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Tracing the First Voice: The Influence of Mother Tongue on Second Language Acquisition-A Study of English Learning among Undergraduate Students in Pakistani Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cognitive, pedagogical, and sociological aspects of how the mother tongue affects undergraduate English language learners at Pakistani universities. The study examines how L1 helps or hinders English learning, including vocabulary understanding, grammar acquisition, pronunciation, and classroom confidence, using a quantitative survey of 60 students whose primary mother tongues are Urdu and Punjabi. The findings show that the mother language has two functions: it can interfere with pronunciation and provide a helpful linguistic foundation through shared structures, but it can also cause problems like direct translation errors. The study emphasizes a range of student perspectives impacted by environmental, linguistic, and individual factors, highlighting the significance of well-rounded teaching approaches that use the mother tongue to improve learning without sacrificing proficiency in English.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Second Language Acquisition, Undergraduate students, Pronunciation, Fluency, Grammar.

Introduction

Language is a tool used by people to talk with others, learn new things, and make friends. Learning a language is important for more than just doing well in school; it's also important for your identity and sense of belonging to a culture. The mother tongue (L1) is the first language system that learners learn, and it has a big impact on how they learn a second language (L2). Ellis (1997) states that second language acquisition is "the process by which people develop the ability to use another language, in addition to their mother tongue." This process is intricate and shaped by linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social variables.

In countries with several languages, like Pakistan and India, English is essential in school and in work. But the way that pupils' first language and English work together can be both helpful and difficult. For example, L1 gives pupils a structure to build on that helps them learn English by

using structures and ideas they already know. At the same time, discrepancies in syntax, pronunciation, and cultural idioms can get in the way. Because L1 has two roles, it's vital to look at how it helps or hurts learning L2. Consequently, this study concentrates on the impact of the mother tongue on English language acquisition among secondary school students, examining its cognitive, pedagogical, and socio-cultural aspects.

Current pedagogical and linguistic theories highlight the importance of the mother tongue in the process of learning a second language and portray it as a tool that a kid can use in the classroom. Stated differently, L1 is positioned as a strong foundation upon which the second language can be constructed (Cummins, 2001).

It is important to remember, nevertheless, that a native tongue can be both a benefit and a barrier to learning a second language. Additionally, it is argued that students should be made aware of both the similarities and disparities between the two languages since doing so will only help them to understand the connections or distinctions between the L1 and the L2 (Bybee, 2008).

Research Questions:

1. In what ways does the mother tongue help or hinder undergraduate students' efforts to learn English?
2. What structural parallels and divergences exist between English and Urdu (or other L1s) and their impact on students' learning?
3. What effects does the mother tongue have on the sociocultural, pedagogical, and cognitive aspects of learning English?
4. Which kinds of mistakes in English usage can be attributed to mother language influence?

Review of the Literature

Language acquisition is the natural and subconscious way that people learn a language, usually starting with their first language. Krashen (1982) posits that acquisition is distinct from formal learning, occurring intuitively and resembling the process by which toddlers acquire their first language. Chomsky (1965) posited the concept of an inherent "language acquisition device" (LAD), proposing that people are physiologically predisposed to acquire language. Brown (2000) characterizes second language acquisition as "the examination of how learners construct a new language system with minimal exposure, utilizing both their first language and the linguistic input they receive." These definitions emphasize that SLA transcends the mere memorization of vocabulary or grammar rules; it entails the construction of a cognitive framework inspired by L1. The research indicates the existence of both positive and negative transfer from the mother tongue to the second language (L2). Positive transfer happens when learners use cognates or shared syntactic structures to help them learn L1 and L2. When L1 rules are used inappropriately in L2, this is called negative transfer or interference. Odlin (1989) says that transfer is "the effect that comes from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been learned before." Studies have proven over and over that L1 phonological and syntactic systems affect how people pronounce words, how they structure sentences, and how they make mistakes in English (Treffers-Daller et al., 2022; George & Abdullah, 2021).

UNESCO (2014) has stressed the importance of mother tongue in education, saying that children learn best when they are taught in their L1 during their early years in school. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) posits that the exclusion of children's mother tongue in educational settings may result in "linguistic genocide." Diba and Priyadarshini (2023) also say that kids who learn to read and write

in their first language first have better comprehension abilities and find it easier to switch to studying a second language.

In many postcolonial settings, however, the urge to learn English might cause people to forget their native language. Heugh (2011) says that when kids are forced to study exclusively English too soon, their learning and confidence go down. This suggests that multilingual education is the best option, but it might be hard to put into practice because of things like teacher training, the availability of resources, and how people feel about languages.

Manrique (2013) says that the most typical ways that the mother tongue and the target language get in the way of each other are by making grammatical mistakes and saying things wrong. According to Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2013), writing is the hardest of the four language skills. Writing is also the hardest way to talk to someone. They demonstrated that the L1 interference categories for each type of writing differ from one another in terms of syntactic and semantic aspects of L1. The verb form, word choice, sentence structure, and article preposition were the L1 interference categories that happened more than 100 times during the narrative. Because the pupils are not very good at English, it is clear that their native language is still getting in the way. Students use translation and translation methods from their own language to help them understand. Some people say that being able to speak is the hardest skill to learn, and it's clear that spoken English is very vital, especially as a way to communicate.

(2002) Suliman (2014) As an Iranian English teacher who has been working in Turkey for three years, noticed that Turkish pupils have trouble learning English for three main reasons: The Ministry of National Education in Turkey (MEB) says that the best way to learn English is to focus on grammar and accept that English has rigid rules. They also give them a lot of lists and tell them to remember them. Unfortunately, these lists only give one or two meanings, even if the words themselves could represent a lot of different things in different situations. This statement is about the Research in Language and Education: An International Journal (RILE). Kasap, S., and Emamvirdi, B. 8 say that it is not taught, which is especially dangerous for words like "any." The literal translation of this word is "Herhangi," however when used in a negative way, it becomes "Hic." Have you ever lived in a country where English is the main language? The term "ngilizce konuşulan herhangi bir ülkede yaşadınız mı?" means "I do not have any pets." "Hiç evcil hayvanım yok," on the other hand, means that I don't have any pets. There are no strict restrictions for the English language, as any natural English speaker would tell you. You can look at almost anything in a number of ways. The criterion that it must have a correct sound is the most like a rule. If kids learned English through sentences, they would virtually instantly learn grammar.

Most students who are studying Turkish have trouble with tenses, like simple, perfect, and continuous. It should be easy to just give it a name, but it's hard since speakers of other languages are trying to use their own tense rules, which are clearly not the same. They need to learn English in certain situations and think of it in those words, or in an English way, if you like. If you don't do this, people will keep being confused.

