

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

An Investigation of Teachers' use of Amharic Language in English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' use of mother tongue in EFL classrooms in Benishangul Gumuz region, Asosa Zone junior schools during actual classroom instruction of first and second semesters in 2014 academic year. The investigation focused on the functions of Amharic language and its amount in target language classroom. Subsequently, it looked at teachers' knowledge of L1 use in L2 and if they had guidelines of how mother tongue (Amharic) could be well treated in EFL classes. To select target population for the study, cluster and simple random sampling techniques were used. Stratified sampling technique was also employed in order to select target population proportionally from clustered woredas. To answer the research questions qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Classroom observations, interviews and questionnaire were used to collect data. Observations were accompanied by tape recording and recorded data were transcribed and analyzed to investigate the functions of Amharic during lessons, the amount of L1 use and the distribution of L1 use within teachers and across lessons. It was found that the amount and functions of L1 used were varied between teachers, and the overall proportion of L1 talk was higher than that of found in previous studies. Some teachers consistently used high L1 within the lesson. Data obtained through interview confirmed that the variability was attributed to teachers' personal feeling about L1 in L2 use. Most of the teachers used Amharic for specific functions such as translation and maintaining discipline. Questionnaire was also used as a complement of qualitative data that aimed at gathering data on teachers' knowledge of the pedagogical values of L1. The findings showed that there was disparity between all teachers (beginner-higher led teachers) in responding to items and ANOVA confirmed that there was no significant difference between groups of teachers on the current trained of L1 in EFL classroom. Finally, it was found that most of the teachers had no clear guidelines of how to handle Amharic in EFL classes. Finally, teachers' commitment in maximizing target language input appeared to be indispensable in English language teaching. Educational experts and teacher trainers are also needed to intrude on the problem of maximal amount of mother tongue in target language classroom.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Now a days the use of L1 (mother tongue) in L2 (EFL) classroom is becoming a popular agenda among language experts. Recently, scholars have come up with some empirical evidence concerning the inclusion of mother tongue in target language as it brought effectiveness in assisting teaching of English as a foreign language. The perspective is becoming increasingly common and often it draws on Vygoteskian theory. Moore (2013) exemplifies some of the researchers who overviewed bilingual issue (Gracia, 2009; Gumperz, 1976; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009a, 2009b) "arguing not whether L1 use should be sanctioned but whether it should be fostered" (p.239).

Cook (2001) states that L1 has already been used in "compartmentalization of the two languages in mind to maximize students exposure to second language alternating language method that actively creates a link between L1 and L2" (p.402). Though these researchers support the methodological importance of mother tongue, it is not without argument. The proponents of L2 only, on the other hand, devalue the methodological importance of mother tongue in the target language. They argue that "language learning is similar to child learning of the mother tongue and first language influence may be an indication of low acquisition, therefore, it can be eliminated or at least reduced by natural intake and language use" (p.67).

Others argue that the above idea seems ideal from the angle of actual classroom practice. Though making classroom only L2 is the consent of some scholars and "government agency" teachers teach students of EFL by including L1 implicitly (Macaro, 2005, p.35). Harbord (1992) also illustrated from the ground that teacher inability in performing second language

strategies. He pointed out that "many teachers may have tried to switch to 'all-English classroom but they found themselves with inadequately use of L2 strategies" (p.350).

In order to mediate the gap, there are scholars who advocate the inclusion of L1 in L2 is important for target language teaching but the systematic inclusion is required to deserve the ultimate benefit of pedagogical value of L1 when teaching target language. The methodological use of mother tongue, consequently, appeared to be a big deal of scholars. According to Cook (2001), what is challenging is "how can the L1 be better integrated in to teaching?" (p.410). One of the solutions forwarded by Cook (2001) was that to think over all teaching method that makes use of the L1 actively with in the classroom. In contrast to this idea, the advocates of the target language only claim that EFL classroom ought to be L2 only and if not it reduces input.

Krashen (2002) conveys that in language acquisition, the learner needs to focus on the extensions of utterances than that of looking in to the patterns of the language. He stresses that language learning is like that of first language (Krashen, 2002).

The interest of making the classrooms only target language was not only arose from researchers. Educational authorities also discouraged the use of L1 in L2 classroom arguing that ESL classroom ought to practice only in target language (L2). For instance, Macaro (2005) states that in the beginning of 1990s a government agency in the English education system made a number of policy statements which state the mother tongue of the students in a second language classroom "should be banned and that teachers should use the target language exclusively" (p.35).

Butzkamm and Caldwell (2012) state that learners own language cannot be switched off; they are the greatest asset that beginner learners bring into the learning process. The reason is that mother tongue is unavoidable and even children are sometimes observed when they speak to themselves to learn the target language and this referred to as intra-psychological plan.

Besides the above facts, Ethiopian teachers are bilingual English teachers (BETs) and they are commonly observed shifting to mother tongue for various purposes when teaching the target language. This study, therefore, attempted to make a glance on the pedagogical functions of mother tongue (L1) in L2 (EFL), how many words and utterances used, teachers' awareness on current trends of scholarly identified techniques of L1 use in EFL classroom and if they had guidelines in using mother tongue in English language classrooms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As an EFL teacher, the researchers frequently observed English language teachers frequent use of Amharic in EFL classes particularly in Benishangul Gumuz Asosa zone. It is clear that an inexhaustible use of mother tongue in EFL classroom affects the teaching of the target language. As far as the main objective of English language teaching is fostering the target language, unsystematic use of mother tongue results in inefficiency in learning the language. Despite this fact, it is true that it is not as such easy task to ban mother tongue in classrooms. Butzkamm and Caldwell (2012) pointed out that mother tongue is not switched off in the target language.

Additionally, Harbord (1992) also suggested that many teachers try to make the whole lesson target language but unable to handle the entire lesson in the target

language due to different factors (Harbord, 1992). Hence, as far as the topic is not resolved for the past years over viewing the methodological practices of teachers in Benishangul Gumuz is required for the fact that systematic use of mother tongue in EFL classroom obviously results in poor language proficiency. Grim (2010) explains that EFL teachers have to make significant decisions about their teaching "methods and styles," including the use of the first language L1 (mother tongue) whose role become a topic of discussion among different teachers and researchers.

