

استقصاء وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعة
تجاه استخدام اللغة الأولى في الفصول الدراسية
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الملخص باللغة العربية :

استخدام اللغة الأولى في الفصول الدراسية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مازال موضوعاً مثيراً للجدل في هذا المجال ، وتبحث الدراسة الحالية في وجهات نظر معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجامعة حول استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، واستخدمت هذه الدراسة استبياناً مغلقاً لجمع البيانات ، وكان عدد المشاركين (14) مدرساً للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في كلية التربية بالعجيلات ، وتم اختيار المعلمين باستخدام عينة عشوائية ، وقد تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية من خلال التحليل الوصفي ، وأظهرت نتيجة هذه الدراسة وجهات نظر المعلمين المختلفة تجاه استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، وكشفت النتائج أن المعلمين المشاركين لم يوافقوا أو يختلفوا بالإجماع حول استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بينما 55% أيدوا استخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، 45% من المشاركين لم يؤيدوا استخدامها. ويوصي المعلمون بشدة باستخدام قواعد إرشادية موحدة لاستخدام اللغة الأولى في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية .

Investigating University EFL teachers' perspectives towards the use of the first language in Libyan Classrooms

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Abstract

Using the first language in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has been a controversial topic in the field. The current study

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investigates university EFL teachers' perspectives on using the first language (1L) in EFL classrooms. This study employed a close-ended questionnaire to collect the data. Participants were 14 Libyan EFL University teachers at the Faculty of Education, Ajelaat. Teachers were selected using a random sample. The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software through descriptive analysis. The result of this study showed different teachers' perspectives towards the use of first language in EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that teacher participants neither agreed nor disagreed with using first Language (L1) in EFL Classrooms. Whereas 55% supported using L1 in EFL classrooms, 45% of participants were not in favor of using the first language in the classroom. Teachers highly recommended using standardized guidelines for the use of the first language in EFL classrooms.

Introduction

English is known as a lingua France international Language that expanded and became the most used language worldwide. Today, it is very important to learn English because it is a language that is used in political, economic, and social development (Lust, 2006). All countries have included the English language in their education program, at schools, and higher education institutions. English as a foreign language was first taught in Libya in 1940 when English language subjects became an important part of the education programs in all education institutes in Libya. The Ministry of Education with the agreement of the government has made it compulsory at the age of six after 2004.

Even though the Arabic Language is the native tongue in Libya, people think that the English Language should be widely used as it is a vital tool that is significantly used in business, education, and technology (Aljdee, 2011). Since people start learning English as a foreign language, it has become very important to identify what education methods, techniques, and strategies can aid in teaching and Learning it. One of these pedagogical tools is the use of the mother tongue (first language) in teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, this study sheds light on investigating University EFL teachers' perspective towards using students' first language in the Classroom at the Faculty of Education, Ajelaat.

Research problem

Investigating EFL teachers' perspectives on using students' first language in the EFL Classroom is vital for understanding the dynamics of language instruction, in addition to its influence on learning outcomes and foreign Language development among students. The purpose of this study is to investigate Libyan EFL educators' perspectives on the integration of native tongues. Therefore, exploring University EFL teachers' perspectives towards using first language in EFL Classrooms.

Research question

Q1/ What are the University EFL Teachers' perspectives towards using First Language in EFL Classrooms?

Literature review

Previous Research studies

Numerous studies have looked at the perspectives of EFL/SL teachers about the use of first language in the classroom. For example, Cook (2010) conducted a thorough analysis of the body of research and literature to investigate the rationale behind employing the first language in EFL classrooms Cook claimed that the strategic use of L1 can serve as an effective teaching aid for building scaffolds and promoting language understanding. The study also clarified the advantages of using L1 in improving a supportive learning environment and helping students grasp difficult language ideas.

Furthermore, Shin (2006) looked at the use of L1 in EFL classrooms from a socio-cultural standpoint, analyzing how institutional rules and social norms influence instructors' attitudes toward using L1. Using ethnographic information gathered from EFL classes in various cultural settings, Shin drew attention to the impact of more general sociocultural elements on language teaching strategies used by educators. The study emphasized how important to have a sophisticated grasp of the sociocultural factors influencing instructors' attitudes toward L1 use.

Lyster (2007) investigated how instructors use L1 and L2 (Second Language) in instruction to support language and subject acquisition. The study focused on the use of L1 in topic-based language teaching. Through

observations of classrooms and teacher interviews, Lyster analyzes the many approaches instructors take to make the most of their pupil's language skills.

