

# ROLE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM BY NECESSITY TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE ACCURACY

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## Abstract

The present paper deals with the significance of teaching English to accomplish the ever growing demands of English. The methods and approaches adopted or followed by teachers in the past to teach English language, the gap in their language teaching which is the second language for both teacher and students is discussed. A restoration of interest to using a mother tongue in the English classroom is predetermined by prerequisite to improve language precision, fluency and simplicity. This paper aims at examining students' perceptions of the use of mother tongue and translation in diverse linguistic situations. The activities that help elevate learners' understanding of the language use are described. The findings exhibit that all learners need a support of mother tongue in English classes, but the amount of the native language needed depends on students' expertise in English. English has a base in several countries and is considered as the most relevant and convenient tool for International Communication. The people who have expertise in this language could access large number of jobs and also were seen holding high positions in many National and International Organizations. In the earlier days English was just like a Library language, but now that conception has changed completely. At present the challenges noticeable before the English language teachers in India are varied and it is required for them to shape up therefore to meet the demands of the day.

**Key words:** prerequisite, conception, expertise, predetermined, relevant.

The state-of-the-art teaching of languages is based on the communicative method which emphasizes the teaching English through English. However, the idea of abandoning the mother tongue is too stressful to numerous learners, who need a sense of protection in the practice of learning a foreign language. In the past, the occurrence of grammar-translation method led to the strange happening: students were incapable to speak fluently after having studied the language for a long time.

As English has turned into a universal language, its existence and value in the world has extended extremely in the past decades. Many money-earning activities such as BPO, Medical Transcription and IT add to the essence and significance of English in every walk of life. Translation has been thought as uncommunicative, tiresome, futile, problematic, and inappropriate. In the past, students were introduced to English only in their sixth standard. Students learned English just as an additional subject like Physics and Mathematics and got very small opportunity to using it within the school as well as outside the school.

In recent times there has been a reinforcement of interest to translation due to the shift of its importance - to using a mother tongue as a source for the encouragement of language learning. Translation develops three qualities vital to all language learning: accuracy, lucidity, and flexibility. Therefore, the use of mother tongue and translation can provide as a tool for improving language skills. The goals of this paper are, firstly, to scrutinize students' perceptions of the use of mother tongue and translation in learning English, and secondly, to illustrate the activities which raise learners' awareness of language use. Comparison between the first language L1 and the second language L2 through translation might help learners start language usage and serve as a tool to have advancement in English.

It is obligatory to distinguish between the teaching of translation as a professional skill and the use of the mother tongue in the teaching circumstances as an aid to language learning. The need for some translation in language learning is generally supported by non-native teachers. Native teachers of English argue that foreign language learning needs as much exposure to the L2 as probable during precious classroom time, and any usage of the L1 or translation is a waste of time.

However, recently the approach to mother tongue and translation in language classes has undergone a positive change. Translation holds a special importance at a transitional and advanced level: in the advanced or final phase of language teaching, 'translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes

Communication and understanding between strangers' (Ross, 2000:63).

Mother tongue has potentially both positive and negative consequences. It is claimed that students working in groups do not have to speak English all the time. Use of mother tongue relates to learner identity. Negative impact of mother tongue use is that too much dependence on the L1 may destabilize the interaction in English.

However good the students are at comprehending reliable reading or listening materials, the majority keeps mentally translating from L2 into L1 and vice versa. This fact makes teachers of foreign languages conscious of the importance of translation in language classrooms. Another cause is that translation is a natural thing to do in language learning, and code-switching between languages is regarded as naturally developmental. The amount of L1 use by particular students may well have to do with differing learner styles and abilities.

The real significance of translation in English classes lies in exploiting it in order to compare grammar, vocabulary, word order and other language points in English and the student's mother tongue. Cross linguistic similarities and differences can fabricate positive transfer or negative transfer such as underproduction, overproduction, production errors, and misinterpretation. It should be emphasized that transfer is not always caused by the influence of native language.

Numerous studies indicated that both negative and positive transfer between the L1 and L2 was significant for development of the inter language, the intricate system of the learners' L2. Many teachers identify that the L1 in the classroom is a positive representation of the inter language. The data on the inter language and language transfer show that it is highly probable that L2 learners will always think most often in their L1, even at the advanced level.

Moreover, translation in the L2 classroom offers a way to highlight similarities and differences between L1 and L2 forms. The translation is useful for L2 attainment because, firstly, it uses valid materials, secondly, it is interactive, thirdly, it is learner-centered, and finally it promotes learner independence. It is worth mentioning that in teaching / learning English there has been a long-felt dissatisfaction, mainly on the students' part, about excluding or nominal use of translation in mastering complex issues. Learners persistently wanted to check the exact meanings of the occurring terms in their native language by consulting bilingual dictionaries or asking for teacher's explanations.

