

The Use of the Mother Tongue in English Language Classroom in the Algerian Schools

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Abstract

The role of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom has always been a matter of debate among its users because it becomes a part of the learning process and it is important to deliver the information to the learners either in L1 or L2. Thus, this paper studies the use of the Arabic language in the English language classroom. An example of this case exists in the Algerian schools where the use of Standard Arabic or the Algerian dialect in English classes is hypothesized. Data collection is based on questioning pupils and interviewing the teachers. This paper summarized that the mother tongue plays an important role in facilitating the understanding of new terms and in-class management by the teachers whom some of them see it as positive while others a negative aspect. The use of L1 in classroom varies among the teachers. Some of them use it in classroom while others do not; and such use depends mainly on their mastery of the English language.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, education, the English language, Arabic language, English Language Classroom.

Introduction

The term education is defined as the act of forming and instructing a person; this term has vital importance in the development and prosperity of humans in any society since it is the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the other. It is necessary to understand that education enables people to be productive and to have good behavior in society. This will lead to more effective school reform programs and improve the everyday lives of students and teachers. The process of using the mother tongue in foreign classrooms has always been an issue of controversy. The mother tongue is the native language that a person acquires in his early stages of development. Linguistically speaking; the mother tongue is the language spoken by the parents, thus, that language will be the primary language of the child.

The existence of Berber which is spoken in many parts of Algeria, the Arab conquest which brought the Arabic language, and the French colonization which introduced the French language, are all factors that determine the language repertoire of Algeria. The Algerian speech community bases its daily communication on Algerian Arabic; people use its standard form in religion, education, media, institution, literature, and other domains. Therefore; this paper studies the process of introducing the mother tongue, or Algerian Arabic, in the Algerian English language classroom. Thus, many hypotheses are raised, perhaps the most important one in this paper is that whether the mother tongue plays a role in removing ambiguity and misunderstanding in classroom or it handicaps the process of learning a foreign language. In order to test this hypothesis the research tools or questioning the pupils and interviewing English language teachers were used.

1. The Language Repertoire of Algeria

In the last twenty years, there has been a continual protest over the language question in Algeria. Four languages are spoken in one way or another in Algeria; these are Standard Arabic the official language, Algerian Arabic spoken by almost all the Algerians, French and Berber. Berber has been recognized as a national language by constitutional amendment on May 8th, 2002. Algerian Arabic or the Algerian dialect and Berber are the native ones of the majority of the Algerian population. French is regarded as a foreign language that can be used in media, culture, and education. Standard Arabic took the biggest share of all the languages that have existed in North Africa to the extent that it has become the most used one in the Maghreb. This has taken place gradually because of various factors; the most important one is that Arabic is the language of Islam religion. Berger (2002) adds another reason is that Arabic at a given time was the vehicle of knowledge, science, and scholarship; it was the equivalent of today's English language.

In addition to Arabic, the French language keeps its value and importance since it is the language of science and technology. French is now part of the standard school curriculum, ethnologic estimates indicate that 20% of the

population can read and write it. Some two-thirds of Algerians have a fairly broad grasp of French, and a half speak it as a second language. Besides these two languages, Berber flourishes but slowly. Despite the influences of other languages, mainly Arabic, French and to a lesser extent Spanish, it is still used because many Berber speaking areas are mountainous and have had natural protection against invasions¹. Recently, the language repertoire of Algeria has added other foreign languages that are taught in schools and universities; these languages, including English, allow us to communicate easily mainly with the native speakers of those languages.

1.1. The Mother Tongue: Arabic/ Berber

The term mother tongue has several different meanings. It usually refers to the first language acquired by the child in his early stages of development. This first language is assumed to be the one spoken by the primary caregiver. Lust (2006) declares that because of the many changes that have occurred in child-rearing practices; there has been a refinement of the original meaning. Skutnabb (2008) defines the mother tongue as the first language that the child learns; he adds that the learning process takes place in a naturalistic way, that is to say, not through formal teaching.

