

Bonanza of Translation Studies: Students' Attitudes towards the Emerging Discipline

NABARAJ NEUPANE

Abstract

Translation has been mandatory for global communication and Translation Studies (TS) as a distinct discipline has been of paramount importance in the current context of linguistic and cultural hybridity elsewhere. TS has been introduced as a teaching subject at different Universities of Nepal. Therefore, it is the right time to evaluate the tendency of the major stakeholders, i.e. students towards the discipline. In this context, this study aimed to observe the students' attitudes towards it. For obtaining this, a survey research design was used. The tool for collecting data was a close-ended questionnaire consisting of fifteen statements, which represented cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudes. The subjects were 105 students who had already passed B. Ed., majoring TS course. The findings indicated that the subjects had positive attitudes towards the TS course. The results also proved that TS resources and materials should be student-friendly, informative, interesting, and accessible to the students.

Keywords: Affective, Attitude, Behavioural, Cognitive, Translation Studies.

Introduction

Students' attitudes play a key role in the formation of educational materials and resources of the emerging discipline like *Translation Studies*. With this presumption, this article explores the students' cognitive, affective, and behavioural stances towards the nascent discipline. Thus, a brief acquaintance to the bonanza of the discipline and the concepts

of attitudes are indispensable before entering the main entrance of this research.

Translation practices may have begun when different linguistic communities came into contact. In such situations, translation could have been an intermediate tool of communication but it was not given due importance that time. For example, the Greeks met other peoples and cultures in the 6th and 7th centuries B. C.; however, there is no discussion of either the practice or the process of translation throughout ancient Greek literature (Connolly & Bacopoulou-Halls 2011). Therefore, it is axiomatic to say that history of translation is as old as the history of human civilization in the sense that inter-linguistic communication necessitates translation, a tool for the cultivation of human civilization. This echoes the mythology of the Tower of Babel as mentioned in the *Bible*. In the past, translation was a random practice as it was carried out without any systematic principles and theories. Yet, there are traces of the fact that a host of honourable writers wrote well, translated well and wrote about translation as well (Newmark 1981). In those days, translation was taken as a literary activity. However, it was viewed to be a mechanical rather than a creative task. Therefore, it did not receive much public and academic interest. Yet about fifty years before, scholars thought of discussing all translational activities under a single discipline, which they called *Translation Studies* (Holmes 1972/2004). Since then, it emerged as a discipline and it has occupied a vital position in academic and public spheres.

The mixing up of diverse communities now has resulted in multilingualism, in which, “Nothing moves without translation [...]. No change in thought or technology spreads without the help of translation” (Bates 1943 as cited in Ordudari 2008: 4). In addition to this, Paz (1971) has rightly conceded, "All texts, being part of a literary system descended from and related to

other systems, are 'translations of translation of translations'" (as cited in Bassnett 2005: 44). Therefore, translation is essential to enter into the treasure house of knowledge. Moreover, translation is crucial to safeguard and promote linguistic and cultural diversity in the changing geography of globalized societies (Ceramella 2008). Likewise, Cronin (2010) has added, "The hegemony of English in the fastest growing area of technological development means that all other languages become, in this context, minority languages" (254). Therefore, for assimilation as well as resistance, translation has been an integral part of modern life. Further, the exhortations like "No global communication without translation" (Newmark 2011: 55); and "Translate or die" (Engle & Engle 1985, as cited in Neupane 2017: 22) prove the dire need of translation in the present world. Showing the significance of translation in the technically narrowed down world, Shastri (2012: ix) has asserted:

Globalization has made the world a small place. It is inhabited by hundreds of communities with different languages, social set-ups, cultures, attitudes, and their own specific world views. The technological boom has opened up the possibilities and opportunities of interaction/ communication among these communities. Translation is the only means to meet this need.

The theoretical foundations of *Translation Studies* became strong along with the groundwork of the theorists like Nida (1964), Catford (1965), and so on. The burgeoning field got its name as *Translation Studies* only in 1972 with the debut of Holmes' seminal paper (Hatim & Munday 2004: 126), which became "the manifesto of today's discipline" (Snell-Hornby 2006: 40) and "the founding statement for the field" (Gentzler 2010: 93). Although it is still nascent, *Translation Studies* (TS) has been a bonanza for researchers currently.