Third, this is one of the most important words in English. If you use it in a sentence where it doesn't belong, it could hurt the whole sentence. The same thing is true if it isn't there. In summary, Kavaliauskiene (2009) presented an alternative set of findings. First of all, all pupils Most of the time, kids who are studying English use their native language. They also do things like reading comprehension tasks, writing summaries, and back-translation assignments. These activities help students understand how English is different from their first language, which helps

them learn the language better. Numerous publications have been authored regarding the phenomenon of mother tongue interference, with each article illuminating a unique aspect of the topic. Because of this, this study was done to help people understand the problem better. The two questions outlined below are the central focus of this inquiry:

- 1) How is the first language (L1) used in a typical English classroom in Iran and Turkey?
- 2) What do English professors and students think about using L1 in classes where L2 is being taught?

But this impact may also be in the teaching method or the style of teaching. This study describes the difficulties that undergraduate students, non-native speakers of English, encounter when learning English due to the impact of their mother tongue, specifically with regard to motivation and linguistic interference. According to Abbas et al. (2025), language learning can be revolutionized by contemporary educational technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), which provides engaging, adaptive experiences and individualized feedback. Even though conventional teaching techniques are still useful, including AI-powered resources helps solve issues caused by mother tongue interference by offering specialized assistance. This highlights how crucial it is to combine cutting-edge teaching resources with consideration for students' linguistic origins in order to successfully improve language acquisition.

And as John P. Kotter said, "The rate of change is not going to slow down...if you want to get ahead, you're going to have to change more than you have before."

Theoretical Framework

This study uses a number of theoretical points of view to look at how a person's first language affects their ability to learn a second language.

• Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH):

Lado (1957) asserts that the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) posits that learners juxtapose L1 and L2 structures, facilitating learning when similarities are present. Learners are more likely to make mistakes when there are differences. For instance, Urdu and English both use SVO word order, which helps people learn how to make simple English phrases. But people often make mistakes while using articles ("a"/"the") because Urdu doesn't have articles in the same way.

• Error Analysis (EA):

Corder (1967) stressed the need to look at learner errors since they show how people learn a language. EA helps figure out how L1 affects L2 mistakes, including translating too literally, using the wrong tense, or making phonological substitutions.

• Krashen's Input Hypothesis:

Krashen (1985) posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to "comprehensible input" that is marginally above their existing proficiency level ($i+1$). The first language can help make L2 input easier to understand, especially at first.

• Socio-cultural Theory:

Vygotsky (1978) says that language learning is a process that happens through social interaction, identity, and cultural background. From this viewpoint, the mother tongue is not solely a linguistic system but a cultural asset that affects motivation, self-esteem, and identity in second language acquisition. These frameworks work together to describe how the mother tongue affects learning English on a structural, cognitive, and social level.

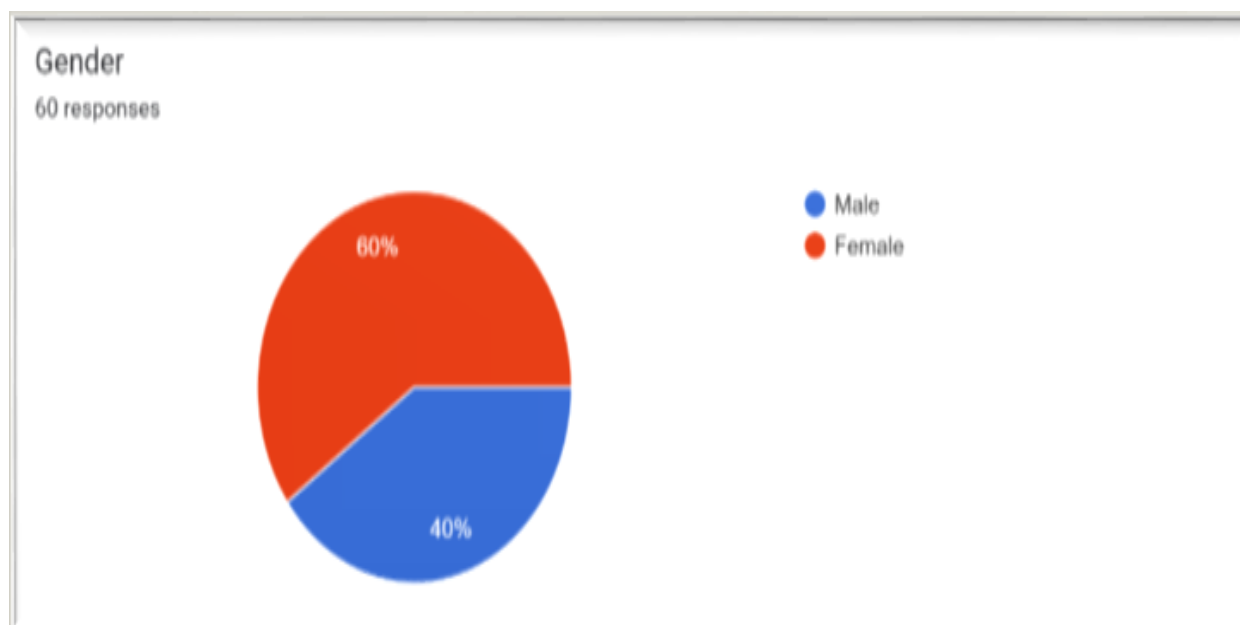
Methodology:

This research used a quantitative survey methodology to investigate secondary school students' perceptions regarding the impact of their mother tongue on English language acquisition. A standardized questionnaire is administered to around 60 students, aged 18-22, enrolled in multilingual institutions where English is a mandatory course.

There are different parts to the questionnaire: personal information, language background, how well you think you speak, read, write, and listen in English, experiences of positive and negative transfer, and how you feel about both L1 and L2. Items on a Likert scale show how much learners think L1 helps or gets in the way of their English learning. A pilot study is done to improve the tool and make sure it is reliable and valid.

