

**SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING VIA FIRST LANGUAGE BY
TESTING LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH USING TWO
DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OF INSTRUCTION**

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ABSTRACT

There has been a bulk of purposeful opinions and debates on learning second language via helping of mother tongue, which let learners to improve their second language easily and effectively. The aim of this study is, to find out the perceptions of students of the first language via second language learning by testing learning vocabulary through using two different mediums of instruction. Twenty full- time study students at the age of eight years, at the English school for learning English language were participated during the 2011-2012 Academic year Spring Semester in Azad school in Urmia – Iran. This study addresses to relationship between first and second language learning and some quantitative aspects of primary students language learning performance. Based on data, which was analyzed by SPSS, program, the results has shown the parallel finding between two groups of subjects; however, interference of L1 in learning process has more affection than learning without it. More explanation of the words via the scholars makes them to have high motivation that could concern their tests results.

Keywords: Second Language Learning, Testing Learning Vocabulary, Different Mediums of Instruction

1. OVERVIEW

Attempts to compare the effectiveness of L1 in L2 learning process have brought mixed results, some indicating no difference between them, however, some believe that using L1 and the interference of L1 in learning the foreign or second language has some advantages (8), (14), (19) and (12). In relation to this matter, (24) has done an investigation on L1 and L2 glosses: their effects on incidental vocabulary learning. Due to this two types and the other different kinds of suggestions the advantage of one gloss type over the other type for instance, compared L1 with L2 glosses with 85 English-speaking participants who were studying Spanish as a second language. They read a Spanish text with 613 words under three conditions: (1) L1 (English) gloss; (2) L2 (Spanish) gloss; and (3) No gloss. In this relation, (12) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he mentioned 'the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2'. He argues that transfer is governed by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. (8) examined the effects of sentence-level L1 translations on incidental vocabulary learning, and, instead of typical word definitions or explanations, she used sentence-level information (translation of the sentence in which a certain target word appears). (13) also compared the sentence-level L1 translation glosses with basic dictionary form L1 glosses and found that the basic dictionary glosses were more effective than sentence-level translation glosses when there is interference of L1 utilization. While, these researchers examined the different text formats exclusively either in L1 or L2 conditions, others have looked into the comparison of L1 with L2 glosses. There have been numerous debates over kind of L2 word presentation assist and facilitates learning vocabulary. There is theoretical evidence stating that teaching vocabularies, which are in the same word family, facilitate the learning process of L2. This technique, which claimed to be an effective way in developing the learning of new words, can be seen in the teaching order of new vocabularies in most English textbooks, without considering the fact that this notion is still based on theoretical evidence rather than the experimental one. Regarding to (10) it proved that mother tongue always is helping to learning L2 acquisition. This situation makes to have high motivation in learning process in the learners; this statement re-emphasise the importance of mother tongue precious in learning L2. However, it is suggested to follow the target language rules in learning progression without using of mother tongue; that, based on language learning theories, behaviourism theory (22) believes that learning a language could be happened through imitation (i.e. by imitating what others say or write). They believe that the mistakes in the L2 are a result of the L1; thus, it can be resulted that using of L1 in the process of L2 learning is important. In addition, in the following (6) asserts that having background of a second language assist the child to learn better than when he does not any information about the target language; therefore, he needs to be in universal condition and familiars with alphabets and words and recognize the meaning of text. Being in the universal circumstance contains a set of abstract principles common to all languages, which enables the child to generate an infinite variety of sentences. Due to this matter, he believes that every child has deep background of every language and it just needs to endorse and promote it.

Although some researchers (10) have shown that communication language teaching (CLT) is better than grammar teaching method (GTM); however, in this study tried to show the influence and authority of GTM in the learning of second or foreign language. The foremost principle of this study is to examine the students' performance in learning

vocabulary in L2. It focused on finding the process to teach vocabulary in primary school and find some valuable and practical patterns, which are functional and helpful in teaching vocabulary in L2.

Different scholars have different opinions about this issue. (11) explains interference as the automatic transfer, because of previous shaped habit, of the surface structure of the L1 on the surface of target language. (16) defines interference as appearance of errors in students' usage of target language, which came back to the first language. A lot of research into language learning is based on the target language that takes place in the classroom.

