

Role of L1 in English Language Teaching To Rural Area Students with Reference To Erode Region

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ABSTRACT : Now-a-days rural colleges and schools are using the mother tongue to teach English in class room surroundings. In rural areas, L2 cannot be taught without the help of L1. Because the level of the students is less compared with the urban and semi-urban areas. There is no compromise with L1 while we learn L2. Task based activities help a lot in learning L2. L1 helps the learners to understand the context, L1 will make the students comfortable, once they acquire the structure of L2 with the help of L1, and they do not use L1 forever. It should be avoided because the learners are not able to enrich their knowledge in English. Teachers have to motivate the students to learn L2 without any translation in L1. It will help the learners to develop the communication skills in English fully.

KEYWORDS : English, Language learning, Translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Thomas 1984, Edge 1986, Atkinson 1987, Tudor 1987, indicated a revival of interest in the use of the mother tongue in English classroom. It is only a communicative movement, of translation as a method of teaching a foreign /second language in classrooms. The use of mother tongue is no longer recommended as a doctrine of compromise in second or foreign language teaching. In the views of Widdowson, the translation could be used to present the second language and not to acquire new knowledge. Steven Krashen, with his Natural Approach to language acquisition, proposed that students learn their second language much in the same way that they learn their first, and that L2 is best learned through massive amounts of exposure to the language with limited time spent using L1 (Tang, 2002). However, in recent years, focus has been shifting towards inclusion of L1 in the language classroom.

II. IMPORTANCE OF USING THE MOTHER TONGUE

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. (i.e. giving explanation in English itself without using any mother tongue) 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.

III. USES FOR L1 IN ENGLISH CLASSES

David Atkinson (1987:241) lists appropriate uses for the L1 in the L2 classroom). Auerbach (1993) 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 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 (Tang, 2002)

Research has shown that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the second language. So, for example, if your child has developed good reading skills in Tamil, she is likely to be able to apply these skills when reading English. (One useful reading skill is the ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. Another one is the ability to decide which new words in a text are important to look up in the dictionary and which words can safely be ignored.) For this reason it helps if you can encourage your child to read good fiction and non-fiction in her own language. Similarly, the skills of being able to plan out a piece of writing or develop an argument in a persuasive essay can be applied in the second language once they have been learned in the first.

VI. HABIT OF USING L1 AND L2 SIMULTANEOUSLY

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-Tamil). 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 in to 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 rid of L1. So the learners did not get confident to communicate in English.

V.EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN L2 LEARNING:

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 in to 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.

VI. STUDENT USE OF L1

A. Students often use L1 when doing pair work to construct solutions to linguistic tasks and evaluate written language. The use of L1 allows them to work within their Zone of Proximal Development, as proposed by Vygotsky (Wells, 1999). 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 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. Private talk is when learners talk themselves through a learning process. However, it is important to point out that students who use L1 for communicative purposes in the classroom must also be expected to use L2 in the classroom to practice its use. L1 use in written tasks is especially valuable because it helps to clarify and build meaning. It allows learners to repeatedly evaluate and clarify communication with regard to choice of content and register appropriate to the task (Wells, 1999). This re-evaluation is often done orally, in conversation with a peer or teacher or in private talk. Collaborative dialogue allows learners to build linguistic understanding concerning a number of language tasks. As Cook stated in her article "Using the First Language in the Classroom" (2001), "L1 provides scaffolding for the students to help each other."

VII. DISADVANTAGES OF USING L1 IN L2 CLASSES:

If the English teachers teach the L1 in L2 classes, the following problem may arise:

- The teacher should have adequate knowledge to teach the literary terms.
- The students are not able to group what is taught in the L2 classes.

Learning English is different from learning other language English is very often used for communication process. Learning L2 is not in the same situation like learning mother tongue by a child. The second language learner knows language but they do not know how to ask question. According to Jacoban "Bilingualism is for me the fundamental problem of linguistics". Students use L1 while speaking in order to:

- ask each other clarifying questions
- express frustrations concerning their lack of understanding
- clarify meaning of words in L2
- find new words in L2 which correspond to already known words in L1
- use language to process complex concepts
- build shared meaning while evaluating written tasks through shared discussion

Translation as a pedagogic tool may be used for successful teaching. While teaching L2 in rural and semi urban areas we English teachers have to give L1 translation for L2 to the learners. Because the learners are not able to understand what a teacher taught in the classroom. Translation involves the processing of information. It enables the learners to handle the complexity of language not only in their mother tongue, also in the second language. Sometimes it might be helpful to clarify very difficult concepts or vocabulary which suits familiar to students and the teachers cannot elicit their meaning from students, or when they cannot guess their meaning from the context. The students need translation into their native language in order to understand better concepts that seem difficult for them. So they feel less nervous in learning the difficult concepts in English language. In some cases, L1 helps to check understanding of very complex expressions, like idioms, phrases, etc. Therefore, I use L1 to clarify or check understanding in very complex language expressions. I believe that using Albanian in L1 classes helps lower level student when new vocabulary is introduced or when we teach them comparative grammar. Students understand better L2 if they base it upon L1.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Teachers have to take into consideration the teaching environment and the target population they teach. Some of them would say that in such classes using L2 as much as you can is very crucial, since students are only exposed to L2 only in classes; therefore they need more exposure to L2, because they do not practice their L2 outside classrooms. Others would also say that if you only use L2, you make your students try to communicate with you in that language, giving them the opportunity to practice the target language and drag out as much output in L2 as possible. Teachers have to provide adequate exposure to learners of English. They have to fix the syllabi according to the students-teachers comfort which enable the learners to respond easily. They have to use English as much as possible in her /his teaching. So the learners are exposed to develop their communication skills in English. Learners realize that fluency in L1 is a stepping stone towards achieving fluency in L2. The mother tongue represents a powerful resource that can be used in a number of ways to enhance learning but that it must always be used in a principled way. L1 and L2 are the two banks of rivers of communication.

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