Data Collection

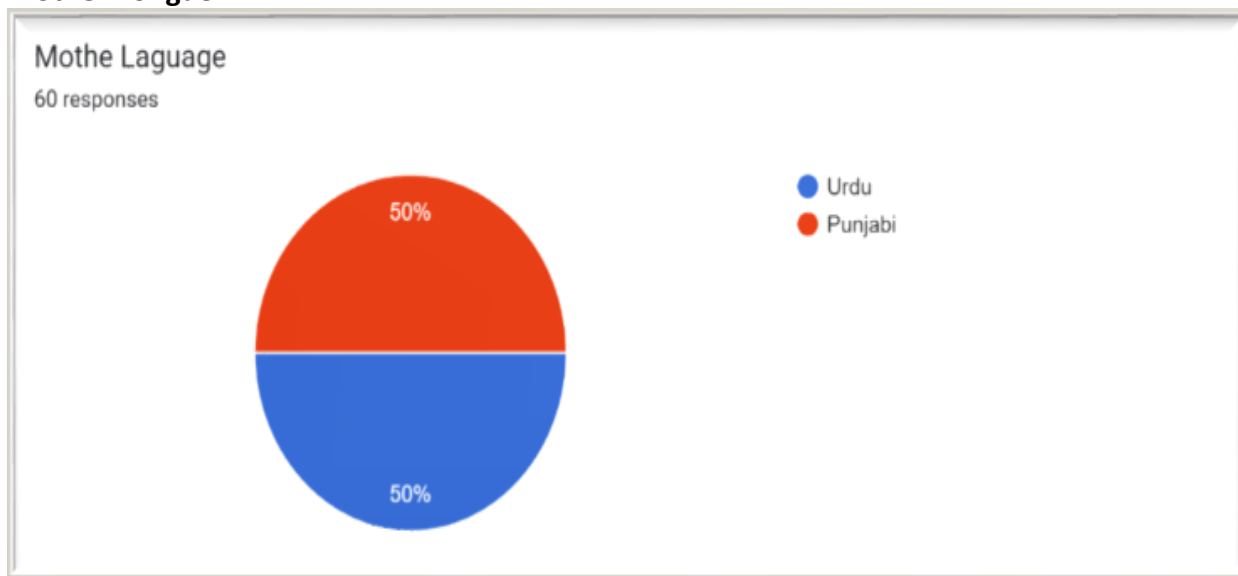
A Google Form questionnaire collects data from 60 students at different universities in Pakistan, with permission from both the universities and the students. We use SPSS software to code and analyze the answers. Descriptive statistics (such frequencies, percentages, and averages) are used to find general patterns of L1 effect. Correlation analysis analyzes the link between L1 background and English competence levels. This method sheds light on how L1 helps or hurts English learning, what problems students have, and how teachers can make plans to overcome these problems.

Data Analysis: Gender:

The gender distribution of 60 respondents is displayed in the pie chart.

Based on the chart: Women make up 60% of the respondents.

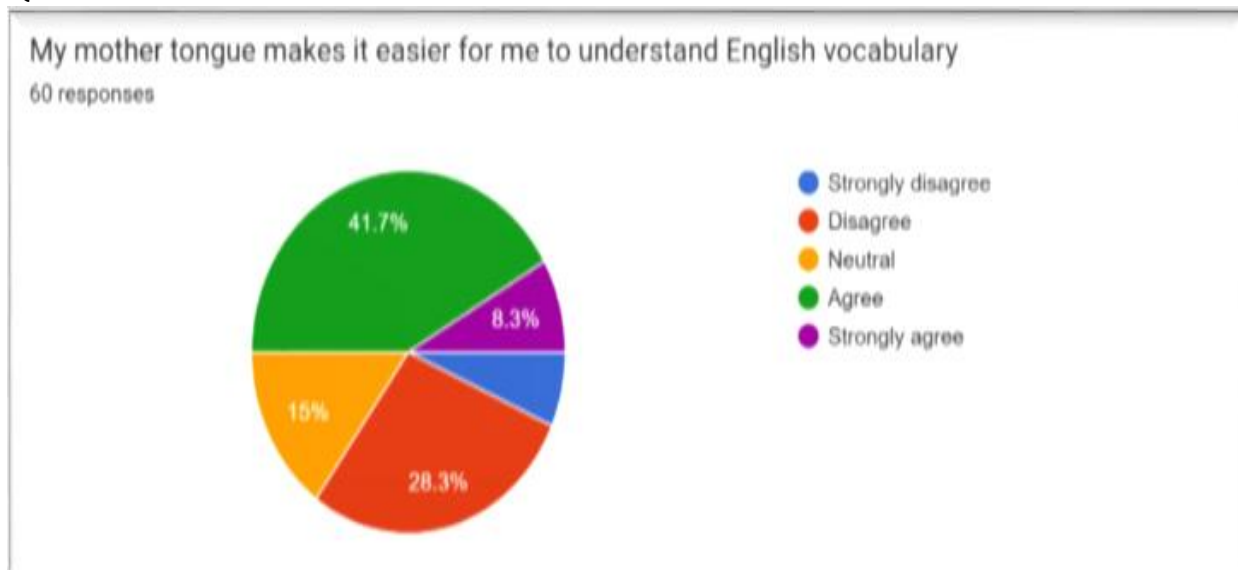
Male responders make up 40% of the sample.

Mother Tongue:

60 respondents' mother tongue distribution is displayed in the "Mother Language" pie chart.

- The data shows that 50% of respondents said Urdu was their first language.
- Punjabi was indicated as the mother tongue by 50% of the participants.

An equal distribution of Urdu and Punjabi speakers among the respondents is shown by the data. A bilingual or balanced language community within the surveyed group may be indicated by this equal representation.

Question 1:

The statement "*Mother Tongue and English Vocabulary*" shows students' views about whether their mother tongue helps them understand English vocabulary.

