

《研究ノート》

## 英語授業における母語の使用について

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An Exploration of First Language Use in English Language Teaching

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キーワード

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**Introduction**

Abundant literature has been generated, theoretically and pedagogically, concerning the issue of how to teach and learn a new language. The general assumption has been that a new language should be taught and learned monolingually in the classroom, with no reference to the learners' first language (L1) for explanation, classroom management, or communication between teacher and learner. This monolingual assumption appears to stem from the blind belief that the language being taught must be used in every language class activity, with learners actually being discouraged from making use of the language they have already acquired. As this monolingual style of teaching became firmly established in the late nineteenth century, the literature on language teaching naturally accepted the notion of such monolingual teaching throughout the twentieth century.

However, this monolingual assumption has

been increasingly questioned, due to a reevaluation of the effective use of learners' L1 in the teaching of a new language. The following research review explores this growing trend. Among the immense body of literature on the teaching and learning of a new language, this study focuses on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. Hall and Cook (2012)<sup>1</sup>, in particular, stress the importance of examining the monolingual assumption in the teaching of English, because "it has had a devastating effect on the status of non-native English speaker teachers" (p. 273). In addition, they point out that overreliance on native-speaker proficiency may create an unattainable and undesirable goal in learning English, and that the monolingual teaching of English has hampered "the development of bilingual and bicultural identities that are needed by most learners, both within the English-speaking countries and in the world at large" (p. 273). In light of this, the following research review summarizes a brief history of monolingual teaching, and explores the widespread use of

learners' L1 and its changing context, and arguments concerning L1 use; examines the amount and functions of L1 use, and theoretical underpinnings in support of L1 use, in English language teaching (ELT); and teacher and learner perceptions of L1 use. The paper concludes with an overview of L1 use in ELT.

### **Brief history of monolingual teaching**

According to Hall and Cook (2012), the monolingual teaching of new languages rapidly gained its current status, beginning in the late nineteenth century in Europe, for the teaching not only of English but also of other major European languages. Phillipson (1992) notes that the origin of the monolingual tenet goes back to the spoken language teaching methods espoused in the 1880s-1890s by the Reform Movement in foreign language teaching. The discovery of phonetics and psychology in the context of the movement, associated with Sweet, Jespersen, Palmer, and Hornby, promoted good spoken language learning habits and activities, and opposed the grammar-translation method, which dominated foreign language teaching in secondary education at that time. In particular, Palmer (1922) was influential in establishing a coherent rationale for active oral language teaching. According to Howatt and Widdowson (2004), however, they were not necessarily opposed to the use of learners' first language. Sweet (1899), for instance, endorsed the idea of using translation in the teaching of English vocabulary.

Hall and Cook (2012) argue that monolingual teaching was launched with the work of Maximilian Berlitz, who founded the Berlitz schools in 1878 in the United States. His accidental employment of a French instructor who spoke no English inspired him to develop

the Berlitz method (Berlitz International 2008), which became a model for other language schools. One of the main principles of the method is the total exclusion of any use of the learners' native language in the classroom, which can eliminate the cumbersome process of first utilizing the learners' native language and then shifting to the target language. Devotion to this principle created the environment in which learners with multiple mother tongue backgrounds take the same class, and native speaker teachers are employed, who do not necessarily know the languages of their learners. This monolingual principle was in the interests of both language schools and publishers in the English speaking countries, as it allowed them to promote monolingual (English) teaching methods and materials worldwide without consultation with speakers of other languages.

Consequently, with the dismissal of traditional language teaching such as grammar-translation, the goal of language teaching evolved into preparing learners to communicate in a monolingual environment and imitate the use of the new language by its native speaker. However, Davies (2003) points out that this goal may not be useful or even attainable for many learners. Sridhar & Sridhar (1986) suggest that language learners should work in bilingual and multilingual environments where translation and appropriate code-switching are valued in learning a new language. This reassessment of the advocacy of bilingual teaching appears to be supported by the scholarly recognition that learners need to operate bilingually, and wish to maintain their own cultural and linguistic identity while speaking English; and that they need to use English not only in native-speaker environments but also as a lingua franca with other nonnative English speakers (e.g., Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). That is to say, as

Widdowson (1994) argues, the ownership of English no longer belongs to English-speaking countries.

