

“Using first language in English classroom: Perception of student teacher”

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Abstract:

“A student’s native language is something which we never try to take away from him”

-Anonymous

The present paper is an attempt to lay out the usage of first language in second language classroom teaching. The mother tongue (L1) of a learner acts as a basic foundation for achieving learning goals in second language (L2). The main purpose of the paper is to find out to what extent students’ are reliable on their native language. It is important for a teacher to understand the language background of a learner in classroom teaching. The objectives of the study are to identify reasons and perception of students in using first language, to find out the difference between boys and girls in using language. The paper also highlights the awareness of using first language in the target language classroom. For investigation, the researcher has followed simple random sampling and selected 200 student teachers (boys and girls) to understand their perception. The data were collected through administering questionnaire to the students followed by discussion and suggestions in the class. The findings revealed that mother tongue is unavoidable part while learning target language. It is suggested that students’ can use first language to meet their needs occasionally, they should not completely rely on it in order to acquire new information.

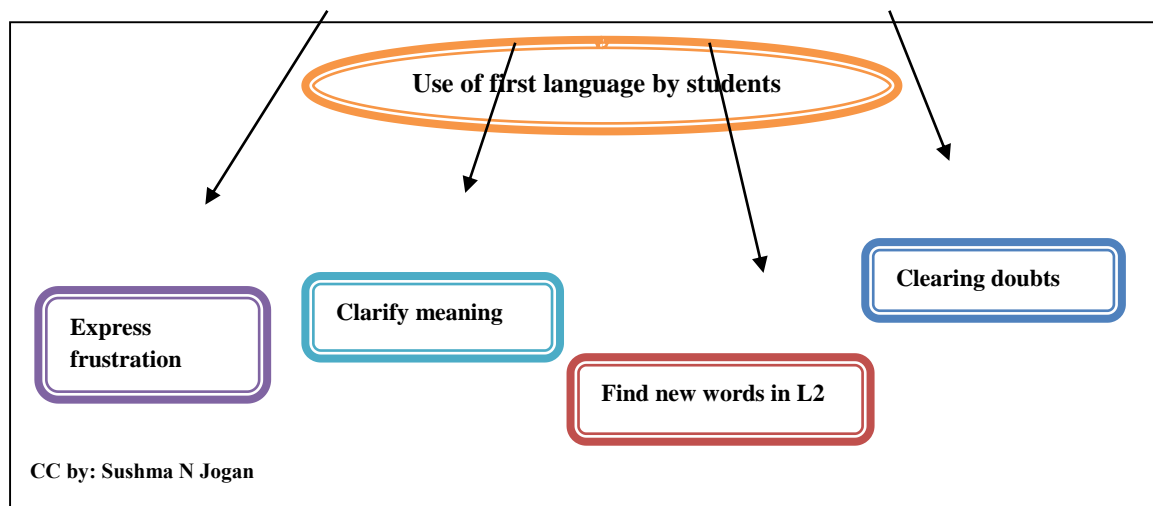
Key words: native language, target language, student teacher, perception and acquisition

Introduction:

The teacher must try to understand the language diversity of the classroom and should realize the importance of cultural background of every student. Dialect plays an important role in acquiring language. Larsen-Freeman (2000, pp. 101-102) claims that “the native language of the students is used in the classroom in order to enhance the security of the students, to provide a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar, and to make the meanings of the target language words clear.” Teacher must know when and where they are using first language because a classroom will be having diverse cultural students in order to understand it. This is applicable to the students also even they have to understand for what purpose they are using and what are its limitations in the target language classroom. Schweers (1999, p.7) asserts that “starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express

themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English.”

According to Tang (2002), moderate and judicious use of the mother tongue is helpful and can facilitate the learning and teaching of the target language. Many studies have reported that teacher and student use L1 for different purposes like giving instructions, explain grammar concepts, motivating students, helping them to overcome problematic situations. In the same way students use their native language to express frustrations, clarifying meaning of a new word etc. Thus, it is clear to say that students can use L1 according to the circumstances occur in English classroom.



