The Interference of Mother Tongue in English Language Grammar Classes: A Case Study on Grade Six EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The major intent of this study was to explore the interference of mother tongue (Amharic) in EFL grammar classes. Felege Abiot Elementary School was chosen via random sampling method (lottery). In this school in particular grade six, there were three EFL teachers. Three of them were selected with comprehensive sampling technique as to be participants. The study was a case study research design in nature. Classroom observation and interview were used to gather data from participants; the data were then analyzed qualitatively. The result of the study revealed that Amharic (L1) could be sparingly utilized in EFL grammar classes. Additionally, it was found that Amharic was used in occasions when the teachers and their learners failed to apply L2 in explaining idea, comparing and contrasting rules of Amharic and English language, offering instructions and confirming students' comprehension. However, EFL teachers utilized the rules of Amharic to English language words. On the basis of these, it was possible to conclude that EFL teachers believed the use of L1 in L2 classes positively, but they directly employed the rule of L1 to L2 contexts unsystematically.

Keywords: Applications**,** Interference, Mother tongue and Occasions

Introduction

The history of English language teaching has been in never ending two polar opposite contentions regarding the use of L1. On one side, the use of L1 in L2 (English) contexts has got a positive belief. This orthodoxy had first been commenced with the classical teaching method, Grammar Translation Method, in which the major aim of the lesson was targeting at translating literatures into students' mother tongue (Howatt, 1984; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Harmer, 2001).

On the other side, the idea of L1 use was automatically viewed as a negative phenomenon. This philosophy is true in two prominent teaching methods such as: the Direct and the Audio-Lingual Methods. These teaching methods advocate English only classrooms as it is postulated that the use of L1 could result in interference and bad habit formation in L2 learning (Ellis, 1997; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Cortes, 2005). Advocating this assumption, (Phillipson, 1992, p.185) stated that English-Only-Principle has tenets like "English is best taught monolingual, and the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker."

In support of this, Krashen's theories (the Input Hypothesis and the Monitor Model Theories) completely rejected the use of mother tongue in target language classrooms. Krashen brought an argument that students could learn L2 if and only if they are merely given maximum exposures and great comprehensible inputs; he believed that the input is the only causative factor in L2 acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

In a nutshell, according to advocators of English-only-Approach, L1 has been regarded as a sign in L2 occasions from various reasons. For example, it is a waste of time (Krashen, 1982), a cause for boredom (Heltai, 1989), a hint of teachers' limitation to teach properly (Buckmaster, 2002), a taboo subject (Deller, 2003), a source for fallacy translation and negative transfer (Cortes, 2005). Therefore, the English-Only-Approach has long been a 'respected orthodoxy' in English language teaching classes.

Later on, disproving the perspective of the Direct and the Audio-lingual methods, several teaching methods have emerged with the idea that L1 has a supporting role for teaching as well as learning L2. For example, L1 is utilized in the Silent Way to instruct pupils, in the Community Language Learning to inspire students, in the Total Physical Response to introduce lessons and in the Suggestopedic Method to offer meaning of dialogues. Besides, the Communicative Approach, as far as its primary focus is on communication, seems to encourage the judicious use of L1 (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Following these teaching methods and approaches, advocators of first language have argued against the idea of the English-only-policy saying that L1 in L2 classes is a time-saving instrument rather than a waste of time (Weschler, 1997; Cummins, 2007; Timor, 2012) and a reference rather than an interference (Makulloluwa, 2013; Pakera, 2015; Rommel, 2017).

As far as researchers' work experience was concerned, even though the idea of the use or not use of L1 in the field remains debatable, most teachers and students in elementary school were utilizing it in EFL contexts. Yet, the application of them regarding it seemed still questionable. They did not tend to employ it properly. They looked using it randomly without having logical reasons. If so, the development of English language could be ineffective as far as it loses its exposures. In this regard, Jingxia (2008) stated that it is the mandate of EFL teachers to frame the use of L1 by making a judicious decision to avoid the underuse or overuse of L1 in L2 classrooms. Thus, the researchers were inspired to look what teachers believed, how and when they applied Amharic language in EFL grammar classes.

