

Exploring the Usage of Afaan Oromoo (L1) in English as a Foreign Language Classroom: The Case of Primary Schools, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract—Although there have been various claims and counter-claims about the use of L1 in EFL learning, much still remains to be known about what is going on in English classrooms, particularly in primary schools. The current study attempted to shed light on L1 usage in EFL primary school classrooms. The purpose of this paper is to determine why, how, and the extent of L1 in EFL classroom. A descriptive qualitative research, which embraced in-depth interviews and classroom observations, was utilized in the study. The participants were three EFL teachers chosen through purposive sampling. Twelve English language classes were audio-recorded. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings reported that Afaan Oromoo was a helpful teaching-learning tool, particularly in clarifying grammatical items and explaining word meanings. The participants not only just welcomed students' L1 in English classes, but they also adopted it as the default language to be used without seeking to utilize any other strategy for English learning and teaching. Therefore, the study advised EFL teachers to develop principles for the judicious and deliberate use of L1 in English classes to improve students' English learning capacities.

Index Terms—L1 (Afaan Oromoo), L2 (English), EFL teachers, judicious use, extent

I. INTRODUCTION

Language usage in the classroom has long been a source of contention in English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) instruction, with frequent shifts between the English-only approach and the use of learners' mother tongue. This concept is generally built around two key components. On the one hand, it advocates that English is best studied and acquired when the target language should be the only medium of communication in the classroom (Tang, 2002). On the other hand, in situations where the student and the teacher share the same L1 in EFL classes, the use of L1 in English classrooms is an unavoidable aspect and sees learners' mother tongue (MT) as a beneficial tool that may facilitate and contribute to learning the target language. These conflicting ideas have been the subject of much research by many scholars. As a result, language-learning classrooms and the use of languages in EFL classrooms have become more contentious and challenging.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. L1 Use in EFL Classes

The use of the first language (L1) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has long been a point of contention in second language acquisition (SLA) research, with both proponents and detractors arguing their respective cases. Monolingual advocate (Miles, 2004) believes that the use of L1 in EFL classrooms is detrimental, interfering, and debilitating, and that L1 use diminishes the EFL learning process and limits students' ability to use L2 in the classroom. According to Littlewood (1981), teachers should utilize the target language in all settings to be good role models for students. In addition, the monolingual approach supporters believe that the L1 has no important function in the EFL/ESL classroom and that it may deprive students of valuable input in the L2 and hinder development (Ellis, 1985; Auerbach, 1993).

Nevertheless, numerous studies in the literature demonstrate the significance of L1 use in L2 classes (Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Proponents of L1 use in the L2 classroom claim that L1 helps pupils learn L2 more efficiently (Atkinson, 1987; Sharma, 2006; Tang, 2002). In today's academic circles, at least, a bilingual vision of language classrooms dominates, and the use of both L1 and L2 is acceptable, if not promoted. Advocates of L1 usage in EFL classroom claim that L1 can be beneficial. There has not still been adequate research on the usage of L1 to identify what is going on in EFL classes and whether or not its use facilitates or hinders EFL learning in Ethiopian primary schools. The need for the present study arose from this felt gap.

B. The Amount and Functions of L1 Use

The quantity of overall L1 usage by language teachers is also connected to the varied roles of L1 use in foreign language lessons. While the primary purpose in the classroom is to optimize EFL instruction, there is no consensus on the amount of L1 used in English classrooms, despite the fact that most study results have stressed the L1's facilitative effect and judged it a helpful tool for increasing English learning (Cummins, 2007; Butzkamm, 2003).

Previous researches have indicated that teachers employed L1 for a variety of purposes and in varying quantities in FL teaching. Duff and Polio (1990), for example, discovered that teachers' usage of L1 was consistent across different lessons. Despite the ongoing discussions about the L1's role, empirical studies have shown that it is probably inevitable in SL/FL classes, especially when students share the same L1 and when teachers are familiar with their students' L1. However, it is controversial whether teachers should find a balance whatsoever between employing the L2 and the L1. Previous research has shown that not only does the amount of L1 use in the classroom vary, but so do teachers' actual practices and perceptions (Turnbull & Arnett, 2002).

