

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE,
MULTILINGUAL SETTING AND TEACHING TECHNIQUES

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Abstract: This paper explores the use of the students' first language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (ELF) classes at the South East European University (SEEU) Language Center. The university, located in a diverse, multilingual country, has a student body coming from a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity presents challenges for English teachers, particularly in deciding when and how to use the students' L1 to facilitate learning.

Key words: methods, psychological barriers, methodological strategies, demonstrate, comprehension, target language.

Introduction

The study investigates the extent to which L1 is used in SEEU's English classes and examines the methodological strategies employed by teachers to accommodate students from multilingual environments. Data analysis combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings suggest that a balanced and cautious use of L1 does not negatively impact students' exposure to the target language (English).

The paper highlights the complexities of teaching in a multicultural classroom, where students come from various language, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The authors discuss the potential drawbacks of excessive L1 use, recognizing that it can detract from the time allocated for English instruction.

The use of the native language (L1) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes is a topic of ongoing debate among educators. While the English-only policy is prevalent, teachers and students are often drawn to their L1 for communication ease.

This paper explores the role of L1 in EFL acquisition, analyzing arguments from both sides. Supporters of L1 use, such as Atkinson (1987), emphasize its effectiveness in clarifying concepts and saving time. Conversely, critics argue that excessive L1 reliance hinders exposure to the target language.

Research by Schweer (1999) and Ferrer (2000) suggests that teachers, drawing from their own language learning experiences, recognize the positive role of L1 in second language acquisition. Stern (1992) argues that L1 and L2 are intrinsically linked, and excluding L1 hinders comprehension and overall success in acquiring the

target language.

Macaro (2005) highlights the time-consuming and potentially monotonous nature of excessive input modification strategies employed to avoid L1, supporting the use of L1 for smoother communication. Nunan and Lamb (1996) further emphasize the inevitability of L1 use, particularly at lower levels of language proficiency.

In conclusion, the paper demonstrates the complex relationship between L1 and L2 acquisition. While the optimal approach remains debated, both sides acknowledge the potential benefits and drawbacks of L1 use in EFL classes.

The demand for foreign language learning has skyrocketed, with professionals across various fields needing English for practical communication. This shift has brought about changes in the education landscape, with flexible formats like online classes and individual tutoring becoming the norm. However, a key challenge remains: defining the curriculum, structure, and teaching methods.

Traditional language instruction, focused on theoretical concepts, has given way to a more applied approach. The focus is now on real-world communication and practical use. Aristotle's triad of teaching ethics – **logos**, **pathos**, and **ethos** – remains relevant. Effective language teaching requires clear presentation, engagement with students, and a positive attitude towards learners.

The role of the teacher has also evolved significantly. The traditional, authoritative figure is being replaced by a facilitator who encourages student autonomy and creates an environment for collaborative learning. While the teacher's role may seem less prominent, their influence on student engagement remains crucial, particularly in group settings where they act as guides and organizers.

The evolution of language learning methods is closely tied to shifts in psychology. The emphasis on individual needs and self-actualization, championed by Maslow, has brought a new focus on the psychological aspects of learning.

Effective language learning now prioritizes authentic communication, balanced expectations, mutual respect, and individual freedom. This creates a positive environment where students are empowered to make choices and express themselves freely.

Teachers are no longer confined to rigid methods or materials. They can choose from a wide array of techniques, ranging from traditional grammar exercises to interactive games and even simultaneous translation. This flexibility allows them to tailor instruction to individual learning styles.

The "classical method," with its focus on phonetics, syntax, and vocabulary building, remains relevant and effective. It provides a structured foundation for language acquisition, much like the traditional methods of learning Latin, Greek, and French. This method, however, requires time, patience, and a commitment to consistent practice.

The "classical method" of language learning, with its emphasis on thorough foundational knowledge, remains highly valued in university language programs. This approach, often referred to as the "fundamental method," equips learners with a strong understanding of the language system, enabling them to navigate complex grammatical structures and understand the nuances of native speaker usage.

A prominent figure in classical language pedagogy is N.A. Bonk, whose textbooks have become widely respected and enduring classics. The classical method emphasizes a deep understanding of "why" things are the way they are in a language, encouraging students to delve into the logical structure and intricacies of the language system.

While the classical method has evolved to incorporate modern pedagogical approaches, its core principles remain unchanged. This method, often used for beginners, aims to establish a strong foundation in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, while addressing psychological barriers to communication. Though the methods may be updated, the goal of equipping learners with comprehensive language skills remains the same.

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