Braun (2006) studied how teachers' linguistic backgrounds influence their educational approaches and sense of self in multilingual classrooms. By use of reflective analysis and narrative inquiry

In the framework of teaching languages, Braun looked at how educators navigate their linguistic and cultural identities. The study emphasized how instructors' perceptions of L1 usage are shaped by the intricate interactions among their professional experiences, personal histories, and institutional expectations.

Benefits of Using L1 in EFL Instruction

Several studies are highlighting possible benefits related to incorporating L1 in EFL instruction, for example, Cummins (2007) suggested that making use of students' first language proficiency can enhance cognitive development and transfer of Linguistic rules and skills between Languages. In addition, Cook (2001) claimed that careful use of L1 can provide valuable scaffolding, helping students get complex linguistic concepts and creating a supportive learning environment. EFL teachers may use L1 to manage classroom dynamics, maintain student engagement, and identify learners' individual needs. (Macaro, 2001).

Scholars supposed the use of one's native tongue or code-switching between the mother tongue and a foreign language is a common practice in EFL around the world. This is seen as an unnatural act that, when employed wisely by educators or students, appears to aid in the process of learning (Carless, 2001).

Drawbacks and challenges

Despite the alleged advantages, there are several difficulties and possible negative effects associated with using L1 in EFL classes. One issue is the potential for an overreliance on L1, which might limit opportunities for students to exercise their language skills and improve their fluency while also impeding their exposure to English (Laufer and Hills, 200). Furthermore, especially in diverse classes with pupils of variable language

proficiency, instructors may find it challenging to maintain a balance between L1 and English use (Shin, 2006). Teachers' attitudes about L1 use may also be influenced by institutional regulations and cultural attitudes, such as several regulations may feel pressurized to emphasize teaching in English solely (Bentahila and Davies, 1992).

Factors influencing teacher's decisions to use first language

Many factors, such as their personal language teaching experiences and attitudes, pedagogical training, and contextual limitations, influence EFL instructor's perspectives on the usage of L1. According to research, educators who use communicative language teaching methods are more likely to be receptive to using L1 as a tool to improve understanding and communication (Baker, 2011). Additionally, teachers' judgments about using L1 are influenced by their assessments of their student's language competency and learning requirements. Teachers utilize L1 to help students who are struggling (Lysta, 2007). Furthermore, instructors' confidence in their ability to use L1 in the classroom may be influenced by institutional expectations. and rules, such as curricular standards and requirements for standardized testing (Braun, 2006).

EFL/SL teacher's view towards using L1 in the classroom

Numerous studies have been done to look at how instructors feel about using L1 in EFL instruction in various contexts. One of the most popular applications for the first language was translating vocabulary from any language to English and verifying the meaning of new terms. Teachers' opinions regarding the use of those languages have a special bearing on whether or not they decide to employ the first language in a second foreign language classroom (Amir, 2017). According to recent studies, instructors also think that using students' prior language skills frequently helps them acquire L2 to some level. Furthermore, according to instructors, learning a second language is likely to have inter-linguistic effects, which might result in mistakes because of negative transfers (Akin, 2014).

Method

Participants

The respondents of the sample study were 14 EFL Libyan university teachers at the faculties of Arts and Education-Ajelaat in the University of Azzawia. The participant teachers were selected randomly from a large population at the faculties of Education, Ajelaat. The participants are both male and female MA and PhD holders. The age of the participants ranged from 35 to 65 years. Teachers represented a range of teaching experience: 20% had less than three years of experience, 49.7% had less than 10 years of experience and 50.3% had been teaching for over 10 years. The study was conducted during the academic year 2023-2024.

Data Collection instrument

The study utilized a quantitative approach for data collection. To obtain an in-depth understanding of the problem, close-ended questionnaire questions were used. Dornyei (2007) explained that “used questionnaires any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react other by writing cut their answers or selecting from many existing answers” (p.102). The questionnaire consists of 10 close-ended questions that were designed according to the Likert scale in which respondents can determine their level of agreement with the questionnaire statements in five points: (1) strongly agree; (2) disagree; (3) neutral; (4) agree; (5) strongly agree.

However, the study had several limitations. Firstly, the sample was small. Secondly, the sample obtained was specific to the selected universities in one city, and therefore generalization of the findings cannot necessarily be applied to other teachers in other universities in Libya or other countries.

