

Aspects of L1/L2 Interference within Foreign Language Instruction at Georgian HEIs: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings from a research study conducted at one state university and one private university in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2022-2023. The research engaged 23 university professors specialising in foreign languages and involved 203 Georgian and international students studying at various programs and language proficiency groups. The study's principal objective was to scrutinise the impact of employing L1 (native language) and L2 (second language) on acquiring a target foreign language. For Georgian students, English functioned as the target foreign language. Conversely, for international students, English served as the medium of instruction for learning Georgian as a foreign language. Beyond investigating the influences of language usage, the study sought to uncover prevalent patterns in using L1/L2 as instructional mediums. The primary objective of this research study is to examine the impact of using L1 (native language) and L2 (second language) on the acquisition of a target foreign language. Specifically, it aims to determine how L1 and L2 influence language learning outcomes and proficiency levels. The research aims to show the effectiveness of employing either L1 or L2 as an instructional medium in language education. Additionally, the study seeks to identify any patterns or variations in the use of L1 and L2 based on different language proficiency groups and language learning contexts.

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of foreign language instruction is characterised by its dynamic nature, with pedagogical approaches continuously evolving. In examining the language dynamics within higher education institutions (HEIs), it becomes evident that students at varying levels of proficiency in the foreign target language exhibit distinct needs and preferences regarding language interaction strategies. Lower-level language proficiency students may necessitate increased interaction facilitated through utilising their native language (L1), translation, or code-switching and, accordingly, rely on such strategies as scaffolds to bridge comprehension

gaps and negotiate meaning effectively. Utilising L1, translation, or code-switching may serve as a means for lower-level students to bolster their confidence and engage more actively in classroom discourse. Conversely, higher-level proficiency students may demonstrate a reduced reliance on these interaction tools, as their heightened language skills equip them with greater linguistic autonomy and proficiency. For these advanced learners, interaction in the target language may suffice for achieving communicative objectives, as they possess the linguistic competence to navigate complex language tasks with minimal recourse to L1 or translation. Understanding these nuanced differences in language interaction preferences among students at varying proficiency levels is crucial for educators in tailoring pedagogical approaches that effectively cater to the diverse linguistic needs and abilities within HEI settings.

Within higher education institutions, the instruction of foreign languages, frequently a prerequisite for diverse study programs, manifests in varied approaches. English is commonly incorporated into programs, either as mandatory or elective courses. Simultaneously, Georgian assumes the role of a foreign language for international students, thereby adding linguistic diversity to the educational landscape.

Teaching the Georgian language to international students at Georgian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) unfolds as a dynamic and culturally enriching endeavour. As a foreign language for these students, Georgian fosters a deeper connection between learners and the society they inhabit during their academic pursuits.

Most universities' provision of Georgian language courses to international students facilitates their seamless integration into the host country's society. An intriguing issue arises when examining the English and Georgian Languages in the context of L1/L2 interference, particularly considering their roles as languages of instruction and target languages in the foreign language teaching environment. This study envisions the English and Georgian languages as instructional languages within foreign language groups at Georgian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) while simultaneously recognising them as target languages within the same groups. A similar study was conducted in 2018 in Georgia at a private university. The study's results revealed a nuanced landscape, with teachers employing L1 strategically to facilitate comprehension, particularly at lower proficiency levels. At the same time, students exhibited varying degrees of acceptance and preference for L1 instruction based on their language proficiency and learning needs (Kilanava. 2018).

This study tries to explore the L1/L2 interference in the foreign language classes in more extended way and it delves into a noteworthy scenario where international students, for whom English is the second language, are instructed in Georgian as the foreign (target) language. This instructional process involved instances of English language interference, as both professors and students engaged in the study shared proficiency in English. A parallel situation with distinct characteristics unfolds among local Georgian students, for whom Georgian was the shared language with professors, while the target language was English. This intricate interplay of languages and their roles in the instructional setting adds complexity to the foreign language teaching landscape at Georgian HEIs.

This paper is grounded in a study undertaken during the academic years 2022-2023 at a state and a private university to examine the pedagogical practices of teaching English and Georgian as foreign languages at Georgian state and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This

study's central emphasis was investigating the instances where instructors employed or abstained from using the target language in the class work.

The study addressed the following research questions:

RQ.1. Under what circumstances and for what reasons is the first/second language (L1/L2) used in foreign language classes?