Arabic is the largest language in its Semitic family. It is spoken in 22 countries extending from Morocco and Mauritania in the west of Africa to Iraq on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. With the coming of Islam, it appeared in the form of Classical Arabic and then it has developed into Modern Standard Arabic (Cadora (1992)). Arabic is the official language of the country since 1963. Arabic comes into two forms: Standard Arabic i.e Classical Arabic/Modern Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic. There is a distinction between Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic; Classical Arabic is the language of Quran, it is regarded as the formal version that was used in the Arabic peninsula, it was also the language of poetry during the pre-Islamic times, and the language of royal and princely courts throughout the Islamic history.

Modern Standard Arabic is the modern counterpart of Classical Arabic; it is the official language of all the countries in the Arab Nation, and the one used in educational spheres. To avoid any confusion, it is decided to use the term Standard Arabic (SA) in this paper to refer to the variety of Arabic. SA is, therefore, the language used in formal and official circumstances. It is also considered as the most prestigious one for the fact that it is the language of religion and the large history and literature it holds during the pre-Islamic period. In the case of Algeria, the linguistic policy after independence insisted on recovering the national language and gradually reducing the importance of French. Thus, laws and programs of Arabization have been spread, and all the Algerian constitutions announced that Arabic, i.e SA, is the language of the country.

In addition to SA, there are various forms of Arabic which exist in different parts of Algeria; these are regional varieties with different accents. The three major varieties which can be distinguished in Algeria are the eastern variety, the western one and the central one. While the western variety is similar to Moroccan Arabic, the eastern one is similar to the Tunisian dialect. Unlike SA, Algerian Arabic is neither codified nor standardized; but it is the spoken variety of the majority of the Algerians in their daily life. It is also the vehicle of people's culture, tradition, and emotions. The common feature of AA is its inclusion of many borrowed words from French with the general syntax of the mother tongue, some of these words are: [ku:zina] “kitchen”, [tʌbla] “table”, [ʃɔmbra] “room”, etc. This linguistic situation has resulted from the French conquest of Algeria for many years. From a linguistic point of view, AA shares many of the language features of SA but differs considerably from it. Besides the lexical variation between the two, AA drops the case endings of the written language in words like: [baabon] becomes [bab] “door”, [tɔfahatɔn] becomes [tɔfaha] “apple”. It also ignores the initial article of the standard form {al} in many words such as: [lɔbhɑr] instead of [al baħr] “sea”, [lbarəħ] rather than [al bariħa] “yesterday... etc.

Variation does not occur only between SA and AA, but between the Algerian dialects too. One aspect appears in the use of many lexical items which varies from one region to another, such as "car" is called [tɔnbil] in Algiers, [lɔtɔ] in Bechar, [taksi] in Constantine, and [lwatira] in Msirda. In other cases, the same word has different meanings creating a kind of semantic variation. For instance in Constantine: [səlləktah] means “I paid him”, while in Bechar it means “I saved him”. AA is not only spoken and used in informal circumstances but it is written. This concerns mainly folk poetry, plays, and private letters. There are also some colloquial words in AA which are loaned into French and are used at the level of speaking and writing, like: [sa se də la hɔgra], (ça c'est de la hogra), “this is injustice”.

Berber has been recognized as a national language in 2002. The Berber varieties are still the native languages of about 20% of the Algerian population, as they continue to be part of international academic studies. The Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilization (INALCO)² in Paris is interested in the domain of the Berber language and civilization. Berber is still preserved in many parts of Algeria despite the widespread Arabization. Tamazight has 41 basic sounds, 38 consonants, and 3 vowels, except the variety of the Touareg variety which has developed some extra long and short vowels. The lexicon constitutes one of the important domains of dialectal variations among Tamazight dialects. In addition to the basic Tamazight vocabulary, many loan words are taken from Arabic and French. For example: [bsəl] “onion”, [sqaq] “road”, [arwah] “come” are words borrowed from Arabic and are used in Tamazight. Similarly, words like: [əstilɔjet] “pens”, [takuzinət] “kitchen”, [tilifu:n] “telephone” are French words used in Tamazight, and are morphologically integrated in its word structure.