Demir (2012) further asserted that the present issue is not whether or not to employ L1 in L2 classrooms, but rather how much, when, and how to use it. The study stressed the value of L1 in EFL lessons and reported that excessive and inappropriate L1 use should be avoided because it impedes students' opportunity to learn English. Similarly, according to Ellis (2008), excessive L1 use can impede FL learning and does not play a significant role in EFL classes. According to Kim and Elder (2005), target language instruction in EFL classes should only be done to help students acquire language like that of L2 native speakers.

Moreover, advocating the use of L1, most investigators have also warned about the misuse of L1 in L2 classes. Cole (1998) claims that teachers will determine for themselves whether L1 is truly necessary and valuable. They may establish a secure and exciting atmosphere for language learning by examining when and how to use it, as well as conditions under which it will assist student learning without becoming exhausting practice (p.95).

Researchers, like (Hall & Cook, 2013; Macaro, 2001; Marsella, 2020; Perdani, 2021), discovered that learners' L1 can be used as a resource in the foreign language classroom to provide explanations of unclear English concepts. In addition, L1's contribution is recognized in explaining vocabulary and grammar items, in maintaining student discipline, and in creating a positive, inclusive classroom atmosphere. Giving instructions, correcting language errors, assessing students' work, and giving them feedback, are further areas in L1 use has proved useful.

Teachers utilize L1 mostly for instruction, classroom management, explaining aspects of the English language, and establishing rapport (Krkğöz, 2018, cited in Tanrıseven & Yasemin, 2021). Hanáková and Metruk (2017, p. 387) found that teachers thought L1 could be used to prevent misunderstandings, visualize L1 and target language differences, and save time in their study of the use of L1 in the foreign language classroom. Teachers thought that English should be the primary medium of communication, but they also thought that the use of L1 can be used as a teaching tool when necessary.

Finally, given these contemporary perspectives on L1 usage, the present pedagogical approaches must be reconsidered. Cummins (2007) contends that the monolingual approach to L2 teaching is not only unsubstantiated by objective research but it also contradicts contemporary cognitive psychology theories with instructional consequences. Cummins, for example, claims that learners frequently organize and interpret new information by activating past knowledge, skills, and experiences. Although the L1 is part of that body of prior experience, monolingual instructional techniques see the L1 as a barrier to L2 learning and hence disregard it as a resource.

A substantial body of evidence supports the belief that a reasonable utilization of the Mother tongue can improve the process of learning and teaching L2 (El-dali, 2012; Kelleher, 2013; Voicu, 2012). Yet, there is not much agreement on what the word reasonable utilization of the L1 truly means. Reasonable use of L1 is not precise and differs from using L1 to reduce learners' anxiety, to explain complicated grammar or vocabulary, to assess understanding, or to offer instructions (Auerbach, 1993; Meyer, 2008). L1 may facilitate L2 learning when used appropriately and disrupt when used incautiously (Prodromou, 2002, cited in Celik, 2008). However, what an appropriate use means remains unclear. Despite the exponential growth in English instruction at the secondary and tertiary levels, there is a paucity of research on L1 use in primary school English classrooms.

Many studies, however, tend to reveal that the student's L1 helps to learn English better if used carefully. In addition, the practical reason for an English-only classroom is problematic as students and teachers share the same language. Primary school students in Ethiopia (like in many other countries) expect their English teacher to teach them, supported with, the student's own language. In such a situation, the question that should draw attention should be settling how a teacher could teach English well without ignoring the language the children bring to the classroom. As it is impossible to stop students from using their L1 during the English learning process, why not make use of it in a way that benefits the classroom? Answering this question requires an intelligent decision based on the principles of effective language pedagogy.

On the one hand, excessive usage of L1 could encourage pupils to transfer L1 traits to L2. In this sense, minimizing students' L2 exposure through L1 use might end in major issues for L2 learners. On the other hand, if used reasonably, L1 will assist L2 students in developing their L2 skills. In addition, teachers have questioned whether or not they should employ the learners' native language in the EFL classroom. Though studies acknowledge the importance of L1, the question of whether language teachers should employ L1 in ESL/EFL schools has long been contentious. Despite vocal

appeals for the correct use of learners' L1, several teachers claim that L1 use is troublesome in EFL classrooms. Therefore, exploring what is really going on in EFL lessons in terms of the usage of L1 in EFL classes is a critical issue right now.

