

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Using L1 in the ESP Classroom: a Case of Medical English at an Applied Medical College in Saudi Arabia

Mohammad Qasim AlTarawneh^{1*} & Eyad Ahmad AlMithqal²

¹ESP instructor, AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, KSA

²ESP instructor, AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, KSA

Corresponding Author: Mohammad AlTarawneh, E-mail: mohdqasim1982@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: April 04, 2019

Accepted: May 25, 2019

Published: May 31, 2019

Volume: 2

Issue: 3

DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2019.2.3.4

KEYWORDS

Learners' and teachers' perceptions, use of L1, Learning English for Specific Purposes ESP, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of using first language (Arabic) in the ESP classroom from the viewpoints of both students and teachers of the Preparatory Year Department at an applied medical college in Saudi Arabia. It also intended to find out if there were significant differences in perceptions according to variables like gender and college level. Surveying 92 students and 10 teachers through a questionnaire and interviews, the results revealed that instructors' and students' viewpoints of L1 use in their medical-English classes were considerably negative. No statistical differences in the students' perceptions were noted according to college level; however, there were slight differences due to gender variable; females were more to disagree with more L1 use in the classroom. Despite their negative views, instructors stated differences between students due to both gender and college level, believing that males and Level 1 students need more L1 while teaching medical English than females and Level 2 students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on second language acquisition (SLA) has always regarded the use of the first language (L1) as a helpful tool or as an obstacle to learning a second language (L2). This has created an overarching debate over using/ not using L1 into L2 classroom and the extent to which L1 could motivate or hinder L2 learning; more specifically in contexts where English is taught and learned as a foreign (EFL) or a second language (ESL).

Consideration of the L1 into the L2 classroom has originated in SLA acquisition research since the advent of Grammar Translation Approach (GTA) as a predominant language teaching/learning methodology in the late 1950s. At that time, the method was at its heydays being positively considered as an effective tool to learn a second language; more specifically, classical languages such as Greek and Latin (Chastain, 1988). According to this approach, translation and memorization of the rules and grammatical structures help learners to understand the target language easily. Several advocates of GTA method (Ellis, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Kraemer, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Popovic, 2002; Nation, 2003; among others) claimed that the surface

structure of L1 has a strong influence on the structure of L2 and that the mother tongue is efficiently used as the medium of instruction and communication. Yet, in the late nineteenth century, the dominance of translation in the ESL classroom began to be overlooked when views of using only English in the ELT classroom (i.e., the direct method) were spreading like wildfire. Since then, the use of L1 in L2 classrooms started to be rejected by both teachers and students (Larsen-Freeman 2012). In England; for example, using the natural use of the target language for communication turned out to be "a sign of a good modern language course" (Department of Education and Science ([DES], 1990, p.58). Moreover, fluency was regarded as the main goal of teaching/ learning a foreign language, to the extent that in Japan; for example, most of the teaching processes were carried out in English as a way to help learners become fluent users (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT], 2003).

In nutshell, the supporting views of using only English in the L2 classroom are based on the idea that L1 would limit exposure to the target language and impede learners from using it. Therefore, a foreign language can be appropriately learned when it is used

for natural communication, or when it is communicatively instructed in the ESL/EFL classroom.

An example of such EFL contexts would be Saudi Arabia where English is taught and learned as a foreign language and where students start learning the language in Grade 5 at school, the last year of the primary level (Al-Nofaie, 2010). Following this, students do not seem to have adequate exposure to the target language. School students are exposed to approximately 4 sessions per week, and each is of 45-60 minutes' long. At university or college level; however, the exposure to the language may be longer as there are more class sessions and students may have more contact to instructors who are either English native-speakers or bilinguals from other countries (AlMoayidi, 2018; AlNofaie, 2010; AlShehri, 2017). Such exposure to the English language at both school and college levels may be rather limited when the students' mother tongue (i.e. Arabic) is used in the EFL classroom. Despite such limited exposure, using L1 in the L2 classroom has always been an issue of hot debate as researchers and scholars; more specifically those in the EFL contexts, are still either advocating or opposing its use in the L2 classroom, discussing at the same its positive or negative effects on the EFL teaching and learning process.

A great deal of this research addressed the importance, effects and perceptions of using L1 (Arabic) in the general-English classroom and at both school and college or university levels (AlAmir, 2017; AlHarbi, 2017; AlMoayidi, 2018; AlNofaie, 2010; AlShammari, 2011; AlShehri, 2017). However, in English-specific-purpose classrooms, (henceforth, ESP), one could hardly find studies investigating perceptions of L1 use in the ESP classroom or addressing any possible differences in the stakeholders' views which could be attributed to some contextual variables such as gender, college/university level, etc. Such research, when found, would contribute to the literature on the effects of mother tongue in restricted academic and professional settings in the world, in general, and in Saudi Arabia, in particular. It is to this end, the current study seeks to investigate the perceptions of teachers and students of using L1 (Arabic) in English-for-medical-purposes (henceforth, EMP) classrooms at an applied medical college called GC (for anonymity) in Saudi Arabia. It is suggested that the findings of such research would contribute to exploring stakeholders' general perceptions which

could be of benefit to improving students' language development in ESP contexts and improving teachers' professional activity in Saudi Arabia or worldwide.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

SLA research declared that learner's mother tongue plays an important role in the L2 learning process. The concept of inter-language and language transfer theory (Selinker, 1972; Ellis, 2008; Cook, 2001) clearly addressed the influence of the use of L1 on L2 learning. Such research findings present strong support and academic evidence in favor or disfavor of its use (Afzal, 2013; Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Ellis, 2008; Harmer, 2007; Jenkins, 2005; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Krashen, 1982; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Tang, 2002; among others).

Many scholars advocated using L1 and supported its positive impact on the learning of L2. For example, Ellis (2008) argued that learners have a tendency to construct their interim rules by using their mother-tongue knowledge in the target language learning process. He also noticed that learners believe in L1 and then translate ideas to the target language. Krashen (1982) also acknowledged the strong influence of the surface structure of the L1 on the surface structure of L2.