(4) suggest that in the process of learning the L2, L1 responses are grafted on to L2 responses, and both are made to a common set of meaning responses. Furthermore, the learner is less skilful in L2 and all words he/she applies in L2 traces back of the structure of L1. Based on (10), students were not interesting in to the scholars who talk into the mother tongue, and the preferable language for them is the target language. However, as it is mentioned earlier (10) employing of mother tongue sometimes makes good situation to the learners to improve their second language learning.

Considering the subject of study, (5) believed that in second language teaching, advocates of CLT have dominantly, disagree with the use of L1 for teaching vocabulary in L2 classes. While on the contrary, (21) noted, "A learner's of L1 is one of the most important factors in learning L2 vocabulary. According to 1 (7), this may identifies that L1 and L2 vocabulary are phonologically, semantically and association ally linked within the same word family; speakers can make conscious link between them. (18) believed that cod switching is one way for teaching vocabularies, for example, the teacher told a story first in L1 and then repeated in English. Other advocates of L1 using L2 in teaching vocabulary include (2), (3-9) and (23), who argue for selective- principled use of L1 due to its practicality, stating, "The attempt to avoid L1 at all leads to despondency manner".

(2) states that many learners believe that incidental use of L1 give them opportunity to show that they are intelligent and talented people. While, (20) believes that when the use of L2 is not so much outside the classroom, it is essential to amplify the utilization of L2 in the language classroom and the role of L1 must be minimized. Thus, it is obvious to use L1 is interesting with others who have the same L1 and it is easy for interaction; and for those who feel shy and prefer to communicate in L1. (17) conclude that L1 translation can be a useful method, because it is understandable, clear, short and familiar. According to (20), when the use of L1 translation mixed with the utilization of word cards for beginners, it will increase the speed of vocabulary learning

2. METHODOLOGY

The paper demonstrates empirically that through employment of pre and post-test which carried out on lower primary students who are in the process of learning and acquiring the second language. The subjects were twenty students at the age of eight years who came from two different living environments. Group A consists of ten subjects who came from a rural

school while the ten subjects of group **B** came from a sub urban area in Urmia-Iran. The study was accomplished in 3 phases within two weeks.

A and B groups are going to be taught in different mediums of instruction. Group A will be taught in mere English language while, group B will be taught in both English and Persian languages. First, they were held pre-test exam in order to evaluate their vocabulary knowledge. Then, the students will be taught in the so-called order. At the end of treatment they were held a post-test to evaluate the learning process. The aim of this study is basically to examine which way of L2 vocabulary presentation is more helpful for L2 learners and to observe whether using two different mediums of instruction makes any significant difference considering the notion of interference of L1 in second language learning. Later, during the 2nd week of the study, post-test was given to the subjects. The test consisted of 10 words that have been learnt and explained during the previous phase. The test required the subjects to match the words with the pictures to show their understanding of the words.

3. FINDINGS (Group A)

Pre Test

Table 1: Scores obtained by subjects

| Subject | Score Group A |
|--------------|-----------------|
| S1 | 3/15 |
| S2 | 3/15 |
| S3 | 6/15 |
| S4 | 2/15 |
| S5 | 2/15 |
| S6 | 4/15 |
| S7 | 3/15 |
| S8 | 8/15 |
| S9 | 2/15 |
| S10 | 2/15 |
| TOTAL | 35/15 |
| MEAN | 35/15= 2 |

Ten subjects were given 15 words that were adjectives. The findings from table -1 show the scores, the students obtained from the pre-test in-group A. From the table above, it is shown that most of the subjects were not familiar with the words given, but only a subject (S8) from group A, has achieved the highest score in the test and the subject scored 8 out of 15 marks. The mean score for the findings above is 2; therefore, it shows that the subjects in the average were only familiar with 2 words out of 15 words given.