As described before; Tamazight's status in Algeria is national. The Berber Cultural Movement which was born in the aftermath of the Berber Spring in 1980³ continues to claim peacefully the rights of the Berbers' culture and language, and demands the recognition of Tamazight with full education and cultural benefits. Tamazight has been recently recognized among the languages that are taught in schools. In most of the Berber speaking regions, one can notice a strong social demand for the Berber language and culture. Many Berber speakers are writing in their language, and in Kabylia where the linguistic and identity awakening is particularly noticeable. Although there are differences between Berbers and Arabs, they have many linguistic and cultural similarities. Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, the founding father of the Ouléma Association in 1931, says in this respect: "we are Berber people who have been arabized by Islam".

1.2. Foreign Languages: French/ English

The French colonization of Algeria in 1830 was not merely economic exploitation or political domination, but a comprehensive annexation that aimed at eliminating its culture. The French controlled education, government, business, and most intellectual life for one hundred thirty-two years. The French colonial system imposed a harsh program of acculturation which positioned French as the dominant language on its colonies, ousting local languages, Arabic and Berber. Profoundly de-structured by the colonial settlement, Algeria had to face a series of cultural problems related to its national identity. After independence, language has been a huge political, social and ideological issue in Algeria. Arabic was chosen to identify Algeria's identity and religion, while official attitudes towards French and Berber were largely negative. Although the government pursued a policy of linguistic Arabization of education, the strong position of the French language in Algeria was not deeply affected by this policy. After a political debate in Algeria in the late 1990s regarding the substitution of French for English in the educational system, the government decided to retain the French language. It is, according to President Ben Bella (1962-1965), a necessary tool for the acquisition of modern techniques. In the same sense; Ahmed Taleb El Ibrahimi, a former Minister of Education and one of the leading proponents of the Arabization policy considers Arabic as the appropriation of the Algerian soul and French as the window open on the world.

The English language has great importance playing the role of an international language. It is spoken now by more than 508 million people ranking in second place as far as the number of its speakers, according to Shondel (2006:15). No one can consider himself as part of this globalization if he does not master two things: English and computing. The importance of English springs from its wide use rather than from the number of its speakers. The paramount importance of English in the world has led many countries, including Algeria, to include it at nearly all levels of the educational system. Teaching English in Algeria begins in the first year of middle school education and is carried out till the end of secondary school i.e. four years plus three years. Since September 2003 English has been taught for 7 years

both in middle and secondary schools. It is worth noting that EFL is preceded by 5 years of Arabic instruction and 3 years of French as a first foreign language in primary education.

In addition to that, English in higher education is taught either as a major in English Department or as an additional module in the other fields of study such as economic science, and technology. Moreover; it is recommended that English should be taught from primary school to give the learners the opportunity of acquiring a fundamental principle and also to improve their level as well as their language learning. The big changes undergone by Algeria in its educational system since the independence 1962 have given more importance to English. Consequently TEFL has received a great deal of reinforcement and for these reasons, English has been given the status of a second foreign language by the Algerian authority and, thus it has become a compulsory subject matter in the curriculum in all schools all over the country.

2. English Language Teaching

English language teaching (ELT) is a widely teacher-centered term. Teaching English as a second language (TESL), teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) are also used. Other terms are also used like English as an international language (EIL), English as a lingua franca (ELF), or English for specific purposes (ESP), English for academic purposes (EAP). Those who are learning English are often referred to as English language learners (ELL). Typically, a student learns English to function in the new host country, e.g. within the school system, to find and hold down a job, to perform the necessities of daily life (Fernandez 2004). English teaching does not presuppose literacy in the mother tongue. Thus, Brown (2007) sees that teaching English involves not only helping the student to use the form of English most suitable for his purposes, but also exposure to regional forms and cultural styles so that the student will be able to realize meaning even when the words, grammar or pronunciation are different to the form of English he is being taught to speak. English learners can be adults; intermediate or advanced students, and even at the secondary school level.