The researcher has observed the approach to teaching the English language in the Ethiopian primary school education setting, particularly where both teachers and learners have a similar L1 (in the Afaan Oromoo context). Based on the observations, the students' L1 is being used practically in EFL sessions. Both the teacher and the learner use L1 in the English classroom. The extent of L1 that EFL teachers should utilize to assist their pupils acquire English is a key problem that must be addressed. The curiosity to find out the rationale that underlies the use of L1 in L2 classes in selected primary schools in Ethiopia is partly what initiated the present study. As can be recalled, it has been noted in this paper earlier that unsystematic and excessive use of L1 in L2 classes may result in the student's reliance on L1, and this will lead to learners' low performance in the TL.

Despite its prevalence, the issue of L1 use has received insufficient attention in the Ethiopian educational context. Studies carried out by (Kenenisa, 2003; Abiy, 2012; Jemal, 2012) can be mentioned as a few examples of the related works in the local context. None of these previous related studies has raised issues of the reasons for L1 use, the amount and the frequency of its use in L2 classes.

C. *Objective of the Study*

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the use of L1 (Afaan Oromoo) in English as a foreign language classroom in Ethiopian primary schools. The present study was, therefore designed to address the following basic questions:

- 1) To what extent is Afaan Oromoo used in English classes?
- 2) What are the functions of Afaan Oromoo as used in the English classes?
- 3) How do teachers and students use Afaan Oromoo in the English classes?

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. *Design of the Study*

This study explored how L1 is used in EFL classrooms. A description of the methodology and design used by the researcher is provided in this section. To answer the research question, the qualitative approach was used to determine the amount and function of L1 utterances in an EFL classroom. To extract meaning from raw data, a descriptive research design was employed. Before the beginning of the data collection, all participants verbally agreed before the observations began, and every effort was made to protect confidentiality and anonymity throughout the procedure.

B. *Participants*

The study was conducted in public primary schools in Shambu town, located in Horro Guduru Wallaga Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia. In this study, the participants were selected through purposive sampling. Three EFL teachers participated in the study. In addition, three sections of students taught by the three teachers were chosen for classroom observations. Six students (two from each observed classroom) were chosen for the interviews. Student interviews were needed to get data on reasons for using L1 in their L2 classes. Teacher interview was also carried out to obtain data from the teachers on their reasons for using L1 in L2 lessons.

C. *Instruments*

As explained elsewhere, two data gathering instruments: classroom observations and in-depth interviews were used for data gathering in this study. Classroom observations were carried out to collect data on how, when, and on what occasion teachers and students employed L1 in English lesson classes. Two observation checklists were used in this regard: one for the teachers and the other for the students. The observation schemes were employed to capture instances and frequencies of L1 usage in the English classroom. Lessons were audio-recorded, and observations were documented using field notes. Each class was observed four times with each session lasting 45 minutes. Accordingly, twelve classroom observations were carried out to seek data for the study.

In addition to observation, interviews were employed to gather further information. Interviews were used to get data on the participants' experiences and understanding of L1 use in EFL classrooms. The teacher and two students from each class provided the interview data. Moreover, employing interviews in this study was needed to acquire more in-depth information, free and flexible replies, and information on participants' ideas, feelings, attitudes, or emotions in response to specific questions. Obtaining such data is a rather difficult job through classroom observation and questionnaires (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989). Three teachers and six students from each class participated in the interviews.

D. *Data Collection*

First, permission to visit the school was obtained from Shambu Town Education Office. Next, the researcher visited the school and met with the school directors. The directors introduced him to the English teachers. He worked with the teachers until the end of the data collection sessions.

In this study, the first method of data collection was classroom observation. The students and the teacher were observed to gather information about L1 usage, and teachers and students' actual practice of L1 use in EFL classes. Furthermore, observing the classes aided the researchers in selecting students for the interview based on their classroom talk, behavior, and participation during lessons. Each observed class was audio taped four times. Three teachers and six students were interviewed one week after classroom observation. One week was needed to transcribe observation data that later served as the source of information for the interviews. The interview was conducted in Afaan Oromoo.

E. Data Analysis

Data for this study was gathered using classroom observations and interviews. The audio-recorded data were carefully studied before their transcription. The transcriptions were then carefully reviewed, and coded for instances of L1 use. The focus of classroom observation was to gather data on the amount and purposes for which teachers and students used L1 in EFL courses.

