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IMPORTANCE OF USING THE MOTHER TONGUE IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the importance of using mother tongue in English classes. It studies positive and negative effects of L1 in L2 teaching process.

Keywords: ESL classroom, the “Bilingual method”, communication, teaching process, L1.

INTRODUCTION

The use of L1 in English classroom is for three reasons. It is based on the learners preferring strategy. The learners should correlate whether the teacher permits translation or not. Secondly, allowing the students to use their mother tongue, in ESL classrooms. If the teachers won’t allow them to use L1 in English classes then the students automatically try to use various methods in learning English. Thirdly, the teachers who are using L1 in L2 teaching are more successful than taking class in L2. Danchev insists that translation is the inevitable part of second language acquisition. There is no justification for promoting the use of the mother tongue in L2 classrooms. In some group of schools and colleges it may not be possible to use English at class in all the time. In many schools and colleges the “Bilingual method” is used to get L2. But only in literature classes, usage of complete English to acquire language. But in most of the educational institutions in rural and semi-urban areas English is taught by the help of the L1. If it is not, the learners did receive only a little or no exposure even in the English classroom.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Auerbach suggests the following possible occasions for using the mother tongue: negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; record keeping; classroom management; scene setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing

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grammar, phonology, morphology, and spelling; discussion of cross-cultural issues; instructions or prompts; explanation of errors; and assessment of comprehension. Teachers often use L1 in beginning and intermediate classes to:

- give instructions
- explain meanings of words
- explain complex ideas
- explain complex grammar points

In English classrooms the teacher opens the textbook and reads a paragraph of a lesson for the day and explains the content of sentences by sentences in L1 (mother tongue-Uzbek). The learners doesn't aware of the meaning of the context. Again the teacher will explain the same context. The teachers have some stock explanations for being practical in the classrooms. So that the learners can hear some English in the English classes and try learn vocabulary and start utilizing the words/phrases in their day –today activities and try to pass in the examination. If the teacher uses L1 in L2 class they lose the opportunity to hear new words of English and they are not able to acquire the pronunciation in technical term in language classes. Everyone uses language but the particular form in which it manifests itself depends on a whole range of factors. Normally, teachers have been reading and translating it into L1. They thought that this helps learners to understand well. The learners do feel relaxed and they can comprehend better. But they are not capable to accustom themselves to get of rid of L1. So the learners did not get confident to communicate in English.

Many researchers have recommended use of technology for children in a classroom in which a concurrent translation approach was used. Then average ESL classroom is beset without the overuse of the mother tongue. Because the learners do not understand the content which is in English; and yet it translated into L1. The learners' doesn't know how to format the sentence when they are writing. Then the sentence won't be formatted as in L1. The student fails to use English in L2 classes. So the teaching of L2 in L1 strategies becomes efficient in the time of examination context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students often use L1 when doing pair work to construct solutions to linguistic tasks and evaluate written language. By working in pairs and using L1 intermittently with L2, students may be cognitively processing at a higher level with regard to linguistic tasks than if they were limited only to communicating in the language they are trying to learn. L1 vocabulary allows learners to use language which they may not

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yet possess in L2 in order to process ideas and reach higher levels of understanding. This applies both to social talk between partners and private talk intended for the learner alone. Social talk, as the name implies, is talk between peers for the purpose of conversing.

Several studies have demonstrated the benefits of using L1 to learn a TL. For example, Villamil and de Guerrero analyzed the discourse of Spanish-speaking university students while they engaged in peer revision of their TL (English) writing. Their data demonstrates that "the L1 was an essential tool for making meaning of text, retrieving language from memory, exploring and expanding content, guiding their action through the task, and maintaining dialogue". Despite the fact that the empirical benefits of using L1 are readily apparent, the governments of several Asian countries in which English is a foreign language suggest that the use of L1 be kept to an absolute minimum. These official guidelines have resulted in guilt on the part of English teachers who use L1. However, there is no need for these teachers to feel guilty. If L1 is utilized well and presented communicatively, it can be a facilitative tool that will improve the language proficiency of students. This paper argues for the appropriate use of L1 in foreign language learning environments by drawing on theoretical perspectives and empirical work in the existing literature. Three key issues are addressed: the rationales for the use of L1, the positive effects of L1 on foreign language learning and teaching, and the ways in which L1 can assist foreign language teachers.

Additionally, some scholars feel that switching from TL to L1 can be an effective strategy for improving student proficiency in TL if L1 is deliberately utilized in classrooms. These opponents of the TL-only practice argue against it from a number of language learning perspectives. For example, Anton and DiCamilla found that L1 can serve as a very useful cognitive tool, providing scaffolding for students in their effort to achieve learning tasks. Likewise, Brooks and Donato indicate that the L1 enables students to negotiate meaning and communicate successfully in the TL. These scholars argue that the avoidance of L1 use denies TL learners a valuable educational tool. Their argument is based particularly on the integrationist learning theory (Ellis, 1994), which suggests that input alone is insufficient for achieving language acquisition. To allow input to readily become knowledge, there must be interaction between TL learners and other speakers. This interaction will elicit the negotiation of the meaning of the input and the production of the output.

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CONCLUSION

Furthermore, the use of L1 may assist students in reducing affective barriers and increasing their confidence in their ability to successfully comprehend the TL. For example, Seng and Hashim indicate that lower proficiency students usually have difficulty expressing or verbalizing their thoughts with confidence and accuracy, so they should be allowed to fall back on L1 to understand the TL. In fact, Liao has observed that when the TL is the only medium allowed in discussions, students remain silent due to their nervousness or lack of English competence. In contrast, when both L1 and TL are allowed as media for discussions, there is more participation and meaningful communication is sustained longer. Therefore, the use of L1 results in an increased willingness by students to communicate verbally and express their ideas.

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