Though contrastive analysis between learners' own language and the new language was present in the 1940s and 1950s (e.g., Fries, 1945; Lado, 1957), the emergence of SLA negated learners' L1 use in the 1970s and 1980s. Early SLA theory insisted that a natural order of acquisition should apply to all learners of English, regardless of their L1, and that learners' first language would negatively interfere with the acquisition of a second language (e.g., Krashen, 1982; Selinker, 1972). Thus, early SLA did not support the attention to differences between learners' L1 and the new language, which is essential in bilingual teaching. In spite of the common belief in the superiority of monolingual teaching, however, bilingual teaching has persisted in the language classroom worldwide.

### **The widespread use of learners' L1 and its changing context**

As abundant research shows, despite the dominance of language teaching methods and SLA theories that promoted monolingual teaching until the late twentieth century, learners' first language and translation have continued to be used worldwide, particularly in EFL contexts where learners often share a common language with their teachers (e.g., Adamson, 2004; G. Cook, 2010; V. Cook, 2008; Ma, 2012; Saito, 2014, 2016). Such studies demonstrated bilingual teaching, code-switching, and code choice that emphasizes learner and teacher choices, in classroom interaction over a wide range of ELT around the world. Therefore, Hall and Cook (2012) note that "the existence and advantage of using the learners' own

language in class are increasingly recognized" (p. 278), and more positive views of first language use in societal and scholarly trends should be examined.

The recent trends in L1 classroom use, as well as translation, appear to be reflected in changes in the academic and political climate regarding language teaching and learning. For example, early SLA theories about natural acquisition attention through meaning have come to be doubted even by SLA theorists (e.g., Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Widdowson, 1990). Instead, research has increasingly focused on social aspects of the type of language learning and teaching that embraces complexity, diversity, difference, and uncertainty, such as social turn, complexity theory, sociocultural theory, and ecological approaches, in order to explain language phenomena (e.g., Block, 2003; Kramsch, 2002; Lantolf, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

In addition, the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism has reemerged due to the globalization of English, which highlights the fact that nonnative English speakers far outnumber native English speakers. Bilingualism and multilingualism are principally concerned with speaker identity, code-choice, and code-switching, and increasingly recognize language learners as multiple language learners in multiple speech communities (e.g., Norton, 2000; De Fina, 2007).

A number of studies concerning the links between code-switching, speaker identity, and the symbolic values of languages appear to demonstrate that debates on code-switching between learner's L1 and the new language no longer revolve around the issue of how a new language is learned effectively, but the issue of identity construction in a complex multilingual world. For example, one critical research approach demonstrated that learners'

L1 use can create a safe space in English-medium classrooms, and stressed the need to employ a balanced form of academic bilingualism in order to challenge the subordination of learners' educational goals to the symbolic domination of learning English (e.g., Arthur, 1996; Lin, 1996). Thus, the changing context of bilingualism and multilingualism, with its emerging political, social, and personal perspectives, reevaluates the importance of learners' L1 use in the real-world context of in-class code-switching.

### Arguments about L1 use

In terms of the traditional opposition between teaching that utilizes learners' L1 for new language instruction, and monolingual teaching that utilizes only the new language, Stern (1992) maintains that these two approaches actually complement each other, and form a continuum in which learners' L1 can be used in different ways at various stages during instruction; and argues theoretically for cross-lingual techniques (here, the use of L1s), which are efficient for the learner.

Widdowson (2003) develops Stern's argument by introducing the notion of 'bilingualisation', which is the process of acquiring a new language in ELT; and develops the notion of compound bilingualism, which implies that two languages (the learners' L1 and the new language) are interwoven in the mind of learners regarding vocabulary, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics. Thus, Widdowson emphasizes that learners' L1 plays a crucial role in the development and use of the new language.

In addition, Cook (2001) questions the notion of coordinate bilingualism, that the separation of languages in the learners' mind is indispensable for acquiring a new language, which is a central belief in monolingual teaching. Cook also

suggests effective means of utilizing learners' L1, including conveying meaning and explaining grammar, organizing classroom activities, maintaining discipline, establishing rapport or relationships between teacher and learner, and use of learners' own language for testing. Thus, Stern, Widdowson, and Cook attempt to exploit the use of learners' L1 as a means of providing effective shortcuts related to the learning process and goals.