RQ.2. To what extent does it facilitate learners in acquiring the target language and aid lecturers?

RQ.3. In which context is L1/L2 employed mostly reading, writing, speaking or listening?

The study employed questionnaires and oral interviews as research methods to answer these questions. Upon surveying both students and lecturers, several insights emerged. The frequency of L1/L2 usage was contingent on explanatory purposes, the ways of utilising L1/L2, encompassing instructions, and the purpose of communication or interaction. The study delved into the rationale behind using L1, examining which language skills were involved, the purpose of such usage, and the underlying intentions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of teaching/learning a foreign language, the integration of both the native language (L1), the second (L2) or the target language (L3) can exert significant influence across various facets of language skills acquisition, spanning speaking, listening, reading, and writing domains. Strategic incorporation of L1/L2 within speaking activities may serve to furnish learners with a familiar framework, thereby bolstering their confidence and fluency as they navigate complex linguistic structures and expand their vocabulary repertoire. Similarly, within listening comprehension tasks, the discerning use of L1/L2 can aid in elucidating instructions and clarifying intricate concepts, particularly advantageous for individuals operating at elementary proficiency levels. Moreover, when grappling with reading comprehension exercises, deliberate recourse to L1/L2 may facilitate the interpretation of unfamiliar texts or lexical items, fostering deeper engagement and comprehension. Likewise, in writing endeavors, judicious deployment of L1/L2 can support idea generation, organisation, and coherence, thereby streamlining the composition process and enhancing linguistic precision and creativity. By harnessing learners' existing linguistic resources and offering targeted assistance where necessary, educators can foster a more inclusive and efficacious learning milieu conducive to comprehensive language acquisition and proficiency enhancement. However, Incorporating the first language (L1) into foreign language instruction has been a topic of extensive discourse in academic circles. Those who oppose using L1 put forth diverse arguments, contending that it impedes the acquisition of the target language (L2). Conversely, advocates for L1 use in language teaching offer various justifications, asserting that L1 acts as scaffolding, enabling students to support each other in the learning process. Cook underscores that disregarding a learner's L1 denies a significant aspect of their consciousness (Cook, 2010). Scholars further argue that L1 remains a valuable natural resource in L2 learning (Mart, 2013). Schweers claims that using L1 in the foreign language classroom can help establish rapport with students and show respect for their native language (Schweers, 1999). Likewise, Chavez proposes that for students to connect the second language (L2) with authentic communication, it must be seamlessly integrated into the classroom in genuinely meaningful ways (Chavez, 2003). Additionally, MacIntyre and Legatto discuss the potential contribution of the first language in promoting effective language communication within educational settings

(MacIntyre et al., 2011). Jamshidi in the journal paper suggests that using L1 in the L2 context is crucial for learners to organise, enhance, and enrich their speech (Malaysia, 2013). Despite these supportive arguments, some scholars approach L1/L2 in foreign language teaching/learning more cautiously, advocating for judicious, occasional, or limited application of L1 (Kafes 2011; McMillan and Rivers 2011). However, an opposing viewpoint argues that L2 should be acquired similarly to L1 without interference from the first language. Analogous to how babies learn their native language without translation, students can seamlessly acquire the target language (Ellis 2013, Gouin 1892, Turnbull 2002). There is supportive discussion for an exclusive L2 approach in foreign language classes from authors who perceive L1 as an impediment in the teaching process, advocating for a strict L2-only policy (Larsen-Freeman 2000, Macaro 2001, Krashen 1981).

Using L1 in L2 teaching is closely linked to translation and code-switching. The debate extends beyond the mere use of L1 or L2 in foreign language classes, delving into the nuanced aspects of translation. Some scholars advocate for applying translation while teaching the four language skills, viewing it as an integral part of a communicative approach (Atkinson 1987, Fernández 2014). The utilisation of translation in the pedagogy of foreign languages has yielded both advantageous and detrimental outcomes. Translation may facilitate comprehension of texts exceeding learners' linguistic proficiency thresholds. Translating passages into one's native language can enable a more efficacious grasp of intricate concepts and meanings. Another constructive consequence of employing translation in foreign language instruction can be the reinforcement in fostering the cultivation of critical thinking skills as students delve into the meaning and intention encapsulated within texts. Conversely, incorporating of translation in foreign language teaching is not devoid of challenges. A prominent concern pertains to the potential overreliance of learners on translation mechanisms, thereby impeding their capacity for direct thinking and communication in the target language. Such excessive dependence can impede the cultivation of fluency and the expression of ideas in a natural manner. Considering the positive aspects of using translation during the teaching process, Cook maintains that translation is helpful in language teaching because of its cognitive, pedagogical, and functional benefits (Cook 2007).

