

**THE ROLE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT THE INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
(A Case Study of Government Degree College Batkhela, District Malakand)**

Kamran Zaib¹ (Principal and Corresponding author), Muhammad Anwar², Hazrat Abbas³

Original Article

1. MPhil Scholar, Department of English Literature and Linguistics, Northern University Nowshera
Email: kamranzaib.khan@gmail.com
2. MPhil Scholar, Lecturer and HOD in the Department of English Literature and Linguistics, GDC Batkhela
3. MPhil Scholar, Department of English Literature and Linguistics, Northern University Nowshera

Abstract

It is undeniable fact that mother tongue as a medium of instruction in L2 language teaching and learning is still important, relevant and should be investigated. The purpose of this study is to look into the role, and importance of the mother tongue in learning English at the intermediate level at Government Degree College Batkhela Malakand Pakistan. It seeks to investigate the issue regarding the usage of mother tongue in educational institutions. In this study, we have employed quantitative methods. This study found that English language teachers routinely interact with students in Pashto in English language lessons, which the students feel easy. Pashto is frequently used as a medium of instruction by English language teachers. Furthermore, the Grammar Translation Method is frequently used by teachers. Students have a positive attitude towards their mother tongue since their knowledge and learning background does not value the direct method of learning or excessive use of the Target language (English). Based on the findings, English language teachers at Government Degree College Batkhela should teach students not only in English but also in their mother tongue more frequently. Certainly, the English language should be employed as a medium of instruction at the Inter level, but it is also vital to employ Pashto for the students' convenience. Furthermore, it is suggested that English language teachers must receive pre-service and in-service training in innovative ELT methodologies.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Function of Mother tongue (L1), The Direct method, GTM, L2

Introduction

The term "mother tongue" harks back to the notion that the linguistic skills of a child are honed by his mother and, therefore, the language spoken by the mother would be the primary language that the child would learn. The mother tongue, also known as the native or first language, is the language that a person learns from birth or during a critical period when language learning ability is biologically linked to age. It serves as the foundation for social identity as well as the medium of instruction in school and society. The use of one's mother language as a medium of instruction is a crucial topic that has led researchers to numerous debates (Yadav, 2014). Mother tongue has potentially both positive and negative consequences: it may serve social and cognitive functions (Carless, 2008). It is claimed that students working in groups do not have to speak English all the time. The use of mother tongue relates to learner identity. The negative impact of mother tongue use is that too much reliance on the L1 may undermine the interaction in English.

In the 19th century, the grammar-translation system was established in Europe to teach classical languages, which focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and memorization (Suzanne, 2018). This method deals with grammar, vocabulary, and memorization. Teaching grammar consists of a process of learning the rules of language and then applying them to express one's own opinions. Grammar rules are taught deductively by teachers and students are required to learn them by rote and then translate text from L1 to the target language (Jabeen, 2016). The first language is used as the medium of learning in this approach, and all rules are taught in the first language. The first language is maintained as the reference system in the Grammar-Translation Method while studying the second language (Liu, & Shi, 2007). In language learning, translation from one language to another is important and the Grammar-Translation Method through a comparison between two languages helps students understand the meaning of abstract terms and complicated phrases.

The systematic study of grammatical rules is critical for improving students' reading comprehension and capacity to produce grammatically accurate sentences. It is especially important for students in the teacher education program who need a stronghold on the grammar of the target language. Students' capacity to analyze and solve problems improves as they learn and use morphology and syntax. The emphasis on comprehending literary works creates an environment in which reading and writing skills are properly developed. Although Grammar-Translation places low expectations on teachers, it frequently frustrates students. Overemphasis on translation will never free students from their dependence on their first language. Reading and writing are overemphasized in the Grammar-Translation approach while listening and speaking are neglected. Knowing a great number of grammatical rules does not guarantee that students will be able to apply them appropriately in real-life situations. The texts used in the Grammar-Translation Method are largely taken from literary works. The language learned frequently does not meet the learners' practical demands. Students are not motivated to actively communicate in the target language by memorizing grammar rules and multilingual word lists.

