

# ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING THE NATIVE LANGUAGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING. A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Annotation:** Recently the attitude to mother tongue has undergone a positive change. The importance of the use of MT in English classroom is proved to be essential for better understanding of the subject and its essence. This article describes the role of using the native language in teaching and learning a foreign language, its specific features, advantages and disadvantages as well.

**Keywords:** english teachers, native language, classroom, features.

A native speaker is a person for whom this linguistic instrument is native — that is, learning from birth without any teaching methods. He does not only speak this language but also thinks and even dreams. We can say, he uses it in any life situations effortlessly. Native speakers speak correctly, moreover, they use a "living" language - with all the colloquial words and other specific characteristics of a certain geographical area. But can every resident of this or that country (English is used as the first language in the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and in some other countries) become a teacher? Of course not. Native speakers are people of different professions, and although communication with native English speakers is always useful for a student, the benefits of such communication should not be overestimated. Different questionnaires were given to English Language teachers and students. The aim of the methodology was to discover their opinions and attitudes toward using native language in the English classroom. English teachers through the questionnaire focused on the subjects' opinions toward the use of native language and they gave various opinions regarding the use of the learners' native language. The learners' views were also assessed in order to gain insight into their opinions regarding the use of their native language in their ESL classroom. The following section sums these results obtained from the data analysis and discussion.

There are number of different ways in which L1 researchers, with useful methodological procedures, tried to investigate and identify the ESL learners' needs. The aim of these methodologies was to gain familiarity with the issue, and to obtain a deeper understanding about the topic. L1 researchers used variety of research methods, including questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews. This section of the paper provides the information regarding participants, materials and related procedures.

The debate over whether to use or not to use to learners' L1 inside the classroom has always been the topic of discussion for various people for various reasons. The debate has also involved ESL/EFL teachers. Some argue that such use may lead to more dependence of an ESL/EFL on his/her L1 that may hinder the progress of mastering the target language. Whereas others believe that the use of an ESL/EFL learners' L1 may ease the process of teaching and learning the target language as the teachers can explain complex ideas and rule more effectively in learners' L1 saving a lot of time.

This use can also assist the ESL/EFL learners in acquiring and mastering target language vocabulary. Keeping in mind such counter arguments, the present paper aim to investigate when to use native language in a class and, most importantly, how to use it and promote learning, advantages and disadvantages of using native language in classroom, how to encourage students to use L2 appropriately, and exploring some of the best ways to teach English language.

The use of native language in ESL classes has been debated for a long time. The use of native language is not a problem but the English teachers are concerned about its appropriate use and when it is necessary to use. There are many dilemmas whether to use the native language in an English language classroom or not. Many teachers are either for or against it. Those who are against consider that their main reason is the risk of

creating native language dependence and thus preventing students' effort to find the meaning from explanations or contexts.

According to Ellis several authors maintain that L1 has no essential role to play in EFL teaching and that too much L1 use might deprive learners of valuable input in the L2. But there are other, also strong arguments for using students' native language, believing that native language is helpful in explaining complex idea and grammar rules and also helps students learning new vocabulary more effectively, and preventing the waste of time in explanations and instructions. However, the idea of avoiding native language is too stressful for many students and it is teacher's responsibility to create a comfortable class and help students feel confident and interact independently.

There are no instant recipes. No quick and easy method is guaranteed to provide success. Every learner is unique. Every teacher is unique. Every learner-teacher relationship is unique, and every context is unique.

The native language is often seen as a complex feature of the English classroom and there are many dilemmas whether to use native language in ESL class. Many teachers' experience suggests that native language can make positive contribution to English learning while some other proponents of L2 continue to believe that English should be taught through English, and not by the use of native language, which has to be avoided in the classroom. The key for the teacher seems to be using the native language

Using Native Language in English Second Language Classroom language appropriately and avoiding the over-use which will make learners feel that they cannot understand the content until it is translated into their native language.

- ✓ All of these factors form the basis for the need of this study. In that regard, the present study aims at the following:
- ✓ Knowing when to use native language in a class and, most importantly, how to use it and promote learning.
- ✓ Advantages and disadvantages of using native language in classroom.
- ✓ To find out how to encourage students to use L2 appropriately.

Another use of the mother tongue involves learners communicating with one another about a task. This can take the form of comparing answers, explaining grammatical structures within the task or as Eldridge [10,80-85] observed in his classroom, using the mother tongue to comment, evaluate and discuss the task at hand. Eldridge [10,87] noted another interesting use of the mother tongue in regards to "floor-holding". He hypothesizes that the "native code ... may function as a kind of stopgap, while the (target code) is being retrieved." Of course this may be unavoidable at early levels, but students should be made aware of the available communication strategies involving English "stopgaps", such as "Umm", "Let me see", or "Just a minute".

Atkinson agrees with Bolitho that permitting students to use their L1 brings a "valuable 'humanistic' element" into the language classroom, allowing students to express themselves clearly and effectively. The assumption here is that once students have expressed what they want to say in their L1 then the teacher can help them articulate it in English.

Atkinson claims the most significant advantage of mother tongue use is that it is consistent with the "preferred learning strategies" of the majority of learners in language classrooms around the world. In other words, if students want something translated and will likely do it on their own anyway, why not give it to them directly. This is especially evident with beginner and intermediate students. Students are often comforted to know exactly what a new grammatical structure or lexical item means in the first language. It is difficult to ignore the wishes of the students when contemplating one's approach to teaching, but as teachers we need to know where to draw the line.

Some teachers, especially at private English language schools, may argue that students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, so when they come to English class it is "English Time". Students may come for only one or two hours a week and, during that limited time, want an English-only atmosphere. In fact, some students may be offended if the teacher addresses them in anything other than English, possibly feeling as if the teacher doesn't think they can understand the English.

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