Code-switching is defined by Crystal (2003) as the transition from one language to another within a sentence and also plays a significant role in foreign language classrooms. Code-switching in foreign language teaching may refer to alternating between two or more languages during the instructional/learning process, aiming to enhance comprehension, communication, and language acquisition. Code-switching may facilitate comprehension by allowing instructors to explain complex concepts or unfamiliar vocabulary in the learners' native language, reducing cognitive load, enabling effective content assimilation, promoting learner participation and engagement during discussions or group activities, and enhancing confidence and language proficiency. Meanwhile, it also may impede learners' production in the target language. According to Gardner-Chloros, examining the interchange between languages offers invaluable insights into the cognitive processes involved in both language comprehension and production. It prompts exploration into the linguistic cues embedded within words and sentences that facilitate meaning interpretation, as well as the mechanisms by which individuals construct and convey their intended message. Comparing this phenomenon across multiple languages enhances our understanding by highlighting distinct features and nuances inherent in the linguistic process (Gardner-Chloros, P.2009).

Frequent switches to the native language might foster dependency, hindering the development of fluency and accuracy. Depending on the study results Leibscher states that students engage in code-switching not only as a recourse when their proficiency in the second language (L2) proves insufficient or for participant-related purposes, but also for discourse-related functions that frame the interactive significance of their verbal expressions (Leibscher. 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

The research study employed a quantitative research methodology to investigate the impact of L1 and L2 on acquiring a target foreign language. Data was collected through surveys and interviews, which sought to gather information on language usage patterns, precisely the extent to which L1 and L2 were employed as instructional mediums. During the research phase, participants were stratified into proficiency cohorts comprising A1/A2 and B1/B2 levels, yet administered identical questionnaires. This stratification facilitated nuanced findings, delineating disparate perspectives on L1/L2 utilisation between lower and higher proficiency cohorts.

The collected data was analysed using statistical methods to draw meaningful conclusions and insights regarding the research objectives.

3.1.Participants

The study was conducted at one state and one private university in Georgia, Tbilisi, involving 23 university lecturers of English and Georgian as foreign languages and 203 Georgian and international students from various programs and language classes at different proficiency groups. Georgian students learned English as a foreign language, while international students studied Georgian as a foreign language. An interview approach using open-ended questionnaires was employed to gather data on the intensity, purpose and impact of L1/L2 usage within the foreign language classes.

The study aimed to reveal the purposes of L1/L2 application based on factors such as the language proficiency level of the classes, the language environment, and the specific goals for using L1/L2—whether for instructional, or involuntary usage. In both scenarios, where English was utilised as a target language and, in specific groups, as a language of instruction, and similarly with Georgian, when it functioned as a language for instruction in some groups and as a target language in others, teachers used either Georgian (their native language) or English (L2 for both teachers and students) during interactions with students. Both parties were expected to incorporate L1/L2 in the communication process.

3.2. The instrument

The research inquiries investigated the situational contexts and resultant effects of using L1/L2. Respondents were administered three closed-ended questions, accompanied by open-ended questions during interviews. The closed-ended questions were mainly uniform, with different specific aspects for students and the professors, featuring five potential response options for participants to select their preferred answer. If the participants chose the option of the first question indicating not using L1/L2 in the language classes, they did not have to answer the following two questions. These inquiries were disseminated to respondents through Google Forms, whereas the open-ended questions were posed during face-to-face encounters.

4. RESULTS

4.1.Closed questions

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The respondents' answers to the closed-ended questions gave the following data.

Students' answers

1. Under what circumstances and for what reasons do you use first/second language (L1/L2) in foreign language classes? The possible answers were 1. Never, 2. Rarely only for interacting with my groupmates, 3. Occasionally, for clarity on complex topics or cultural nuances. 4. Frequently, to aid comprehension of complex concepts. 5. Always, as a foundation for effective learning.

