

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING NATIVE LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Present article shows that the usage of mother tongue in learning second foreign language classrooms has long been a controversy in the field of language teaching. Understanding the background of the controversy, this paper tries to review the treatment of a first language by leading language teaching methods. Then, the review is focused on the results of current research on whether the use of the first language hinders or assists second/foreign language acquisition.

Key words: native language, learning strategy, language teaching method

INTRODUCTION

First of all, we should answer what does mean native language? A first language, native tongue, native language, or mother/father/parent tongue (also known as arterial language or L1), is a language that a person has been exposed to from birth [1] or within the critical period. In some countries, the term *native language* or *mother tongue* refers to the language of one's ethnic group rather than one's first language. Sometimes, the term "mother tongue" or "mother language"(or "father tongue" "father language") is used for the language that a person learned as a child (usually from their parents).

Children growing up in bilingual homes can, according to this definition, have more than one mother tongue or native language. The usage of native language in

English classes has been explained for a long time by many researches. The use of native language is not a problem but the English teachers are concerned about its appropriate use and when it is necessary to use. Should teachers use the students' first language in the English classroom? There are many dilemmas whether to use the native language in an English language classroom or not. Many teachers are either for or against it. Those who are against consider that their main reason is the risk of creating native language dependence and thus preventing students' effort to find the meaning from explanations or contexts. According to Ellis several authors maintain that L1 has no essential role to play in EFL teaching and that too much L1 use might deprive learners of valuable input in the L2. But there are other, also strong arguments for using students' native language, believing that native language is helpful in explaining complex idea and grammar rules and also helps students learning new vocabulary more effectively, and preventing the waste of time in explanations and instructions. However, the idea of avoiding native language is too stressful for many students and it is teacher's responsibility to create a comfortable class and help students feel confident and interact independently. *What is the best way to learn a second language? What is the best way to teach a second language?* There are no instant recipes. No quick and easy method is guaranteed to provide success. Every learner is unique. Every teacher is unique. Every learner-teacher relationship is unique, and every context is unique. The native language is often seen as a complex feature of the English classroom and there are many dilemmas whether to use native language in ESL class. Many teachers' experience suggests that native language can make positive contribution to English learning while some other proponents of L2 continue to believe that English should be taught through English, and not by the use of native language, which has to be avoided in the classroom. The key for the teacher seems to be using the native language appropriately and avoiding the over-use which will make

learners feel that they cannot understand the content until it is translated into their native language. All of these factors form the basis for the need of this study. In that regard, the present study aims at the following:

- □being aware of when to use native language in a class and, most importantly, how to use it and promote learning.
- Pros and cons of using native language in classroom.
- To find out how to encourage students to use L2 appropriately.
- Exploring some of the best ways to teach English language.

METHODOLOGY

There are several of different ways in which L1 investigators, with useful methodological procedures, tried to investigate and identify the ESL learners' needs. The aim of these methodologies was to gain familiarity with the issue, and to obtain a deeper understanding about the topic. L1 researchers used variety of research methods, including questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews. This section of the paper provides the information regarding participants, materials and related procedures. Some studies have also identified students' needs and opinions related to the use of both languages in English classroom. There were also many experimental researches in schools where all English teachers were nonnative speakers, and they all shared the same language. In the present study, different questionnaires were given to ESL teachers and students. The aim of the methodology was to discover their opinions and attitudes toward using native language in the English classroom. English teachers through the questionnaire focused on the subjects' opinions toward the use of native language and they gave various opinions regarding the use of the learners' native language. The learners' views were also assessed in order to gain insight into their opinions regarding the

use of their native language in their ESL classroom. The following section sums these results obtained from the data analysis and discussion.

RESULT

The analysis and the discussion of the data revealed that most of the teachers and students believe that it was necessary and acceptable to use native language in teaching. The arguments presented for the use of native language of the learners inside the classroom in some situations include:

- Native language saves great deal of time
- Helps clarify the meaning of difficult words
- Prevents the misunderstanding of the meaning of new word
- Helps to explain grammar rules
- Provides a sense of security and confidence
- Provides a better possibility to give instructions more effectively. The arguments presented by the students to justify the use of the native language inside the classroom for teaching and learning ESL include:

- Native language gives a sense of security and helps feel less stressful
- By being able to use both languages they are less confused
- They feel the need to express their ideas and thoughts in their own language
- They prefer translating difficult context and words They feel necessary the teacher's use of native language in grammar explanations In fact, there is no rule that you should never use native language in English class and it cannot be rejected since it fulfills certain functions and purposes for the learners.

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of using native language in English classes has been discussed for a long time. One of the problems that teachers sometimes face with

students who all share the same native language is that they use their native language rather than English to perform classroom tasks. This may be because they want to communicate something important, and so they use language in the best way they know. Regarding the use of the native language in English classroom, it is important to find out how students themselves feel about it. I always feel nervous when speaking English. My English appear is not good enough; I can't express very well. I feel bad in my mind because I wonder why I can't speak English very well. These kinds of statements are often declared by foreign learners and often heard by teachers and this indicates to an important issue that needs to be discussed. The importance is highlighted even more by the fact that the students' culture is part of their language and by neglecting their language, the teacher, in a monolingual classroom, neglects their culture which leads to the danger of neglecting their identity as well. What is more, there is no valid database that could confirm the standpoint that the monolingual approach in teaching is the best one.

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