

Perceptions of Students towards the Use of Thai in English Classrooms

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate students' perceptions towards the use of their first language (L1), Thai, in English classrooms. The participants were 158 undergraduate students who majored in English at Asia-Pacific International University. Data were collected through a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with students. The results show that while most students recognize the advantages of using L1 to explain complicated grammatical points, define new lexical items, and clarify difficult concepts or ideas, they prefer their English classes to be conducted in English. In addition, they favor English teachers who know the students' L1 so that the teachers can use the L1 whenever needed in giving individual assistance to students. The result also suggests that students with low GPA tend to rely on L1 as a language learning tool.

Keywords: *First language (L1), Second language, Mother tongue (MT), English language teaching (ELT)*

Introduction

As a world language, English is widely taught in Thailand even though it has no official role in society (Jindapitak, 2013). However, Thai language is commonly used as the medium of instruction in English language teaching (ELT) in most schools in Thailand (Khamkhien, 2010). This phenomenon has been the subject of a number of studies. Vanichakorn (2009) investigated how students' L1 affected their English learning experiences in comparison to those in English-only classes. Abe (2011) examined perceptions of Thai university students at Ubon Ratchathani University toward their teachers from various countries, while Thongwichit (2013) looked closely at the attitudes of language and non-language students toward L1 and the reason for its use in English classes where L2 interaction was prevalent.

Literature Review

An extensive review of literature on this subject was conducted. The result of the review is divided into two categories, namely, 1) the role of L1 in second/foreign language classroom, and 2) students' perception towards the use of L1.

The Role of L1 in Second/Foreign Language Classroom

The role of students' first language (L1) in second/foreign language classroom like English has been a controversial issue for decades. Due to its capacity to explain concepts, to support learner' understanding, to describe abstract vocabulary, to save time, to clarify grammar rules, to check learners' attention, and to establish close relationship between students and teachers (Sharma, 2006; Al-Buraiki, 2008; Hussein, 2013), some view the use of L1 in ELT favorably, seeing it as a facilitator and a linguistic resource (Celik, 2008; Mart, 2013). In light of this perception, it is not surprising that proponents of L1 in language learning maintain that the prohibition of using L1 will "certainly deprive" students of a very useful language learning tool (Sharma, 2006; Hussein, 2013).

In other words, the findings from the above-mentioned studies suggest that L1 is not an obstacle to language learning.

Nevertheless, a number of studies reported conflicting findings. In their study on the use of L1 in English language teaching, Souriyavongsa, Rany, Abidin and Mei (2013) observed that the use of L1 had a crippling effect on students' language learning. They attributed the failure to two factors: (1) the excessive use of L1 and, (2) the lack of understanding on when or how to use L1 appropriately. In a similar vein, Kalanzadeh, Hemati, Shahivand, and Bakhtiarvand (2013) concluded in their study that the overuse of L1 could have a demotivating effect on students and might lead to their dissatisfaction. In contrast, some studies showed that when L1 was used appropriately, it raised students' achievement in writing English sentences (Usadiati, 2009), increased students' comprehension (Alshammari, 2011) and led to higher achievement (Damra & Qudah, 2012).

Students' Perception Towards the Use of L1

The reality is that L1 is used to varying degrees in English language classes. Students themselves have developed their own opinions of its use, and these perceptions seemed to be reflective of the controversy surrounding the use of L1. Some responded positively towards the use of L1 (Sharma, 2006; Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alshammari, 2011; Jafari, 2013). Similarly, Abe (2011) and Thongwichit (2013) discovered that many Thai students held a favorable opinion towards the use of their mother tongue in English language classes. In fact some students appreciated their English language teachers knowing their mother tongue (Craven, 2011; Jan, Li & Lin, 2014). This optimistic opinion may arise from an encouraging experience with the use of L1 in which students found it helpful in understanding difficult concept, in learning new vocabulary and in providing them a sense of direction (Dujmovic, 2007).