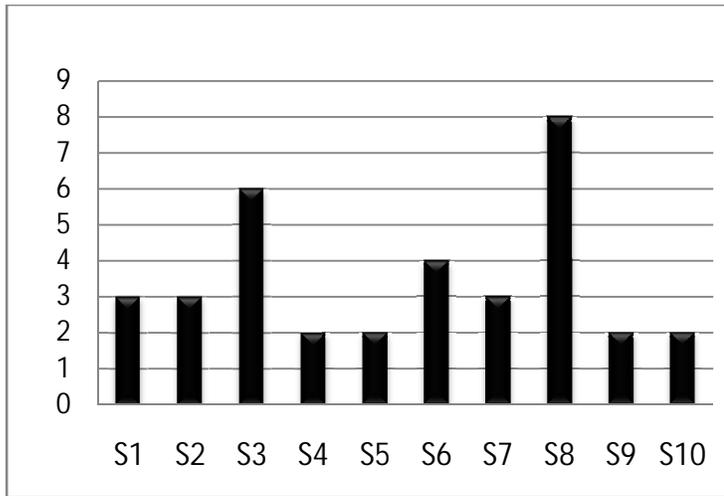


Figure 1. The range of subjects

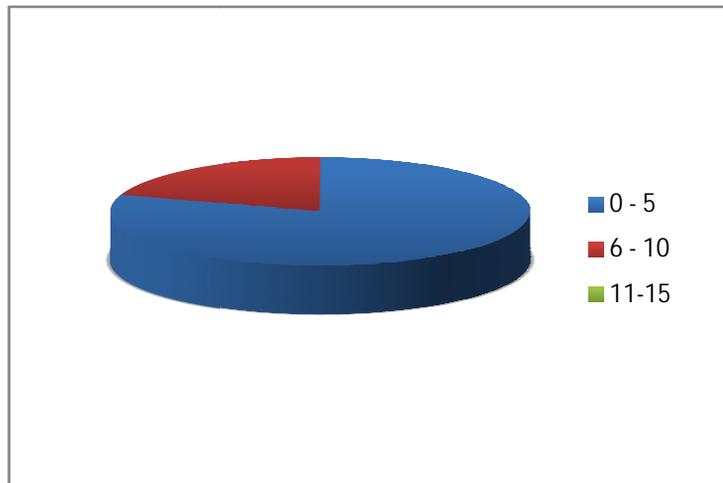


Figure 2. The range of subjects

Figure - 2 and -3 shows the range of marks obtained by subjects. From 10 subjects, eight subjects obtained marks between 0-5 while, other 2 subjects scored 6-10 marks and none of the subjects took 11 to 15 marks. After conducting the pre-test, the teacher started teaching the target words using the target language (L2)

Post Test

Table 2: Scores obtained by subjects

| Subject | Score |
|---------|-------|
| S1 | 4/10 |
| S2 | 4/10 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| S3 | 10/10 |
| S4 | 3/10 |
| S5 | 6/10 |
| S6 | 8/10 |
| S7 | 6/10 |
| S8 | 10/10 |
| S9 | 6/10 |
| S10 | 3/10 |
| TOTAL | 60/10 |
| MEAN | 60/10= 6 |

The results from table - 2 show the scores of subjects after applying the small-scale study in the classroom. From the table above, it shows that subjects scored full marks during the post-test while four subjects scored less than five marks. The other subjects obtained more than five marks in the post-test. In overall, it makes the mean six. Although, during the teaching and learning process the teacher used fully L2, the results still show development.