A good deal of the advocating research revealed that second language learners generally access their L1 while processing the L2 (Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 1992). Studies by Afzal (2013), Jenkins (2005) and Khati (2011); for instance, investigated the perceptions of the teachers who noticed a positive improvement on students' learning of ESL as a result of using their mother-tongue in the L2 classroom. Moreover, Kang (2013) argued that teachers with low English proficiency depended highly on the use of L1 more than on L2, whereas teachers with high English proficiency level did the opposite as they used only the target language inside the classroom. Kayaoğlu (2012) pointed out that 91% of participants agreed that the use of the Turkish language in English classes is useful and beneficial, while 68% stated that Turkish should be utilized in classes under some conditions like going over the topic, giving clear instructions and explaining grammar rules to students.

Brooks-Lewis (2009) investigated students' perceptions of L1 use and found that students positively viewed L1 as something beneficial and necessarily needed. According to the findings, using

L1 was seen to minimize anxiety among students and give them the chance to bring their life experiences to the classroom. Furthermore, Butzkamm's (2003) study revealed that L1 use is inevitable and important and that without it, there would not be any comprehension as learning new meanings is linked with L1. Bonyadi's (2003) findings drew a similar conclusion by ascertaining that it is unavoidable for language learners to use their mother tongue as a resource which enables them to relate lexis and structures of L2 into their L1. The results also indicated that L1-L2 translation helps students to improve their reading comprehension skill as it is a conscious development of learning.

Harmer (2007) pointed out that students speak their mother tongue in the classroom if they are linguistically unable to understand some vocabulary terms for a specific task. To him, translation is considered as a natural thing in the language learning process, and code-switching from language to another is a natural development in learning practice. According to Rodrigues and Oxbrow (2008), students admitted using their L1 as a way which helps them to improve their L2. Many students in their study stated that they highly preferred their teachers to use L1 in explaining grammar rules, giving instructions, and clarifying the differences and similarities between the mother tongue and target language. A more complete investigation carried out by Latsanyphone and Bouangeune (2009) found that students who got instructions in their L1 demonstrated a high improvement in English than the second group who obtained instructions in the target language.

According to Atkinson (as cited in Mee-Sing, 1996), the function of the mother tongue in L2 classrooms has long been neglected and denounced. He believes that its potential as a classroom resource is great and its role should merit considerable attention in TESOL. Nation (2003) also made reference to this by claiming that L1 provides a familiar and effective way of quickly getting to grips with the meaning and content of what needs to be used in the L2. Furthermore, Kraemer (2006) points out that using students' first language might ensure their comprehension of foreign language input despite several contradicting theoretical views. Finally, the role of L1 in terms of translation in EFL classrooms was addressed in the literature as scholars contended that translation can be used as an effective element to enhance language learning (Bowen & Marks, 1994; Ellis, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Widdowson, 1978; Ur, 1996). As positive attitudes towards translation have

been formulated (Popovic, 2002), translation has been described as a "legitimate pedagogical tool especially in an EFL environment, and claim that it deserves to be rehabilitated" (Widdowson, 1978:18).

On the other hand, there have been many opposing views towards using L1 in the learning and teaching of L2. Depending on these views, it was constantly held that L1 should be kept away from being used in EFL classrooms because it will reduce the linguistic input made available to students and affect classroom interaction, a matter that is considered to be as avoidable as possible (Campa & Nassaji, 2009). According to Willis (as cited in Dash, 2002), students must practice the target language during the course if they really want to be able to use it at the course end. Eldridge (1996) supports this view in EFL contexts as he claimed that English language teachers in monolingual environments have been very much interested in reducing and abolishing the L1 use in the L2 classroom so as to maximize the amount of time spent using the target language and improve learning efficiency. Researchers and teachers have also been concerned with minimizing code-switching in the L2 classroom, clearly because switching could indicate either a failure to learn the target language or an unwillingness to do so.

Numerous researchers insisted on using only L2 as they did not succeed in finding any fruitful and valuable potential in using the L1. The findings of such opposing research revealed that the overuse of L1 decreased learners' exposure to the target language input (Krashen & Terrel, 1983; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). In short, the views opposing the L1 use largely depend on the claim that not all research studies addressed a greater influence of the inter-language and bilingual approach on students' knowledge and that L1 could be excluded from the pedagogy of L2.

Studies taking contextual variables, e.g., gender, university level, etc. when investigating the perceptions of L1 use have addressed differences in views between participants. Concerning gender; for example, Adamu's (2002) findings showed that females had higher positive attitudes towards using L2 than males, and they highly expected their EFL teachers to use more L2 in the classroom. Female teachers were more to disagree with L1 use in Quadumi (2007) study as they were found to avoid L1 and regard its use as anti-pedagogical.

Within the ESP paradigm, research on L1 use in the ESP classroom still appears to be newborn, as one can rarely find a research study discussing perceptions of L1 use or showing a journalistic approach of how, how much and when to use L1 in the ESP classroom.

A good example of such research comes from Albania where Xhemaili (2013) investigated the perceptions of using L1 (Albanian) in the ESP classroom from the perspective of teachers and ESP students who were studying Law and Public Relations at a public university. The results revealed that students had a high preference to use their L1 as it can facilitate their comprehension of what is going on in classes, make them comfortable when getting lost, and help them to learn English more easily. However, more than half of the teachers had negative views of using their students' mother tongue as a way to teach ESP. Nonetheless, some teachers agreed that with some L1, students would be capable to understand difficult professional concepts, guess meaning from context, follow up tasks, or learn new vocabulary.

Studies in the context of Saudi Arabia were numerous supporting or opposing the use of the students' mother tongue (Arabic) in the English language classroom. At a female school context, for example, AlNofaie (2010) examined teachers and students perceptions towards the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. Through using a questionnaire, interviews, and observation, the results revealed that there were positive attitudes towards Arabic as a facilitating tool to learn English. The same results were addressed in Albalawi's (2016) study as school female teachers in Tabuk city gave positive feedback to the use of Arabic in their English language classes, stating that L1 facilitates the teaching process and enhances the learning experience in the classroom. Similar positive perceptions were expressed in AlAsmari (2014) as Preparatory Year Program teachers at a Saudi university had general preferences of employing students' mother tongue (Arabic) in their EFL classrooms.

In another university context, Khresheh (2012) used observation and interviews to examine when and why teachers and students at the Preparatory Year Department use L1 in the English language classes. According to the results, Arabic was viewed as an eclectic technique in certain situations, including avoiding mistakes in front of students or peers, asking for more clarification of what was conveyed in

English, or when being unable to use L2 complex constructions.