Others, however, saw the use of L1 as causing more harm than good. An investigation done by Al Sharaeai (2012) revealed that students preferred the English-only policy. In a different study, Vanichakorn (2009) observed that some students in English-only environment seemed to be more motivated to learn and could be easily engaged in instruction. The same phenomenon was noted both by Tsukamoto (2011) who discovered that students favored L2 over L1 instruction to improve their listening and speaking skills, and by Nazary (2008) who found that students wanted better exposure to L2 even though they expected the English teachers to know their first language.

The Present Study

While other studies on the use of L1 in English classes have been conducted in Thailand (Abe, 2011; Thongwichit, 2013 & Vanichakorn, 2009), this current study examined how the use of Thai in ELT was perceived by students who graduated from local high schools where Thai was the medium of instruction in English classes and then enrolled in ESL classes where English was the medium of instruction.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do students perceive the use of Thai in English classes?
2. If Thai is to be used in English classes, when should it be used? Under what circumstances will it be appropriate to do so based on student opinions?
3. In which skill (speaking, listening, reading, writing or grammar) do students prefer Thai to be used?
4. What type of students relies more on L1 as a language learning tool?

The findings of this study are intended to discover situations in which the use of L1 might be useful to students. The awareness of students' thoughts and opinions regarding their English learning may be helpful in guiding the teachers in their lesson planning and in their in-class interaction with their students. In situations where the use of L1 is beneficial, teachers can allow Thai to be used. Considering how influential perception is on students' decision making, the findings from this study may even influence administrative actions regarding staffing and hiring. For

instance, the administration may make sure that there are English teachers who speak Thai, and may make it a priority to hire bilingual teachers.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study were selected, using purposeful sampling, from a population of Thai students who were majoring in English in the undergraduate Thai Program at Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand. The admission criteria for the undergraduate BA English in the Thai Program differ from the admission criteria for the BA English in the International Program in terms of the required English proficiency at the time of admission. While applicants are required to have a minimum TOEFL score of 500 or IELTS score of 5.0 to major in English in the undergraduate International Program, applicants to the Thai Program are accepted at a lower level of English proficiency.

At the time of the data collection for this research, the participants were taking English courses taught by English teachers most of whom who did not speak the students' first language, and English was used as the medium of instruction in all their major courses except for translation courses where both Thai and English languages were used. The participants came with varying levels of English proficiency, ranging from basic all the way to the advanced level.

Procedure

The subjects who agreed to participate in this study were given a paper-based questionnaire at a pre-arranged time and location. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were advised of the voluntary nature of their participation. The questionnaire consisted of 24 items: 5 items of demographic characteristics and 19 items on the use of Thai language in English classes. The 19 items, designed to measure perceptions about the use of Thai language in English classes, were scaled along a 5-point Likert Scale from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. Adapted from the studies of Sharma (2006), Dujmovic (2007), Al-Nofaie (2010), and Hussein (2013), these items focused on the students' perceptions toward the use of L1 in various learning situations. The survey was written in English with Thai translation. The data collected from the questionnaire were computed and analyzed using SPSS.

Additionally, to gain deeper information on the subject, twelve participants were interviewed. They understood the voluntary nature of their participation and were assured of protection of their identity. Three questions were asked. They were:

1. What do you think about using English as the only medium of instruction?
2. Would you prefer your English teachers to use some Thai? If so, when?
3. Do you think your English teachers should know your first language? Why?

Students' responses were recorded and transcribed with word processes. Their responses were then thematically analyzed.

Results

The characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1. Of the 158 students who participated in this study, about one-thirds were male (33.5%) and two-thirds were freshmen and sophomore. More than half had a GPA between 2.00 and 3.49. The majority (60.8%) graduated from public schools, and most of them came from the north and northeastern Thailand.

Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Male	53	33.5
	Female	105	66.5
Year Level	Freshman	60	38.0
	Sophomore	49	31.0
	Junior	22	13.9
	Senior	27	17.1
GPA	below 2.00	10	6.3
	2.00-2.49	27	17.1
	2.50-2.99	39	24.7
	3.00-3.49	46	29.1
	3.50-4.00	34	21.5
	Missing	2	1.3
High school	Private School	51	32.3
	Public School	96	60.8
	Technical School	5	3.2
	Others	6	3.8
Birthplace	Central Thailand	34	21.5
	North Thailand	87	55.1
	Northeast Thailand	32	20.3
	East Thailand	3	1.9
	West Thailand	2	1.3

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants (N=158)

Table 2 reports the mean, standard deviation and percentage of strongly agree/agree and undecided. For the purpose of this study, items with mean responses of 3.00 or higher are considered important reasons for the use of Thai in English classrooms based on student perspective. Based on this guideline, 8 of the 19 items are considered important.