The above-mentioned delineations give me an impetus to conceptualize that translation has been the most wide-ranging and the most far-reaching discipline of the day and will remain so in the future, too. Thus, it is the right time to dig into the needs and prospects of translation and *Translation Studies* as a separate discipline.

As a burgeoning discipline, *Translation Studies* (TS) has occupied a vital space in publications and university curricula. TS has been introduced at Bachelor, Masters', M. Phil., and Doctoral Levels at different universities of Nepal. In Tribhuvan University (TU), it was assigned at B. Ed., as a full credit course, i.e. 100 full marks and six periods a week till 2018 and at M. Ed. fourth semester as a 3 credit course and is allocated three hours a week. The course entitled *Translation Theories and practices*, assigned for B. Ed., aimed to provide an introduction to the theoretical and practical facets of the discipline *Translation Studies* (Faculty of Education 2009). In this context, this study aimed to investigate students' attitudes towards TS course, along with these parameters: cognitive, affective, and behavioural (adapted from Ajzen 1987; Kalengkongan 2012; Yamashita, 2013; & Chien and Yu 2015). This study is significant firstly because any study in the domain of TS is important as translation has been a means for trans-communicating across cultures home and abroad; and secondly because students' attitudes reflect views, thoughts, and perceptions of the major stakeholders of the discipline. Further, the students' success and participation rate depend upon their attitudes towards the course they are assigned to. Attitude also plays a crucial role in pedagogical processes and hence it is one of the significant psychological factors that influence students' achievement (Farooq & Shah 2008). Therefore, it is reasonable and rational to explore the students' attitudes towards TS.

Review of Literature

Translation, since antiquity, has been practised by a name or the other into different academic spheres. However, to put in Gentzler's (2010) words, "It has existed only since 1983 as a separate entry in the *Modern Language Association International Bibliography*" (1). However, this burgeoning field got its name as *Translation Studies* in 1972. In this connection, Hatim and Munday (2004) have conceded, "It was in the translation section of the Third International Congress of *Applied Linguistics* that James S. Holmes, an Amsterdam-based lecturer and literary translator, presented his famous paper *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* in August 1972" (126). This declaration came in such a setting that translators and translation researchers needed outlets to accumulate the related tasks. This seminal paper was considered to be "the manifesto of today's discipline" (Snell-Hornby 2006: 40) and "the founding statement for the field" (Gentzler 2010: 93).

Currently, *Translation Studies* has been a discipline of the day. Therefore, Baker (2011, 2018) has rightly claimed, "Translation has become a highly attractive career for young people with a love for languages and for engaging with other cultures, as well as a growing area of research" (2).

The next key term of the study, 'attitude' refers to a way of thinking and behaving towards something. It is the way one thinks and feels about some entity and behaves toward it positively, neutrally, or negatively. It affects one's tendency towards some facts, beliefs, feelings, and reactions one shows. For Kerlinger (1984), "Attitude affects people to have a certain tendency toward things around them such as environment, issues, and different kind of ideas" (as cited in Kalengkongan 2012: 2). It implies that attitude connotes one's viewpoint, thought, feeling, emotion, belief, or opinion towards certain

entities. This view is also evidenced in Ajzen's (1987) assertion in these words, "Attitude is a disposition or respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event" (15). Similar view echoes in Mager (1986, as cited in Kalengkongan 2012), who has divided attitudes as favourable (positive) and unfavourable (negative). The former attitude attracts whereas the latter distracts someone toward something.