In addition to the broad theoretical explanations of the use of learners' L1 in the work of the aforementioned researchers, Butzkamm & Caldwell (2009) offer ten maxims for using learners' L1, which explore issues of learner confidence, a focus on meaning, and the links between the learners' own and the new language. They present the notion of dual comprehension: understanding both what is said and how it is said, which is facilitated by the use of learners' L1, and outline a repertoire of related classroom techniques, including idiomatic translation, bilingual dictionary work, and the use of dialogues and dramas.

At the same time, G. Cook (2010) refers to a climate of revival of translation, and presents translation as both a natural and effective means of language learning, and a needed skill in globalized multicultural societies. He insists that translation functions as a tool for intercultural understanding, language awareness, and identity maintenance, though the distrust of translation has been deeply ingrained from the late nineteenth century onward.

### Examining the amount and functions of L1 use in ELT

Hall and Cook (2012) note that numerous studies have attempted to quantify the amount of L1 and new language use in the classroom;

mainly investigating to what extent teachers use each language, and the reason for code-switching. Some studies have focused on the teaching of English, and others on foreign language teaching in English speaking countries. For instance, Duff and Polio (1990) investigated teachers' practices involving learners' L1 and the new language in 13 foreign language classrooms within a university language program. The results revealed that the mean and median amounts of new language use in teachers' classroom discourse were 67.9% and 79%, respectively, and therefore the corresponding amount of learners' L1 use by teachers was 32.1% (mean) and 21% (median). However, they also demonstrated that, in terms of individual teacher usage, the range of new language use varied from 10% to 100%.

In terms of the EFL contexts in Asia, Cai (2011) examined English classes in a Chinese university where up to 80% of the teaching was in Chinese, though teachers reported less use. Liu et al (2004) documented English classes in a high school in South Korea in which learners' L1 was used in up to 32% of class time. Thus, attempts to quantify the amount of L1 and new language use suggest that L1 use is generally observed in the classroom, and confirm that the amount of L1 use varies according to the context. In addition, some research notes teachers' underlying negative attitudes toward L1 use, which prevail in many contexts.

Now let us consider the functions of learners' L1 use in ELT. While considerable variation is observed in the quantification of L1 use by teachers, the functions of own-language use appear to be relatively constant and stable. Numerous studies confirm the effective pedagogical functions of L1 use by teachers, including for grammar instruction, classroom management and administration, demonstrating

empathy and showing solidarity with students, providing translations for unknown words, compensating for students' lack of understanding, responding to students already speaking in their L1, and other pedagogical functions (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990; Ma, 2012; Medgyes, 1994; Saito, 2014, 2016).

In terms of the classification of teachers' reasons for their use of learners' L1, Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) suggest that teachers may use it for medium-oriented goals such as explaining vocabulary items and teaching grammar, and for framework goals such as giving procedural instructions and assigning homework. In a similar manner, Littlewood and Yu (2011) explore the distinction between core goals for teaching the target language, framework goals for managing the classroom situation, and social goals for expressing personal concern and sympathy, in order for teachers to use learners' L1 strategically in class.

Furthermore, Littlewood and Yu highlight the reassuring role of learners' L1 use in class, which can reduce their anxiety and enhance the affective environment of learning a new language, counteracting the negative effects of monolingual teaching. Similarly, abundant studies confirm the affective-humanistic and interpersonal functions of L1 use, which can promote classroom unity and identity, and motivate learners to develop positive attitudes toward learning a new language. Therefore, Edstrom (2006) argues that L1 use is effectively a moral issue: teachers have a moral obligation to use it judiciously in order to understand students as individuals, to show respect and concern, and to create a positive affective environment.

To summarize, abundant evidence has been adduced in support of widespread L1 use and

code-switching in classrooms, though the amount of L1 use appears to be often underestimated by teachers. L1 use and code-switching obviously fulfill pedagogical functions, and are employed in a various range of contexts worldwide. Therefore, Widdowson (2003) contends that L1 use is a natural element of teaching techniques, which can be treated as a positive resource for language teaching, not an impediment to learning a new language. The following section explores the theoretical underpinnings of the use of learners' L1 in facilitating the process of acquiring a new language.