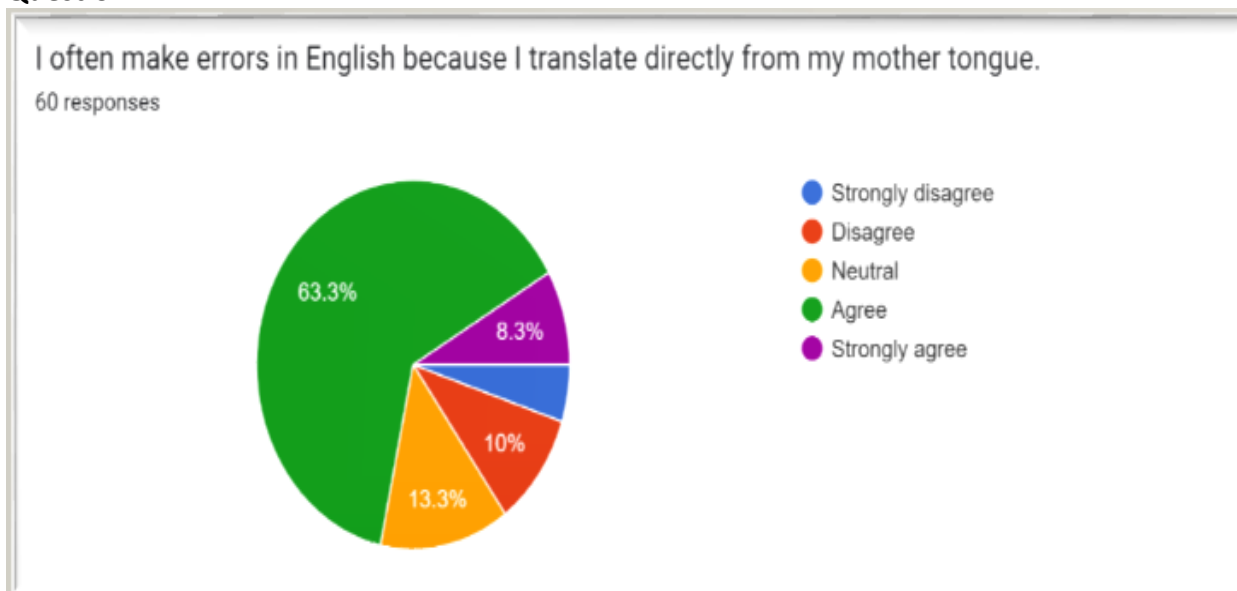
70% are Agree

15% are Neutral

15% students Disagree

70% of students agreed that their mother tongue helps them in understanding English vocabulary. And 15% disagreed, while 15% stayed neutral. This indicates that for the majority, the mother tongue plays a positive role in learning English.

Question 2:



71.6% participants agree

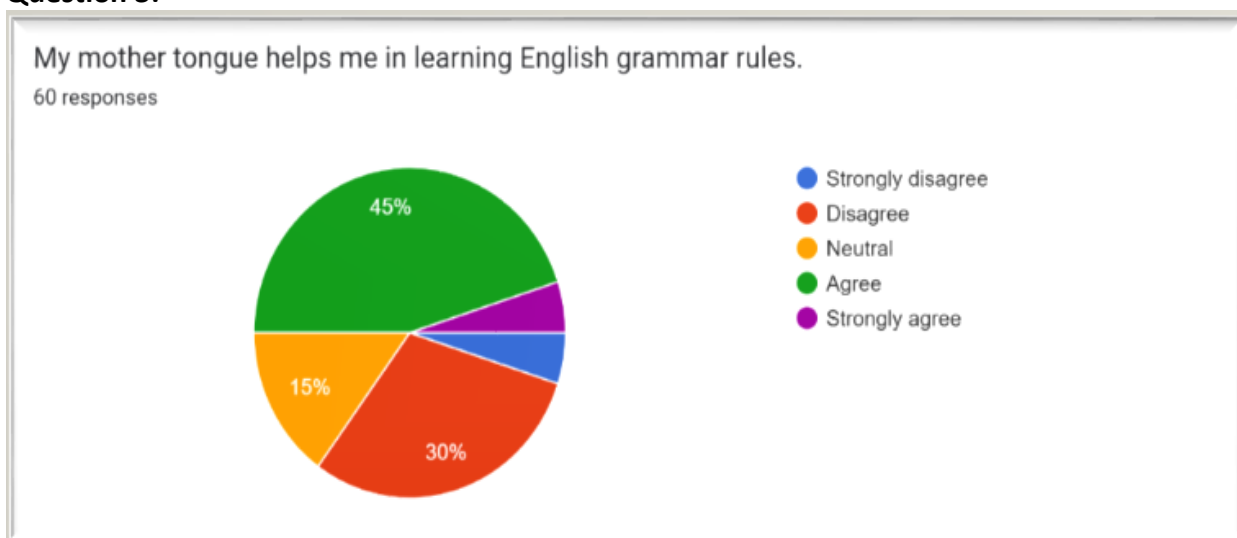
13.3% are Neutral

15.1% students Disagree

Errors Due to Direct Translation:

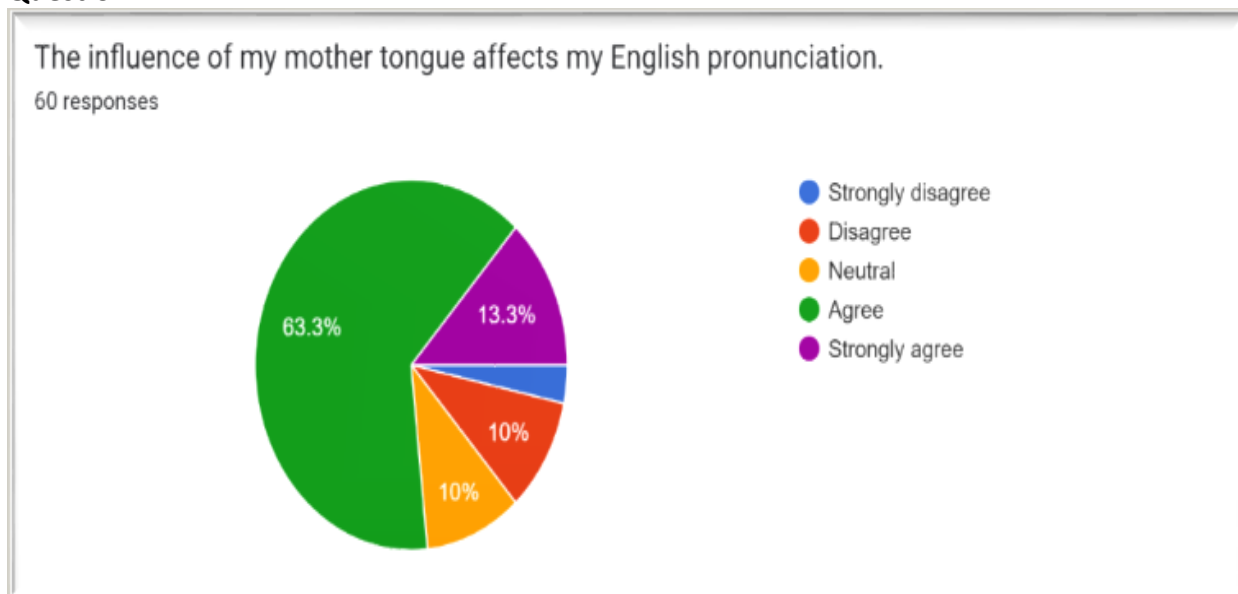
There is strong agreement that direct translation from the mother tongue often causes errors in English. This highlights a common challenge in learning English influenced by native language interference. The ratio of approximately 72% shows that the influence of mother tongue is one of the main reasons for making errors, which may be the semantical error and the grammatical error, like subject-verb agreement and more.