Other research studies clearly support the positive views towards using Arabic while learning/teaching English. For instance, AlShammari (2011) revealed that Arabic was used by both teachers and students for clarification; they considered it useful in the learning process and essential in increasing students' comprehension. Positive views were also expressed in recent research (AlAmir, 2017; AlHarbi, 2017; Tamimi & Qadermazi, 2015). Teachers could use the students' native language as both purpose and medium of instruction to enhance learning experience among learners (Alharbi, 2017); nonetheless, they have to be selective wherever they use L1 in the language teaching process (AlAmir, 2017).

Perceptions towards L1 were cross-culturally examined by Shuchi and Shafiqul-Eslam (2016) when they investigated teachers' and students' perceptions of L1 use at two different universities in Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh. L1 was seen as important to provide assistance and facilitation to the teaching and learning process and support teachers with efficient pedagogical tools that maximize the learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the findings suggested a moderate and judicious use of L1 be used so as not to impede the learning process.

Within this thoroughly-discussed literature in Saudi Arabia, only AlMoayidi (2018) contradicted these positive views of using Arabic in the ELT classroom. Besides examining the hidden debate over the efficiency and inefficiency of the mother tongue in the EFL classroom, he provided evidence that the use of L1 in English classes had a negative impact on English language learners.

Despite the thorough literature on such a topic in the Arab World (Saudi Arabia is a case in point), one can hardly ever find a research study that addresses the use of Arabic in an English-for-Specific-Purposes (henceforth, ESP) classroom. It is to this end, this study seeks to uncover reality over the use of L1 (Arabic) in the ESP classroom in an EFL country like Saudi Arabia and in a restricted context where a special type of English is used and urgently demanded (i.e. English for medical purposes). The study this way shifts focus from investigating perceptions of using Arabic in General-English classrooms to perceptions of using L1 in the ESP classroom, a thing which has been rarely discussed and researched in EFL contexts, in general, and in

Saudi Arabia, in particular. Consequently, the current study seeks to find out answers to the following questions.

-How do Saudi EFL students at GC medical college perceive the use of their L1 (Arabic) in English for medical purposes classroom?

- Are there any significant statistical differences in the students' perceptions which can be attributed to gender and college level?

- What are the college instructors' perceptions of using L1 in the ESP classroom? And do these teachers perceive any differences attributed to gender and college between the students in relation to needing more or less L1?

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Context and Participants

The participants of this study were the Preparatory Year students at an applied medical college in Saudi Arabia called GC (for anonymity), as well as the English instructors teaching at that college. The students were enrolled as Level 1 and Level 2 students at the college during the first semester of the academic year 2018/2019. The students were supposed to complete 36 credit hours (approximately 11 courses) at their first year of study at the Preparatory Year Department, taking two English courses; namely, English for Medical Purposes 1/EMP101 and English for Medical Purposes 2/EMP102 offered at both Level 1 and Level 2, respectively. These two English courses were of 15 credit hours (8 hours for EMP101 and 7 hours for EMP102) and taught 20 hours and 14 hours per week for EMP101 and EMP102, respectively. Table 1 gives details about these English courses taught to Preparatory Year students at the college.

[Table 1: Information about the two English courses given at the College]

The students were of both genders (males and females) with an age range of 19-21 years old and share the same cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their total numbers in both male and female college branches were approximately 242, 94 males (39%) and 148 females (61%). In contrast, the total number of the English instructors was 16 (6 males and 10 females), and they were of different teaching experiences that ranged between 3 and 18 years of teaching English as a foreign language but with an experience average range of 5 years teaching ESP courses at the college. The samples of the study were selected randomly to include 92 students (38% of the students' population)

and 10 instructors (62.5%) from the male and female branches. The instructors were of different nationalities including Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan India and the Philippines. Most of these teachers (7 teachers) were Arabic-English bilinguals, and only three teachers were non-Arabs from the above mentioned non-Arab countries. Despite being non-native speakers of Arabic, these teachers had intelligible command of the language and little difficulty understanding it.

The student participants included 40 males (43.5%) and 52 females (56.5%), and they were all distributed as 56 students (61%) in Level 1 and 36 students (39%) in Level 2. The instructor participants were selected randomly from the two college branches and included 5 males and 5 females, all having an experience average of 5 years of teaching medical English at the college.

The participants showed consent to participate in the study after explaining the main aim of the study and being assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purposes. Table 2 gives a reader-friendly description of the students' population and samples across gender and college level, whereas Table 3 provides more information about the teaching experiences of the instructor participants.

[Table 2: Distribution of students' population and samples across gender and college level]

[Table 3: Instructors' experiences in teaching EFL and ESP]

3.2 Instrument and data collection

The study utilized two instruments to collect data; namely, a questionnaire and interviews to answer the first two and third question, respectively. The questionnaire was adapted from Johnson (1992) but has been modified to suit the context of the study. It included 20 five-point Likert-scaled items where respondents are required to answer each question in a closed-ended format that ranged from 5 corresponding Strongly Disagree to 1 representing Strongly Agree. Furthermore, the questionnaire was distributed among the students by the researchers themselves (as they were instructors at the same college) to be collected back the day after. 95 questionnaires returned back, but the researchers deemed to discard three questionnaires as they included incomplete answers which, if included in the analysis, might distort the results.

The interviews were structured to include a set of four questions that would allow the instructors to state their

perceptions as regards using L1 (Arabic) in their ESP classrooms. The interviews were 30-minutes' long and were conducted in English at the instructors' available time and pace and according to a previously-agreed schedule. Structured interviews are said to be more appropriate in settings where participants have limited time to participate in research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010; Sakaran, 2003). As this applies to the research context where the instructors; besides other managerial duties, had to teach approximately 4 hours a day, the researchers thought structured interviews would save their time and effort.

3.3 Data analysis

The data gathered were differently analyzed according to the instruments used and the research questions asked. Put simply, the data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in terms of descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, means and standard deviations). The statistical results including means were discussed according to a scale of three degrees (low, moderate and high) to show how negatively (high degree) or positively (low degree) the use of Arabic (i.e. mother tongue) in the ESP classroom was perceived by the students. These degrees are used according to mean ranges as follows:

- Low (1- 2.33)
- Moderate (2.34- 3.68)
- High (3.69- 5)

The data from the interviews were recorded based on the instructors' agreement, and their recordings were transcribed and interpreted into written units (Creswell, 2002; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). These written units were later quoted and coded by an identifiable participant (e.g. Instructor A) to be easily discussed and commented on in the analysis part and in relation to each question asked in the structured interview.