'The most important statement was the fact that English teachers tend to take a monolingual approach thus neglecting the importance of translation in the process of teaching English. The ESL classroom cannot follow the motto "One nation, one people, one language", a somewhat overrated statement since it implies that a classroom is a state. Quite contrary to that, the L1, i.e. the mother tongue of the students, should by all means be acknowledged. 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. The disregard of the students' mother tongue can in fact de-motivate the students and be counterproductive. Therefore, there is neither a scientific nor a pedagogic reason to exclude L1 from the teaching process. There are probably more reasons, utilitarian and political, to make the use of L1 quite valuable in the process of teaching English. The former reason implies that the students would be motivated to think more about appropriate equivalents in their own languages and the latter one, of course, emphasizes the importance of cultural diversities and tolerance among nations'. (Cook: 2007)

Translation as a teaching tool needs to take into account a number of diverse aspects, such as grammar, sentence structure, collocation and subtext. Uncritical use of translation may give learners inadequate, perplexing or even inaccurate information about target language. This paper aims, first, at rating contemporary students' perceptions of intellectual translation they employ in learning, and, second, at sharing the experiences of using translation in class activities. The implications of the use of the mother tongue in learning English for Specific Purposes are described.

It is now usually accepted that language transfer or cross-linguistic influence, does occur, but is a far more complex phenomenon than hitherto believed. Transfer can be positive and facilitative, where the two languages are identical, or negative, when there are noteworthy differences between two languages. With the English learners, we have used a number of activities that are beneficial for their linguistic development. Post reading activities give students the opportunity to assess, précis, and react to a reading material through discussions in small or large groups. After having read a copy as a homework assignment, students were encouraged to generate different comprehension exercises, such as multiple choice questions, true or false statements, and general questions on the contents of the text. Learners' designed exercises were scrutinized in pairs or small groups.

The activities of writing different types of summaries, e.g. interpretation, descriptive summary or opinion essays, have also proved advantageous by allowing teachers to pin-point errors stemming from the mother tongue. However, checking written work increases teacher's load notably and might be considered as a disadvantage. The most functional activity has been back-translation class activity. Selected texts for re-translation should not be too long or too linguistically difficult, or too distant from the knowledge of the student. Students in pairs translated different short passages from L2 into L1.

The essential analysis of re-translated texts by students and teacher's feedback permit raising learners' awareness of vocabulary, grammar, style, and language transfer. The following conclusions have been drawn. First, all the learners usually rely on their mother tongue in learning English. Second, the amount of the native language that students need depends on their expertise and linguistic situations.

Conversational language is used in informal social interactions. It is usually contextualized language, occurring in familiar face-to-face settings and supported by gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and the immediate communicative context itself. English learners normally develop conversational language, or basic interpersonal communicative skills, reasonably fast. On the other hand, cognitive academic language expertise—communication that depends profoundly on language, demands greater cognitive participation, and is much less supported by interpersonal or contextual cues.

Teachers who understand the distinction between conversational and academic language will appreciate students' conversational abilities while recognizing that they may not have the academic language that will allow them to employ in considerate interactions with content without support. Teachers, who appreciate the difference between conversational and academic language scaffold teaching in such a way as to assist students' understanding and, at the same time, attend to the development of their academic language. English learners should not be excluded from opportunities to employ with literature. Literature provides exposure to rich language and powerful ideas that are worth thinking and talking about. And, shared literature experiences can have a say to building a classroom community where all members feel contented participating in the talk.

One of the joys of teaching is interacting with a ample range of students who have different backgrounds, strengths, needs, interests, and preferred ways of learning. Every class is a mix of learners, and each new academic year brings a new set of individuals. As teachers embrace the variety in their classrooms they distinguish the need to discriminate instruction in order to best serve their students.

Challenges before the English Language teachers in India are massive and clear. They should be able to cater to the practical needs of learners, to make them knowledgeable adequate to interact with one another and also to retrieve information all over the world. English has a base in several countries and is considered as the most relevant and convenient tool for International Communication. The people who have expertise in this language could access large number of jobs and also were seen holding high positions in many National and International Organizations.

In the earlier days English was just like a Library language, but now that conception has changed completely. At present the challenges noticeable before the English language teachers in India are varied and it is required for them to shape up therefore to meet the demands of the day.

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