Question 3:



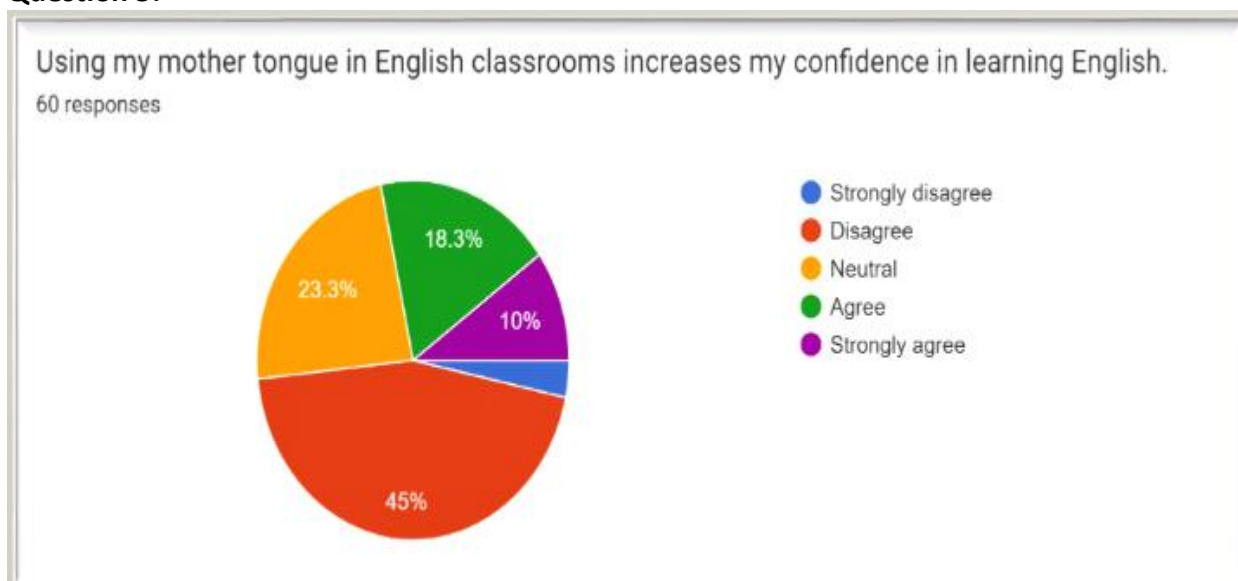
Learning Grammar Rules: Responses are mixed but tend to agree that the mother tongue helps in learning English grammar rules, implying some transfer of syntactic understanding.

Question 4:

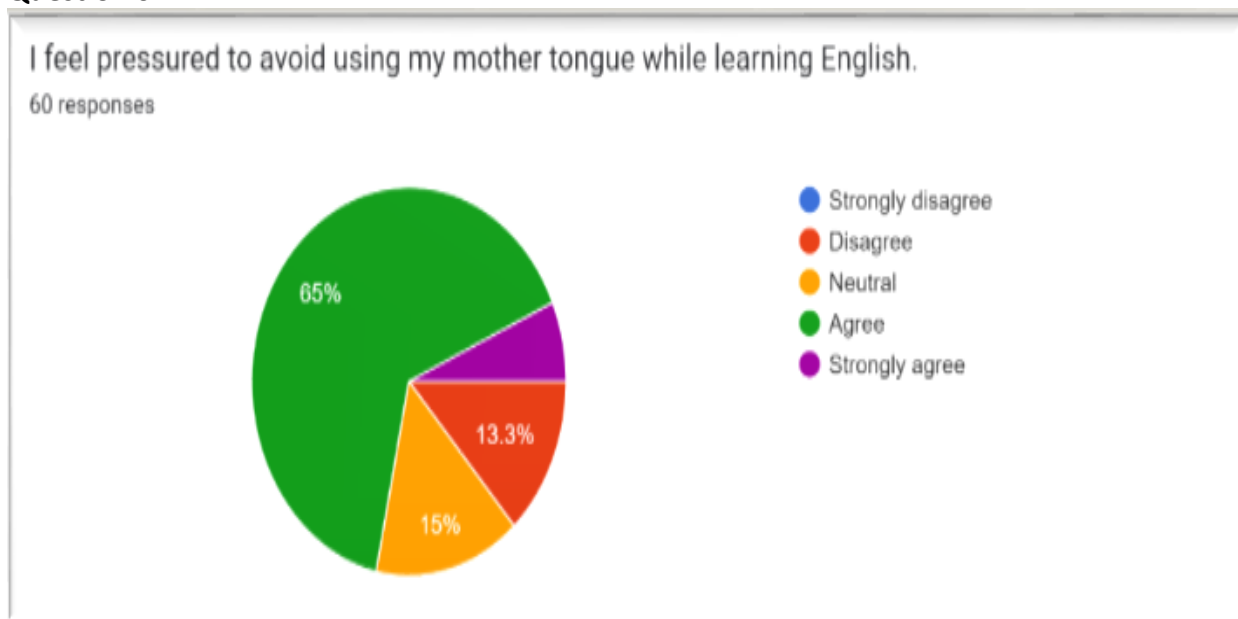


Pronunciation Influence: Many respondents agree that their mother tongue affects their English pronunciation, indicating a notable impact of phonetic interference.

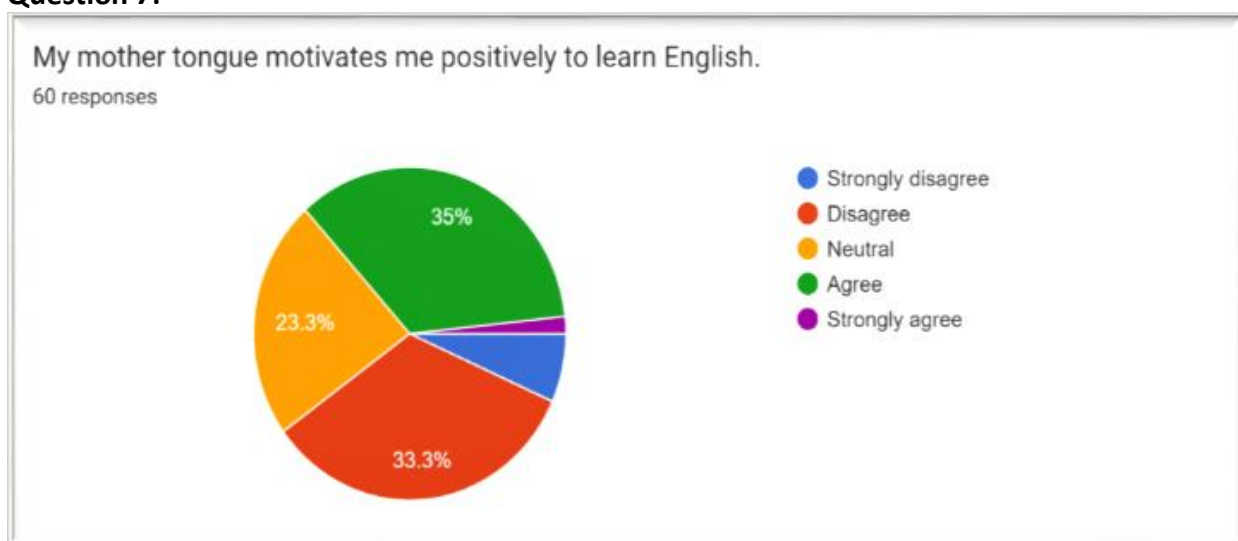
Question 5:



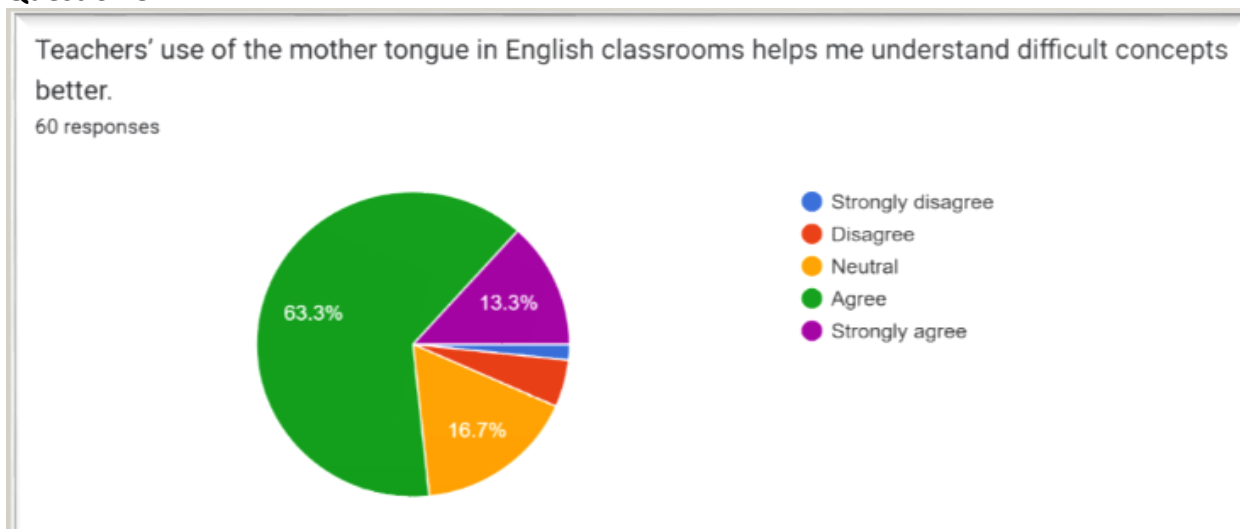
Confidence and Usage in Classrooms: In using the mother tongue in English learning classrooms, most of the participants disagree on increasing confidence.

Question 6:

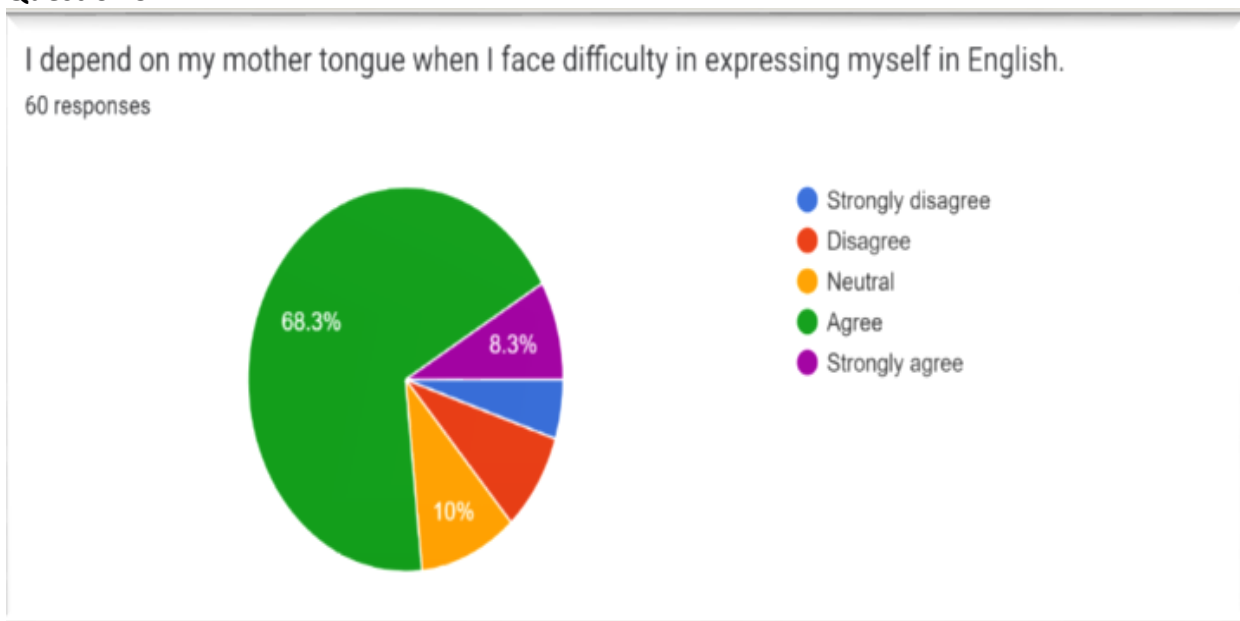
Most of the respondents (71.3%) feel pressured to avoid using their mother tongue while learning English, indicating a conflict between policy/practice and learner comfort. 13.3% disagree with the statement shows that they do not feel any pressure in using their Mother tongue and almost 15% are neutral.