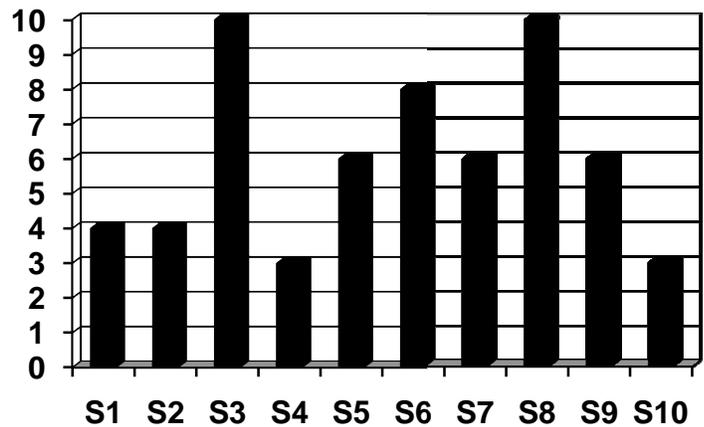


Figure 3. Development of subjects

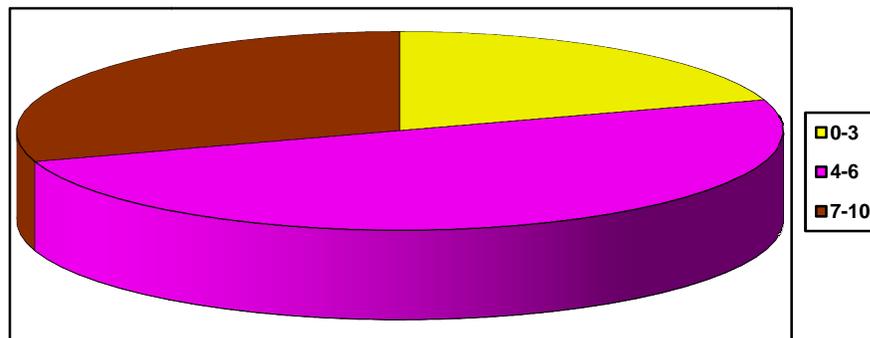


Figure 4. Development of subjects

The two above figures show the development of each subject based on the score, which they obtained in the post-test. Though, there is progression in the scores, 3 subjects scored 0-3 marks in group A which shows the subjects still do not understand the words quite well.

Moreover, two subjects successfully gained full marks in the test and the others scored between 4-6 marks.

3.1 Comparing the Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test in Group A

Table 3: Mean score

| Test | Mean Score |
|-----------|------------|
| Pre- Test | 2 |
| Post-Test | 6 |

The table left shows the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test. In the pre-test the mean score obtained by the subjects is 2 words while, in the post-test the mean score obtained by the subjects is 6 words. It shows that there is an improvement in understanding the words.

Findings (Group B) Pre- test

Table 4: Scores obtained by subjects

| Subject | Score |
|--------------|--------------------|
| S1 | 4/15 |
| S2 | 4/15 |
| S3 | 2/15 |
| S4 | 2/15 |
| S5 | 4/15 |
| S6 | 3/15 |
| S7 | 5/15 |
| S8 | 6/15 |
| S9 | 1/15 |
| S10 | 9/15 |
| TOTAL | 40 |
| MEAN | 40 / 15 = 3 |

Table - 4 shows the findings from the pre-test done in the classroom. The subjects were given 15 words. From the score, it is clearly shown that most of the subjects did not know and have not any idea about the words listed in the worksheet. There is only one subject (S10), who has achieved a high score in the test. Three questions were given to the S10 and it is found out that her mother is American native who uses English regularly in his daily life. From the table above, the mean score of group B is 3, which shows that this group understood 3 words out of 15 words. Below are the charts that show the results:

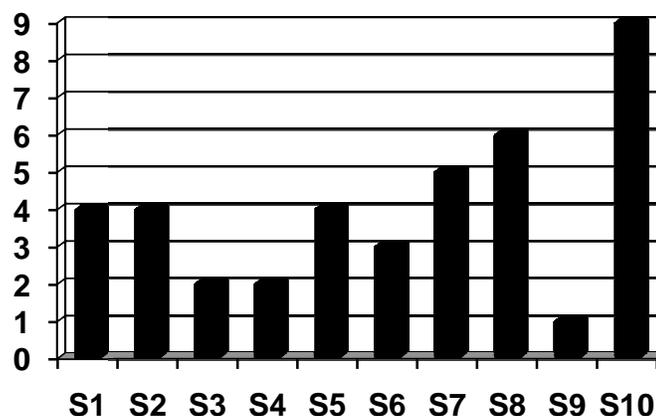


Figure 5. The range of subjects

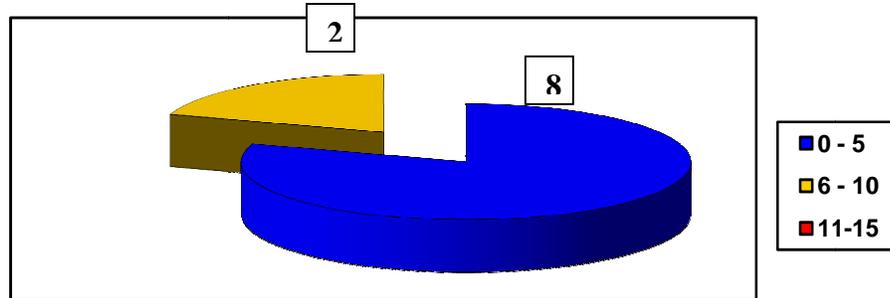


Figure 6. The range of subjects

According to figure - 6 and figure - 7, it is clearly shown that out of 10 subjects, 8 of them scored between 0-5 marks and only 2 subjects scored between 6 – 10 marks.