Teachers' talks were broken down into utterances and analyzed to determine the amount and functions of L1 usage. Then, all occurrences of L1 use were labeled in order to restructure data into groups that allow for better comparison of data within the same categories. Following that, instances were counted (throughout the twelve classroom observation sessions) using a word count processor. A word count processor was needed to extract the number of L1 words from the total number of words uttered during the observed lessons. Finally, the percentages of L1 usage in each session and in the total sessions observed were reported after certain mathematical calculations. Then, the percentage of L1 use was calculated for each teacher. The number of L1 words, L2 words used and their percentages are presented in a table. As a result, the analysis was finer-grained than in earlier studies, offering a more precise and in-depth understanding of teachers' L1 practices. Moreover, Nvivo 12 was used to do a thematic analysis of the interviews and field notes (Nowell et al., 2017). Interviews and field notes assisted in understanding the underlying causes for L1 usage as well as teachers' sentiments and opinions regarding L1 use. This cannot always be reached simply through observing and recording classes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in this section are based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis of classroom audio-recorded data to answer the research questions related to the amount and purposes of L1 utilized by teachers and students in EFL classrooms.

A. Findings From Classroom Observation

The word count from the class audio transcription revealed that teachers and students utilized 25,667 words in 12 sessions (four sessions for each teacher) in EFL classes. Out of the total words counted in all the twelve English teaching sessions, 4605 words were in L1 (Afaan Oromoo). This is equal to the overall use of 17.48% Afaan Oromoo words. All the other words (21,063), spoken were in English, which is equal to 82.52% of English words.

TABLE 1
THE NUMBER OF ALL WORDS SPOKEN IN THE OBSERVED LESSONS

EFL Teachers	Sessions	No of Afaan Oromoo words	% of Afaan Oromoo words	No of English words	% of English words
T1	1	95	5.57%	1611	94.43%
	2	113	6.15%	1724	93.85%
	3	156	7.44%	1941	92.56%
	4	312	13.51%	1998	86.49%
T2	1	405	17.63%	1892	82.37%
	2	398	16.51%	2013	83.49%
	3	172	7.99%	1980	92.01%
	4	195	9.45%	1869	90.55%
T3	1	689	31.2%	1520	68.8%
	2	671	30.9%	1499	69.1%
	3	697	31.5%	1517	68.5%
	4	702	31.9%	1498	68.1%
Average		384	17.48%	1755	82.52%

The presence of L1 words (17.48%) in the data indicates minimal use when compared to L2 utterances (English) which represent 82.52%. All of the teachers used L1 in their classes, but the extent to which they employed it varied substantially between their lessons. As indicated in Table 1 above, the teacher's L1 use ranged from a low average of 5.57% to a high use of 31.9%. A similar amount of variation was seen across various lessons presented by the same teachers. From these L2 words, it can be concluded that the teachers considered in this study predominantly use English.

B. Purposes of L1 Use in EFL

Overall, in the sampled classrooms, Afaan Oromoo was used 793 times for various purposes and occasions. A grammar explanation is a most frequently used category (266 times), which is equivalent to 33.54%. Several instructions on grammar topics that occurred during the observations were done in Afaan Oromoo. The degree of

grammar explanation occurrences is higher than in any other category, and more explanation was given in Afaan Oromoo, compared to the other functions for which L1 was used during the observed lessons.

TABLE 2
FUNCTIONAL AND FREQUENCY OF AFAAN OROMOO USE BY TEACHERS

Description of Teachers' Use of Afaan Oromoo	Occurrences	
	Frequencies	Percentages
Comprehension check	20	2.51%
Instruction	53	6.69%
Class management	99	12.48%
Grammar explanation	266	33.54%
New vocabulary translation	235	29.64%
Response to students' question	43	5.41%
Motivating students	21	2.66%
Talking about tests, quizzes and other assignments	39	4.92%
Others	17	2.15%
Total	793	100%

The second most common use of Afaan Oromoo was the translation of new terminology from L2 to L1. The teachers used Afaan Oromoo 235 times or 29.64% of the time to do this. Classroom management was the third most common application of Afaan Oromoo. This counted for 99 times the use of L1 and equals 12.48% usage. It has been used for warning pupils, keeping the class silent, directing them on how to go from one activity to another, organizing seats, controlling time, and performing other similar classroom procedures.