For Berstein, Roy, Srull, and Wickens (1991), attitude is "a tendency to respond emotionally, cognitively, or behaviourally, to a particular entity in a particular way toward anything whether the response is positive or negative" (as cited in Kalengkongan 2012: 3). Hence, attitude can be emotional, cognitive, or behavioural. Further, Matthewson (1994, as cited in Yamashita 2013; and Chien and Yu 2015) has forwarded the three components of attitude, based on Lewis and Teale's (1980) tri-attitudes model. Accordingly, affective component, which corresponds to emotions/ feelings/ opinions, can be good/ like/ favourable or bad/dislike/unfavourable. Likewise, the cognitive component, which corresponds to beliefs/thoughts/evaluations/rational arguments, is based on the ways one thinks/behaves/judges an object or concept. Similarly, behavioural (also called conative) component corresponds to intentions, actual reactions, performances, or behaviours shown by someone toward something. For example, if one reads books on TS extensively, it is his positive conative response towards the subject. Although the sense is the same, Lohithakshan (2007) has presented different terms in this claim, "Attitude is cognitive, judgemental, and emotional [...] Attitudes have both a cognitive and emotional content and this complex organization is a pre-disposition for a specific response when confronting the specific situation" (31). This implies three types of attitudes such as cognitive, judgemental (like behavioural), and emotional (like affective). This definition also confirms that a specific response can be

positive or negative. Therefore, Kalengkongan (2012) has summed up this way, "Attitude is a special tendency, thought, or opinion that people have in facing problems or viewing certain matters" (2). The similar conclusion has been drawn by Chien and Yu (2015). In this juncture, Adhikari (2016) has conceded, "Attitude refers to how we think, feel about, and act towards our fellow human beings and how they think, feel about and act towards us" (14).

Of many, some studies have been presented in this study. Farooq and Shah (2008) used a set of 47 statements to test 685 respondents' attitudes towards mathematics. They found out that there was no gender biasness in the attitudes towards mathematics. However, they have indicated the importance of positive attitude in achieving success in the pedagogical domain. Likewise, Hanna (2009) conducted a study, which aimed to identify and reflect students' attitudes to the theory and practice components of translation. In an action research design, Hanna interviewed three respondents; and conducted informal discussions on the topic. By using the respondents' responses and his reflexivity, the researcher concluded that he achieved a little about the students' attitude towards translation theory and practice although he has demonstrated students' positive attitude towards the issue he raised. These two studies focus on the specific subject area. However, Bhargava and Pathy (2014) associated their study on student teachers' attitude with the teaching profession. Basing their research on 96 respondents' responses, they have concluded that attitude is affected by variables like age, experience, beliefs, gender and stream of education. Their research has also exhibited that a positive attitude is liable to bring the desired quality. Thus, students' positive attitude lies at the heart of the success of any educational institutions.

These delineations give me the impetus to develop a theoretical framework that students' attitudes can be measured by the instances like positive, neutral or negative, which subsume the three facets of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of attitudes

Methodology

The study followed a survey research design because its purpose was to obtain a snapshot of students' attitudes (Nunan 2010) towards TS. The respondents of the study were 105 M. Ed. English (I and II Semesters) students of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. Those samples were selected because they had completed a full credit TS course at B. Ed. and were convenient to the researcher.

The instrument for collecting data was questionnaire comprising 15 close-ended questions, assuming that each of them had "equal value, importance, or weight in terms of reflecting an attitude towards the issue in question" (Kumar 2006: 145). The questions consisted of three components of attitudes, like cognitive (1-5), affective (6-10), and behavioural (11-16) (Appendix A). Before administering them to the subjects, the researcher had given the first draft to his ten colleagues/experts for judgement, based on which the questions had been re-formed. The questionnaire used a three-point Likert scale with these options: agree, undecided, and disagree to represent the three dimensions of attitudes like positive, neutral, and negative respectively.

One hundred and five questionnaire sheets were distributed to the subjects to obtain responses, which were grouped and calculated in percentage for analysis and interpretation of the results based on cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of attitudes.

Results and Discussions

This section caters for analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the obtained results from the questionnaire filled up by 105 subjects, studying at M. Ed. first and second-semester students of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. There are holistic presentation and discussion of the results followed by the component-wise analysis of the results.