### Theoretical support of L1 use in ELT

First, from a psycholinguistic perspective, Cook's multicompetence model (2008) conceives of language learners as bilingual users who use language differently and have different mindsets from monolinguals. Cummins (2007) stresses that bilingual learners develop metalinguistic awareness as a result of processing two languages, and suggests that learners are able to benefit from focusing on the similarities and differences between their L1 and a new language. Cummins' discussion appears to echo some current SLA research that places an emphasis on explicit contrastive analysis and translation between two languages. Some SLA theorists suggest that translation activities are the most frequently used learning strategies, produce pushed output to learn a new language, and facilitate learning by reducing the processing load required for tackling cognitively challenging tasks; and they advocate the effectiveness of translation for learning vocabulary (e.g., Cook, 2010; Macaro, 2006).

From a constructivist perspective, the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding is based on what learners already know and

believe (i.e., their prior knowledge). Brook-Lewis (2009), for instance, points out that recognizing the importance of learners' prior knowledge is demonstrated by the incorporation of learners' L1s in foreign language education, and describes how adult Spanish-speaking learners of English could appreciate and build on their prior knowledge and communicative experience. Cummins (2007) also contends that effective learning relies on the engagement of prior knowledge that has shaped learners' L1, identity, and cognitive functions.

Sociocultural theorists emphasize that the process of collaboration driven by social interaction facilitates language development (e.g., Lantolf, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). From a sociocultural perspective, the learners' L1 is used as a cognitive tool for scaffolding language learning. For example, Swain and Lapkin (2000) note that L1 use helps learners understand task content and maintain interpersonal collaboration and interaction, and stress that the L1 should be used for specific linguistic and communicative functions in the classroom, in order to support new language learning. Thus, sociocultural theorists argue for the importance of structured and principled L1 use in order to increase learners' use of a new language for communication.

The aforementioned perspectives seem to be consolidated into a sociolinguistic concept of the language classroom as a bi- or multilingual community of practice, where learners are able to develop into bi- or multilingual users whose L1 complements the learning of the new language (Wenger, 1998).

### Teacher and learner perceptions of learners' L1 use

In terms of teacher perceptions of L1 use,

numerous studies suggest that teachers have a sense of guilt in using learners' L1 in the classroom (e.g., Macaro, 2006; Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011). However, their results suggest a more complex understanding of teachers' perception of L1 use. For example, the abovementioned beneficial functions of L1 use, such as the effectiveness of contrastive analyses between the L1 and new language, grammar instruction, classroom management and administration, and rapport-building, should not be ignored. At the same time, teachers' identity as language teaching professionals may evolve over time, from advocating a monolingual approach to embracing L1 use. In addition, there is the possibility that teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward L1 use will vary according to cultural background and educational tradition worldwide. Summarizing teachers' perceptions of L1 use, language teachers' judgement seems to be indispensable for establishing an optimal balance between L1 and new language use. Thus, an English-mainly policy instead of an English-only one, based on teachers' decision-making in various local contexts, appears to be valid (e.g., Macaro, 2006; McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

Though there is a relative lack of research into learners' perceptions of L1 use, some studies note that the positive affective role played by L1 use in the classroom, suggesting that it makes grammar instruction more intelligible and reduces learner anxiety, though overreliance on L1 use may reduce learners' motivation (e.g., Rolin-Ianziti & Varshney, 2008; Saito 2014, 2016). In sum, the humanistic and reassuring role of L1 use, suggested by Littlewood & Yu (2011), seems to help create a positive and comfortable space for language learning.

## Conclusion

Though monolingual teaching still prevails as an overwhelming force in language curricula, institutions, policy creation, and teaching methods, and has been supported by traditional SLA research that has treated L1 use as a barrier to new language input, the abundant research introduced in this literature review suggests that L1 use is not only inevitable in the language classroom, but contributes to the construction of a community of practice that embraces multilingual competence and attitudes in a globalized world. Reflecting the recognition of L1 use in language education, many ELT publishers attempt to produce global language textbooks that integrate L1 use and translation into language learning activities. Thus, a paradigm shift in language teaching and learning has begun, in order to embrace bi- and multilingual communities of practice.

## Notes

1. This literature review is basically a condensation of Hall and Cook (2012), which is the seminal work on this issue.

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