From the total of ten observed categories, the sampled teachers in all of the categories used Afaan Oromoo. Specifically, three of these categories, namely, grammar explanation, translating new vocabulary, and classroom management are the categories in which the most common occurrences of Afaan Oromoo were observed. These three categories constituted 75.66% of instances of L1 use in the present study.

C. Students' Use of Afaan Oromo

In total, students in the observed classes used Afaan Oromoo 231 times in various situations. They used it 97 times in class to do things like raising their hands and asking the teacher to do things like reading or writing an answer on the board. Students also utilized L1 when they expressed confusion about anything or when they wanted to ensure that they understood what was going on in class.

TABLE 3
FREQUENCY OF AFAAN OROMOO USE BY STUDENTS

Description of students' use of Afaan Oromoo	Occurrences	
	Frequencies	Percentages
Talking with each other	15	6.5 %
Asking and answering questions	49	21.21%
In pair work or group work	0	0%
Dealing with classroom activities	97	42%
New word translation	51	22.08%
Talking about tests, quizzes and other assignments	16	6.93%
Other issues: table talk,	3	1.3%
Total	231	100%

Students used Afaan Oromoo 51 times to translate English words into Afaan Oromoo. Likewise, they switched to Afaan Oromoo 32 times to ask questions, and 17 times to answer teachers' questions. They conjointly used Afaan Oromoo 16 times to speak about tests, quizzes, and assignments. Students in their L1 typically asked a question about tests in L1 in the observed classes.

Generally, the analysis of students' L1 use in L2 classrooms showed three main functions of L1 use: dealing with classroom activities, translating new words, and asking and answering questions. These accounted for 85.28% of Afaan Oromoo use by the students considered in this study.

D. Findings From Interviews

The interviewed teachers noted that when whole English is utilized as a medium of communication, students could not understand lessons. When learners fail to understand, the teachers reported using, different mechanisms to help the learners to understand the material. If that fails, they reported resorting to utilizing Afaan Oromoo. In addition, the data indicated that the teachers use Afaan Oromoo because students have restricted exposure to learning English, particularly students' poor English performance results from their lack of practice outside the classroom. As a result, teachers believed that unless students used Afaan Oromoo, they would completely lack vocabulary and grammar points. Moreover, teachers held the view that Afaan Oromoo needed to be used for grammar rule explanation. Translating new vocabulary, simplifying instruction, and inspiring and supporting the students to participate in lessons can also best be done when L1 is used during lessons. Yet again, they said they used Afaan Oromoo to clarify and show variations

between L1 and L2. Teachers think that allowing Afaan Oromoo in English classes can be a valuable teaching technique that encourages learners to engage in class activities. Teachers also expressed their belief that their students would feel more at ease and confident when L1 is used in English classes. Students' L1 in L2 class acts as a mediator, and therefore, reduces their communication apprehension.

The interviewed teachers perceived that using Afaan Oromoo particularly helps students who find participating in lessons difficult when whole English is used. As a result, students' English competence appears to be an important consideration in the decision to be made regarding the use of Afaan Oromoo in schools. On the other hand, students want L1 to be used, as this will enable them to be certain and assured of what they have studied. Students also believed that using Afaan Oromoo clarified their misunderstanding.

During the first interviews, participants demonstrated that they were mainly aware of the estimated quantity of their L1 usage. Data indicated that teachers do not believe in the total exclusion of L1. For example, T1 stated that Afaan Oromoo might be used for up to 20% of EFL sessions. When students understand the subject readily, they utilize a smaller quantity; when the issue is complex, more Afaan Oromoo use is required to clarify and minimize misunderstandings.

T2 claimed that the use of Afaan Oromoo ranges between 15-20%. He was concerned that exceeding this restriction might limit the student's English learning prospects. This teacher believed that there is no consistent use of L1 because it relies on the nature of the lesson or topic as well as the students' comprehension.

Another interviewed teacher pointed out that, Afaan Oromoo should not be excluded from EFL lessons since it is utilized for different reasons. This indicates that prohibiting the use of Afaan Oromoo in elementary school English classes would be a frustrating move for both teachers and their students. The interviewed teachers confirmed that Afaan Oromoo serves as a teaching tool. They added that utilizing English only with such low-level learners is pointless. Similarly, they remarked that employing Afaan Oromoo is a way of assisting and encouraging learners to learn well.