Items	M	SD	% (strongly agree/agree)	% (undecided)
1 Thai should be allowed in English classrooms.	2.46	1.25	27.9	17.7
2 My English teacher should know Thai.	3.05	1.16	39.5	25.9
3 I like my English teachers to use some Thai in teaching English.	2.73	1.21	29.1	29.7
4 Teachers should give permission to ask difficult questions and get the answers in Thai.	2.71	1.17	28.5	28.5
5 I think some Thai translation helps me learn English.	3.33	1.19	51.9	22.2
6 Thai is necessary to help define some new vocabulary items.	3.30	1.13	49.4	25.9
7 Thai is necessary to explain complex grammar points.	3.49	1.08	58.9	23.4
8 Thai is necessary to explain difficult concepts or ideas.	3.35	1.08	49.4	31.6
9 Thai is necessary to explain the difference between Thai and English.	3.10	1.15	38.6	32.9

Table 2 (Continued)

Items	M	SD	% (strongly agree/agree)	% (undecided)
10 Thai is necessary to give instructions.	2.86	1.14	32.9	27.2
11 Thai is necessary to motivate learners.	2.74	1.13	26.6	31.0
12 Thai is necessary to give suggestions on how to learn more effectively.	2.85	1.08	26	35.4
13 Thai is necessary to check learners' comprehension.	3.05	1.15	39.9	27.2
14 The use of Thai in class helps me feel at ease, comfortable and less stressed.	3.03	1.20	36.7	31.6
15 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Grammar.	2.68	1.25	30.4	20.9
16 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Reading.	2.28	1.12	15.2	27.2
17 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Writing.	2.36	1.22	21.6	18.4
18 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Listening.	2.39	1.22	20.9	21.5
19 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Speaking.	2.32	1.23	20.9	18.4

Table 2. Item mean, standard deviation and percentage of strongly agree/agree and undecided (N=158)

The discussion of the results is guided by the four research questions. The first discussion will address question 1.

How do students perceive the use of Thai in English classes?

Items 1 to 5 address this question. Item 1 (Thai should be allowed in English classrooms) suggests that more participants were of the opinion that Thai should not be allowed in the English classes (M=2.46, SD=1.25). These results correspond with one study on Japanese students (Tsukamoto, 2011) and two studies on Iranian students (Kalanzadeh et al., 2013; Nazary, 2008). Tsukamoto found that Japanese students appreciated having their English classes taught in English rather than in Japanese. In the Middle East, Nazary discovered that Iranian students rejected their teachers' use of L1, and that they were reluctant to use it. Likewise, Kalanzadeh et al. found that their Iranian subjects did not enjoy English classes taught in their first language.

For item 2, (My English teacher should know Thai), more participants were of the opinion that their English teachers should know Thai (M=3.05, SD=1.16). At first glance, this result seems to conflict with the result on item 1 (Thai should be allowed in English classrooms), M=2.46, SD=1.25. A careful observation shows that there is no conflict between the two. Responses to item 1 (Thai should be allowed in English classrooms) show that more students were in favor of not allowing Thai in English classroom. This item refers to the medium of instruction in English classes. On the other hand, the responses to item 2 (My English teacher should know Thai) indicate a strong preference for English teachers who know the students' L1, Thai. This refers to the language or languages the English teachers know as opposed to the language being used in the class. A similar observation was noted in other studies. Jan, Li and Lin (2014) reported that the majority of Chinese student who participated in their study expected their English teachers to know their mother tongue. Studies done by Craven (2011) and Nazary (2008) echoed the same discovery. Regardless of the students' English proficiency, they expected their English teachers to know their first language.

As shown in Table 3, more respondents did not want their teachers to use Thai in teaching English, M=2.73, SD=1.21. In other words, more participants did not want their teachers to use L1.