Atkinson (1989) identified some reasons for use of L1 in L2 classroom. These are "learners preferred strategy, a humanistic approach and an efficient use of time" (pp.350-351). According to him "learners' preferred strategy" means students' desire to translate without the encouragement from the teachers. The humanistic approach is to do with permitting learners what they like to say and in proficient use of time is to do with mother tongue enhances the use of time appropriately by facilitating communication. Atkinson (1987), moreover, identified the way in which the use of mother tongue appears to be effective in EFL classroom. These are for eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving instructions, co-operations among learners, discussion of classroom methodologies, and presentation on reinforcement of language checking for sense and testing.

Cook (2001) also identifies five points in which L1 can positively use in EFL classroom. These are "to convey meaning of words or sentences, for explaining grammar, for organizing tasks, maintenance of discipline and gaining contact with individual students" (pp. 114-417). Lay and Lally, as cited in DiCamilla and Anton (2012), also confirmed that the use of L1 during the pre-writing and

planning stages of L2 writing may be beneficial in the organization of a composition. DiCamilla and Anton (2012) also found out that “L1 use in L2 learning has communicative, cognitive, and hence real pedagogical value” (p.185).

The other area where L1 showed a great role in EFL according to Mohamed (2004 as cited in Carless, 2008) is that consciousness raising tasks that seek to lift up the students’ understanding of the formal properties of language features. The study by Scott, Di La Fuente (2008) shows that in joint consciousness-raising students talk to oneself in L1 as they translate the text, recall grammar rules, review the task and plan what to say in L2. While the benefit of L1 in teaching EFL seems to have acceptance among language experts, the degree and intensity of L1 in L2 (L1 words) is not clearly identified by scholars. Copland and Neokleous (2010) found out that in Greek Cyprus teachers’ belief about the place of the L1 in L2 classroom had complex and even emotional relationship with its use professing affective and cognitive reasons for using L1 in the classroom.

Besides the above facts, the use of L1 in EFL becomes destructive unless teachers use it in a proper way. This is the big issue among ELT experts particularly in specifying the amount of L1 and the systematic use of L1 in L2 and that is why researchers keep their eyes on the fascination of L1 in L2. Because of this, it is the spot that every teacher of EFL has to have note of it. One of the ELT experts Harbord (1992) recommends that though L1 helps us to do all mentioned points, however, excessive dependency on mother tongue consequences problem in L2 teaching. Carless (2008) strongly commented that “more concrete guidance” (p.336) need to be provided for teachers

from the side of teacher educators as when students need to use mother tongue.

It is true that in Ethiopia almost all of learners and teachers of EFL speak one of the countries’ languages in the classroom. Teacher unconditionally use L1 (Amharic) or any language of the country) in L2 (English) classes. As far as the current researchers are an EFL teacher and he has been observing teachers of junior schools in Assossa Zone, he has noticed inexhaustible L1 use in EFL classroom. Some of his informal observation led him to provoke an idea that teachers are not using target language only. They have some deficits in systematic use of mother tongue and it seems that teachers have no clear understanding of the pedagogical values and guideline as to how they use it.

The domestic scholarly researches made by Jemal (2012 and Kenenissa (2003) were attitudinal study that Jemal focused on teachers and students perception of the use of the Oromo language in EFL classroom around colleges whereas Kenenissa investigated on the frequencies of L1 (Oromo) in EFL classes particularly assessing students’ desire of their teachers to speak in EFL. The other domestic researcher was Abyi (2012) who assessed the impact of L1 use in pre-writing (idea generating) stage on L2 writing. Other researchers were Abyi and Mohammed (2011) who reviewed attitude of teachers and students in using Amharic in English language classroom in Bahir Dar elementary schools. They found that teachers and students have positive attitude towards the use of mother tongue but still it demands investigating teachers understanding of the theoretical values of adding L1 in L2 classroom. The very reason for this study is, hence, to look at whether teachers have clear understanding of the systematic integration of L1 for pedagogical uses, functions of L1, its

amount and teachers' guideline in teaching EFL in Asosa junior schools.

Research questions

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher raised the following four questions.

1. What are the functions of L1 in teaching EFL from the teachers' side?
2. How many Amharic words do teachers use in EFL classes?
3. What is the extent of teachers' knowledge about the pedagogical values of L1 in English classroom?
4. Do teachers of junior schools of Asosa zone set a specific guideline based on the theoretical assumptions and techniques of L1 use in L2?

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

This study generally aimed at investigating teachers' use of students' mother tongue in EFL classrooms. The inquiry was tried to assess the gap between literature and actual teachers' practice of using L1 (Amharic) in EFL classes. The study attempts to find out whether teacher use L1 in accordance with the literature review and scholarly identified empirical findings or if they use L1 in EFL classrooms unreservedly.

METHODOLOGY

This section contains methods and design that the researcher used to undertake the study. The research methodologies employed in the study were both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Frankel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) those who engage in such research claim that the use of both methods provides a more complete understanding of research problems than does the use of either approach alone and referred to as mixed research.

The assumption behind the employment of qualitative method in the study is to identify the function and amount of Amharic utterances in EFL classroom. The quantitative method, on the other hand, aims at gathering data about teachers' knowledge regarding the current practice of L1 in EFL classroom specifically the pedagogical values of L1 in teaching EFL, and if teachers have specific guideline about the use of L1 in L2. To get meaning out of raw data, descriptive research design was used.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Since it was difficult to investigate all zones in the Region, the researcher employed random sampling technique to get the target zone and Woredas so as to identify the schools for the study. In order to achieve this, each element [zones] in a sample frame was assigned a number. Consequently, the selected zone for the study was Asosa zone.

In Asosa zone there are 7 Woredas and they are highly dispersed from one another for the fact that schools are geographically blended to Woredas; and consequently, it required cost to collect relevant data. To overcome this problem, the researcher preferred to use cluster sampling technique. Clustering technique was undergone in such a way that clustering three Woreda in one and four Woreda in the other geographically and simple random sampling was employed to select the target Woreda from each clustered woredas.