E. Reasons for Afaan Oromoo Use in EFL Classes

The interviewed students noted that Afaan Oromoo served them to grasp the meaning of words. They reported that their lack of appropriate English vocabulary often drives them to switch to Afaan Oromoo in English sessions. This acknowledges the students' recognition of the beneficial impacts of the use of Afaan Oromoo in English classes. When their teachers use Afaan Oromoo to explain grammar, the students said they establish mental comparisons of English and Afaan Oromoo grammar. This, they reported, helps them, comprehend English grammar. When the teachers use Afaan Oromoo repeatedly, the students reported recalling and remembering lessons, they have learned. They also said if their teachers give Afaan Oromoo examples while explaining the difficult meanings, they learn better.

However, classroom observation data indicates that teachers used a combination of Afaan Oromoo and English without regard for students' obvious needs for L1. It appears to be possible to assume that even without the students' expressed the need for L1; teachers can understand their student's need by working with them in the preceding months. The teachers seemed to expect the learners to utilize English in many of the observed cases, but the teachers themselves were observed using a combination of L1 and L2 frequently. Establishing guidelines for L1 use in class may put an end to the spontaneous use of the students' own language during lessons.

F. How L1 Was Used in EFL Classes

Although there are several ways for a teacher to focus on teaching a TL without utilizing students' native language, an occasional and fair addition of L1 can aid to increase student understanding and reinforce language learning. In the interview data, teachers described using L1 as a facilitating tool for teaching difficult grammar and vocabulary items, providing instruction, checking comprehension, and creating a conducive educational atmosphere. They stated that employing L1 as a last option after attempting to convey the topic in English repeatedly. They stressed that students should first attempt to grasp English since English is the medium of instruction. The teachers' interview shows that if the students' attempts to grasp English fail; L1 can be employed as a last option to clarify a few difficult concepts. However, classroom observation result showed that teachers' integration of L1 was not systematic since it prioritized utilizing L1 to attempting to use L2 in EFL classes.

The teachers were not role models in speaking English at every opportunity during any activity. They were seen directly shifting to students' L1 even at the beginning session of the classroom lesson. For example, T2 started the lesson in the following ways:

T2: Kaleessa waa'ee maalii baranne? (What did we learn yesterday?)

Ss: Letter baranne. (We learned about letters)

T2: Letter maaliidha jenne? (What did we say a letter is?)

T2: Kana kaleessa baranne. (We learned this yesterday)

T2: Category letterii maal faati? (What are the categories of letters?)

It is apparent from the extract that the teacher started the lesson focusing on L1 use. He asked the classroom in Afaan Oromoo "Kaleessa waa'ee maalii baranne?" When translated into L1, means 'What did we learn yesterday?' Here the teacher opened the lesson using the students' own language without checking whether or not the students would find it difficult to understand the question if L2 was used to ask the question about the lesson of the previous day.

V. DISCUSSION

It can be understood from the classroom data that L1 is always present in EFL classes. Participants agree that using students' L1 can help the teaching of the English language. Both students and teachers have positive views regarding utilizing L1, especially when teaching grammar or when confronted with difficult vocabulary that cannot be named in the target language. The result of the study is similar with a study conducted by Varshney and Rolin-Ianziti (2006) that compared students and instructors' opinions of L1 use in the classroom and discovered that both students and teachers perceived it as a helpful tool in teaching lower-level students. In addition, the finding of this study also supported Macaro's (2001) optimal position of judicious usage of L1. In addition, Cook (2001) states that by employing L1 in the classroom, teachers may express meaning and arrange the class.

A. *The Extent of L1 Use in English Classrooms*

The findings revealed that Afaan Oromoo was used in all of the observed classes. There was not a lesson that was conducted exclusively in the TL (English). This demonstrates that English teachers use Afaan Oromoo for a wide range of activities. The data demonstrate that L1 words (17.48%) were compared to L2 words (82.52%). As seen in Table 1, the sampled teachers in this study were employing relatively little L1 in English classrooms. In comparison to other research that anticipated context, relatively little use of Afaan Oromoo was observed across all teacher types. For example, Tang (2002) demonstrated that "limited and judicious use of L1 in the English classroom does not reduce students' exposure to English, but rather can assist in the teaching and learning processes" (p.41).