One hundred and five subjects responded on fifteen questions, dealing with the three components of attitude, namely, cognitive, affective, and behavioural (Table 1). Their responses have been counted and converted into a percentage for the ease of analysis and discussion. Table 1 reveals that most subjects believe that TS course enriches vocabulary across languages (94.28%), and they enjoy reading translated texts provided that they can choose for their interests (88.57%). They also prefer TS course as it offers the readers with bilingual/multilingual flavour (88.57%). Further, they read translated literary texts enthusiastically (85.71%). Therefore, they argue that students of B.Ed. should be encouraged to read TS course (91.42%). Most importantly, they favour translation as a good technique of teaching second/foreign language and promise in using this in their teaching career (85.71%). However, some of them (20%) disagreed translation as an important subject and 14.28% of subjects did not take translation as a useful tool in daily activity. Similarly, some of them showed neutral attitudes in responding translation texts rewarding (25.71%); whether their translation skill has been developed after completion of TS course (31.42%), dislike reading translated texts (25.71), and so on.

S. N.	Statements	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	I think translation is very important for everyone.	84	80	-	-	21	20

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2	I find translating texts rewarding.	78	74.28	27	25.71	-	-
3	I believe that TS course enriches vocabulary in two/more languages.	99	94.28	-	-	6	5.71
4	Students of B. Ed. should be encouraged to read TS course.	96	91.42	9	8.57	-	-
5	I feel my translation skill has been developed after completing TS course of B. Ed.	60	57.14	33	31.42	12	11.42
6	I enjoy translating texts if I can choose the texts.	93	88.57	12	11.42	3	2.85
7	For me, translation is very useful in daily activity.	75	71.42	15	14.28	15	14.28
8	I prefer TS to other courses because it gives me bilingual/multilingual flavour.	93	88.57	9	8.57	6	5.71
9	I don't favour TS as it hampers in developing ELT skills.	33	31.42	33	31.42	39	37.14
10	I like TS because it gives glimpses of multicultural assets.	75	71.42	24	22.85	6	5.71
11	I usually translate academic, literary, and technical texts intralingually or interlingually.	63	60	30	28.57	12	11.42
12	I read translated texts (poems, stories, etc.) enthusiastically.	90	85.71	12	11.42	-	-
13	When I get access to the Internet, I read out translated texts if they are easy, interesting and informative.	81	77.14	24	22.85	-	-
14	I dislike reading translated texts and so I try to read original texts as far as possible.	27	25.71	18	17.14	60	51.14
15	Translation can be a	90	85.71	9	8.57	6	5.71

	good technique of teaching second/foreign language, so I will use it in my teaching career.						
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Table 1 Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire

These data (Table 1) imply that students have mixed attitudes towards TS course. The positive attitude (72.22% on average) is followed by neutral one (16.18% on average), and a negative one (11.40% on average). This holistic analysis confirms that students prefer, enjoy, believe, and favour TS course.

Similar results are observed in component-wise analysis and interpretation. At first, the cognitive component has been discussed. There were five statements in the questionnaire to cater for cognitive component and the subjects' responses were almost all positive (Figure 1). For the first statement, 80% agreed; 20% disagreed, but nobody showed the neutral attitude. It means most subjects thought that translation was very important for everyone. Likewise, 74.28% agreed; 25.71% were undecided, but nobody disagreed the second statement. It shows that some subjects could not decide whether translation texts were rewarding, albeit most of them reacted positively to the statement. The third statement was the one for which most subjects (94.28%) responded positively; only 5.71% reacted negatively. It shows that the TS course is highly beneficial for the enrichment and extension of vocabulary across languages. For the fourth statement, too, most subjects (92.42%) agreed that the TS course at B.Ed. was fruitful and so students should be encouraged to read it. Comparatively, fewer subjects (only 60%) agreed that their translation skill had been developed. It implies that they had acquired theoretical knowledge but had remained undecided towards their practical skills. As a whole, subjects were found having a positive cognitive attitude towards TS course (83.4% on average).