To determine the sampling size the statistical formula $\frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$ was used.

Where N= total population and *e* = the percentage of marginal error willing to accept. Accordingly, 5(71%) Woreda such as Asosa, Mengie, Kurmuk, Sherkole and Bambasi Woredas were randomly selected

(by following lottery method) from each cluster.

The aim of maximizing the number of Woreda was to get 67 (83%) of respondents (teachers) out of total number of 81(100%) respondents. The justification of determining the number to 67 was that the researcher has to use 67 respondents in

order to increase his confidence level to 95%. Hence, he has a willing to accept $\pm 5\%$ marginal errors with the confidence of (95%) at α level of 0.05. This means that the actual proportion of the response by respondents ranged from 62.3% to 72.3% (67% $\pm 5\%$).

Table1: Interpretation of Likert scale used in the questionnaire

Mean	Degree	Opinion
4.5–5	Very high	Strongly agree
3.5–4.4	High	Agree
2.5–3.4	Moderate	Undecided
1.5–2.4	Low	Disagree
1.0–1.4	Very low	Strongly disagree

Walters and Küçük (2009). *ELT Journal* Volume, 63(4), 332-342).

Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

As it was already mentioned in the above discussion, to obtain the advantage of reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher employed test retest in 4 junior schools (Hoha number 1 and 2, Megele number 2, and Ura schools). Accordingly, the result calculated by Cronbach Alph indicated 0.827. This result was obtained without omission or addition of 24 items. The test result however was varying when item 13, 22 and 24 omitted from the total questions. Hence, three items were omitted and; as a result, the analysis showed higher result revealing 0.830.

DISCUSSION

As it was mentioned in the previous part, classroom observations were held in four sections for 30 minutes in each class of grade eight for T1 and T3 and grade seven for T2 and T4. (Note that T1, T2, T3 and T4 in this study stand for teacher 1, teacher

2, teacher 3 and teacher 4). T1 and T2 have worked for 8- 9 years that is leveled as teacher level. T3, on the other hand, have worked for 13 years (assistant teacher level) and finally T4 has worked for 17 years that is leveled as led teacher.

All observations were accompanied by tape recording in each section. Recordings were transcribed (see Appendix A, B, C and D) to answer research question number 1; the function of Amharic in teaching EFL and 2; how many L1 is used in L2 classroom. An observation form was filled out documenting the teachers’ code time started and ended (see Appendix F). In order to answer research questions 3 and 4 a questionnaire was prepared based on literature review.

Translation

When the teacher gave the Amharic equivalent word for English, it is labeled as a translation. From this point of view, the transcription of the recorded data depicted that Amharic was used for translation in

EFL classrooms. The recording instances showed that T3 translated for the students first with students request and later by his consent. As one can observe from the following extract 1, T3 was translated English words into Amharic during students group work. In this particular extract, the teacher translated Amharic words into English because students preferred the teacher to translate English words.

Extract 1:T3

- S: Care ማለት ምንድን ነው? [Meaning: what is the meaning of the word care?]
- T: መንከባከብ ማለት ነው:: [Translation by the teacher]
- S: Environment ማለት ምን ማለት ነው? [Meaning: what is the meaning of the word environment?]
- T: አካባቢ ማለት ነው::[Translation by the teacher]
- S: Characteristics? [Meaning: what is the meaning of the word **characteristic**?]
- T: ባህሪይ:: [Translation by the teacher]

From the above extracts the interrogative “**care**” ማለት ምንድን ነው? the word “care” was demanded by the students to be translated into Amharic. Subsequent to teachers’ response, students steadily asked the teacher to translate even other English words; environment and characteristics. In addition, the following extract shows the interactions between the teacher and students through mother tongue that reveals teachers preference of translating English words.

Extract 2:T3

- “Feeding” መመገብ ማለት ነው::
- “Growing” ማደግ ማለት ነው::
- “Inspire” ማለት መደሰት ማለት ነው::

According to this extract the teacher was in a position to translate the English words without students’ demand for translated words by the teacher. Though teachers performed some of scholarly identified functions of L1 in L2, they employed them without clear knowledge how they work in L2. The data obtained through questionnaire and observation also revealed that there was variability of knowledge on the area under discussion between teachers; and consequently there was inconsistency in employing the functions.

Extract 3: T2

“...from mid of September to mid of March” ከታህሳስ አጋማሽ እስከ መጋቢት አጋማሽ ድረስ...”

As the extract shows, translation of English words into Amharic by T2 and T3 did not come from many attempts to explain in English. Both teachers translated while they were working on the exercises. For example, T2 translated [**“borderland”** ማለት አዋሳኝ ማለት ነው::] which the word “አዋሳኝ” in Amharic means “borderland.” This technique was applicable during the grammar translation method that focused on translation of every word in to mother tongue. However, such an approach has been discredited on a number of grounds and it is not my intention to advocate its reintroduction. Cook (2001) pointed out that the use of L1 for conveying word and sentence meaning recognizes that the two languages are closely linked in the mind. The teacher explained on the interview as the following:

“I am afraid that students can’t listen to all English words ...and even they can’t catch

everything when I always use English.”

This response indicates that, teacher’s use of mother tongue was manifested from his personal feeling that is also referred to as self-approach. The recording instance also showed that T3 first translates English words for students when students asked him to do so. Literature is not against translation in the process of language learning when it is based on students’ preference. Harbord (1992) argued that translation is an inevitable part of second language learning even where no formal learning occurs. What matter is translation is not regarded as teachers’ strategy of EFL teaching; however, it is a learner preferred strategy and the teacher needs to work with student natural tendency rather than against it. Teachers use such translations whenever they think there is a challenge in helping students to understand the context of the word.