For validity and reliability issues, several procedures were taken into consideration. At first, the questionnaire was sent a committee of two instructors to check its suitability to the context in terms of wording, difficulty or misleading structures. According to their suggestions, the questionnaire was modified to include 20 items which were then translated into Arabic with the help of two members of the Translation Committee in the college. Each question in the questionnaire was given in English with its Arabic translation to ensure full understanding of the student respondents, especially those who are weak in English.

When the questionnaire was ready in its final draft, it was piloted and distributed among 20 students of both

genders and college levels (who were excluded from the actual study) a week before the actual study to check the questionnaire's reliability in terms of its internal consistency of items. The data were analyzed using SPSS, and through Cronbach's Alpha, the obtained value (R) was successfully 82.

As regards the interviews, the first draft was sent to the same committee to check its suitability to the context of the study. The draft was later modified in terms of wording till its final draft.

4. RESULTS

Based on the objectives of the study, the data is presented into three major parts; namely, general perceptions towards L1 use, gender differences, and college level differences.

4.1 Perceptions of L1 use in the ESP classroom

This section states the general perceptions of both students and teachers but starts with students' questionnaire responses followed by the teachers' interview responses.

The statistical results show that all students across their gender and college level negatively perceived the use of L1 in the ESP classroom. This was evident by the high total mean score (3.92) and standard deviation (0.92) across all of the survey questions. Table 4 gives reference to their total scores.

[Table 4: Total mean and standard deviation across all questions]

The students' responses to all questions indicated negative attitudes towards using Arabic to learn English for medical purposes. This is obvious from the results represented by the means and standard deviations for each question in Table 5.

[Table 5: Means and Standard deviations of students' responses of all questions]

As described in Table 3, almost all of the questions scored high means ranging from 3.70 to 4.03 and with standard deviations ranging between 0.8 and 1.12. Only Question item number 20 scored a moderate degree with a mean score of 3.63.

Teachers were quite similar to students to view the L1 as a negative aspect when teaching medical English. From their responses, it appears that Arabic cannot develop a learner who is able to communicate medical-related content. All seemed to disagree with using Arabic considering it as a hindrance to the learning of English or any foreign language. In relation to this, Table 6 shows some written interview quotes

representing teachers' negative views towards L1 use in the ESP classroom.

[Table 6: Quotes representing teachers' negative perceptions]

Some teachers went to agree with using Arabic in very limited circumstances such as giving instructions on complex tasks, more clarifications to weak students, taking attendance, and teaching difficult medical terms or abstract concepts. Here are some of their quotes.

It's unavoidable when teaching unfamiliar medical vocabulary. (Teacher A)

If (students) are too weak, there could a place for L1, but it must be as minimal as possible. Of course, it ought to be purely related to medical content. It could be used with true beginners to understand abstract concepts and some instructions. (Teacher C)

I use L1 in some parts of the lesson like abstract vocabulary- when it is difficult for the students to grasp the meaning, some grammatical points and giving instructions. (Teacher D)

In very difficult lessons, L1 can be used minimally just to make the class activities run more smoothly and effectively. (Teacher B)

I think that the use of L1 in the English for medical purposes EMP class should be prohibited and limited to only giving instructions and taking attendance. (Teacher H)

4.2 Perceptions and gender differences

All respondents including students and teachers noted differences between male and female students as to which gender needs more L1 in their ESP classrooms. Males were considered more likely to use or ask for using Arabic while learning/teaching medical English. These differences were obvious from the participants' responses to both data collection instruments; namely, the Student's Questionnaire and Teachers' Interviews.

The questionnaire's statistical results indicated such gender difference, despite their negative perceptions of using Arabic in their Medical-English classes. Females were more to disagree with the L1 use in classroom more than males, both scoring 4.05 and 3.73, respectively. Table 7 gives reference to these differences in total means and standard deviations.

[Table 7: Differences in perceptions according to gender]

The differences may be clearer when handling the mean and standard deviation for each question asked. Most means indicated a high level of disagreement to L1 use in the ESP classroom from both males and females, but with priority given to the females as they scored higher means in most items. Despite being similar in their perceptions in items 3, 4, 5 (with the same mean 4) and 19 (mean score 3.7), some major differences were noted. For example, males' preferences of using L1 in the classroom (Item 7) were higher than those of the females as noted by the differences in their means (3) and (4) on the same item, respectively. Furthermore, males were more to agree with using L1 as perceived by their moderately-given means scored by items 7, 8, and 18. However, females showed higher agreement on Item 20 as indicated by their moderate mean (3.56) compared to the males' scored mean (3.73). In sum, females highly disagreed with using L1 in the ESP classroom across all survey questions, but they had a higher agreement on the last question with a moderate mean of 3.56. Table 8 shows the differences in perceptions between males and females according to the means and standard deviations scored by all items.

[Table 8: Males and females' differences in perceptions across all items]

Teachers provided some insightful views as regards their perceptions of which gender need more Arabic in the EMP classes. Most of them agreed that females need less Arabic while learning English clearly because they are more patient, careful, hardworking, serious, concerned about their prestige and status, eager to use English, and aware of the importance of L2 in improving their linguistic ability. On the other hand, the teachers described males as impatient, less serious, less hardworking, less careful, less willing to study and use English, and less aware of the importance of English in the field that relates to their study and future careers. Examples of their responses in the interview are given as follows.

[Table 9: Quotes representing teachers' perceptions of gender differences]

4.2 Perceptions and differences according to college level

This section provides some interesting results concerning the differences in perceptions between Level 1 and Level 2 students. Although the students' questionnaire showed no differences in the students'

perceptions which could be attributed to the college level, teachers clearly supported such differences, stating that Level 1 students were more likely to ask for L1 use in the EMP classroom.

The students' responses across their college levels (i.e. Level 1 and 2) were almost identical in their perceptions of using L1 (Arabic) in their medical English classrooms. According to their total means and standard deviations, Level 1 students were just as similar in views as those in Level 2. Table 10 shows the students' perceptions across the college level.