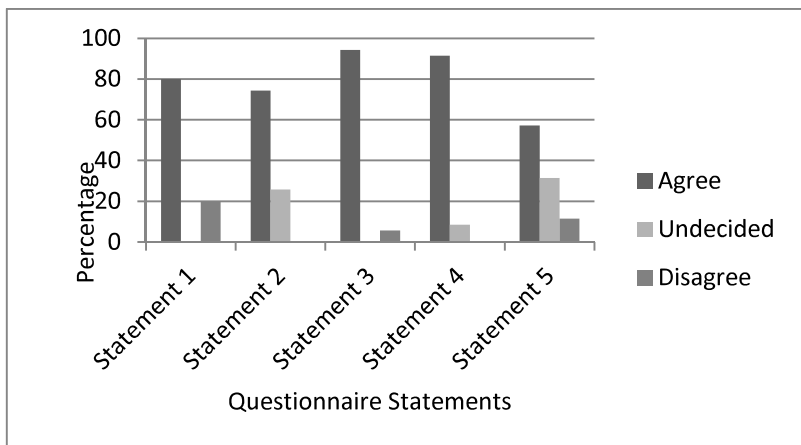


Figure 1 Cognitive Attitudes of the Subjects

As the responses to the cognitive component, the subjects showed a tendency towards the affective component, too. For the five statements, the subjects exhibited a positive attitude in general (Figure 2). They showed a strongly positive attitude to the 6th and the 8th statements (88.57% each). This proves that they favour translating texts of their choice. This data also confirms that they give preference to TS course since it gives them multilingual flavour. Therefore, students should be provided with the texts of their selection. Similarly, for the 7th and 10th statements, they have a positive attitude (75% each), which implies that translation is really useful in daily activity. TS course also enhances multilingual knowledge in the learners. They also agree that translation helps develop ELT skills (Statement 9). Despite this, they opined that translation hampers ELT skills (31.42%) and they seemed undecided to this statement (31.42%). This reveals that the subjects were not confirmed whether the translation is facilitative of enhancing ELT skills or not. Concisely, the subjects showed a favourable affective attitude towards TS course. However, the course

needs to focus on developing ELT skills and the texts should be student-friendly.

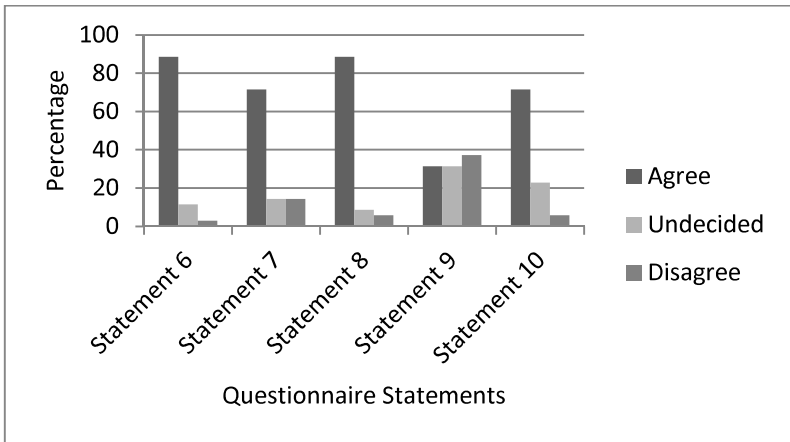


Figure 2 Affective Attitudes of the Subjects

The third component of attitude, i.e. behavioural, consisted of five statements as to give equal focus on all the three components of attitudes. The positive attitude was expressed by the subjects in general (Figure3). The 11th statement was agreed by 60%, disagreed by 11.42%, and neither agreed nor disagreed by 28.57%. It refers to the subjects' uncertainty about doing practical translation activities despite their theoretical knowledge. They equally agreed for the 12th and the 15th statements (85.71% each). It means they read translated literary texts delightfully. They also accept translation as an effective technique of teaching second/foreign language and they decide to use it in their teaching career. This justifies the implementation of communicative teaching approaches, which allow the judicious use of translation in second/foreign language classes (Harmer 2008a & 2008b). The subjects also showed interest in reading translated texts on the Internet if they are in the subjects' "comfort zone" (Neupane 2016: 88). This is revealed in the 13th statement. Finally, the subjects

disagreed the 14th statement. This implies that they have a more positive tendency (51.14) towards reading translated texts than in reading original ones (25.71%). Even for the behavioural component, the subjects expressed their positive tendency.