In extract 2 and 3, nonetheless, the interest for translation did not emanate from students. For instance, T2 observed translating sentences and phrases whenever he explained points in English. Hence, it is obvious that translation in this context came from teacher’s desire. According to researchers, translation is valuable when students perform to simplify texts or any language aspect. According to DiCamila and Anton (2012; Harbord, 1992) learners resorted to their native language when they tried to make sense of the meaning or form of the text and when they evaluated an L2 text either in the form of translation or by externalizing their explicit knowledge about the L2.

Maintaining Discipline

According to transcriptions three teachers used Amharic for maintaining discipline. The following extracts were taken from

three teachers because T4 had never used Amharic for maintaining discipline.

Extract 4

T1: ዝም ብላኹሁ እኔን ተከታተሉ:: [follow me with silence]

T2: ሸ...ሸ...እየተስማማን እንሂድ እሺ? ከተጠያቂው ወጪ ማንም ሰው እንዲያውራ አልፈልግም:: ምንም ድምጽ መስማት አልፈልግም:: [Silent...let agree, ok? [I don’t want others students to speak except the one that is allowed to speak. I don’t like to hear any voice, ok?]] የምትስቁ ተማሪዎች be careful. አትሳቅ West በየት በኩል ነው east በየት በኩል ነው ያለው? አታቅም? አታውቅም ለዛ ነው የምትስቀው:: [...those who are laughing....don’t laugh...where is east? where is west? You don’t know where east and west are. That is why you are laughing].

T3: አትበጥብጥ አንተ አትረብሽ .ሸ. . . ሸ . . ባካኹሁ ዝምበሉ [please do not disturb... you do not disturb!] በቃ...በቃ...በቃ... አንድ ሰው እንዳይተነፍስ:: [stop!..Stop!...Stop...no one should speak!] ዝም በል አንተ ልጅ....[you...boy...keep silent!]

The above extracts show us that three teachers used Amharic for maintaining silence in the classroom. During the observations, teachers were using mother tongue repeatedly even to control one or two students. T4, however, did not use Amharic utterances to maintain discipline. Most importantly, teachers were highly interested in mother tongue of students

rather than English when students misbehave in the classroom. Some of spoken words were produced from teachers’ emotional conversation with some misbehaved students.

T1 used Amharic for the similar purpose only once. He preferred students’ attention only at the beginning of the lesson. T3 also used Amharic utterances for discipline and his utterances were emotional: አትበጥብጥ አንተ አትረብሽ! ሸ. . . ሸ . . ባካችሁ ;ቢቃ...ቢቃ...ቢቃ... አንድ ሰው እንዳይተነፍስ:: Meaning: [you...boy don’t disturb...please, stop! Stop! No one should whisper!]

The way T3 used L1 shares some cultural incident which let students seek attention of their teachers when they warns in Amharic language. Regarding this, Cook (2001) pointed out that the need to maintain discipline sometimes calls for L1. He added that saying “shut up or you will get a detention!” in the L1 is a serious treat rather than practice of imperative and conditional constructions (p. 415). Macaro (1997, as cited in Cook, 2001) found out students report “once their teacher slipped into the L1 it is something really bad!” (p.415). Franklin (1990, as cited in Cook, 2001) also found out that 40% of teachers preferred the use of the L1 for maintaining discipline. The data gathered through observation in table 4.12 also shows that teachers are highly interested in mother tongue for discipline purposes.

Explaining Grammar

The other taxonomy on L1 function found from the recorded data was Amharic for explaining grammar. The following pieces of extracts show that T4 used Amharic as a strategy to explain grammar lesson. According to the recorded data, T4 showed an interest to correlate Amharic sentences to help students internalize two grammatical forms.

Extract 5

T4: “Comparative” የምን ለወ ሁለቱን ነገር ለማወዳደር ነዉ::[...to compare two things] Superlative adjective ደግሞ ከሁለት በላይ ለሆኑ ነገሮች ነዉ:: [...to compare more than two things].

As it can be seen in the above data, T4 used Amharic sentences to elucidate the difference between comparative and superlative degrees. The teacher employed the strategy to help students conceptualize grammatical patterns by explaining the two forms in Amharic. In the interview section the teacher gave his opinion why he included a very small amount of mother tongue into EFL. He suggested that,

I do not always use Amharic in my classroom because I know that it is not allowed in English classroom though students want me to clarify ideas in Amharic. And I know that students are very alert when I use Amharic but how can they learn the language unless at list avoid fear of speaking the language...

According to T4 making a shift into Amharic does not support teaching the target language suitably. It is also possible to deduce that the teacher was meticulous in integrating the two languages. During the observation the researcher noticed that he shifted to L1 after a heated discussion

about what comparative and superlative degrees are between students and him.

Ellis (1992) pointed out that L1 is legitimate for explaining grammar rules. According to researchers mother tongue raises students' awareness of and elicit conscious reflection on a grammatical structure through a focus on the difference between two languages (Scott et al, 2008). Nevertheless, the teachers' emphasis on clarifying the meaning of comparative and superlative degree than explaining forms of the two grammatical structures in Amharic. If it were in such cases, the L1 may help

students to formulate hypotheses about language and support them in developing explicit understandings about how grammar operates in the target language (Careless, 2008).

Amount of L1 use in EFL

The second research question was finding out the amount of mother tongue used in EFL classroom. In order to determine the amount of L1 used in the observed classes, first, the researcher carried out a word count of all L1 and L2 utterances. Then he calculated and compared the amount of L1 used by each teacher.

Table 2: The amount of Amharic and English words observed from four lessons in 2 hours.

	Teachers	T1		T2		T3		T4	
		Amount	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Languages	English (L2)	429	81%	860	59%	881	84%	721	96
	Amharic(L1)	101	19%	552	41%	169	16%	31	4
	Total	530	100%	1412	100%	1050	100%	752	100%

N: total number of word distribution for each teacher

As it is presented on the above table, the amount of Amharic and English words used during recordings of each section was that, T2 used 860 (59%) English and 552 (41%) Amharic words with total of 1412 spoken words within 30 minutes. T3, on the other hand, used 881 (84%) English and 169 (16%) Amharic with the passage of 30 minutes recording time. In addition, T1 built-in 429 (81%) English and 101 (19%) Amharic words. Finally, T4 performed 752 (96%) English and 31 (4%) Amharic words from the total of 752 words. In sum, 2891 English and 853 Amharic words were used across all lessons.