Research Problem

In the majority of methods and approaches of foreign language teaching and learning, mother-tongue is considered central to understanding the target culture and the language itself. Although the use of the mother tongue is not encouraged in the literature on language teaching approaches, this study shows that L1 is used by teachers and students at the Intermediate level at Government Degree College Batkhela. In L2 classes, the majority of TEFL researchers advise against utilizing L1. However, in our current situation, using L1 in the classroom will be analyzed. It is necessary to investigate the importance of the mother tongue as a method of instruction in second language learning. But how much and in which cases mother tongue plays the role in learning English at the intermediate level in Government Colleges in Dir Lower.

Research Objective

- To know the role, and importance of L1 in learning English at the intermediate level.

Research Questions

- What role does L1 play in the preproduction (comprehension) of L2?

Significance of the Study

Along with having a mother tongue, understanding the target culture and language is essential. Most of the time, the students, especially at the early levels, find it difficult to know something new in the target language. To get the main idea and for better comprehension, the students of a foreign language use their native language. Similarly, the teachers also reside in their

native language for the students' sake. The present study will assist children from remote areas in receiving education in their mother tongue, which is aimed at comprehension. This study is also of great significance for the researcher as it will pave the way for them to work on the same theme in various other areas and explore all those aspects that the researchers have mentioned.

Literature Review

The use of English in the Indo-Pak subcontinent predates the formation of Pakistan. The English language was brought to the Indo-Pak peninsula by the British monarchs in the 16th century (Mahboob, 2009). The English language gained official, political, and social status during the British administration. Because of the economic and social mobility associated with this language, it was originally introduced by the British government (Mahboob, 2009; Rahman, 1996). Even though Urdu is the national language, English has played an important role in Pakistan's administrative, economic, and educational sectors since the country's founding in 1947 (Mahboob, 2009). The inaugural address of Muhammed Ali Jinnah, who was the first governor-general of Pakistan and delivered his statement in English to the first constituent assembly on the occasion of Pakistan's independence, demonstrates the high standing of the English language since its foundation (Mahboob, 2009). To put it another way, by the time Pakistan attained independence, the English language had become so deeply ingrained in the country's socio-political fabric that it was constitutionally protected as one of the official languages (Mahboob, 2009; Rahman, 1996). This research demonstrates that local research on English language education and learning, as well as its consequences on pupils, is lacking. As a result, the research aims to meet a portion of this requirement.

The mother tongue, which provides Language Acquisition Support System, is the most important asset that is brought to the process of learning an L2. The importance of English in today's world cannot be overstated. English is one of the world's most widely spoken second languages. It has become the universal language of science, technology, trade, commerce, international politics, and international relations. 1.4 billion people are thought to speak English as their first language. Non-native speakers account for three out of every four English speakers. English is a compulsory subject in Pakistani primary and secondary schools. It has established itself as a reliable and noteworthy future source. Along with English, mother languages i.e., Punjabi, Pashto, Saraiki, and Urdu are also used. As a result, their importance in English learning should not be overlooked. It's worth noting that the bulk of Pakistan's languages is Indo-European, including Urdu, Punjabi, and Saraiki. English is also a member of this family.

"The greatest technique to translate foreign phraseology is through translation, and the foreign phraseology is assimilated during the interpretation process" (Nazir, 2000). Learning, according to Stephan Krashen, is a continuous process of growing a foreign language through language classes and a concentration on the language's grammatical elements (Krashen, 2003). In language teaching, voluntary reading may be the most powerful pedagogical instrument (Krashen et al., 2003). The researchers have thoroughly and deeply studied the case of the role of the mother tongue in learning English at an intermediate level in Government Degree College Batkhela.

Research Methodology

Nature of the Study

The researchers' field of study is linguistics hence the researchers have used the quantitative research method. The data are accessed, discussed, and analyzed quantitatively. The study evaluates the mother tongue's efficiency at the Intermediate level in Government Degree College Batkhela. To achieve their goals, the researchers have conducted a statistical and reasonable analysis of the student ratio.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The research was conducted in the Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. However, the study is delimited to Government Degree College Batkhela. Data was collected from sixty-five students at Government Degree College Batkhela using the quantitative method of research, by giving them the questionnaire, thirty students from intermediate Part 1 and thirty-five students from intermediate Part 2 were chosen. The questionnaire was set up in such a way that it is simple to solve the problem. There were twelve closed-ended questions in the survey.