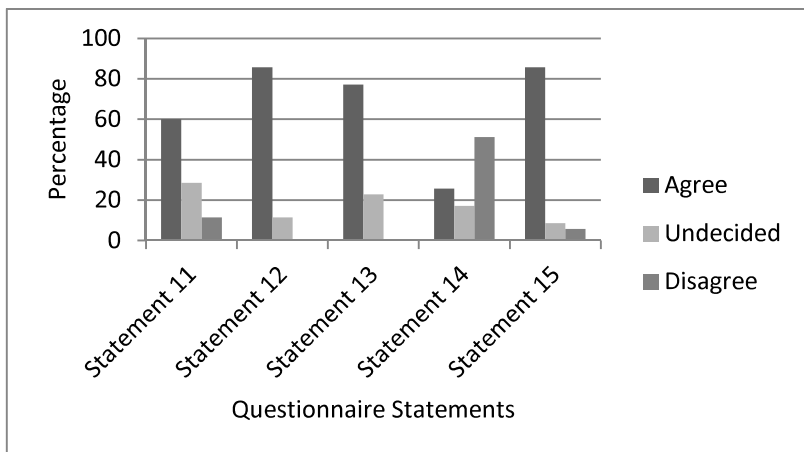


Figure 3 Behavioural Attitudes of the Subjects

In this way, out of the 15 statements, 13 were straightforward ones. Two of them (9th & 14th) were made tricky to cross-check the subjects' awareness in responding to the questionnaire. Even for these two statements, they responded positively, which shows that the students are positive towards TS course. These findings corroborate the conclusions drawn by Farooq and Shah (2008), Hanna (2009), and Bhargava and Pathy (2014). Thus, the students' positive attitudes towards the *Translation Studies* course entail the necessity of continuation of the course.

Conclusion and Implication

The study aimed to dig out students' attitudes towards TS course. The findings indicated that the subjects had positive attitudes toward the course. Three scales of attitudes, namely,

positive, neutral, and negative were envisaged in terms of three components like cognitive, affective, and behavioural. For all the three components, the subjects revealed their favourable tendency. This verifies students' positive attitudes towards the TS course.

The results of the study showed that the resources and materials for translation should be student-friendly, easy, interesting, and informative. Then, the students would prefer, enjoy, and favour reading translated texts from online and offline sources. TS course should be oriented towards enriching vocabulary stores across languages and enhancing multilingual/multicultural assets so that knowledge of the different languages conglomerate in the readers' minds. The results also verified that translation could be a good teaching technique for developing ELT skills. Therefore, TS course should make provision for the discussion of the judicious use of translation technique. It should also aim to develop learners' practical skills in translation of different types of texts. For this, even the practical examinations, on the regular basis, should be allocated for the students.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Students

Dear Students

The following is a survey questionnaire to explore students' attitudes towards *Translation Studies* (TS). There is no right or wrong answer to any question. Your responses will remain anonymous/confidential but be used only for research purposes. Please take time to read these questions carefully, select your response thoughtfully, and tick the option you choose cautiously.

Name:.....

Student Number:

S.N.	Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	I think translation is very important for everyone.			
2	I find translating texts rewarding.			
3	I believe that TS course enriches vocabulary in two/more languages.			
4	Students of B. Ed. should be encouraged to read TS course.			
5	I feel my translation skill has been developed after completing TS course of B. Ed.			
6	I enjoy translating texts if I can choose the texts.			
7	For me, translation is very useful in daily activity.			
8	I prefer TS to other courses because it gives me bilingual/multilingual flavor.			
9	I don't favour TS as it hampers in developing ELT skills.			
10	I like TS because it gives glimpses of multicultural assets.			
11	I usually translate academic, literary, and technical texts intralingually or interlingually.			
12	I read translated texts (poems, stories, etc.) enthusiastically.			
13	When I get access to the Internet, I read out translated texts if they are easy, interesting and informative.			
14	I dislike reading translated texts			

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	and so I try to read original texts as far as possible.			
15	Translation can be a good technique of teaching second/foreign language, so I will use it in my teaching career.			

Note: 1-5 Cognitive; 6-10 Affective; and 11-15 Behavioural.

Cite this Work:

NEUPANE, NABARAJ. 2020. Bonanza of Translation Studies: Students' Attitudes towards the Emerging Discipline. Translation Today, Vol. 14(2). 1-20. DOI:10.46623/tt/2020.14.2.ar1