As can be indicated in the previous extracts, of all teachers, T2 relatively used

maximum quantity of Amharic words followed by T3. The transcript showed that T2 was not aware of specific points when to use Amharic language. Some of the words he produced implied that he was emotional on the methodological approach to assimilate the two languages. For instance, there was no valid reason when he included the following Amharic utterances into English language reading lesson.

Extract 6:T2

Kilimanjaro is the second largest. የዓለም ትልቁ ተራራ ሚባለው...which is Evert ነው:: ይህኛው በታኅሣሥ ውስጥ የሚገኝ የአፍሪካ ትልቁ ተራራ

ነዉ። ከፍታዉ አምስት ሺህ ስምንት መቶ ስንት ነዉ? ዘጠና አምስት ሲሆን ይህ ተራራ Kilimanjaro ተራራ ነዉ። which covers with what? Snow...በበረዶ የተሸፈነ ነዉ። በዚያ ተራራ ላይ ምን አለ? ሦስት Volcanic Center የሚባሉ አሉ። Three የሆኑ ሴንተሮች አሉ። This volcanic center appears in Kilimanjaro. በዚህ ተራራ ውስጥ so አንደኛ “woshra” ሁለተኛ “Mawanzi” ሶስተኛ “Shira” የሚባሉት ናቸው። The third one is “Shirah.” The second is “Mawanzi” The third one is what? Snow caven በሚባለው ቦታ እንዳለ ያመለክታል። The first one is Mawanzi, the second one is “Shira” and snow shaved; then ይህንን ተራራ ሰዎች የሚጠቀሙት ለምንድን ነው? በአፍሪካ ውስጥ የሚገኝ ሲሆን is used for tourist attraction.....ለቱሪዝም መስብህነት ይጠቅማል። Specially, for African የገቢ ምንጭ ከመሆኑም በላይ ሰዎች ሲመጡ ያንን ተራራ ሄዶ ለማየት..... Because this is the essential and we can know the direction of the country which ከሰሀራ በረሀ ውጪ የሚገኙ አገሮችም እንደዚያ ነበሩ። ናይጄሪያና ማን ነበሩ? እስኪ አንድ ጥቀሱልኝ።

As we can observe above, there is a frequent addition of L1 into L2 spoken sentences. Most of L1 utterances recorded in the presentations were more employed for very specific purposes: particularly descipline and translation. The amount of L1 used across lessons relatively range from 31 (3.63%) to 552 (64.72%). There is a high range between T4 (3.63%) and T2

(64.72%). This is also highly greater than the proportional amount of L1 found across lessons by Macaro (2001) which was proportioally ranged from 0% to 15.2% across lessons.

Additionally, the proportional amount of L1 (Amharic) talk by all teachers across four classes is 22.7 % and this is also highly greater than Macaro’s 5 second sampling record of 6.9% as a proportion of talk. The proportional amount of L2 across lessons also ranges from 14.83% to 30.4% this is also smaller when it is compared to Neil (1997) as cited in Macaro (2001) found in his study that teachers’ L2 use varied between 97.5% and 33.1 % as a proportion of lesson.

The distinctive activity examined from tape recording was that, T2 and T3 strived to add Amharic letters in to English words that referred to as negative transfer (Brown, 2004). As it is found from tape recording teacher were translating English sentences in to Amharic and frequently adding Amharic sounds into English words: [-ʔ] as [-n], [n-] as [bə-] [h-] as [k].

Extract 7: T2: Kilimanjaroʔ; h longest; n snow; T3: threeʔ

T1 and T4, on the other hand, used Amharic utterance for mediating some difficult sections of the lesson for students. According to classroom observation T1 used Amharic after frequent questions to elicit students to talk about the rights of disabled people. T4 also turned to mother tongue after active participation of students that he realized students were unable to realize about the two grammatical forms (superlative and comparative). However, the amount of Amharic words used by T1 was high for the mentioned specific activity. For instance, the following extract shows T1 used more

Amharic words than English when he desired to provide examples on “the rights of disabled people.”

Extract 8: T1

ለምሳሌ:-የተለያዩ ህንፃዎች በሚሰሩበት ጊዜ አካል ጉዳተኞችን ግምት ውስጥ ያስገባ ባመጥን አለበት። ይህ ለምሳሌ አካል ጉዳተኞችን በግምት ውስጥ ያስገባ መብት ነው። So they have to be considered in that way. Because still it thought that they are culturally ignorant ብዙ ጊዜ አካል ጉዳተኞች በባህል ተጎድተዋል ተብሎ ነው የሚታሰበው። specially በተለያዩ በሽታ በሚጎዱበት ጊዜ ወደ ሰው

አያቀርቧቸዋል። But all have to be treated equally ሁሉም ሰው አኩል መብት አለው አይደል? አዎ በዚህ ዘመን ማንም ሰው አኩል ነው። ስለዚህ የሌላውን መብት መንካት አግባብነት ለውም።

Besides, in similar way to T2, T1 focused more on the content of the lesson than the language aspect. Unlike the three teachers, T4 relatively added small amount of mother tongue during 30 minute recording. He used mother tongue for ordering students in class work and explaining the concept of grammar. For more illustrations, the proportional amount of English and Amharic utterances between four teachers is presented bellow.

Table 3: The proportional amount of English and Amharic words used between teachers

Teachers		T1		T2		T3		T4		Total words	
Amount		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Languages	English	429	14.83	860	29.74	881	30.47	721	24.93	2891	77.21
	Amharic	101	11.84	552	64.71	169	19.81	31	3.63	853	22.79
Total		530	26.67	1412	94.45	1050	50.28	752	28.56	3744	100%

N: the amount of words used between teachers

The table shows that the total amount of words used by four teachers were 3744 out of which 2891 (77.21%) were English and 853 (22.79%) Amharic. When we see the proportional amount of words used between teachers, the above table displays that, T2 used 860 (29.74%) English and 552 (64.71%) Amharic words. Secondly, T3, used proportionally 881(30.47) English and 169 (19.81%) Amharic words. Thirdly, T1 used proportionally 429 (14.83%) English words and 101 (11.84%) Amharic words. Finally, T4 employed 721 (24.93%) English and 31 (3.63%) Amharic words which was proportionally the smallest of all the three teachers. It is possible to deduce from the table that there is no uniformity between teachers in substantiating L1 and L2.