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Algeria is acquiring more prestige and importance because of the government policies, the opening of the Algerian market to foreign companies and investors and the recent rapid changes in the world (globalization). The educational authorities see the study of English as an important aspect and that all the students, regardless of their field of study, are required to learn English as a foreign language. Algerian learners meet English only in the classroom. English language teaching (ELT) in Algeria is inspired by the national policy, and recently it is another way to diminish French interference and influence.

3. Variables Affecting English Language Teaching

English in Algeria is still taught as the second mandatory foreign language. At the beginning of the 1990s, policymakers tried to introduce English at the primary level, but they failed. In September 1993, pupils of the fourth grade were asked to choose between French and English as the first mandatory foreign language. This decision failed because the number of pupils who chose English was negligible. In 1996, Algeria opted to make English its chief foreign language in schools replacing French, but it failed again. There is a failure in changing the status of English because language-in-education planning⁴ in Algeria is generally grounded on political, social and ideological objectives. Nevertheless and despite its importance, the English language remains in perpetual competition with the French language at least in respect to two points:

* In addition to French, which is considered as a first foreign language, English has the status of a second foreign language.

* Though it ranks as a foreign language, the French language is part of the Algerian learner use in daily life since they use it in daily speech. It is the language used in media and some official speeches; whereas, English is restricted to classroom use.

The objectives for teaching English were set in the 1976 Ordinance. It was introduced in the Eighth Grade (Middle School). The Algerian students had to learn it as a module for the next five years- two years in middle school and three in the secondary school. The Algerian decision-makers see the teaching of English as a clue to: communicate with different parts of the world, have access to modern sciences and technologies, encourage pupils to develop creativity in its universal dimensions, and make pupils prepared to successfully seat for examination.

4. The Role of the Mother Tongue in the Foreign Language Classroom

The role and the use of the mother tongue (L1) in language teaching have been variously described and researched. Giving the pupils immediate translation is seen as a failure, as the immediate translation tends to create a dependency on the students. The use of L1 in the foreign language classroom is to convey the meaning of unknown words, clarify the confusing word, and explain difficult concepts. Visual aids, props, textbook illustration are also used to explain a new term and clarify the words that remain confusing. However, Atkinson (1987) stated that the visual aids can sometimes mislead the understanding. In the target language (TL), the teacher has to be precise on whatever terms explained. A rough explanation is certainly not enough. The explanation, demonstration, or whatever picture used should be carefully graded and selected. Therefore, L1 is the precise means of getting the means across. L1 is also used to check the pupils' comprehension; or when the teacher and pupils need to compromise or negotiate disciplinary and other management circumstances. In the classroom, noise and indiscipline might seem to occur to circumstances; therefore, the teacher needs L1 for its immediate effect to minimize the noise or indiscipline during the task (Mitchell and Myles 2004).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2008) argues that the use of the mother tongue in the classroom can sometimes create a better teaching-learning environment reducing language anxiety and building self-confidence. Language anxiety is aroused when pupils have communication anxiety, fear of negative social evaluation, or academic evaluation. Thus, the use of L1 allays language anxiety. The intervention of L1 in a foreign language classroom helps the pupils to understand many expressions and use them on the basis of their needs and with great confidence. The pupils also feel secure and assured as they can understand and use it.

5. Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper is based on collecting information from both primary sources and secondary sources. The latter is based on collecting information from various documents such as: books, journals, and articles. The primary sources used here involve the use of both interview and questionnaire. The interview reduces the possibility of incomplete answers or un-answered questions since ambiguous questions were clarified immediately; moreover the respondents' own words were recorded through a recorder. Interviews were addressed to a limited number of English language teachers through prepared questions, i.e. interview schedule, which involved various questions about the level of education, teaching experience, the level of their pupils, etc. In some cases we left some of our interviewees to talk freely without asking questions aiming at collecting more and deep information.

The questionnaires involved a list of open ended and closed questions which were selected carefully and appropriately. They were addressed to pupils through the technique of collective administration. The questions involved simple and clear sentences which can be understood by all respondents. We have also avoided asking the double-barreled questions, i.e. a question within a question, because the respondents may not know which one they should answer. Ambiguous and too long questions were also excluded along with the leading questions whose structure leads the respondent to answer in a certain direction. And at the top of these we have tried to make our questionnaires as short as possible. Respondents were not obliged to give their answers immediately, and they were required to fill out the form themselves.

