually benefit students or raise their average. However, when the grades were further analyzed in tables 4a and 4b which show the percentage distribution in each type of the classes, we notice that although there isn't any significant difference in the passing percentage, the exclusive use of L2 helped more students achieve the average level grade than the use of L1 did. The percentage of the students achieving the average grade in L2 only classes were 8.1% higher than their counterparts in the mixed classes where L1 and L2 were used together. However, the study indicated that the percentage of students achieving the Above Average and Distinction grade levels was higher in mixed classes than in their counterpart English-only classes. This could suggest that the use of L1 in L2 classes, though it might not help students pass the course, might actually help those students who already have a good knowledge or level of English achieve better. Thus, it seems that if we want our students in the advanced levels to achieve higher grades, L1 should be permitted in the class. On the other hand, the findings of the study show that in order for students to achieve a higher average in the beginner's levels, only L2 should be used.

Since the main purpose for this study was to determine if using L1 in the L2 class will help more students pass the course, the most important category in this study becomes the Average level group. This category represents the normal, or average, student's achievement and improvement making the most important percentage in the findings the one between D and C+. The percentage of this particular category is in favor of the classes where only L2 was used in both levels. In both

levels, the study shows that a higher percentage of students passed the course in the classes where only L2 was used compared to the classes where both L1 and L2 were used.

8.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the obvious limitations of this study, the findings of this paper are still an important contribution to the field. It is vital, however, to keep in mind that more research on the use of L1 in L2 classes at the University of Jordan and its effect on the students' performance in exams is still needed in order to help both teachers and students achieve their ultimate potential in their L2 classes. The University of Jordan has its own particular status, rules, and an exclusive variety of students which means that future studies should find ways to reach a more generalized outcome with a more diverse sample. Nonetheless, with some modifications to accommodate for the particularities of and differences in each language class, these findings could be applied on a variety of FL classes taught at the University of Jordan, and perhaps at other universities, to maximize the students' language learning experience at the university level. Therefore, the findings of this study could be useful to other L2 classes taught at the university whether it is a general university course that is considered a prerequisite for all students, or a course taught as part of the Foreign Languages Faculty syllabus for students majoring in various foreign languages.

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تأثير استخدام اللغة العربية في محاضرات اللغة الانجليزية على نتائج الطلاب في الامتحانات في الجامعة الاردنية

*سامية أبو الحج**

ملخص

يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة علامات الطلاب التراكمية من الناطقين باللغة العربية كلغة أم في مادة اللغة الانجليزية كمتطلب جامعة اجباري. تهدف الدراسة الى استكشاف اثر استخدام اللغة الام داخل الصف على نسبة نجاح الطلاب في المادة مقارنة مع الصفوف التي تُستخدم اللغة الانجليزية حصريا فيها وذلك باستخدام اسلوب القياس الوصفي كمنهج للبحث. كما تقوم الدراسة بمقارنة العلامات بين العينتين للوصول لما يُثبت ان كان استخدام اللغة الام يساعد الطلبة على الحصول على معدل اعلى في المادة. تقوم مخرجات هذا البحث بتمكين اساتذة اللغات الاجنبية عموما من استخدام طرق ووسائل اكثر فاعلية في صفوفهم على المستوى الجامعي لمساعدة طلابهم على النجاح والحصول على معدل اعلى. ولقد اثبتت مخرجات الدراسة ان استخدام اللغة الام في صفوف اللغة الاجنبية – وعلى عكس الاعتقاد السائد بان ذلك يقوض من عملية تعلم الطالب – قد كان له اثر ايجابي في رفع علامات الطلاب ونسبة نجاحهم وخصوصا في صفوف المستويات المتقدمة في اللغة. كما اثبتت الدراسة ان المستويات الابتدائية قد استفادت بدرجة اكبر من استعمال اللغة الاجنبية بشكل حصري.

الكلمات الدالة:. اللغة الانجليزية،الصف، الامتحانات، الأداء.

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