[Table 10: Students' total means and standard deviations across college level]

Despite having very few differences in means and standard deviations across the survey items, students had a high-level disagreement with using L1 in their ESP classrooms. Such high disagreement was indicated by the item mean range 3.7-4.13 and 3.7-4.1 for both Level 1 and Level 2 students, respectively. Their responses for agreement on using L1 were also identical as students of both levels scored the same moderate disagreement mean (3.63 and 3.64) for Level 1 and 2, respectively. It was only Item 19 where students of both levels appeared to differ in their perceptions, clearly because Level 2 students had a lower disagreement level (3.60) compared to Level 1 students whose disagreement level was higher as indicated by their mean score (3.80). Table 11 shows the students' results in means and standard deviations across all survey items and their college levels.

[Table 11: Students' results across college level and survey items]

Teachers' perceptions of who need more L1, Level 1 or Level 2 students, totally contradicted the statistical results of the students' responses. Nearly all teachers confirmed that Level 1 students were more likely to need Arabic while learning/teaching medical English. Some teachers justified this as Level 1 students seem to be unfamiliar with the college policy, the courses and the professional concepts related to the medical field. Others stated that at this stage (Level 1) students are high school graduates who come to college with little exposure to General English; let alone English for medical purposes. However, Level 2 students are more experienced in the English courses, materials, policy, and context, and have more exposure to medical English as they completed English-for-Medical-Purposes course EMP101 during their first semester. Level 1 students were seen as having low proficiency in English; this would encourage them to use or ask for using Arabic to understand instructions,

new vocabulary and concepts as well the context of learning. Table 12 gives examples of the teachers' responses.

[Table 12: Quotes representing teachers' perceptions of college level differences]

Although the majority of the teachers attested the differences in the students' perceptions according to the college level, and that Level 1 students need more L1 in their classes, one teacher believed that it has nothing to do with college level as students of both levels should be challenged to learn everything in the target language. She states:

"Both of the levels need to learn everything using the foreign language. It will be a challenge for them" (Teacher G)

Another teacher supported the previous quote, believing that low proficiency in General English or unfamiliarity with medical English, does not justify using Arabic in the medical-English classroom at any college level. Teacher I states:

From my experience, none of level 1 or 2 students are justified to use their mother tongue in learning English. If they use it in Level 1, they will get used to using it again in Level 2 unfortunately. The teacher can replace the usage of Arabic to explain any new medical term by using real objects or some models from the Nursing laboratory. (Teacher I)

5. DISCUSSION

Although the literature body generally addressed opposing and advocating perceptions towards the use of mother tongue in the L2 classroom, almost all of the contextual literature in Saudi Arabia expressed only positive perceptions (AlAmir, 2017; AlAsmari, 2014; AlBalawi, 2016; AlHarbi, 2017; AlNofaie, 2010; AlShammari, 2011; Khresheh, 2012; Shuchi & Shafidul-Eslam, 2016; Tamimi & Qadermazi 2015). L1 use might be greater in the ESP classroom (Xhemaili, 2013); however, the findings of the current study gave negative feedback to using L1 (Arabic) while learning/teaching English for medical purposes EMP. Both teachers and students showed higher agreement to only-English use and recommended that L1 should be as avoidable and minimal as possible in their EMP classes. Most of other studies opposed these findings as L1 was perceived as an eclectic technique (Khresheh, 2012), a purpose and medium of instruction (AlNofaie, 2010; Khresheh, 2012), a facilitating tool to increase students' comprehension (AlShammari, 2011), and an efficient pedagogical tool

that supports teachers and students to maximize learning experience (AlHarbi, 2017; AlBalawi, 2016; Shuchi & Shafiqu-Eslam, 2016) and outcomes (AlAmir, 2017).

The study revealed the participants' consensus in relation to differences in perceptions between males and females, as females were more to disagree with using Arabic in their EMP classes. The study this way supports the findings of Adamu (2002) and Quadumi (2007) where female participants had higher positive attitudes towards using L2 than males. Female students were described by the study participants as more patient, hardworking, serious, motivated, and aware of the importance of L2 use to improve their language ability and skills. From the socio-cultural perspective, females are considered more careful about their learning, and this is obvious from their achievement and progress. From a sociolinguistic perspective, females are more careful about using English (i.e. standard form) for prestige and social status.

The participating teachers recommended several techniques where L1 use can be avoided. Some suggested utilizing technology, Total Physical Response, real objects, lab models, body language, and voice tone. They agreed that such techniques might enable teachers to minimize L1 use and increase students' exposure to L2. For example, a teacher states,

Teachers can discard L1 through a self of techniques, including Total Physical Response (TPR), voice tone, body language, audio-visual aids, etc. (Teacher C)

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Unlike previous research conducted on the same topic, this research took a different angle to examine teachers' and students' perceptions towards using L1 (Arabic) in the ESP classroom at an applied medical college in Saudi Arabia during the academic year 2017/2018. The study also investigated differences in perceptions which could be related to gender and college level. An ethnographic approach to data collection was employed by using a questionnaire and interviews to collect data and answer the research questions. The results revealed that both teachers and students had negative views as regards using Arabic in their English-for-medical-purposes EMP classrooms. Although both addressed differences in perceptions due to gender, the student questionnaire results showed no differences attributed to college level. Despite males' negative views towards L1 use, females were more to agree with only-English use in the classroom as the most appropriate way to learn the

target language. Teachers indicated differences in perceptions between students according to the college level, believing that Level 1 students need more L1 as they are unfamiliar with and less experienced in the type of English used in a restricted context like healthcare and medicine. In spite of their negative perceptions, teachers justified minimal use of Arabic in certain circumstances, including explaining abstract and medical terms, developing rapport with students, especially newcomers (L1 students), translating new vocabulary and preparing for given tasks for easy class run-on.

The study is limited in its context and participants to focus on only students' and teachers' perceptions in a particular context (i.e. GC medical college) which, although a case study, might be generalized to other ESP contexts in Saudi Arabia or worldwide. Considering the views of other participants (i.e. administrators, course designers, teacher trainers, etc.) in perception-based research and using multiple data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, surveys and reflections or blogs, would add credit to data triangulation and reliability of the results.