The samples who were involved in this paper were mainly teachers of the English language and their pupils. The sample size of the teachers was limited to around 14 teacher form different secondary schools; while the number of the pupils was around 85. As mentioned previously, the teachers were interviewed whereas the pupils were given a list of questions. The teachers were selected through the technique of expert sampling while the pupils were selected randomly.

6. Data Analysis

6.1. Arabic Use in the English Language Classroom

Many teachers agree that the mother tongue is primarily used to facilitate understanding and comprehension in EFL classes. The percentage of 64, 28% of the teachers expressed their support for the inclusion of mother tongue in their EFL classes and marked such use in their classes. 35, 72% of them declare that they try to avoid using the first language in class since it affects the learning of the foreign language and (see table 1). Due to their dissatisfaction with the status quo, the EFL teachers displayed attitudes that are in line with their conviction of the use of L1 in their EFL classes. The main purpose of the proposed approach is to highlight the positive use of mother tongue in EFL classes and stress its mediational role in facilitating the EFL teaching-learning process. It is believed that the principal use of the mother tongue will help in achieving that goal. Such use, however, has to be restricted to lower levels, and only when the use of English becomes unpractical. Once the basics of the language have been acquired, the use of the students' mother tongue will have to be withdrawn gradually, and at the same time, the input in English has to be increased. In line with this view, bilingual teachers would be more suitable for the beginner and false beginner levels.

Tables 1: Secondary School Teachers' Use of L1 in English Class

Samples	Number	L1 Use in Classroom	Rate	Non Use of L1 in Classroom	Rate	Total
Secondary school teachers of English	14	09	64,28%	05	35,72%	100%

Samples	Number	Rate
Teachers using L1 in class	09	64,28%
Teachers do not use L1 in class	05	27,72%

The mother tongue plays a useful teaching-learning role that cannot be ignored in EFL classes; it helps in explaining mainly abstract words and grammatical concepts. For any practical methodology to be efficient in EFL classes, it needs to make use of the mother tongue as a mediating teaching-learning tool. For EFL learners, the mother tongue is a key learning strategy that has been ingrained in their learning culture and experience. In the Algerian educational system, it is known that the teachers of the English language are not allowed to use L1 in the classroom only in case the learners do not understand certain terms. English is not like French; that is the pupils are not exposed to English terms in daily communication except for few words like "weekend".

English terms, especially the new or the difficult ones, need explanation and sometimes translation. For instance, when the teacher wants to teach his pupils how and when to use stress he needs first to explain to them first what does the word 'stress' means. In this case, the teacher has first to ask his pupils if they know its meaning; in case they don't, he uses gestures or can use examples on the whiteboard. In case the pupils could not get the right meaning the last solution for the teacher here is translating the difficult term into Arabic saying: "stress means *ʃadda*".

The teacher's use of the mother tongue cannot affect or handicap the acquisition of the foreign language because the learners already have a language basis from their mother tongue or L1. Therefore, there is no competition between their L1 and foreign language. Those two languages have distinct systems in the brain. The process of foreign language acquisition involves cognitive, social, and emotional factors that are inseparable and equally related to MT and FL. It seems then that the sole use of the FL by the teacher is not justified theoretically or practically.

When learning a new language, particularly at low proficiency levels, it is natural for students to make use of the L1 in a variety of ways. Teachers can respond to this "natural process" by selectively including small amounts of L1 to support their students (Thomason 2001). Teachers are actively choosing to use the L1 for certain functions, and are varying this usage depending on the proficiency level of their classes. The addition of a new definition: Teacher-invited student use of L1 should provide some guidance even to those teachers who either lack student

L1 ability or who lack confidence in using it. Similarly, institutions that maintain an English-only policy may want to reconsider their position given the wealth of data that is now available portraying positive aspects of the role of the L1 in the EFL classroom. The mother tongue is often seen as a negative feature of the foreign language classroom, and decisions about whether to use the mother tongue are amongst the most common dilemma that language teachers in monolingual classrooms face.