The same phenomenon is reflected in the participants' response to item 4 (Teachers should give permission to ask difficult questions and get the answers in Thai), $M=2.71$, $SD=1.17$. The result suggests that more respondents did not think that teachers should give permission to ask difficult questions and get the answers in Thai. Responses to item 5 (I think some Thai translation helps me learn English.) seem to be contrary to the responses to items 3 and 4 in which respondents expressed strong preference for the use of English in English classes. However, the responses to item 5 indicates that a high number of the respondents reported that some Thai translation helped them learn English, $M=3.33$, $SD=1.19$. One possible explanation for the seemingly contradicting opinion is in the way the respondents view translation. They may view translation as a process of communicating meaning in one language to another. In other words, translation is a tool to learn English, not to replace English. From this perspective, the responses to item 5 do not conflict with the responses to items 3 and 4. In fact, this result suggests that the respondents were aware of the advantages of their first language when it was occasionally used to facilitate L2 learning. This ties in with the findings of Dujmovic (2007) and Alshammari (2011) whose subjects acknowledged that L1 helped them learn English, and that a balanced use of L1 was found to be useful in the language learning process.

	Items	M	SD	% (strongly agree/agree)	% (undecided)
1	Thai should be allowed in English classrooms.	2.46	1.25	27.9	17.7
2	My English teacher should know Thai.	3.05	1.16	39.5	25.9
3	I like my English teachers to use some Thai in teaching English.	2.73	1.21	29.1	29.7
4	Teachers should give permission to ask difficult questions and get the answers in Thai.	2.71	1.17	28.5	28.5
5	I think some Thai translation helps me learn English.	3.33	1.19	51.9	22.2

Table 3. Responses to research question 1: How do students perceive the use of Thai in English classes?

The data collected from the interviews indicate that all the participants preferred classes to be conducted in English rather than in L1 because they found English-only instruction more motivating as they could improve their listening and interaction with others in L2. Comparably, Vanichakorn (2009) found that students who were instructed in English only were more motivated to learn English than those who were in bilingual classrooms. A study by Kitjaroonchai and Kitjaroonchai (2012) on the motivation of Thai students who majored in English showed that students had high levels of integrative and instrumental motivation to learn English despite the challenges they encountered in learning English.

The face-to-face interviews revealed the same phenomenon. The interviewees preferred English-only instruction even though it is challenging due to limited vocabulary, low proficiency, or difficulty in understanding instructions. They expressed a strong desire for greater exposure to English as they felt deprived in their high school because of the following issues: (1) they were taught English using the Thai language, (2) a heavy emphasis was placed on grammar, and (3) the opportunities for authentic communication for students was either very little or non-existent. Additionally, the majority of the participants in the interview expected their English teachers to know their mother tongue so that they were able to give occasional assistance to some students who need individual explanation or personalized instruction in L1. Parallel findings were made by Abe (2011) in a study at another university in Thailand. Abe reported that the students did not want their bilingual English teachers to speak Thai because they wanted to improve their English by interacting with the teachers in that language. However, these students expected their non-native English teachers to know their students' first language.

If Thai is to be used in English classes, when should it be used?

Items 6, 7 and 8 addressed the second research question. For item 6 (Thai is necessary to help define some new vocabulary items), $M=3.30$, $SD=1.13$ and 8 (Thai is necessary to explain difficult concepts or ideas), $M=3.35$, $SD=1.08$, the majority of the students thought that Thai was necessary for defining some new vocabulary items and explaining difficult concepts or ideas. Such findings are in line with several studies (Jan, Li & Lin, 2014; Hidayati, 2012; Hussein, 2013; Alshammari, 2011; Dujmovic, 2007; Sharma, 2006) which claimed that most students assigned the highest importance of the use of their L1 to defining new vocabulary or difficult words.

For item 7 (Thai is necessary to explain complex grammar points.), the majority of the respondents indicated that Thai is necessary to explain grammar points, $M=3.49$, $SD=1.08$. This finding is in line with the findings of Sharma (2006) whose study showed that over half of the students (62%) agreed that the use of L1 was necessary to explain complex grammar points. Likewise, Dujmovic (2007) discovered that almost all the student participants (97%) admitted that L1 was necessary to explain complex grammar points, and Mart (2013) supported that the use of L1 was beneficial to explain grammar.