Conducting further research on L1 use in ESP contexts would be imperative in developing more understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions towards employing L1 in ESP classes in EFL contexts, in general, or in Saudi Arabia, in particular. Research might be promising when it shifts focus to address the relationship between mother-tongue use and students' motivation, anxiety, and achievement and progress in learning the target language. It is suggested that such research, when conducted, would add insights to the literature on SLA and language learning in ESP environments which mediate theory into practice and study into work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our gratitude to the editor, anonymous reviewers, and colleagues and students at AlGhad Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, Dammam Branch, KSA, for their insightful comments and suggestions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Mohammad Qasim AlTarawneh: An ESP instructor at AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences, Dammam, Saudi Arabia. He is also a Ph.D. Candidate at Eastern Mediterranean University, North

Cyprus. His research interests are English language teaching and learning, language teaching/learning methodology, language program evaluation and curriculum design in ESP settings.

Eyad Ahmad AlMithqal: An ESP instructor at AlGhad International Colleges for Applied Medical Sciences in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. His research interests are language learning, phonetics and phonology, textbook evaluation, translanguaging and classroom-based research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adamu, A. (2002). Students' attitude towards mother tongue instruction as a correlate of academic achievement: The case of Sidama. Unpublished master thesis, Addis Ababa University.
- [2] Afzal, S. (2013). Using of the First Language in English classroom as a way of scaffolding for both the students and teachers to learn and teach English. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Science*, 4 (7), 1846-1854.
- [3] Al-Amir, B. A. (2017). Saudi female teachers' perceptions of the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. *English language Teaching*, 10 (6), 12-20.
- [4] AlMoayidi, K. A. (2018). The effectiveness of using L1 in second language classroom: A controversial issue. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8 (4), 275-379. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0804.02>
- [5] AlNofaie, H. (2010). The attitudes of teachers and students towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Saudi public schools: A case study. *Novitas-ROYAL Research on Youth and Language*, 4 (1), 64-95.
- [6] AlAsmari, A. (2014). Teachers' perceptions about the use of mother tongue in Saudi EFL university classrooms: A gender-line investigation'. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 4 (10), 2066-2075. doi:10.4304/tpls.4.10.2066-2075List
- [7] AlShammari, M. M. (2011). The use of the mother tongue in Saudi EFL classrooms. *Journal of International Education Research*, 7 (4), 95-102.
- [8] AlShehri, E. (2017). Using learners' first language in EFL classrooms. *IAFOR Journal of Language Learning*, 3 (1), 20-33.
- [9] Auerbach, E. R. (1993). Reexamining English Only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27 (1): 9-32. doi:10.2307/3586949
- [10] Brookes-Lewis, K. A. (2009). Adult learners' perceptions of the incorporation of their L1 in foreign language teaching and learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 30 (2), 216-235. From <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/amn051>
- [11] Bonyadi, A. (2003). Translation: Back from Siberia. *Translation Journal*, 7 (3). From <http://accurapid.com/journal/25edu.htm>.
- [12] Bowen, T., & Marks. J. (1994). *Inside teaching*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- [13] Butzkamm, W. (2003). We only learn language once. The role of the mother tongue in FL classrooms: death of a dogma'. *Language learning journal*, 28 (1), 29-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571730385200181>
- [14] Campa, D. J.C., & Nassaji, H. (2009). The amount, purpose, and reasons for using L1 in L2 classrooms. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42: 742-759. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01052.x>
- [15] Chastain, K. (1988). Developing second language skills. *Theory and practice*, 3, 23-29.
- [16] Cook, V. (2001). Using first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57 (3), 402-423.
- [17] Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research planning, conducting and evaluating qualitative and quantitative*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- [18] Dash, P. (2002). English Only (EO) in the classroom: Time for a reality check. *Asian EFL Journal*, 4 (4), 1-20.

- [19] Department of Education and Science (DES). (1990). *Modern Foreign Languages for Ages 11 to 16*. London: Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office.
- [20] Eldridge, J. (1996). Code-switching in a Turkish secondary school. *ELT Journal*, 50 (4), 303-311. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/50.4>
- [21] Ellis, R. (1992). *Second language acquisition and language pedagogy*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- [22] Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd Edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [23] Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2010). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (7th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [24] Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- [25] Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th Ed.). Cambridge: Longman.
- [26] Jenkins, J. (2005). Teaching pronunciation for English as a lingua franca: A sociopolitical perspective'. In C. Gnutzmann, & F. Intemann (Eds.), *The Globalization of English and the English Language Classroom* (pp. 145-158). Tübingen: Narr Gunter.
- [27] Kang, D. (2013). EFL teachers' language use for classroom discipline: A look at complex interplay of variables. *System*, 41 (1), 149-163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.01.002>
- [28] Kayaoglu, M. N. (2012). The use of mother tongue in foreign language teaching from teachers' practice and perspective. *Pamukkale University Faculty of Education Journal*, 32 (2), 25-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9779/PUJE492>
- [29] Kharma, N. N., & Hajjaj, A. H. (1989). Use of the mother tongue in the ESL classroom'. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 27 (3), 223-235. DOI: 10.1515/iral.1989.27.3.223
- [30] Khati, A. R. (2011). When and why of mother tongue use in English classroom. *NELTA*, 16 (1-2), 42-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v16i1-2.6128>
- [31] Khresheh, A. (2012). Exploring when and why to use Arabic in the Saudi Arabian EFL classroom: Viewing L1 use as eclectic technique. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (6): 78-88. Available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n6p78>
- [32] Kraemer, A. (2006). Teacher's use of English in communicative German Language classrooms: A qualitative analysis. *Foreign Language Annals*, 59 (3), 435-450.
- [33] Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- [34] Krashen, S. D., and Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach to language acquisition in the classroom*. New York: Pergamon.
- [35] Lai, M. S. (1996). Using the L1 sensibly in English language classroom. Available online at: <http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/48/4800045.Pdf>.
- [36] Larsen-Freeman, D. (2012). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (3rd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [37] Latsanyphone, S., & Bouangeune, S. (2009). Using L1 in teaching vocabulary to low English proficiency level students: a case study at the University of Laos. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 2 (3), 186-193. From <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n3p186>
- [38] Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (1999). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [39] Ministry Of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology MEXT. (2003). The 21st Century Coe program outline of selected programs. Available At:

- [Http://Www.Mext.Go.Jp/English/News/2004/03/04031901. Html.](http://www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2004/03/04031901.html)
- [40] Nation, P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, 5 (2), 1-8.
- [41] Popovic, R. (2001). The place of translation in Language Teaching. *Bridges*, 5, 3-8.
- [42] Qadumi, H. A. (2007). Teachers' attitudes toward using the mother tongue in the EFL Classroom. *Al-Quds University Journal for Research and Studies*, 10, 1-31.
- [43] Rodríguez, C. J., & Oxbrow, G. (2008). L1 in the EFL classroom: more a help than a hindrance? *Porta Linguarum*, 9, 93-109.
- [44] Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- [45] Seliger, H., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second Language Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [46] Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 10, 209-241.
- [47] Storch, N., & Wigglesworth, G. (2003). Is there a role for the use of the L1 in an L2 setting? *TESOL Quarterly*, 37 (4), 760-770.
- [48] Suchi, I. J., & Shafiqul-Islam, A. B. M. (2016). Teachers' and students' attitudes towards L1 use in EFL classrooms in the contexts of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. *English language Teaching*, 9 (12), 62-73. doi: 10.5539/elt.v9n12p62
- [49] Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2000). Task-based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research*, 4, 251-274
- [50] Tamimi, S. H. S., & Qadermazi, Z. (2015). L1 Use in EFL Classes with English-only Policy: Insights from Triangulated Data. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 5 (2): 159-175.
- [51] Turnbull, M. (2001). There Is a Role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, But... *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57 (4), 531-540. DOI: 10.3138/cmlr.57.4.531
- [52] Turnbull, M., & Arnett, K. (2002). Teachers' uses of the target and first languages in second and foreign language classrooms. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 204-218.
- [53] Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- [54] Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [55] Xhemaili, M. (2013). The advantages and disadvantages of mother tongue in teaching and learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes. *Anglisticum Journal (IJLLIS)*, 2 (3), 191-195.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Information about the two English courses given at the College

Course name & code	Level given	Credit hours	Teaching hour/week
English for Medical Purposes 1/ EMP101	Level 1	8	20
English for Medical Purposes 2/ EMP102	Level 2	7	14
Total		15	34

Table 2: Distribution of students' population and samples across gender and college level

level	Total pop						Sample Students					
	Males		Females		Total No		Males		Females		Total No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
L1	62	39%	97	61%	159	100%	23	41%	33	59%	56	100%
L2	32	38.5%	51	61.4%	83	100%	17	47.2%	19	52.7%	36	100%
Total	94	100%	148	100%	242	100%	40	100%	52	100%	92	100%

Table 3: Instructors' experiences in teaching EFL and ESP

No	Instructor	Gender	EFL teaching experience	ESP college teaching experience	Level teaching in the college
1	Instructor A	Male	10 years	8 years	Level 1
2	Instructor B	Female	3 years	1 year	Level 1
3	Instructor C	Male	10 years	6 years	Level 1
4	Instructor D	Male	15 years	5 years	Level 2
5	Instructor E	Male	18 years	2 years	Level 2
6	Instructor F	Female	9 years	6 years	Level 2
7	Instructor G	Female	12 years	6 years	Level 1
8	Instructor H	Male	10 years	7 years	Level 2
9	Instructor I	Female	13 years	3 years	Level 2
10	Instructor J	Female	8 years	6 years	Level 1

Table 4: Total mean and standard deviation across all questions

N	%	Mean	St. Dev.
92	100%	3.92	0.92

Table 5: Means and Standard deviations of students' responses of all questions

No	Item	Mean	St. Dev.
1	Arabic should be used in all English lectures.	3.9	0.9
2	I would like my English teacher to use Arabic in lectures.	3.8	0.8
3	I feel more comfortable when the teacher uses Arabic in English lecture.	4	1
4	Using Arabic in the classroom helps me to learn English.	4	1
5	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in the lecture.	4	1
6	I understand the lesson much better when the teacher uses Arabic.	4	0.8
7	I prefer not to use Arabic in English classes.	4	1
8	Using Arabic motivates me to participate more in English classroom activities.	3.8	0.8
9	Using Arabic in class helps me to learn English better.	4.1	0.9
10	I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses Arabic during talks or discussions outside the classroom.	3.9	1

11	I prefer teachers to use Arabic when summarizing material already covered.	3.9	0.9
12	It is very effective when my teacher uses Arabic for clarifying difficult grammatical points.	4.03	0.93
13	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when checking our comprehension.	4.1	0.83
14	I think that successful English language learning is based on using only English in the classroom.	4.02	0.8
15	I learn the English language better if teachers use only English in the classroom.	4	1
16	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when giving basic instructions.	4	0.9
17	Using Arabic helps me express my feelings and ideas when I fail to do that in English.	3.92	0.9
18	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in pair/ small group work.	3.78	1.03
19	Teachers should use Arabic to explain difficult concepts.	3.70	1.1
20	Arabic should be used to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks.	3.63	1.12
	Total means scores	3.92	0.92

Table 6: Quotes representing teachers' negative perceptions

Teacher's code	Interview quoted Comment
Teacher A	I don't encourage using L1 in a language teaching class; it will stop students from practicing English at all.
Teacher F	In my opinion, it's not a good idea to use Arabic in classes while teaching English. It will hinder students from learning the language and make them more dependent on the teacher's use of Arabic to understand everything.
Teacher D	I believe that using Arabic should be prohibited in teaching English for medical purposes, except for the medical terms that are difficult for the students to grasp.
Teacher C	Using Arabic does not help much to learn or teach ESP as a communication-based field. Also, the college policy does not support the L1 use with students in Medical-English classes.
Teacher B	<i>Using L1 in my classroom is mainly forbidden to encourage students to communicate in English. Using only English will develop vocabulary and give them the chance to apply all that they have learned in a full linguistic context. Teacher B</i>
Teacher G	<i>It's not recommended to use the mother tongue in teaching any foreign language.</i>
Teacher E	<i>Using L1 in teaching L2 is restricted and should be controlled by the teacher.</i>
Teacher I	<i>Arabic shouldn't be used in teaching English in general and especially for medical purposes because our students will be exposed to multinational work environment so they need to know all the equivalents for any medical term in English .</i>

Table 7: Differences in perceptions according to gender

Gender	N	%	Total Mean Score	Total St. Dev.
Males	40	43.5%	3.73	0.99
Females	52	56.5%	4.05	0.82
TOTAL	92	100%		