Post- test

Table - 5: Scores obtained by subjects

| Subject | Score |
|--------------|--------------------|
| S1 | 6/10 |
| S2 | 8/10 |
| S3 | 10/10 |
| S4 | 5/10 |
| S5 | 7/10 |
| S6 | 5/10 |
| S7 | 4/10 |
| S8 | 8/10 |
| S9 | 7/10 |
| S10 | 10/10 |
| TOTAL | 70 |
| MEAN | 70 / 10 = 7 |

Table-5 shows the results after the teaching and learning process. As it is shown, 2 subjects scored full marks in the post - test and only one subject scored less than 5 marks. In total, all subjects scored 70 that make the mean 7.

Comparing the Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test of Group B

Table 6: Mean scores

| Test | Mean Score |
|-----------|------------|
| Pre- Test | 3 |
| Post-Test | 7 |

It shows that most of the subjects were able to answer the test successfully compared to the pre-test results. From the table above, it can be observed that there is an

improvement in the scores due to the teaching and learning process that took place before the post - test.

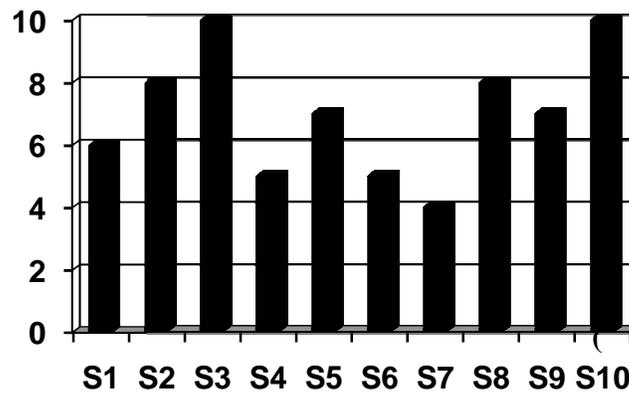


Figure - 8

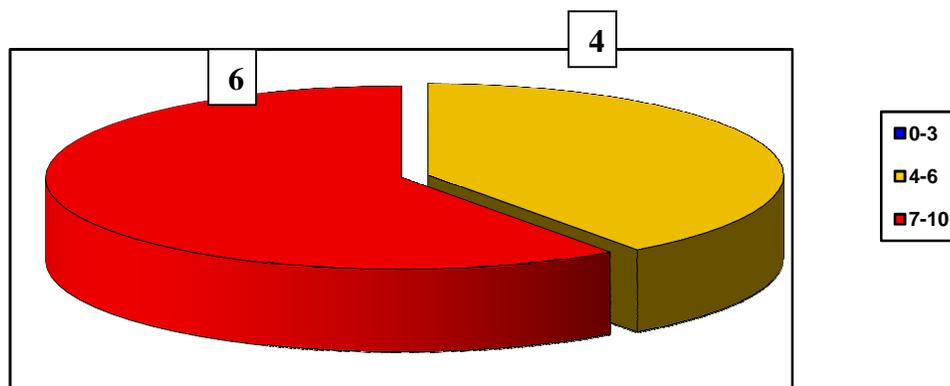


Figure 7 . The range of subjects

Both figures show a clear view of the group B performance in the post- test. In figure - 7, it is resulted that S7 scored 4 out of 10 marks and also S3 and S10 scored full marks. On the other hand, by referring to the figure - 8, none of the subjects scored between 0-3 marks while 6 of the subjects scored 7-10 marks and only 4 subjects scored from 4-6 marks.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study have implications for vocabulary learning and teaching. It provided an indication the use of L2 and the bilingual instruction in facilitating vocabulary acquisition. It also explains the reaction of the subjects towards the language of instruction in L2 class through observation of the teachers and short interviews with the subjects. The results from group A and group B show equality based on the table mean score obtained by the subjects. It means even though, subjects from group A came from rural background, using entirely L2 in teaching the subjects enables them to acquire the words. This reveals the fact, that those subjects who have limited or no exposure in L2 are still able to understand and acquire the words in fully target language instruction as long as the teacher has a good