Items	M	SD	% (strongly agree/agree)	% (undecided)
6 Thai is necessary to help define some new vocabulary items.	3.30	1.13	49.4	25.9
7 Thai is necessary to explain complex grammar points.	3.49	1.08	58.9	23.4
8 Thai is necessary to explain difficult concepts or ideas.	3.35	1.08	49.4	31.6

Table 4. Responses to research question 2: If Thai is to be used, when should it be?

In which skill do students prefer Thai to be used?

Table 5 shows students' opinion regarding the use of L1 in specific skill classes. The mean grammar skill is the highest among the five skills. In other words, grammar receives the highest support for the use of Thai ($M=2.68$, $SD=1.25$ in comparison to the other skills classes. This finding is comparable to that of Thongwichit (2013) whose study found that the majority of the respondents (67.5%) agreed that their teachers should use L1 to explain grammar, and they were in favor of their teachers using L1 to explain the difference between L1 and L2 grammar. Furthermore, some research findings showed that the use of students' L1 increased classroom interaction in teaching English grammar. A study by Hidayati (2012) found that the interaction of the classroom was high when the teacher used students' first language in teaching receptive aspects of the target language and grammar. In a separate study, Vanichakorn (2009) noted that students who studied in English-only instruction struggled in their vocabulary and grammar learning, and that students were in favor of the Thai teacher over the native-speaking teacher when it came to teaching vocabulary and grammar. She also observed in her study that the students in bilingual classes asked mostly about vocabulary and grammar lessons.

Items	M	SD	% (strongly agree/agree)	% (undecided)
15 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Grammar.	2.68	1.25	30.4	20.9
16 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Reading.	2.28	1.12	15.2	27.2
17 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Writing.	2.36	1.22	21.6	18.4
18 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Listening.	2.39	1.22	20.9	21.5
19 I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Speaking.	2.32	1.23	20.9	18.4

Table 5. Responses to research question 3: In which skill do students prefer Thai to be used?

What type of students relies more on L1 as a language learning tool?

The data were further analyzed using One-Way Anova to see the effect the demographic variables on students' perception. One demographic variable seemed to affect students' perception of the role of L1 in class. It was the students' GPAs. The results of One-Way ANOVA show that there was statistically significant impact of GPAs on students' perception on the use of L1 in the classroom on 12 of the 19 items (See Table 6). Two examples of these are item 17 (I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning writing), $F(4,151) = 5.145, p < 0.05$, and item 18 (I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning listening), $F(4, 151) = 5.145, p < 0.05$. These results suggest that GPA is an important factor influencing students' perception of the need for L1 in ESL classes. In other words, students having lower GPAs rely more on the use of L1 as a learning tool in English classes.

Item		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3 I like my English teachers to use some Thai in teaching English.	Between Groups	15.187	4	3.797	2.655	.035
	Within Groups	215.960	151	1.430		
	Total	231.147	155			
9 Thai is necessary to explain the difference between Thai and English.	Between Groups	13.808	4	3.452	2.759	.030
	Within Groups	188.936	151	1.251		
	Total	202.744	155			
10 Thai is necessary to give instructions.	Between Groups	15.781	4	3.945	3.228	.014
	Within Groups	184.527	151	1.222		
	Total	200.308	155			
11 Thai is necessary to motivate learners.	Between Groups	15.151	4	3.788	3.090	.018
	Within Groups	185.074	151	1.226		
	Total					

Table 6 (Continued)

