

Pedagogical implication of L1 usage in EFL classroom

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Abstract:

The use of native language (L1) in EFL classrooms by the EFL teachers is a common phenomenon. The present study is an investigation of this linguistics phenomenon with respect to pedagogical perspective. The study incorporates quantitative research design and has used a close-ended questionnaire to collect data from the participants of the study. EFL teachers were asked about the implication of L1 usage in the classrooms with respect to pedagogy and from the findings of the study, the present study concludes that EFL teachers most of the time use L1 in their lectures to make learning more elaborative, concrete and according to the context and it is not associated with deficiency of EFL teachers in English language.

Key words: Pedagogy, EFL teachers, L1 usage, Deficiency, L2 learning

1. Introduction

The present study is an investigation of pedagogical implication for native language (L1) usage by EFL teachers in the classrooms. The use of native language as it will be called L1 in

this study, by the teachers in the classrooms while teaching a foreign language is not something new in today's globalizing world. About half of the world uses more than two languages (Grosjean, 2010). Most of the times English is being learnt as a global language (Bamgbose, 2001) and there are more nonnative speakers of English as compared to native (Crystal, 2003). EFL teachers pedagogical practices have been studied with various perspectives (Johnson, 1992), (Pajares, 1992), (Ellis, 1994), (Fang, 1996), (Cameron, 2001), (Borg, 2001), (Borg S. , 2003) (Andrews, 2003), (Deterding, D., & Kirkpatrick, A, 2006), (Phipps, S., & Borg, S, 2009), (Theriot, S., & Tice, K. C, 2009). Most of these researches have considered co-relationship between attitude and L1 usage in EFL classrooms. The present study, however, is an investigation into the pedagogical implication of L1 usage in EFL classrooms taking into account of Pakistani context.

2. Previous Studies

Pedagogy with respect to EFL classrooms got much attention after 80's (Clark C. M, & Peterson P. L, 1986), (Johnson, 1992), (Fang, 1996). There are many researchers and scholars who particularly focused on L1 relation with pedagogy in EFL classrooms (Krashen, 1981), (Cook, 2001), (Moore, 2002), (Turnbull, M., & Arnett, A, 2002), (Levine, 2003), (Rell, 2005), (Piker, 2006), (Kraemer, 2006), (Thompson, 2006), (Bateman, 2008), (Wilkerson, 2008). Krashen advocated for using L2 or target language only in a foreign language classroom where primary purpose is to teach L2 language to the students (Krashen, 1981), (1989). Contrary to this there are many linguists and researchers who advocated for the positive usage of L1 during teaching in EFL classroom as an aid for the teachers as well as for the students (Duff, P., & Polio, C, 1990), (Franklin, 1990), (Atkinson, 1993), (Cook, 1999), (Turnbull, 2001), (Turnbull, M., & Arnett, A, 2002), (Levine, 2003),

(Wilkerson, 2008). Atkinson (1993) says that mother tongue (L1) can enhance the students teacher interaction and it is a kind of non-natural environment for teaching if teacher only used L2 in the class when both students and teacher share a common mother tongue (Atkinson, 1993). Cook (2001) is of the opinion that using only L2 in the class does not give maximum output of language learning (Cook, 2001).Turnbull after exploring a French context with respect to L1 usage, concludes that teachers should not use less than 25% of TL or SL in the classroom (Turnbull, 2001). Wigglesworth (2003) is of the opinion that L1 can be used as a cognitive bridge for learning the L2 (Wigglesworth, 2003).

3. Research Design

Quantitative research approach is being incorporated in the present study to get the imperial evidence for L1 pedagogical implication in EFL classrooms. The tool to collect data from the respondents is close-ended questionnaire as Zoltan Dornyei (2003) put forward, “Cost-effectiveness is not the only advantage of questionnaires. They are also very versatile, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics” (Dörnyei, 2003).

3.1 Research Questions.

The present study intends to give answer to the following research question

Q. What is the pedagogical implication of L1 in EFL Classrooms?

3.2 Population.

The population for the present study will be all EFL teachers teaching English at graduate level in the province, Punjab, Pakistan.