proficiency in the target language. However, considering the data analyses, it is clearly shown that students still can benefit from L1 in vocabulary acquisition. L1 interference in L2 class does help the students learning vocabulary better. The low-ability learners had a greater tendency to work out in L2 text and sentence meaning using their first language. This statement also can be proven from this small study that we carried out during the teaching and learning process; because, regarding the figure 7 and 8, there were none of the subjects from group B who scored between 0-3 marks, especially the low-achievers who received lower marks in the pre-test. Those who obtained low marks were able to understand and remember the meaning of the vocabulary in L2. However, since the mean score for both groups are equal, we believe, if the teacher from group A that used entirely target language was given ample time to teach the words, there would be no one who gets the score between 0- 3 marks in the post-test.

What were the reactions from the students towards the language instruction in L2? From the observation, teaching and learning process, it is found that group A showed some improvements from the mean score they obtained. During the lesson, the teachers noticed that the students did have difficulties in understanding the instruction in target language; however, they managed to give the correct meaning when the teacher explained the meaning of the words. It portrayed that if the teacher has ability or proficiency in using the target language it will be easier for the students to understand and acquire the language. During the lesson, the teacher used simple language and gave many examples in explaining the meaning of the words. Apart from that, the teacher used facial expression and body gestures to show the meaning of the words. Although, throughout the lesson teacher used entirely the target language, the students were able to guess the meaning of the words correctly; because of the creativity of the teacher in providing the meaning of the words. Therefore, teacher's creativity in fulfilling the activity can help the students understand the words. However, for group A, there were less question and answer sessions during the lesson. This was probably because of the students' lack of confidence in using the target language and they were seem to be afraid to ask questions; thus, the students were not actively participating.

On the other hand, group B responded well during the lesson, since learning L2 vocabulary was much easier comparing to the group A. This is due to the interference of L1 throughout the lesson. However, the interference of L1 only took place when there was a need raised by the subjects. For instance, when a subject had misinterpreted the short story, the teacher took longer time to explain the story and at that time, the interference took place. Here, L1 has been useful to ensure that the subjects did not mis-interpret the story. By allowing the interference of L1, it helped the subjects to understand and comprehend the story better.

During the lesson, group B subjects tended to expect more L1 words from the teacher, as they knew they were allowed to use L1 while the teacher explanation of the words. Group B did learn in L2, but they were less motivated to learn since, they knew that at the end of the lesson, L1 would be used as one of the teaching aids. Now, it can be seen that by showing and pampering the subjects with L1 opportunities, they tend to take learning L2 for granted. Group B students were seen as passive in learning more about L2, as they had already set in their mind that the interference of L1 was allowed.

From the observation done throughout the study, group B subjects understood L2 instructions since they responded well to the instructions given and they were also able to

complete the task given in L2. But as mentioned above, they were de-motivated to learn L2 words in target language, since they knew that the teacher would use L1 to explain the words in details.

5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The interference of L1 does affect the process of learning and acquiring L2. However, the teacher should be creative enough in order not to let the students being too dependent on L1 in the classroom. Respecting to the group A's performance; even though, they came from the rural background, they were able to learn the words without the interference of L1. It shows that the students are able to learn the vocabularies if they are guided and assisted well. Besides, the performance of the students is based upon the teacher's creativity and the pedagogical skills in teaching vocabularies. It is found out that the teachers' proficiency will seriously affect students' performance.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in ESL classroom, learning vocabularies should be in L2 as to ensure that the students receive authentic material and will be able to apply and use the vocabularies correctly. Students will be able to learn vocabulary if they are guided and assisted well. Teachers should not take advantage on L1 in the classroom as it might reduce the students' motivation in learning L2. From this study, we realize that the students should be given a lot of chances and opportunities in learning L2 without the interference of L1. The interference is allowed at certain occasions and should not be applied regularly during teaching and learning. The teachers should only use L1 as the last alternative. Teaching aids, real objects, body language, facial expression as well as authentic sources can be used to support L2 learning.

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