6.2. The Teacher's View

The 64, 28% of the English language teachers (see table 1) suggested that the main reasons for using mother tongue in their classes are: explaining the meaning of abstract words, restating English words or phrases (especially instructions) and class management. Many teachers also claim that using the mother tongue for translation and explaining the meaning of concrete words is only acceptable when using English and gesture do not succeed. In terms of factors that affect decisions about the use of mother tongue in English lessons, the teachers referred to similar issues: class size, the level of the learners, time constraints, and the type of classroom activity. The teachers also agreed that the mother tongue can have a negative effect if it is not used appropriately. In particular, they agreed that excessive use of the mother tongue would make learners dependent on it when learning English. They did not offer specific comments on how the mother tongue might support learning but emphasized the point that the mother tongue should only be used when it is really necessary and that teachers should make every attempt to minimize it (Kern 1988).

6.3. The Learners' View

Learners were also asked whether they find the teacher's use of mother tongue helpful or not acceptable (see figure 1). Most responses seemed to revolve around using the mother tongue for translation. In justifying this answer, it is necessary to reinforce the understanding of words so that learners could remember them next time without being translated again. And some learners might misunderstand what the teachers say; therefore, translation is a way of ensuring that the learners get the right message. At the same time, learners are also aware that the much use of the mother tongue is not a good fact. Learners also commented on the importance of the use of the target language alone and highlighted problems that arise from the excessive use of L1 in class. In particular, they felt that they cannot be able to understand difficult or abstract words since the teacher does not explain them in the mother tongue. Tsafi (2012) declares, in this case, that only the learners who have a high level of language proficiency can benefit from the teacher by communicating efficiently with them in English. The absence of the mother tongue

might cause some problems of discipline because the teacher cannot stop the noise by using English only.

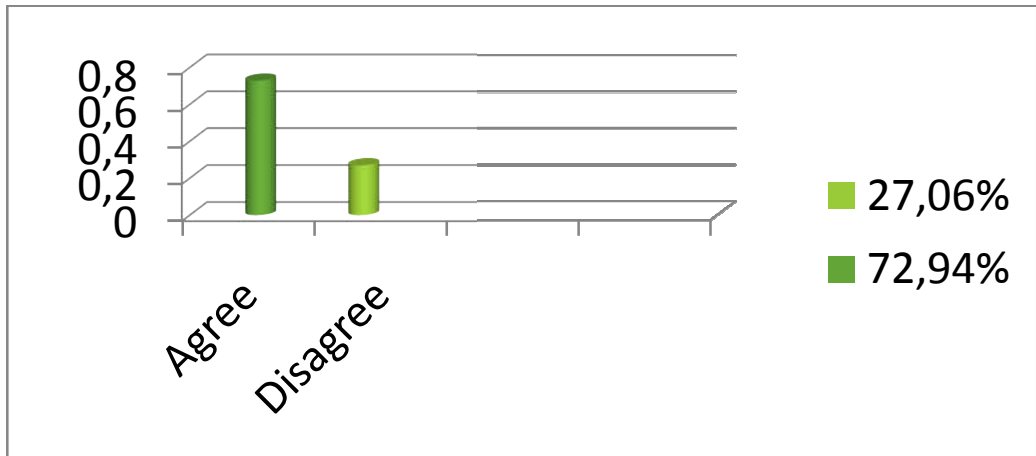


Figure 1: The Learners' Attitudes towards the Teachers' Use of L1 in Classroom

7. Results

The use of L1 by the teachers of English in the classroom varies among the teachers themselves; some of them introduce L1 in various normal uses like class management, giving orders, and other instruction, or for explaining new difficult terms. These teachers see that L1 intervention has a positive role in which it plays the role of a facilitator to reach the pupils' understanding. The pupils themselves cannot speak in English alone; they need to move back and forth into L1 or even Standard Arabic to send a message to their teacher. As a response to their claims, the teachers communicate with them in English. Very few teachers try hard to avoid using their first language when teaching; they also see the use of the mother tongue in class as a bad habit. They argue that the pupils are required to learn the target language without translation or resorting to L1 in case of need. They claim that L1 prevents the pupils from recognizing the message themselves with no reference to L1. The teachers of English in the Algerian schools are not native speakers of the English language, therefore, they will, in one way or another, lack some expressions or terms. As a result, they will resort to borrowing terms from their native language to carry on their explanation to keep the pupils' attention.