According to table 3 the word count carried out after the transcription of recorded data showed all teachers immersed different amount of L1 across lessons that relatively range from 31 (3.63%) to 552 (64.72%). This is highly greater than the proportional amount of L1 found across lessons by Macaro (2001). He found that L1 as a proportion of lessons ranged from 0% to 15.2%. This difference indicated that there was a considerable range of L1 use across all lessons. Additionally, the proportional mean of L1 (Amharic) talk by all teachers across four classes is 22.7 % and this is also highly greater than Macaro's 5 second sampling record of 6.9% as a proportion of talk (see Macaro, 2001).

The proportional amount of L2 across lessons found in this study also ranges from 14.83% to 30.4% this is also smaller when it is compared to Neil (1997, as cited in Macaro, 2001) found in his study that teachers' L2 use varied between 97.5% and 33.1 % as a proportion of lesson. The analysis of the transcription informs that many utterances were used to provide very small and limited activities such as

decipline, translation, explaining grammar. Finally, what is to be considered is that, selected teachers for classroom observations were teachers level (8-9 years), assistant level (13) and led teacher level (17years). Therefore, it might not be difficult for these teachers to strike a balance between using L1 and in the target classroom.

The total proportional amount of L1 obtained is 853 (22.79%) and 2891 (77.21) English words. Surprisingly, the average amount of English and Amharic words found by Abyi and Mohammed (2011) in Bahir Dar elementary schools was 7136 (77.7) English and 2048 (22.3) Amharic. This value was obtained from 10 observations in 5 classes (observing one class two times) that varied between 22 to 33 minutes in each observation. This result clearly indicates that there is high reliability between teachers of Bahir Dar elementary schools and Asosa second cycle schools in using L1 in L2 classroom as far as they persistently used the same amount of utterances for both languages.

Table 4: Teachers' Perception about L1 in L2

Service year		Q1. Using mother tongue is necessary for teaching English language	Q2. All EFL teacher have to have knowledge how to use L1 in L2	Q3. Methodologically using MT with students natural tendency	Q4. Teachers need to use Amharic in EFL classes
Beginner 1-2 years	M	2.8000	2.9000	4.2000	2.2000
	N	10	10	10	10
	SD	1.13529	1.19722	1.87380	1.22927
Intermediate 3-6 years	M	3.0000	3.5000	3.5000	2.9000
	N	10	10	10	10
	SD	1.24722	.84984	1.43372	1.28668
Teacher 6-9 years	M	3.4167	3.4167	3.5000	3.0000
	N	12	12	12	12
	SD	1.37895	1.24011	1.00000	1.04447
Higher teacher 10-12 years	M	2.8333	3.6667	3.1667	2.3333
	N	6	6	6	6
	SD	1.32916	1.03280	1.47196	1.75119
Assistant teacher 13-15 years	M	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	2.5000
	N	2	2	2	2
	SD	.00000	.00000	.00000	.70711
Led teacher 16-18	M	3.8000	3.0000	3.4000	3.0000
	N	5	5	5	5
	SD	1.09545	.70711	.89443	.70711
Higher led teacher >19	M	2.8750	3.1875	3.1250	2.2500
	N	16	16	16	16
	SD	1.02470	.75000	1.54380	1.00000
Total	M	3.0984	3.2951	3.4918	2.5738
	N	61	61	61	61
	SD	1.17905	.97201	1.40976	1.16131

To get relevant data categorization of teachers by service year was desirable. This was also indispensable technique in order to avoid over generalization that might occur between novice and advanced teachers in relation to knowledge and perception of mother tongue use in target language classroom. The finding showed that there were variations in responding to all items. As far as THE mean values about teachers' perception of mother tongue in L2 vary for all levels of teachers, employing One Way ANOVA was central. The result obtained from ANOVA indicated that there is no significant difference between groups of teachers at $p < 0.05$. The calculated value of F is less than the table value of 2.34 (6, 54) at 5% level with degree of freedom being between groups = 6 and within groups = 54 could have arisen due to chance.

Table 5: Teachers' perception about L1 in L2

Service		Q5. Including Amharic does not affect EFL teaching	Q6. Amharic makes teaching EFL easier	Q7. Use Amharic throughout EFL classroom	Q8. Amharic should be completely avoided from EFL classroom
Beginner1-2 years	Mean	3.0000	3.7000	3.4000	2.7000
	N	10	10	10	10
	SD	1.15470	.82327	1.17379	1.49443
Intermediate 3-6 years	Mean	3.1000	3.0000	3.1000	2.5000
	N	10	10	10	10
	SD	1.28668	1.15470	1.28668	1.50923
Teacher 6-9 years	Mean	3.0000	3.7500	2.9167	2.2500
	N	12	12	12	12
	SD	1.20605	1.21543	1.44338	1.42223
Higher teacher 10-12 years	Mean	2.5000	3.0000	2.6667	2.6667
	N	6	6	6	6
	SD	1.76068	1.54919	1.50555	1.63299
assistant teacher 13-15years	Mean	2.0000	3.0000	2.5000	2.5000
	N	2	2	2	2
	SD	.00000	1.41421	.70711	.70711
Led teacher 16-18	Mean	2.8000	3.4000	2.4000	2.4000
	N	5	5	5	5
	SD	1.64317	.89443	1.14018	.89443
Higher led teacher >19	Mean	2.6875	3.8125	2.4375	2.6875
	N	16	16	16	16
	SD	1.13835	4.67930	1.03078	1.40089
Total	Mean	2.8361	3.5082	2.8197	2.5410
	N	61	61	61	61
	SD	1.24070	2.54049	1.23164	1.36105