Table 8: Males and females' differences in perceptions across all items

No	Item	Males		Females	
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
1	Arabic should be used in all English lectures.	3.90	1	4.2	0.80

2	I would like my English teacher to use Arabic in lectures.	3.70	0.90	4	0.70
3	I feel more comfortable when the teacher uses Arabic in English lecture.	4	1	4	1
4	Using Arabic in the classroom helps me to learn English.	4	1	4	1
5	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in the lecture.	4	1	4	1
6	I understand the lesson much better when the teacher uses Arabic.	3.80	0.90	4.1	0.70
7	I prefer not to use Arabic in English classes.	3	1	4	1
8	Using Arabic motivates me to participate more in English classroom activities.	3.60	0.90	3.90	0.80
9	Using Arabic in class helps me to learn English better.	3.80	1	4.2	0.80
10	I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses Arabic during talks or discussions outside the classroom.	3.70	1	4.1	0.80
11	I prefer teachers to use Arabic when summarizing material already covered.	3.80	0.90	4.1	0.90
12	It is very effective when my teacher uses Arabic for clarifying difficult grammatical points.	3.78	1.07	4.23	0.76
13	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when checking our comprehension.	3.70	0.88	4.4	0.63
14	I think that successful English language learning is based on using only English in the classroom.	3.95	0.93	4.08	0.68
15	I learn the English language better if teachers use only English in the classroom.	3.70	1	4.3	0.80
16	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when giving basic instructions.	3.70	1	4.3	0.60
17	Using Arabic helps me express my feelings and ideas when I fail to do that in English.	3.78	0.92	4.04	0.88
18	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in pair/ small group work.	3.58	1.06	3.94	0.98
19	Teachers should use Arabic to explain difficult concepts.	3.70	1	3.70	1.1
20	Arabic should be used to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks.	3.73	1.01	3.56	1.19
	Total mean scores	3.73	0.99	4.05	0.82

Table 9: Quotes representing teachers' perceptions of gender differences

Teacher's code	Interview quoted Comment
Teacher D	I think males and females are different in the way they want to use Arabic. Males are likely to need more L1 in classes due to their impatience compared to females.
Teacher H	Males need L1 in the medical-English classroom rather than females who might be against employing Arabic in the L2 classes as they desire to use more L2 as a kind of awareness of the importance of using L2 in improving their linguistic ability.
Teacher I	I can say that females are always hard workers and more serious in learning than males.
Teacher G	Females are more patient than males. Males need more support and to simplify everything for them.
Teacher F	Males want to use Arabic more than females. I have most of my female students eager to learn and use English than Arabic. The male students I have taught before didn't seem keen on using English; they just wanted to finish the course without any interest in the language. I think males need more L1 in the medical-English classroom, but I do not really recommend it.

Teacher C	I believe females might need less Arabic in the EMP classes as they seem to be more careful about studying and using English in general. This could be proved by their achievement in tests, assignments and overall progress compared to males. With less care and less study, males might need more Arabic to be used in classes.
Teacher A	I think that females tend to use less Arabic than males in English classes as they are more concerned about their prestige and social status.

Table 10: Students' total means and standard deviations across college level

College Level	N	%	Total Mean Score	Total St. Dev
Level 1	48	52.2%	3.94	0.93
Level 2	44	47.8%	3.90	0.92
TOTAL	92	100%		

Table 11: Students' results across college level and survey items

No	Item	Level 1		Level Two	
		Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
1	Arabic should be used in all English lectures.	4	0.90	3.80	0.90
2	I would like my English teacher to use Arabic in lectures.	4	0.80	3.70	0.80
3	I feel more comfortable when the teacher uses Arabic in English lecture.	4	1	4	1
4	Using Arabic in the classroom helps me to learn English.	4	1	4	1
5	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in the lecture.	4	1	4	1
6	I understand the lesson much better when the teacher uses Arabic.	4	0.70	4	0.90
7	I prefer not to use Arabic in English classes.	4	1	4	1
8	Using Arabic motivates me to participate more in English classroom activities.	3.80	0.80	3.80	0.90
9	Using Arabic in class helps me to learn English better.	4	0.90	4.1	0.80
10	I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses Arabic during talks or discussions outside the classroom.	3.90	1	3.90	0.90
11	I prefer teachers to use Arabic when summarizing material already covered.	3.90	1	4	0.90
12	It is very effective when my teacher uses Arabic for clarifying difficult grammatical points.	4.06	0.93	4	0.94
13	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when checking our comprehension.	4.13	0.84	4.07	0.82
14	I think that successful English language learning is based on using only English in the classroom.	4.06	0.81	3.98	0.79
15	I learn the English language better if teachers use only English in the classroom.	4.01	1	3.90	1
16	I prefer that my teacher use Arabic when giving basic instructions.	4.01	0.90	4	0.90
17	Using Arabic helps me express my feelings and ideas when I fail to do that in English.	3.88	0.89	3.98	0.93
18	Students should be allowed to use Arabic in pair/ small group work.	3.73	1.05	3.84	1.01
19	Teachers should use Arabic to explain difficult concepts.	3.80	1.1	3.60	1

20	Arabic should be used to facilitate complicated English classroom tasks.	3.63	1.08	3.64	1.16
	Total mean scores	3.94	0.93	3.90	0.92

Table 12: Quotes representing teachers' perceptions of college level differences

Teacher's code	Interview quoted Comment
Teacher J	Level 1 students are more likely to use their mother tongue in ESP classes. The reason behind this is that they are not familiar with the new medical-related vocabulary in the English course given in the first semester.
Teacher A	I think that Level 1 students consider using Arabic more than the other levels. They don't have that much exposure to using English at this stage.
Teacher D	It might acceptable to use it in Level One with the freshmen so as not to get them shocked by a 100% totally English class which they are not used to.
Teacher F	Level 1 students are more likely to consider using Arabic in their classes because these students are high school graduates with a low proficiency level of English, and some students can benefit from the use of Arabic to understand new vocabulary and concepts.
Teacher C	I think that Level One students need more Arabic use as they are newcomers from schools where they used to use their mother tongue the most. At the first semester beginning, they ask for more clarification in Arabic. Such a thing should be made as minimal as possible. Level one students are not yet familiar with the context, materials, and policies; consequently, they are the ones needing more Arabic compared to Level 2 students who are more experienced with the policies and context.