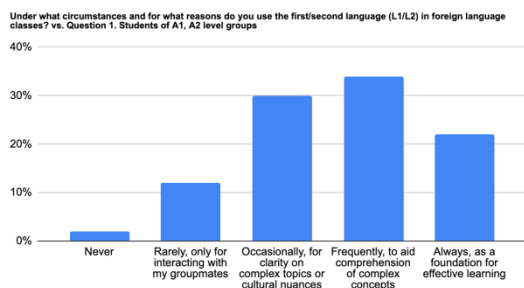


Table 1. Question 1. Students of A1, A2 level groups

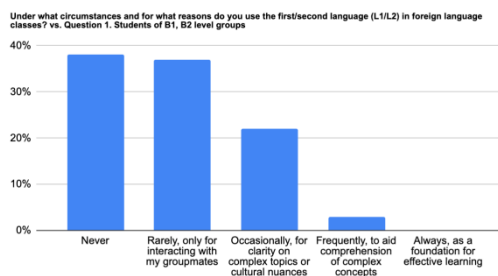


Table 2. Question 1. Students of B1, B2 level groups

2. If applied L1/L2, then to what extent does it facilitate you in acquiring the target language? The possible answers were 1. Understand the Reading Material 2. In Writing assignments 3. Speaking with group-mates and with the professor 4. Listening to the new material 5. All equally

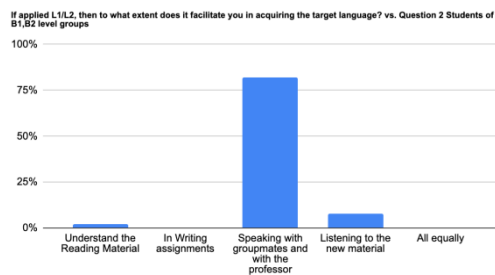


Table 4. Question 2 Students of B1,B2 level groups



3. How do you employ L1/L2 in your language practices? The possible answers were: 1. Occasional Clarification through Code-Switching: "I occasionally switch to my native language (L1) for clarification, especially when tackling complex grammar rules or cultural nuances." 2. Strategic Code-Switching for Cultural Expressions: "In certain situations, I strategically code-switch to express cultural concepts more authentically and vividly in the target language." 3. Limited Code-Switching for Clarity: "I use code-switching sparingly to maintain clarity while adhering to the conventions of the target language.", 4. Minimized Code-Switching in Spoken Interaction: "In spoken interactions, I consciously minimise code-switching to create a more immersive language learning experience, reserving it for challenging topics.", 5. Translation for Vocabulary Expansion: "To enhance my vocabulary, I try to translate them into L1, moving between my native language and the target language."



Table 5. Question 3. Students of A1,A2 level groups



Table 6. Question 3. Students of B1,B2 level groups

1. Under what circumstances and why do you use first/second language (L1/L2) in foreign language classes of A1, A2 - B1, and B2 levels? The possible answers were: 1. Never: I strictly adhere to a target language-only approach, 2. Rarely: I use L1/L2 sparingly, only in exceptional cases, while explaining the new material, 3. Occasionally: I use L1/L2 when explaining complex topics or cultural nuances, 4. Frequently: I use L1/L2 regularly to aid comprehension

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of complex concepts, 5. Always: I use L1/L2 as a fundamental aspect of effective language instruction.

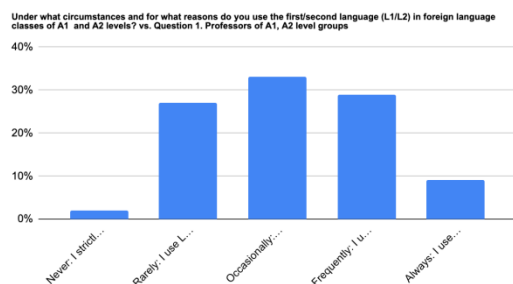


Table 7. Question 1. Professors of A1, A2 level groups

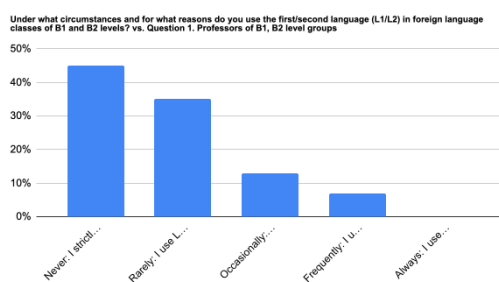


Table 8. Question 1. Professors of B1, B2 level groups

2. If applied L1/L2, then to what extent does it facilitate your students in acquiring the target language? The possible answers were 1. Understanding the Reading Material, 2. Writing assignments, 3. Speaking with group-mates and with the professor, and 4. Listening to the new material, 5. All equally.