Key: 4.5–5 - Very high: Strongly agree; 3.5–4.4- High: Agree; 2.5–3.4- Moderate: Undecided; 1.5–2.4- Low: Disagree; 1.0–1.4- Very low: Strongly disagree

In response to item 5 about including Amharic does not affect EFL teaching, only assistant teachers responded low (disagree) with the mean value of 2. Others respondents chose moderate. The mean of beginner teachers for this item was 3, intermediate 3.1, teacher 3, high teacher 2.5 led teachers 2.8 and higher led teachers also 2.8. The total result of respondents for the item falls in the range of moderate (2.83). Researchers argue that teaching first language influence may be an indication of low acquisition. So, it can be eliminated or at least reduced by natural intake and language use Krashen (2002). Careless (2008) also explained that use of mother tongue has both positive and negative consequence. Hence, mother tongue affects teaching of target language when it lacks theoretical knowledge from teachers' side.

Item 6 was designed to elicit the knowledge of teachers whether or not Amharic language makes teaching of EFL easier. As it was indicated in the table beginners, teachers, and higher led teachers agreed that Amharic makes teaching EFL easier. The mean values for these teachers were 3.7, 3.75 and 3.8 respectively. On the other hand, the mean value for intermediate, higher teachers, assistant teachers and led teachers showed moderate value. The entire mean result for this item indicated high (agree) with the mean value of 3.5 which depicts Amharic makes teaching of EFL easier. Literature supports the response of teachers where everything is under normal condition. Turnbull and O'Cain (1998) suggested that first language can be beneficial as a cognitive, social interaction, and pedagogical in second language learning. Item 7 concerned with the use of Amharic throughout EFL classroom. The response showed that led-teachers and higher led teachers chose mean value of 2.4 which indicated low (disagree). The rest of respondents answered moderate. The total mean value

for this item also showed moderate with mean value of 2.8. This implies that teachers lack knowledge about using mother tongue thoroughly in target language affects target language learning. In contrast to item seven, item 8 deals with teachers' response concerning whether or not Amharic should be completely avoided from EFL classroom. Teachers and led teachers responded low (disagree) and the mean value for this item was 2.2 and 2.4 respectively. The rest of teachers preferred to chose moderate. Finally, the mean of total respondents for this item indicated 2.5 that leveled as moderate (undecided). It is not as such convincing to make complete avoidance of L1 in targets classrooms where BETs are implementing the instruction, however, there are still scholarly advices about judicious use of mother tongue.

Table 6: ANOVA table to see if there if any difference between teachers by service year

Items		df	F	Sig.
Using mother tongue is necessary for teaching English language	Between Groups	6	0.890494	0.508454
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
If EFL the teacher have knowledge how to use L1 in L2	Between Groups	6	0.794993	0.577958
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Methodologically using MT with students is a natural tendency	Between Groups	6	0.678759	0.667326
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Teachers need to use Amharic in EFL classes	Between Groups	6	0.930849	0.480533
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Amharic does not affect EFL teaching	Between Groups	6	0.378039	0.88984
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Amharic makes teaching EFL easier	Between Groups	6	0.171915	0.983273
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Use Amharic through EFL classroom	Between Groups	6	0.847003	0.53955
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		
Amharic should be completely avoided from EFL classroom	Between Groups	6	0.150386	0.98821
	Within Groups	54		
	Total	60		

The mean difference is significant at 0.05 levels

Key: *df: degree of freedom; F: value between groups and with in groups [to be referred from F table];*

Sig: significant difference between groups

In the above table, analysis of One Way ANOVA showed that the calculated value of *F* is less than the table value of 2.34 (6, 54: see distribution of *F* on statistical table value) at 5% level with degree of freedom being between groups = 6 and within groups= 54 could have arisen due to chance. This analysis supports the null-hypothesis of no difference in sample means. We may, therefore, conclude that the difference in result about knowledge of L1 in L2 was insignificant and is just a matter of chance. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference between all teachers (beginner to higher led teachers). This does mean that all levels of

teachers have the same knowledge regarding the general perception of the inclusion of Amharic in EFL classroom with $p < 0.05$ for all variables. It also indicated that the frequent inclusions of Amharic in EFL classroom were without clear justifications of how L1 works in EFL classroom.

Finding of Teachers’ Guideline of L1 in L2 Classroom

The fourth research question about whether or not teachers have clear guideline about L1 in L2 appeared to be answered through questionnaire.

Table 7: Specific guideline how to use mother tongue in EFL classroom

Item	Yes	%	No	%
Q 21. Have you any specific guideline as how to use Amharic in EFL classroom?	12	19.67	49	80.32%

As it has displayed in the above table, the number of teachers who do not have specific guideline how to use Amharic in EFL classroom was four times double than those who have specific guideline on the use of mother tongue in EFL classroom. The table conveyed that 49 (80%) of the respondents have no any guideline on the use of L1 in L2. The number of teachers who set a specific guideline how to integrate mother tongue in to EFL was four times less than those who do not have guideline. The number of these respondents was 12(19.67%).

The above item was followed by an open ended question that was prepared to get the attributions of teachers, if they responded no (see appendix G) or yes, whether they have specific guideline how to treat L1 in L2 classroom. Those who responded no

wrote down on the blank space that it is strange idea for them. They pointed out that they have ample guidelines particularly on classroom supervision, peer evaluation, continuous professional development plan (CPD), school improvement plan (SIP) and continuous assessment. However, there is no guideline how to treat mother tongue in English language classroom. Even some of the respondents replayed that, the issue of how to treat mother tongue in English classroom is becoming a big debate between teachers during peer evaluation. Those who responded yes, on the other hand, were unable to write their guideline.

Lack of guideline at school level as well as national level highly affects English language teaching. Duff and Polio (1990) found out that, for different teachers some of the factors determining the different

amounts of L1 and L2 were lack of departmental policy guidelines and pedagogical training. Hence, an absence of written guideline and policies at the school level contributes to poor practice of L1 in L2. Form open ended responses, there are also indications of low attention from Ethiopian training policy. The issue of mother tongue in target language classrooms was not uncovered in ETP set in 1994. This is also contributing to inefficient language teaching.