Question 7:

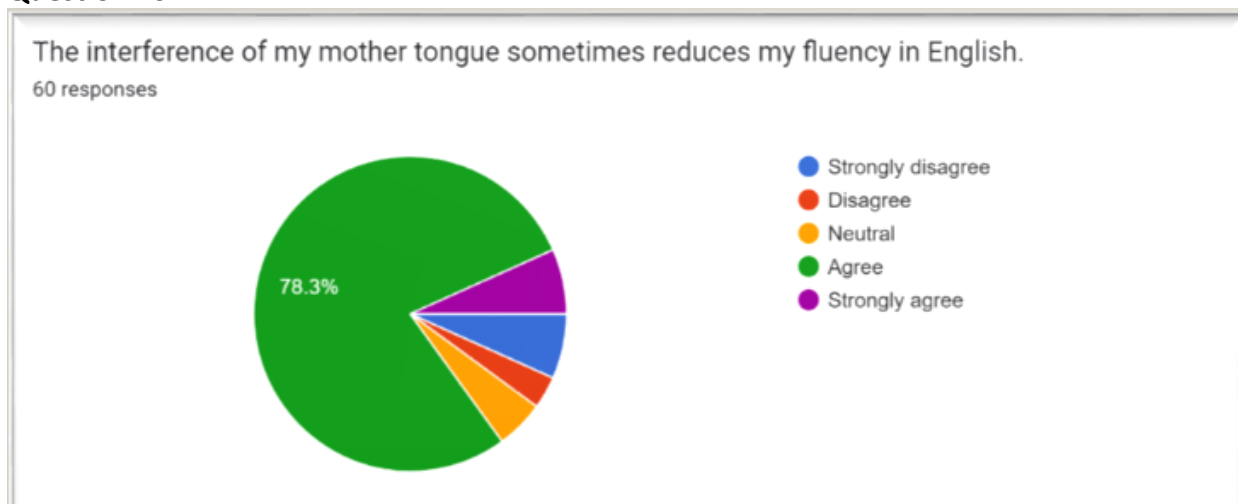
Motivation: Almost 40% of the total participants think that the mother tongue does not motivate them positively to learn the English language, while 36.7% agree with the statement, and 23.3% participants are neutral. The reason behind this diversity is discussed in Discussion section.

Question 8:

Teacher Use of Mother Tongue: Most agree that teachers' use of the mother tongue helps clarify difficult concepts, underlining the practical classroom benefits.

Question 9:**Expressing Difficulties:**

When faced with difficulties expressing themselves in English, the majority of respondents rely on their mother tongue, demonstrating a dependence on L1 as a support

Question 10:

Fluency Interference: There is a perception that mother tongue interference sometimes reduces English fluency, matching linguistic transfer theory.

Summary of the Responses

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree
<i>My mother tongue makes it easier for me to understand English vocabulary</i>	25	17	9	5	4
<i>I often make errors in English because I translate directly from my mother tongue.</i>	38	6	8	5	3
<i>My mother tongue helps me in learning English grammar rules.</i>	27	18	9	3	3
<i>The influence of my mother tongue affects my English pronunciation.</i>	38	6	6	8	2
<i>Using my mother tongue in English classrooms increases my confidence in learning English</i>	11	27	14	6	2
<i>I feel pressured to avoid using my mother tongue while learning English.</i>	39	8	9	4	0
<i>My mother tongue motivates me positively to learn English.</i>	21	20	14	1	4
<i>Teachers' use of the mother tongue in English classrooms helps me understand difficult concepts better</i>	38	3	10	8	1
<i>I depend on my mother tongue when I face difficulty in expressing myself in English.</i>	41	5	6	5	3
<i>The interference of my mother tongue sometimes reduces my fluency in English.</i>	47	2	3	4	4

This layout shows the distribution of responses across all statements for easy comparison of response patterns.

Here is the statistical summary table for the responses, including the Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and p-value:

Statement	Mean	SD	p-value
<i>My mother tongue makes it easier for me to understand English vocabulary</i>	3.17	1.14	0.261
<i>I often make errors in English because I translate directly from my mother tongue.</i>	3.60	0.96	0.00001
<i>My mother tongue helps me in learning English grammar rules.</i>	3.15	1.07	0.282
<i>The influence of my mother tongue affects my English pronunciation.</i>	3.73	0.94	0.0000001
<i>Using my mother tongue in English classrooms increases my confidence in learning English</i>	2.87	1.08	0.343
<i>I feel pressured to avoid using my mother tongue while learning English.</i>	3.50	1.01	0.004
<i>My mother tongue motivates me positively to learn English.</i>	3.07	1.11	0.497
<i>Teachers' use of the mother tongue in English classrooms helps me understand difficult concepts better</i>	3.62	0.97	0.00002
<i>I depend on my mother tongue when I face difficulty in expressing myself in English.</i>	3.67	0.97	0.000006
<i>The interference of my mother tongue sometimes reduces my fluency in English.</i>	3.76	0.93	0.0000002

These show average response levels above or below neutral (3), the variability in responses, and which statements have means significantly different from neutral based on one-sample t-tests ($p < 0.05$).

The above statistics discuss a thorough examination of the respondents' perceptions of the impact of their mother tongue on several facets of learning English. Mean ratings on a 5-point Likert scale are largely above the neutral midpoint of 3, indicating that participants generally agree that their mother tongue influences their English acquisition in a variety of ways. Notably, there were notable benefits in terms of direct translation errors (mean = 3.60, $p < 0.001$), pronunciation influence (mean = 3.73, $p < 0.001$), the usefulness of teachers' use of the mother tongue in understanding complex ideas (mean = 3.62, $p < 0.001$), and dependence on the mother tongue when faced with expression challenges (mean = 3.67, $p < 0.001$). These imply that participants are aware of the native language's both facilitating and interfering functions.

Mixed sentiments regarding this feature were indicated by the fact that the statement "Using my mother tongue in English classrooms increases my confidence" did not significantly differ from neutral (mean = 2.87, $p = 0.343$). Individual answers exhibit moderate variety, with standard deviations ranging from 0.9 to 1.1, reflecting a range of experiences. All things considered, the statistically significant deviations from neutral suggest considerable mother tongue effects on

learning English, highlighting the nuanced role of native language as a facilitator and a hindrance. In order to improve second language acquisition, this nuanced perspective advocates integrating mother tongue issues into carefully balanced instructional procedures.

Discussion:

The diversity in percentages of responses like "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "Neutral" for each question in your survey can be explained by several factors related to how students perceive and experience the influence of their mother tongue on learning English:

Positive Role of Mother Tongue:

The mother tongue plays a significant cognitive role in second language learning by providing a foundation of linguistic knowledge and cognitive frameworks. Students leverage their first language (L1) skills, prior learning experience, and worldview to facilitate acquiring English as a second language (L2). This can explain why many students agree or strongly agree that their mother tongue helps in understanding vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The mother tongue keeps learners engaged, builds confidence, and sustains L1 identity while learning a new language, which boosts motivation and learning efficiency (Kanwal, 2022).

Variation Due to Transfer Effects:

The influence of the mother tongue involves both positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when similarities between L1 and L2 aid the learning process, such as shared grammatical structures. Negative transfer or interference happens when features of L1 cause errors or difficulties in L2, like mispronunciations or direct translation errors. This dual nature causes diverse responses; some students experience more benefits and agree, while others face challenges leading to disagreement or neutral stances (Gao, 2023).