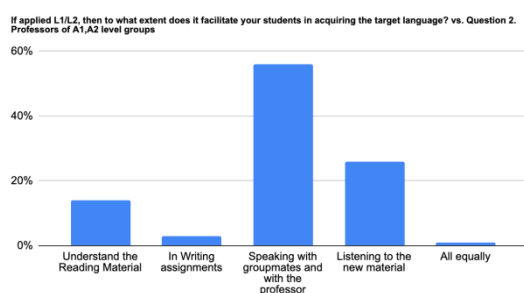


Table 9. Question 2. Professors of A1, A2 level groups

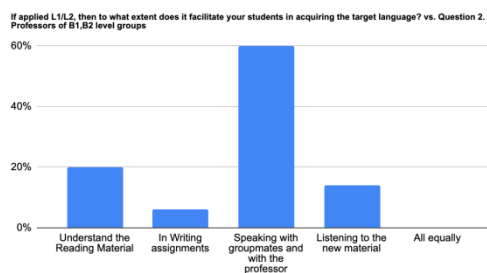


Table 10. Question 2. Professors of B1, B2 level groups

3. If so, How do you employ L1/L2 in your language practices? Possible answers were: 1. Foundational Code-Switching/translation - "I often use code-switching/translation to ensure comprehensive understanding among students." 2. Strategic Code-Switching/translation for Explanation - "I strategically code-switch/translate when explaining intricate grammatical structures or cultural subtleties." 3. Minimised Code-Switching/translation for B1/B2 Levels - "I minimise code-switching/translation to foster an immersive environment, challenging students to rely more on the target language." 4. Code-switching/Translation as a Pedagogical Tool - "I incorporate code-switching/translation as a pedagogical tool, encouraging students to translate texts between their native language and the target language for deeper understanding." 5. Selective Code-Switching/translation for Interactive Learning - "During interactive learning sessions, I selectively use code-switching/translation to engage students, balancing language immersion with effective comprehension."



5. DISCUSSION

According to the data provided above, frequency of L1/L2 Utilisation: In response to the first question, 45% of professors consciously chose not to utilise L1/L2 in their foreign language classes. This observation shaped subsequent analyses, as the survey predominantly targeted L1/L2 usage instances in target language classes. Among students, distinct patterns emerged. At the B1/B2 level, 38% claimed never to use L1/L2, whereas 37% reported rare usage. Only 22% used L1/L2 occasionally, and only 3% indicated frequent or constant usage. Contrastingly, A1/A2 level students exhibited a lower tendency to avoid L1/L2, with only 2% and 12% never or rarely using it. 34% reported frequent usage, and 22% always resorted to L1/L2. For participants who acknowledged L1/L2 usage, the extent to which it facilitated language acquisition was explored. Among B1/B2 level students, a remarkable 82% indicated its positive impact on speaking with group mates and professors. Conversely, negligible benefits were reported in understanding reading material, writing assignments, and listening to new material.

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A similar trend was observed among A1/A2 level students. Professors excluding the number of those who indicated not using L1/L2 in the foreign language classes, irrespective of proficiency level, predominantly endorsed the facilitative role of L1/L2 in speaking activities, with percentages ranging from 56% to 82%.

When students were asked to evaluate the overall facilitation of L1/L2 in language acquisition, differences between proficiency levels became evident. A1/A2 level students were more optimistic, with 35% stating L1/L2 facilitated learning to a large extent and 20% to an extreme extent. In contrast, B1/B2 level students were less convinced, with 43% asserting that L1/L2 did not facilitate. Professors mirrored this divergence, with those teaching A1/A2 level groups expressing a more positive view (ranging from 23% to 27%), while 47% of professors teaching B1/B2 level groups indicated that L1/L2 did not facilitate language acquisition at all.

5.1. Open-ended questions

The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to answer in more expanded ways, and the data collected from the face-to-face meeting interviews presented the following: The questions concerned the research questions and were asked to the students and the professors.