Summary of the Major Findings

Functions of Amharic (L1) in English Classroom

During classroom observations teachers incorporated Amharic in the middle of instruction for translation, maintaining classroom discipline and explaining grammar. The analysis of tape recording showed that these functions were not systematic in assisting target language teaching. Teachers were highly subjected to self-centered approach in concocting the two languages. This explicitly indicated poor language proficiency. Moreover, though teachers performed some of scholarly identified functions of L1 in L2, they were employed without clear knowledge how they work in L2. The data obtained through questionnaire and observation also revealed that there was variability of knowledge on the area under discussion between teachers; and consequently there was inconsistency in employing functions.

The Amount of Amharic used in EFL

As it has already presented in the discussion part, there was a frequent addition of L1 into L2 spoken sentences. Most of L1 utterances recorded in the presentations were more employed for very specific purposes: particularly discipline and translation. The amount of L1 used across lessons relatively range from 31

(3.63%) to 552 (64.72%). There is a high range between T4 (3.63%) and T2 (64.72%). This is also highly greater than the proportional amount of L1 found across lessons by (Macaro, 2001) which was proportionally ranged from 0% to 15.2% across lessons.

Additionally, the proportional amount of L1 (Amharic) talk by all teachers across four classes is 22.7 % and this is also highly greater than Macaro's 5 second sampling record of 6.9% as a proportion of talk. The proportional amount of L2 across lessons also ranges from 14.83% to 30.4% this is also smaller when it is compared to Neil(1997) as cited in Macaro, 2001) found in his study that teachers' L2 use varied between 97.5% and 33.1 % as a proportion of lesson.

Teachers Knowledge of Pedagogical Value of L1

To get relevant data categorization of teachers by service year was desirable. This was also indispensable technique in order to avoid over generalization that might occur between novice and advanced teachers in relation to knowledge and perception of mother tongue use in target language classroom. The findings showed that there were variations in responding to all items. As far as mean values about teachers' perception of mother tongue in L2 vary for all levels of teachers, employing One Way ANOVA was central. The result obtained from ANOVA indicated that there is no significant difference between groups of teachers at $p < 0.05$. The calculated value of F is less than the table value of 2.34 (6, 54) at 5% level with degree of freedom being between groups = 6 and within groups = 54 could have arisen due to chance.

Basic Guidelines of Teacher How L1 Treated in L2 Classroom

As it is indicated in the discussion part 48 (80.32%) of teachers responded that they have no basic guideline how L1 can be methodologically engaged in L2 teaching. Very small respondents replayed that they have specific guideline how to use L1 in English language. Therefore, lack of clear guide line at school as well as national level highly affects English language teaching.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

All teachers in the study worked in similar context of governmental schools in the same region and zone. Their realistic feat of mother tongue in EFL classroom demonstrated that there was a considerable variability between teachers. They have even unclear and personal feeling on L1 use in the target classroom. As it has presented on extract 2, 3, 4, 5, and an interview of T1, T2 and T3 there is a predisposition that lead us to conclude that they have unclear and vague insight about the view of pedagogical functions and use of L1 in L2.

What seems worthy in this study was that although the literature affirms Cook (2001; Harbord, 1992) the pedagogical appreciation of mother tongue in EFL teaching, the study illustrated that the evaluability of L1 for facilitating L2 became distorted because of the unbalanced use with the target language by teachers. The study also showed that the number of L1 utterance counted and proportionally calculated exceeds the previous studies by (Macaro, 2001 and Neil, 1997, as cited in Macaro, 2001). This was an indication for excess amount of mother tongue use in target language

classroom. In comparison to the previous study the amount of word count was proportionally high with considerable variability between teacher as well as lessons.

Statistical analysis of One way-ANOVA assured that there is no significant difference between all groups of teachers at $p < 0.05$ on the perception of L1 in L2. This implied that teachers were not considerate in accessing published academic books, language teaching journals, ELT journals and so on in order to accustom with issue of BETs and thereby to update their proficiency level.

The researchers also recognized that a vast amount of research effort has made into the use of L1 in L2 and that some progress has been made in non-Ethiopian context. Yet there is lack of theoretical knowledge that has persisted between groups of teachers in the sampled schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the conclusion there are factors that affect teaching of the target language because of inappropriate use of mother tongue in English language classroom. In order to tackle these problems the researchers would like to forward the following recommendations:

- Since, scholarly identified functions of mother tongue use in EFL classroom were not well treated by teachers of EFL, it is legitimate for teachers to have a systematic approach in implementing functions. Whenever it appears mandatory for the teacher to help students by shifting to mother tongue it is legitimate to know the purpose of L1 for that particular instance.

- Regarding the unsystematic use of L1 functions in target language observed, teachers should overview findings how the concept works and they have to be sure about the legitimacy of Amharic instances in teaching the language. It is also necessary to identify students' related strategies of mother tongue use in target language. Translation, relating grammatical patterns of the two languages and generating idea are related to learners strategies than teachers.
- Regarding disparity of L1 use between teachers, EFL teachers need to share experiences of other teachers and even schools. Most importantly make English language a medium of communication in the classroom. By doing this students are receiving more comprehensible input (Krashen) thus leading to more complex language structures instead of highly relying on mother tongue. This is for the fact that, when teachers use the L2, students are not only learning about the language but also learning through the language.
- To tackle problems of awareness, a good deal more needs to be done to communicate findings regarding the value of L1 in EFL teaching. Accessing published academic books and journals to junior school teachers who may not always be able to access such publications appeared to be crucial. It would be useful if educational bureaus, teacher educators, colleges and universities provide more concrete guidance to teachers as to when teachers use mother tongue. It is essential if ETP (Ethiopian Training Policy) have a glance on the issue of mother tongue in target language classroom particularly in formulating

necessary guidelines that also seeks the attention of syllabus designer.

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