Research Tool

The researchers have used a closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire includes twelve different questions related to our research topic.

The researchers have selected a closed-ended questionnaire as a data collection tool due to the following two reasons.

- Firstly, Closed-ended questions give limited insight, but can easily be analyzed for quantitative data.
- Secondly, it is easier to compare the responses of different participants.

Sampling size based on gender

The students belong to the male category of gender. The reason for selecting male students is because they are easily reachable. Female students are not selected because access to them was not an easy task.

Locations

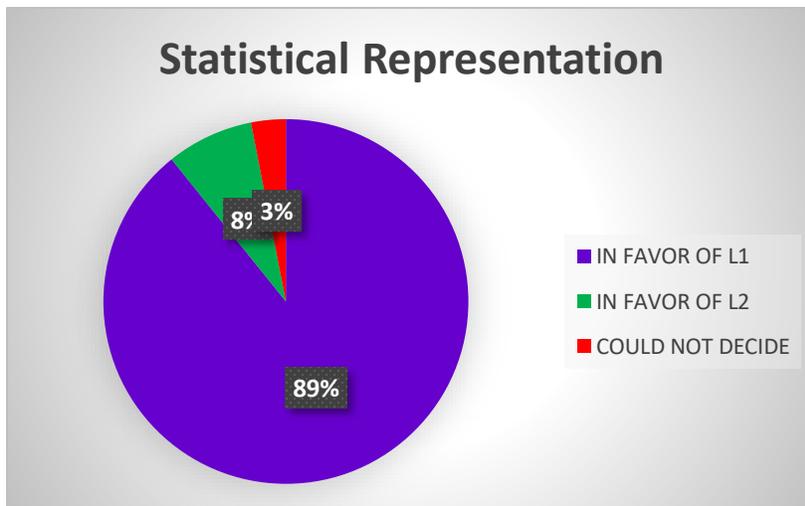
The data is collected from a college at Malakand Agency. In District Malakand, the researchers selected Government Degree College Batkhela.

Delimitation

The researchers preferred to select Government Degree College Batkhela because it is easily accessible. The researchers have selected sixty-five male students of Government Degree College Batkhela. The research is delimited only to the very college. It is further delimited to the male gender.

Discussion

The students were initially surveyed on their thoughts on the importance of their mother tongue in the classroom. According to the quantitative average statistics of the students, 58 of them had a favorable opinion of the role of their mother tongue. As shown in the data, 58 (89.2%) students believe that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the classroom is the best option. On the other side, 5 (7.7%) participants point out that their language abilities are insufficient to meet the classroom's needs. Furthermore, 2(3.07 percent) of respondents were undecided about the language's criterion for satisfying classroom needs. This demonstrates that the majority of students believe that L1 is capable of academic tasks. Some students, on the other hand, are unconvinced about the mother tongue circumstance. The majority of students prefer their mother language because it improves academic achievement and results, just several students object to the role. Furthermore, a few students are unable to make any judgment about the subject.



Recommendations

In the current article, the researchers have simply focused on the positive side of the mother-tongue and have presented points in its favor. It is found that using the mothertongue as a method of teaching in an English classroom can be highly effective in most parts of Pakistan and particularly where the research was conducted. A new study can be carried out to point out those areas and methods in which students can be easily understood. Further, the effectiveness of the Direct Method can also be analyzed to meet modern trends.

Conclusion

The use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction can be beneficial to learning. The main focus of this research was to assess what effect the mother tongue can play at the Inter level at Government Degree College Batkhela. The reviewed literature and discussion show that using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction can have a significant impact. According to the current study, while a touch of L2 is useful, the key focus should be on L1 while giving lectures to students. The results demonstrate that the majority of English language teachers teach English using the Grammar Translation Method, which requires the usage of the mother tongue. It is concluded from the above-mentioned debate and data analysis conducted by the researchers, that using students' mother tongue in an English classroom can have a positive impact on both the learning process and teaching.

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