Research Questions	Questions for Students	Questions for Professors
RQ. 1 Under what circumstances and for what reasons is the first/second language (L1/L2) used in foreign language classes?	Can you provide specific examples or scenarios in which you use your first/second language (L1/L2) in foreign language classes? How do these instances contribute to your language learning experience?	From your perspective as an educator, could you provide insights into the circumstances and reasons that led you to use L1/L2 in foreign language classes? How do these instances align with your pedagogical approach?
RQ.2. To what extent does it facilitate learners in acquiring the target language and aid lecturers?	Reflecting on your language learning journey, describe situations where the use of L1/L2 has significantly facilitated your understanding of the target language. How did this influence your ability to acquire the language effectively?	Reflecting on your teaching experience, can you share specific examples where the application of L1/L2 has notably facilitated your students' language acquisition or comprehension? In what ways has this influenced your instructional strategies?

RQ.3. In which context is L1/L2 employed mostly reading, writing, speaking, or listening?	Considering the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), can you share instances where L1/L2 played a predominant role in enhancing your proficiency in a particular skill? How did this impact your overall language-learning process?	In language skills development (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), could you discuss how you perceive the impact of L1/L2 usage in your classes? Are there specific skills or activities where L1/L2 plays a more significant role in aiding your teaching and students' learning experiences?
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The study could reveal the following:

4.1. Open-Ended Question Results:

The responses to the open-ended questions provided nuanced insights into the circumstances and reasons for L1/L2 usage, its facilitation role, and the specific language skills where it played a predominant role for both students and professors.

The collected responses from students, spanning both A1, A2, and B1 and B2 levels, along with input from the professors, provided a comprehensive view of the diverse landscape of L1/L2 usage in foreign language classes. The inquiry into the circumstances and reasons behind using L1/L2, the extent of its facilitation in language acquisition, and the contexts where it is predominantly employed offers nuanced insights into students' and educators' preferences and practices.

Research Questions	Students' Answer	Professors' answers
RQ.1: Under what circumstances and for what reasons is the first/second language (L1/L2) used in foreign language classes?	The responses from A1 A2 level students predominantly unveiled a greater inclination towards using L1/L2. Numerous examples were cited, such as clarifying complex grammar rules or discussing cultural nuances. A majority expressed that using L1/L2 enhanced their comprehension, creating a bridge between unfamiliar concepts and their native language, thus promoting a	The professors' insights mirrored the students' trends. A1 A2 level classes saw a higher rate of L1/L2 usage among educators, aligning with their perceived necessity for scaffolding and ensuring comprehensive understanding among students at the foundational levels. However, the data also revealed a significant subset of professors (45%) who refrained from using L1/L2 in B1 B2 level classes, suggesting a nuanced pedagogical shift with higher proficiency levels.

smoother learning experience.

On the other hand, B1 B2 level students exhibited a more reserved approach. Instances where L1/L2 was used, were often tied to intricate grammatical structures or cultural subtleties, suggesting a more strategic application of their native language as they advanced in language proficiency.

RQ.2: To what extent does it facilitate learners in acquiring the target language and aid lecturers.

A1 A2 level students overwhelmingly noted that using L1/L2 significantly facilitated their language learning journey. Examples included discussions that clarified confusing concepts, aiding in effective communication with peers and professors, and ultimately influencing a more profound acquisition of the target language. In contrast, B1 B2 level students, while acknowledging some facilitation, did not emphasise L1/L2 as extensively impactful in their language acquisition process, possibly indicative of a more independent approach as they progressed in proficiency.

Professors teaching at the foundational A1 A2 levels recounted instances where L1/L2 proved highly effective in aiding students' comprehension, particularly in explaining complex grammatical structures or cultural nuances. This positive impact influenced their instructional strategies, encouraging a more interactive and supportive teaching approach. In B1 B2 level classes, 45% of professors who abstained from L1/L2 usage suggested a belief in fostering an immersive environment, challenging students to rely more on the target language for comprehension, even if it meant sacrificing some immediate facilitation.

RQ.3: In which context is L1/L2 employed mostly—reading, writing, speaking, or listening?

A1 A2 level students often highlighted using L1/L2 in speaking and listening exercises, emphasising the need for clarity and

A1 A2 level professors frequently cited using L1/L2 in speaking and listening exercises, aligning with the student's preferences for effective communication. In B1 B2

effective communication. However, B1 and B2 level students showcased a more balanced distribution across all language skills, suggesting refinement in their language learning strategies.

level classes, the professors who refrained from L1/L2 use possibly aimed at encouraging a more immersive environment across all language skills, fostering a comprehensive development in students' proficiency.