	Item		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Total	200.224	155			
12	Thai is necessary to give suggestions on how to learn more effectively.	Between Groups	12.504	4	3.126	2.802	.028
		Within Groups	168.489	151	1.116		
		Total	180.994	155			
13	Thai is necessary to check learners' comprehension.	Between Groups	22.841	4	5.710	4.690	.001
		Within Groups	183.845	151	1.218		
		Total	206.686	155			
14	The use of Thai in class helps me feel at ease, comfortable and less stressed.	Between Groups	21.309	4	5.327	3.952	.004
		Within Groups	203.531	151	1.348		
		Total	224.840	155			
16	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Reading.	Between Groups	14.566	4	3.641	3.064	.018
		Within Groups	179.454	151	1.188		
		Total	194.019	155			
17	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Writing.	Between Groups	22.946	4	5.737	4.180	.003
		Within Groups	207.227	151	1.372		
		Total	230.173	155			
18	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Listening.	Between Groups	27.967	4	6.992	5.145	.001
		Within Groups	205.180	151	1.359		
		Total	233.147	155			
19	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Speaking.	Between Groups	23.722	4	5.930	4.252	.003
		Within Groups	210.605	151	1.395		
		Total	234.327	155			

Table 6. Students' perception of the use of L1 in ESL classrooms by GPAs: One-Way ANOVA output

To test for differences between the five GPA ranges, the post hoc comparison technique was used. In this case, the Bonferroni test was employed. The multiple comparison table is reported in Table 7. In the column labeled Mean Difference (I-J), the mean difference values marked with an asterisks indicate which perception mean differ significantly from each other at the 0.05 level of significance. The results indicate that students with higher GPAs (3.00-3.49 and 3.50 – 4.00) differ significantly from those with lower than 2.00 group in their perception of the use of L1 in writing, listening and speaking classes. These results show that the overall difference in students' perception regarding the use of L1 in ESL classrooms is due to the difference in the respondents' GPAs. The results suggest that students in the lower end of GPAs perceived greater need for the use of L1 in their ESL classes. This is the type of students who will rely on L1 as a learning tool.

							95% Confidence Interval	
Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
17	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Writing.	below 2.00	2.00-2.49	.87037	.43366	.465	-.3651	2.1058
			2.50-2.99	.98718	.41524	.187	-.1958	2.1701
			3.00-3.49	1.43478*	.40874	.006	.2703	2.5992
			3.50-4.00	1.44118*	.42143	.008	.2406	2.6418
		2.00-2.49	below 2.00	-.87037	.43366	.465	-2.1058	.3651
			2.50-2.99	.11681	.29329	1.000	-.7187	.9523
			3.00-3.49	.56441	.28401	.487	-.2447	1.3735
			3.50-4.00	.57081	.30198	.606	-.2895	1.4311
		2.50-2.99	below 2.00	-.98718	.41524	.187	-2.1701	.1958
			2.00-2.49	-.11681	.29329	1.000	-.9523	.7187
			3.00-3.49	.44760	.25500	.812	-.2788	1.1741
			3.50-4.00	.45400	.27487	1.000	-.3291	1.2371
		3.00-3.49	below 2.00	-1.43478*	.40874	.006	-2.5992	-.2703
			2.00-2.49	-.56441	.28401	.487	-1.3735	.2447
			2.50-2.99	-.44760	.25500	.812	-1.1741	.2788
			3.50-4.00	.00639	.26495	1.000	-.7484	.7612
	3.50-4.00	below 2.00	-1.44118*	.42143	.008	-2.6418	-.2406	
		2.00-2.49	-.57081	.30198	.606	-1.4311	.2895	
		2.50-2.99	-.45400	.27487	1.000	-1.2371	.3291	
		3.00-3.49	-.00639	.26495	1.000	-.7612	.7484	
18	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Listening.	below 2.00	2.00-2.49	.64815	.43152	1.000	-.5812	1.8775
			2.50-2.99	1.01282	.41319	.154	-.1643	2.1899
			3.00-3.49	1.50000*	.40672	.003	.3413	2.6587
			3.50-4.00	1.38235*	.41934	.012	.1877	2.5770
		2.00-2.49	below 2.00	-.64815	.43152	1.000	-1.8775	.5812
			2.50-2.99	.36467	.29183	1.000	-.4667	1.1961
			3.00-3.49	.85185*	.28261	.030	.0467	1.6570
			3.50-4.00	.73420	.30049	.157	-.1218	1.5902
		2.50-2.99	below 2.00	-1.01282	.41319	.154	-2.1899	.1643
			2.00-2.49	-.36467	.29183	1.000	-1.1961	.4667
			3.00-3.49	.48718	.25373	.567	-.2357	1.2100
			3.50-4.00	.36953	.27351	1.000	-.4097	1.1487
		3.00-3.49	below 2.00	-1.50000*	.40672	.003	-2.6587	-.3413
			2.00-2.49	-.85185*	.28261	.030	-1.6570	-.0467
			2.50-2.99	-.48718	.25373	.567	-1.2100	.2357
			3.50-4.00	-.11765	.26364	1.000	-.8687	.6334