Data analysis

The results were analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics changes collected data into values and shapes that were employed to give a credible description of various variables according to a specific situation. The descriptive statistics

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measures employed in this study include percentages, frequencies, and arithmetic mean.

Results

Table (1) shows the average value of the level of agreement on Likert scale:

Scale Weight	Level of agreement	Weighted Average
1	Strongly disagree	From 1 to 1.79
2	Disagree	From 1.81 to 2.60
3	Neutral	From 2.61 to 3.40
4	Agree	From 3.41 to 4.20
5	Strongly Agree	From 4.21 to 5

Table (1) weighted average value of the level of agreement on Likert scale Table (2) shows the main findings of the questionnaire results of EFL teachers' perceptions regarding using L1 in the classrooms. According to the results, participants' level of agreement with the questionnaire statements was neither agree nor disagree with the arithmetic mean (2.736). The findings revealed that around 55% supported using the first language in EFL classroom whereas 45% of participants were not in favor using L1.

N	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Course	Percentage of the level of agreement
1	Using the students' first language develops their understanding of the foreign language.	2	2	1	5	1	3.09	Natural	54.6%
2	Using the first language in the classroom enhances students' language acquisition.	4	2	1	4	-	2.45	Disagree	36.4%
3	Using the students' first	2	-	5	4	-	3.00	Natural	36.4%

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	language helps clarify complex concepts, especially in grammar and phonology in a foreign language.								
4	I allow my students to use their first language during foreign language classes.	2	3	2	3	1	2.82	Natural	36.4%
5	Using the first language improves a deeper understanding of cultural aspects related to the foreign language.	2	2	1	5	1	3.09	Natural	54.6%
6	Using the students' first language for classroom management purposes is effective.	3	4	2	2	-	2.27	Disagree	18.2%
7	Using the first language in the classroom helps build rapport with students.	2	3	3	3	-	2.64	Natural	27.3%
8	Using the students' first language increases students' confidence in	4	4	3	-	-	1.91	Disagree	0%

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	learning a foreign language.								
9	Teachers should receive training on how to effectively use the students' language in foreign language instruction.	2	3	2	1	3	2.82	Natural	36.4%
10	Using standardized guidelines for the use of the first language in foreign language classrooms are necessary.	2	2	1	4	2	3.27	Strongly agree	54.6%
							2.736		30.90%

Table (2) descriptive analysis of statements of the questionnaire

The frequency of responses to the questionnaire statements

According to the frequency use of the statements of the questionnaire, the results demonstrated that statement 10 “*Using standardized guidelines for the use of the first language in foreign language classrooms are necessary*” has the highest frequency rate among the respondents with a mean (3.27) and the highest level of agreement (54.6%).

However, statement 8 “*Using the students' first language increases students' confidence in learning a foreign language*” came last in the frequency usage rate with mean (1.91) and agreement percentage (0).

Discussion

The questionnaire results showed different teachers' perspectives on using the first language in EFL classrooms. The statistical results showed that EFL teachers neither agree nor disagree with using L1 in EFL classrooms. Around 55% of teachers supported using L1 in EFL classrooms while others were not. This result is similar to findings in a range of studies in many

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institutional contexts. For example, Smith et al., (2015) study reported that 60% of the participants were interested in using first language in their classes, while 40% supported pure L2 immersion. In addition, 54% of the participants emphasized the importance of using standardized guidelines for the use of the first language in foreign language classrooms. The result is also compatible with Garcia and Li Wei (2014) study. The findings affirmed the importance for legislators and leaders in education to acknowledge the benefits of linguistic diversity in the classroom to advance inclusive language policies that assist educators in using students' multilingual repertoires to improve student learning.

Conclusion

This study has shown that teachers have different perspectives toward the use of the L1 in EFL classrooms. Some teachers believe that using L1 is important inside EFL classrooms and to facilitate language learning. Other teachers were not interested in using L1 in the teaching process.

Recommendation

1. It is recommended that the use of L1 in EFL classrooms should be further investigated to understand the benefits of using it in EFL classrooms more critically.
2. It is also recommended to utilize L1 carefully in teaching grammar and vocabulary.
3. Colleges in urgent need to be provided with different types of teaching aids, language laboratories, and the necessary equipment to facilitate learning L2.
4. Since the objective of teaching the EFL is achieving communication, teachers have to be aware of this thoroughly

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