Two main points take into consideration the attitudes and perceptions toward mother tongue use in the classroom. They can be classified into: those which only investigate the attitudes of language learning, and those which explore the attitude of both language learning and language teaching. The teachers come to the classroom with their system of beliefs and attitudes; they determine many of the choices they make about what and how they teach. The teachers often see that using the mother tongue in class makes them feel lazy or showing a lack of power

to control students. This study showed that 64, 28% of teachers allow some sort of mother tongue use in the classroom; nevertheless, there is still a feeling of guilt among those teachers due to the prevalence of the English-only policy.

Although the mother tongue reduces the learner's anxiety and creates the same relaxing learning environment, but it does not really encourage him to use English. It also allows him to bring cultural background knowledge into the class; as it facilitates checking to understand and giving instructions. It also helps the teacher in his explanation of abstract and ambiguous words. The teacher seems to be using the L1 appropriately and avoiding the over-use which will make learners feel that they cannot understand the input of the target language until it is translated into their L1.

Conclusion

The use of L1 or the mother tongue to teach the target language was among the main requirements of the Communicative Language Learning approach (CLL). In CLL, a learner presents a message in L1 to the teacher who translates it into L2. The learner then repeats the message in L2, addressing it to another learner with whom he or she wishes to communicate. Kafes (2011) adds that the learners nominate things they wish to talk about and messages they wish to communicate with other learners. The teacher's responsibility is to provide a translation for these meanings in a way appropriate to the learners' proficiency level. In this sense, a CLL syllabus emerges from the interaction between the learner's expressed communicative intentions and the teacher's reformulations of these into suitable target-language utterances. Community Language Learning places unusual demands on language teachers who must be highly proficient in both L1 and L2. They must operate without conventional materials, depending on student topics to shape and motivate the class.

Machaal (2010) agrees that the mother tongue is often seen as a negative feature of the foreign language classroom, and decisions about whether to use the mother tongue are amongst the most common dilemma that language teachers in monolingual classrooms face. As a conclusion, the mother tongue is used in the foreign language classroom to convey the meaning of the unknown word, clarify the confusing one, and explain difficult concepts. Visual aids, props, textbook illustration are all used to explain a new term and clarify the words that remain confusing. Also, it is used to check the pupils' comprehension, and it is used particularly when the teacher and pupils need to compromise or negotiate disciplinary and other management circumstances. Finally, the use of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom creates a better teaching-learning environment and also increases language anxiety which has a strong effective influence on second language acquisition.

When learning a new language, particularly at low proficiency levels, it is natural that the learners use L1 in a variety of ways. Teachers can respond to this "natural process" by selectively including small amounts of L1 to support their students. The results of this study indicate that L1 is present in the EFL classroom,

and the teachers use it as a linguistic tool. Teachers are actively choosing to use the L1 for certain functions, and are varying this usage depending on the proficiency level of their classes. The learners customarily rely on their mother tongue in learning English. Moreover, the amount of the native language that students need depends on their proficiency and linguistic situations. They autonomously generated that reading comprehension exercises, summary writing and back-translation activities raise the learners' awareness of differences between English and the mother tongue and facilitate linguistic development.

End Notes

1. Ben Ali Mohamed (1993:26).
2. INALCO was established in the early 1790s. It is a primary manufacturer of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), and it is one of the main interested organizations in studying the Berber languages.
3. In the Berber Spring of 1980 the government prevented the Berber writer and anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri from giving a conference on ancient Berber poetry on March 10th, 1980. The students made a strike which spread to high schools. By mid-April, the public support included the industrial working class and hospital workers
4. Language in education planning or acquisition planning refers to the implementation of a strategy or policy aiming at increasing the use and users of language through education

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