Table 7 (Continued)

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
19	I prefer Thai to be used the most in learning Speaking.	3.50- below 2.00	-1.38235*	.41934	.012	-2.5770	-.1877
		4.00 2.00-2.49	-.73420	.30049	.157	-1.5902	.1218
		2.50-2.99	-.36953	.27351	1.000	-1.1487	.4097
		3.00-3.49	.11765	.26364	1.000	-.6334	.8687
		below 2.00 2.00-2.49	.84444	.43718	.553	-.4010	2.0899
		2.50-2.99	.83590	.41861	.476	-.3567	2.0285
		3.00-3.49	1.37826*	.41206	.010	.2044	2.5522
		3.50-4.00	1.42941*	.42485	.010	.2191	2.6397
		2.00- below 2.00	-.84444	.43718	.553	-2.0899	.4010
		2.49 2.50-2.99	-.00855	.29567	1.000	-.8509	.8338
		3.00-3.49	.53382	.28632	.642	-.2819	1.3495
		3.50-4.00	.58497	.30443	.566	-.2823	1.4523
		2.50- below 2.00	-.83590	.41861	.476	-2.0285	.3567
		2.99 2.00-2.49	.00855	.29567	1.000	-.8338	.8509
		3.00-3.49	.54236	.25707	.365	-.1900	1.2747
		3.50-4.00	.59351	.27710	.338	-.1959	1.3829
		3.00- below 2.00	-1.37826*	.41206	.010	-2.5522	-.2044
		3.49 2.00-2.49	-.53382	.28632	.642	-1.3495	.2819
		2.50-2.99	-.54236	.25707	.365	-1.2747	.1900
		3.50-4.00	.05115	.26710	1.000	-.7098	.8121
	3.50- below 2.00	-1.42941*	.42485	.010	-2.6397	-.2191	
	4.00 2.00-2.49	-.58497	.30443	.566	-1.4523	.2823	
	2.50-2.99	-.59351	.27710	.338	-1.3829	.1959	
	3.00-3.49	-.05115	.26710	1.000	-.8121	.7098	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7. Multiple Comparison of student's perception by GPAs (selected output)

Discussion

Limitations of the Study

We recognize a number of limitations of this study. First, the main data collection was done mainly through questionnaire which does not always allow an in-depth understanding of the subjects' perception of the items or the variables under consideration. Second, the number of interview was limited and the questions posed may have not probed the participants adequately regarding their perceptions. Conducting more individual interviews could yield richer data and may have helped us in discovering the reasons for the high percentage of "undecided" in many of the items. Third, the participants were not selected using random sampling procedure and, therefore, the result may not necessarily generalize to the population of English majors in the Thai Program of Asia-Pacific International University. Future study should consider these limitations.

Conclusions

The results of this study show that students were generally in favor of using English in English classrooms rather than using their first language. Students reported that such a classroom environment increased their motivation, provided opportunities for more exposure to English, and encouraged them to communicate more in English. Although a large percentage of the participants were of the opinion that their first language should not be used in English classrooms, they recognized that their L1 helped them learn L2. The findings reveal that the use of L1 is necessary to explain complex grammatical points, to define some new vocabulary items, and clarify difficult concepts or ideas. We also discovered that students expected their teachers to know their L1 so that they can give occasional individual assistance to students who struggle to understand English-only instruction. In short, our findings suggest that the participants were in favor of the use of L2 in the English classes to encourage greater exposure and increased use of the target language while recognizing the facilitating role of their L1 in their L2 learning process. The results of the One-Way Anova and post hoc tests indicate that GPAs have a significant impact on students' perception of the need for L1 in the classroom, and that those with lower GPAs perceived greater needs for the use of L1 in some areas as opposed to those with higher GPAs.

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