Need and significance of the study:

The excessive use or too much dependence on the first language may result into poor learning outcome, which is not good on students’ part. Students try hard to stay connected with their mother tongues. Holding on to native language is sort of holding on to one’s own culture. A typical communicative teaching view is that 'Many learners are likely to remain unconvinced by several attempts to make them accept the foreign language as an effective means of satisfying their communicative needs, if we abandon it ourselves as soon as such needs arise in the immediate classroom situation' (Littlewood, 1981, p.45). The L2 will remain a set of odd and arbitrary conventions if the students do not experience it in meaningful ways.

The above mentioned reasons made the researcher to take up the study for further improvement in using native language in second language classroom.

Review of related literature:

1. Turan & Ozlem Karaagac (2015) found that the instructors used L1 most for rapport building purposes, making the topic/meaning clear, explaining difficult concepts or ideas, etc. However, they used it least for the purpose of talking about something that is not related to course; confirming students’ understanding; conflict management; discussing course policies, attendance and other administrative information; transition from one topic to the other (OK, well, now, let’s); and helping students find the correct answers

for the questions & activities in for the tasks in their textbooks. It was also found out that both the instructors and the students were aware of the importance of using the target language as much as possible in the classes, however, they could not deny the need of mother tongue from time to time.

2. Wafa Al Sharaeai (2012) proved that students have a variety of reasons to use first language. The amount of first language used also differed. The results also showed that students may be able to eliminate them and eventually improve the English language learning process. The author suggested that teachers has to modify their teaching methods and techniques to help their students to improve their English learning process and reduce the amount of first language use.

Operational terms defined:

1. **Native Language:** the language of the country that someone is born in or native to. Our native language is sign language and it has a different relationship with the world. In other words the language to which children are exposed in their homes and communities.
2. **Target Language:** the language to which a text, document or speech is translated. In other words it is a language which a person intends to learn.
3. **Student Teacher:** a student who studies to be a teacher and who, as part of the training observes classroom instruction or does closely supervised teaching in an elementary or secondary school.
4. **Perception:** the act or faculty of perceiving or apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind; cognition; understanding.
5. **Acquisition:** the act of acquiring or gaining possession.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify reasons of students in using first language.
2. To identify perception of students in using first language.
3. To find out the difference between boys and girls in using language.
4. To highlight the importance of using native language in second language classroom.
5. To suggest some measures in using the language.

Hypothesis of the study:

There is a significant difference between boys and girls in using native language.

Methodology:

For the present study, the researcher employed descriptive study.

Sample size and technique: For collecting the requisite data, 200 samples have been taken. Simple random technique is used for collecting data.

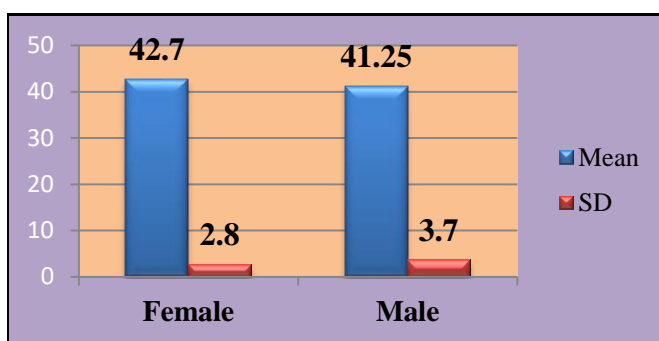
Tools: The questionnaire was administered to the student teachers.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

Test of significance has used to compare the difference between male and female.

Table 1:

	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Female	100	42.70	2.823	146.141	99	0.000*
Male	100	41.25	3.789			



Note: * significance at 0.05 level

The one sample “t” test table shows that mean scores of female where N=100, mean value 42.70, standard deviation 2.823 is more than the mean scores, where N=100, mean value 41.25, standard deviation 3.789 and the calculated ‘t’ value 146.141 and obtained significant value is 0.000 is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the stated research hypotheses can be accepted. Thus can be restated as, there is a significant difference between mean scores of male and female in using first language.

Suggestion and conclusion

The results suggest that students use their first language in a number of situations for different reasons and in various frequencies. The contextual factors may play an important role in students’ choices in using language. Most of the participants claimed that they use first language sometimes to ask or explain new concepts or ideas during English class. It is hoped that this study contribute to the research on the use of L1 by providing insight into the nature of pair/group work and student/teachers’ verbal interaction during real classroom communication. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in using native language in English classroom. Further the study showed that not all uses L1 in classroom, in fact it needs a remedy since in real classroom discourse, students should know the specification of using the language.

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