3.3 Sampling.

Four districts of Punjab, Sargodha, Bhakkar, Lahore and Multan were selected to collect data for the study. In Sargodha and Lahore region, researcher himself distributed and collected the questionnaires, whereas in Bhakkar and Multan questionnaires were posted to the participants and recollected from the same source. A covering letter was also dispatched with each questionnaire describing the purpose of the study. A total number of 214 teachers participated in the study. Out of dispatched questionnaires, two questionnaires were misplaced. So, the data being analyzed is 212 questionnaires as filled out by the participants of the study. Out of 214 participants of the study, 80 participants were from district Lahore, 54 from district Sargodha, 40 from district Multan and 40 from district Bhakkar. Two questionnaires from district Bhakkar were misplaced by the postal service.

3.4 Questionnaire.

A close-ended questionnaire is used to get data from the participants. The questionnaire is adopted and items for the questionnaire are selected from three research instruments used by (Samar Rukh , Nargis Saleem , Hafiz Gulam Mustafa Javeed, Nasir Mehmood, 2014) (Mingfa, 2011) and (Jingxia, 2010). Items were modified to serve the context of the present study and 4-point Likert scale is adopted. The scale ranges from strongly agree (S/A), agree (A), disagree (D) to strongly disagree (S/D).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

A pilot study is being conducted before checking the validity and reliability of the research tool. A total number of 30 respondents were selected for the pilot study from district Sargodha region. Somewhat minor changes were carried out in the items of questionnaire from the feedback of the pilot study

to make items of the questionnaire more comprehensive for the participants of the study.

3.6 Data Collection and analysis of Data.

After recollection of the questionnaire from the participants, SPSS program is being utilized to convert the data in numeric figures. Percentage of each response is being generated in the table below for the ease of understanding of the study.

4. Results

The findings of the study are being presented in the following table in percentile accumulatively for the all 212 participants of the study.

	Statement	S/A	A	D	S/D
1	Mixing English and Urdu is a common phenomenon in EFL classrooms in this institution	33%	58%	9	-
2	Teaching the course in Urdu and English makes it easy for me to deliver the lecturer	45%	53%	2%	-
3	Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu are deficient in English	-	-	77%	23%
4	Teachers who switch from English to Urdu or from Urdu to English can express themselves clearly during their lectures	42%	51%	7%	-
5	Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu can better encourage students.	28%	67%	5%	-
6	Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu can better explain the grammatical points and lexical items in the text.	23%	65%	12%	-
7	Do you think using L1 is an efficient strategy of learning and teaching English?	38%	58%	4%	-
8	Code-switching to L1 is beneficial for the students in EFL classrooms	33%	62%	5%	-

4.1 Discussion

The response to the first item of the questionnaire clearly suggests that mixing of L1 and L2 is a common practice in the EFL classrooms. 45% of the participants strongly agree and 53% agree to the notion that mixing of L1 makes it easy for them to deliver their lecture in an EFL classroom. Regarding

the association of using L1 with a teacher's inefficacy of L2, most of the respondents disagree to it as 77% disagree and 23% strongly disagree to this notion. On the contrary, in response to item 4 of the questionnaire, 42% of the participants strongly agree and 51% agree to the notion that L1 usage makes it easy for them to express themselves in an EFL classroom. Item 5 of the questionnaire is about the psychological needs of the students from the teachers, a total number of 95% participants agreed that teachers who switch to Urdu can better encourage the students for their studies. Item 6 is regarding the difficulty of lectures while discussing grammatical points. 23% strongly agree and 65% agree that teachers who switch to first language can better explain grammar and lexical difficulties of second language. Item 7 of the questionnaire measures L1 usage as a strategy for teaching English, a total 96% respondents view L1 usage as an efficient strategy for teaching English. The last item of questionnaire assesses the overall liability of code-switching in EFL classrooms. 33% strongly agree and 62% agree that L1 usage in an EFL classroom is beneficial for the students.

4.2 Delimitation

Code-switching to L1 in an EFL classroom can be studied considering various factors like classroom settings, students' age, attitudes of the students etc. Present study takes pedagogical prospective of using L1 in EFL classroom considering teachers' opinion.

5. Conclusion

The study from the findings of the data, concludes that with respect to pedagogical implication of L1 usage in EFL classrooms, it is beneficial for the students regarding learning English as well as for the teachers for delivering the lecture. This study recommends the usage of L1 in EFL classrooms.

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