The collected data unveils a dynamic relationship between language proficiency levels, teaching strategies, and the perceived impact of L1/L2 in foreign language classes. The nuanced interplay observed among students and professors underscores the importance of tailoring language instruction strategies to cater to the evolving needs of learners as they progress through proficiency levels.

RQ.1: A1/A2 students leaned towards L1/L2 usage for comprehension, while B1/B2 students strategically applied it for complex structures. Professors aligned with the following trends.

RQ.2: A1/A2 students found L1/L2 highly facilitative, while B1/B2 students emphasised a more independent approach. Professors acknowledged L1/L2 effectiveness, but 45% abstained in B1/B2 classes. **RQ.3:** A1/A2 students highlighted L1/L2 in speaking and listening, and B1/B2 students exhibited a balanced distribution. Professors' responses aligned with students' preferences.

6. CONCLUSION

The study's findings shed light on various aspects of L1/L2 usage in foreign language classrooms, addressing three key research questions.

Research Question 1: Under what circumstances and for what reasons is the first/second language (L1/L2) used in foreign language classes?

The study diligently examined the circumstances and reasons behind the use of L1/L2 in foreign language classes, both from the perspectives of students and professors. The closed-ended questions, coupled with the open-ended inquiries during interviews, uncovered nuanced insights. A1/A2 students leaned towards L1/L2 usage for comprehension, while B1/B2 students strategically applied it for complex structures. Professors aligned with these trends, with those teaching foundational A1/A2 levels often incorporating L1/L2 for comprehensive understanding. Notably, a subset of professors refrained from L1/L2 usage in B1/B2 level classes, indicative of a nuanced pedagogical shift.

Research Question 2: To what extent does it facilitate learners in acquiring the target language and aid lecturers?

A1/A2 students overwhelmingly noted that L1/L2 significantly facilitated their language learning, influencing effective communication and aiding comprehension. Professors teaching at foundational levels also acknowledged the effectiveness of L1/L2 in aiding students' comprehension, thus influencing their instructional strategies. However, a notable proportion of professors refrained from L1/L2 usage in B1/B2 level classes, aligning with the belief in fostering an immersive language environment.

Research Question 3: In which context is L1/L2 employed mostly—reading, writing, speaking, or listening?

A1/A2 level students often highlighted using L1/L2 in speaking and listening exercises for effective communication. In contrast, B1/B2 level students showcased a more balanced distribution across all language skills, indicative of refined language learning strategies. Professors' responses aligned with these trends, with a focus on speaking and listening exercises in A1/A2 level classes and a broader distribution in B1/B2 level classes, possibly aiming for comprehensive proficiency development.

Students at different proficiency levels exhibited distinct patterns, with A1/A2 students showing a greater inclination towards L1/L2 usage (in forms of translation or code-switching) than B1/B2 level students. The contextual effectiveness of L1/L2, particularly in speaking activities, was acknowledged by both students and professors, though opinions on its overall impact differed between proficiency levels.

The open-ended questions provided more nuanced insights into the circumstances and reasons for L1/L2 usage. A1/A2 students and professors often employed L1/L2 for comprehension, while B1/B2 students strategically used it for complex structures. The facilitative role of L1/L2 was more pronounced for A1/A2 students, while B1/B2 students emphasised a more independent approach to language acquisition.

The study highlights the intricate relationship between language proficiency levels, teaching strategies, and the perceived impact of L1/L2 in foreign language classes. The data suggests a nuanced pedagogical shift with higher proficiency levels, as evidenced by professors refraining from L1/L2 usage in B1/B2 level classes to foster an immersive environment.

The findings contribute to the ongoing debate on the role of the first/second language in the target language acquisition, with both advocates and opponents presenting valid arguments. The study underscores the need for language instructors to tailor their strategies based on their students' proficiency levels, recognising the varying impacts of L1/L2 interference in the form of translation or code-switching at different stages of language learning. Additionally, the study emphasises the importance of understanding students' perspectives and experiences, providing valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance the effectiveness of foreign language instruction.

In conclusion, the research study on L1/L2 interference in foreign language instruction in the Georgian context can contribute to the evolving landscape of language pedagogy. It can provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of L1/L2 usage, offering valuable implications for language educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers aiming to optimise foreign language learning experiences in diverse educational settings.

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