Contextual and Individual Differences:

Responses are also shaped by individual learner differences (such as proficiency and learning style), the linguistic distance between mother tongue and English, and educational contexts including teacher practices. For example, some students feel pressure to avoid L1 usage in class, causing disagreement with positive statements about mother tongue use. Others experience encouragement and support through L1 use, leading to agreement. These contextual factors explain the mixed percentages of agree, disagree, and neutral responses across different questions (Okafor, 2023).

Complexity and Ambiguity:

Some responses are neutral because students may have mixed or unclear experiences. They might see benefits in some aspects of language learning but drawbacks in others. Also, societal and cultural attitudes towards language learning can influence whether students feel positively or negatively toward their mother tongue's role, adding to the diversity in views.

Individual Differences:

Students have different levels of exposure, proficiency, confidence, and learning experiences with English and their mother tongue. This variation naturally leads to diverse views—some strongly agree that their mother tongue helps, while others might disagree based on challenges they face.

Specific Question Focus:

Each question targets a specific aspect (vocabulary, pronunciation, confidence, motivation, errors, etc.). Students may perceive the impact positively in one area (e.g., understanding

vocabulary) while seeing challenges in another (e.g., errors due to direct translation from mother tongue). This results in variation in agreement levels question-wise.

Balanced Views:

Neutral responses indicate that some students neither fully agree nor disagree, reflecting their uncertainty or mixed experiences regarding the influence of their mother tongue.

Influence of Teaching Methods: Some students may benefit from teachers using the mother tongue in classrooms, leading to agreement on related questions, while others may feel pressured to avoid it or see it as interfering, causing disagreement.

Linguistic and Cultural Factors:

The mother tongue's similarity or difference with English influences how students respond. For example, phonetic or grammatical differences may cause some students to perceive negative interference, while others benefit from structural similarities aiding learning.

Motivation and Confidence:

While some learners find their mother tongue motivating and confidence-building, others might feel it limits their fluency or expression, producing mixed responses.

In summary, the diversity in response percentages reflects the complex, multifaceted role of the mother tongue in English language acquisition. Its impact varies according to linguistic, cognitive, individual, and social factors, resulting in students having different perceptions and experiences. Research shows that mother tongue plays a complex role in second language acquisition it can support learning through cognitive and cultural connections but also cause interference due to structural differences and over-reliance, producing varied student opinions and responses across survey questions.

Issues related to mother tongue interference:**How do you say?**

Second language learners have trouble since English phonemes sound different from those in their first language. Because of this, they often use the same sounds from their first language. When students say consonants like "th," "ed," or "ph" wrong in verbs, or when they say a word that was spelled the same way in their first language, they are showing their first language accent. This may make it hard to understand what people are saying when you talk to them.

Anxiety:

Second language learners often don't stress a word or syllable at all, or they stress it in the wrong way. For example, think about how you say exclamations and inquiries.

Structure of Grammar

When it comes to tenses, English learners might make a lot of grammatical mistakes, such as forgetting nouns or auxiliaries or employing the wrong verb form. They also utilize grammar rules that are correct in their first language but not in their second.

What can be done to help pupils stop using their first language?

There isn't one perfect way to do it, but in my experience, one of the best ways is to make the students feel that they have to speak the target language. Students are more likely to utilize the target language when teachers provide a real communication environment both inside and outside of the classroom. Professors who welcome and talk to their students outside of class may have better results than professors who just talk to their students in class. This makes things even harder, though, because teachers don't often use L2 outside of the classroom. Schools

should set up a program that lets students and teachers use L2 in and out of the classroom. This method will make learning a foreign language easier and more useful.

Another idea is to teach their students genuine English, the kind they will use in restaurants, airports, department stores, and other places. They can do this by using real-world materials from the media, such as real menus, real movies, and situations where students can use both the formal language they learned in class and the language they use in everyday speech. In other words, it is possible to help students utilize English without having to translate it into their first language by changing the way things are done and encouraging teachers and students to use L2 in the classroom. This is a big duty and a big challenge for teachers.

For college students learning English, the mother tongue has two functions. Positively, it gives students a cognitive and linguistic foundation by using well-known patterns, such as the SVO word order that English and Urdu share, to help them understand vocabulary and fundamental grammar. But structural differences—such as the lack of articles in Urdu, the use of flexible tenses, and phonological gaps (like /th/ sounds)—often cause interference, which leads to literal translations, grammatical errors, and mispronunciations. While teachers can clarify complex ideas with minimal use of the mother tongue, excessive reliance on it impairs fluency. Cognitively, the L1 helps with memory and concept transfer. L1 maintains identity and comfort in a sociocultural sense, but pupils are under pressure to stay away from it in English classes. Therefore, common mistakes that can be linked to mother language influence include odd lexical choices, improper articles, omitted auxiliaries, and misused tenses.

Conclusion:

The results of this study demonstrate the important and complex function that the mother tongue plays in the English language learning process for undergraduate students in Pakistani universities. In various facets of second language acquisition, the mother tongue can act as a facilitator as well as a barrier. When used properly in the classroom, it improves students' confidence and motivation while also supporting their mastery of grammatical rules and English vocabulary. However, the mother tongue also presents difficulties, including direct translation problems, pronunciation interference, and sporadic decreases in spoken fluency.

The mother tongue helps by providing a cognitive and linguistic base for vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, boosting confidence and motivation. It hinders by causing interference such as direct translation errors, mispronunciations, and reducing fluency due to over-reliance.

Parallels like shared SVO word order aid learning, but divergences such as the absence of articles in Urdu, tense flexibility, and phonetic differences cause grammatical mistakes, pronunciation errors, and literal translations. Socioculturally, it maintains identity and comfort; pedagogically, moderate use aids understanding but excessive use impedes immersion; cognitively, it supports memory and skill transfer but can create dependency. Common mistakes include mispronounced sounds ("th," "ed," "ph"), incorrect use/omission of articles and auxiliaries, tense errors, and odd lexical/sentence constructions due to negative transfer.

Urdu and Punjabi speakers are equally represented in the sample, highlighting the linguistic variety at Pakistani colleges and the necessity for specialized language training that takes mother tongue influence into account. A female preponderance in the gender distribution may also indicate demographic trends that should be taken into account when constructing an educational program.

In the end, this study promotes well-rounded teaching strategies that carefully use the mother tongue use to maximize its advantages and reduce its disruptive impacts. By identifying and comprehending the impact of their first voice, these methods can enable students in Pakistani universities to improve their English language skills more easily and confidently. In order to better promote second language acquisition in multilingual situations, this nuanced understanding informs curriculum design and instructional approaches.

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