Teachers believed that the volume and frequency of Afaan Oromoo were related to the learners' English competency. This finding is consistent with Kavaliauskiene's (2009) conclusion that L1 is required in English lessons, but the extent of L1 relies on the learner's English proficiency. Teachers' use of Afaan Oromoo was low, maybe due to fear of being observed and because the frequency of Afaan Oromoo usage was influenced by a variety of circumstances. The degree of competency of the pupils did not appear to be a factor to decide the amount of L1 use based on the observations. This contradicts the conclusions of the interviews. Teachers were encouraged to employ L1 in a variety of contexts when teaching English, even if the amounts used were low.

B. *Reasons for L1 Use*

In terms of the most common uses of L1, it was discovered that the most prevalent examples were translating new vocabulary, explaining grammar, classroom management, and comprehension check. It was clear from the reasons given for the overall use of L1 that participants were aiming to bring attention to various variables, such as pupils' level of understanding. When pupils were unable to express their ideas, or fail to answer or ask questions, they were observed switching to L1 use. Teachers were also observed allowing themselves and their students to utilize L1 without stimulating the pupils too, for example, say certain words again in English, or without attempting any other tactics.

Another significant finding from the data is that there is a positive association between teachers' usage of Afaan Oromoo and pupils' low affective filter. Teachers, for example, claimed that when Afaan Oromoo is used in the classroom, students' affective filters are lower. Another explanation given by pupils was that they felt more at ease when their teacher utilized Afaan Oromoo in the English classroom. Contrary to the findings reported in many other studies, in the present study, the students' L2 proficiency did not affect the teachers' use or non-use of L1 during lessons. Hall and Cook (2012) discovered that "teachers working with lower-level pupils report much more frequent use of the learners' L1 across all functions" (p. 23).

C. *The Occasions of L1*

Teachers welcomed the usage of L1 in the English classroom. They believe that using L1 was critical for learners with limited skills. One might also argue that the learners are using L1 in this setting because they have a good learning relationship with it. The interviewees suggested using L1 to give directions and clarify problematic grammar topics. However, during the observations, teachers used L1 in situations that were not described in the interview, such as disciplining students and managing the class. Furthermore, study findings demonstrate that employing L1 gives cognitive support, improves understanding, and helps to create a positive, conducive learning environment. Using the L1 helps learners negotiate meaning for successful L2 communication (Brooks & Donato, 1994).

Based on the data presented above, participants agree that using Afaan Oromoo contributes much to the student's learning of the target language. The most typical reason for both the teachers and students to employ L1 is to explain word meanings. Teachers explain complicated vocabulary, difficult topics, and new grammatical rules in L1. Teachers frequently encountered topics that are difficult to discuss using only the TL; as a result, they found L1 to be a beneficial tool for conveying the meanings of these concepts to their pupils. According to the teacher and the students, using L1 helps students comprehend grammar more quickly than speaking exclusively in L2. Furthermore, the findings suggest that both primary school teachers and students have positive views toward the adoption of Afaan Oromoo in EFL classrooms. L1 is used as a simplifying tool for a variety of instructional goals. Afaan Oromoo has seemed to be successful in clarifying teachers' instructions and communicating the aims of the lessons and activities, interpreting challenging tasks, boosting learners' understanding, and helping the L2 learning process in general. Teaching English in primary school implies that children seek assistance by using L1. The study participants agreed that L1 may be useful in

the appropriate settings at the right time and should be utilized in emergencies. According to the data from classroom observation, L1 is a default technique that the EFL teachers use to support L2 teaching.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

When students' English language proficiency level is insufficient to grasp English or when misconceptions arise, EFL teachers utilize Afaan Oromoo because these misconceptions may limit students' ability to follow their teacher's instructions. Teachers believed that Afaan Oromoo aids students in understanding and learning; it helps students in comprehending complex grammatical points and abstract concepts, and it supports the teaching of new vocabulary and difficult contents. In terms of student functions, students utilized Afaan Oromoo to ask questions for clarification, acquire grammar and vocabulary items. The study also indicated that when teachers employ Afaan Oromoo in English classrooms, pupils feel comfortable and the benefits of L1 come to mind.

Furthermore, the study confirms that L1 could provide cognitive assistance by scaffolding students' practice to accomplish learning objectives, boost students' understanding, and assist in the establishment of an appropriate learning environment. Although using L1 helps to improve English teaching and learning, misuse may cause students to become too reliant on it, which would contradict the fundamental purpose of L2 teaching. Keeping a balance between L1 and L2 is thus one of the most efficient ways to learn and teach a foreign language.

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