When local works are considered, there are some related studies conducted in Ethiopian context. For instance, (Kenenisa, 2003) assessed the use of students' first language in English language classrooms at Adama Teachers' College. His research specifically focused on frequency of Oromiffa use in English language classes, and assured that it was 'occasionally' used. Furthermore, (Abiy ,2012) looked into the impact of the use of Amharic language in L2 writing lesson at preparatory school. He, then, reported that L1 brought a positive impact in prewriting stage for eliciting ideas in L2 writing skills. Likewise, (Jemal, 2015) assessed the learners' first language (Oromiffa) in EFL class. He particularly focused on whether Oromiffa was applied in L2 class or not, and he compared the difference in using L1 in different years of college students (in first, second and third years). Finally, he reported that Oromiffa was used in English classes, and first year college students used longer time relatively as compared to second and third year students.

This study differed from the preceding local works in that this one was to examine on teachers' beliefs, applications and occasions of using Amharic in English language especially in grammar lessons, while Kenenisa's research was interesting in the frequency of Oromomiffa language use in English classes in general. This study also targeted at teachers' beliefs, applications and occasions of using L1 in EFL in grammar lessons, but Abiy's study was interested in assessing the effect of the use of L1 (Amharic) in EFL writing lesson (brainstorming) stage. As indicated before, the present work emphasized on teachers' beliefs, applications and occasions of L1 in EFL grammar lessons at elementary level (at grade six); however, Jemal's work stressed on investigating whether or not L1 was used, and if used, how long learners used it in different levels (1st, 2nd and 3rd year college stu-

dents at tertiary level). For this reason, the current study was different from the aforementioned ones. To fill this research gap, the present study focused on the following research questions:

1. What beliefs do EFL teachers have about L1 (Amharic) use in EFL grammar classes?
2. How do EFL teachers apply Amharic language in EFL grammar lessons?
3. When do EFL teachers use Amharic language in EFL grammar classes?

Significance of the Study

The result of the present study might be useful for the following bodies. It will probably make EFL teachers become well-aware of the use of L1 in teaching English language. It could direct English language teachers and students to apply the proper use of L1 in EFL classes. It might also aid syllabus designers and material developers to consider learners' L1 use to conduct teaching English language materials. The study could also help other researchers to conduct further researches in English language teaching discipline.

Literature Review

The Brief History of ELT Methods via L1 Use

Over long years, the history of English language teaching has come up with several methods and approaches. This section discusses only some of ELT teaching methods and theories which have theoretical foundations regarding the use of L1 in L2 classes.

The Grammar Translation Method targeted at literature translation from L2 into L1 and vice versa. In the Silent Way, L1 has benefits such as: maintaining instructions, nurturing students' pronunciation and providing comments. In the Community Language Learning, L1 is used to give directions that serve as a bridge. Additionally, in the Total Physical Response, the introduction of lessons is primarily made with native language. In the Suggestopedia, L1 helps to clarify the meaning of dialogues. In the Communicative Approach, the judicious use of L1 is also appreciated if necessary (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Harmer, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

On the other hand, after II World War, the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method came up with objections on the use of L1. The one was from the idea of language interference; all errors in L2 were caused by the interference of L1 (Ellis, 1997; Mitchell & Myles, 1998; Harmer, 2001). The second was from the idea of habit formation. According to behaviorists like Bloomfield (1933) and Skinner (1957) cited in Mitchell & Myles (1998), language learning is the result of habit formation; if L1 is used, it would become a habit for learners.

Argument against L1 use

The complete banishment of L1 from L2 classrooms was attributed to the early years of ELT when English was taught by native teachers with little or no knowledge of students' L1. The advocators of English-only-approach claim that classroom is the only place that L2 learners receive L2 input (Krashen, 1982). Krashen in his Input Hypothesis and Monitor Model Theories postulates that students learn another language best when merely surrounded by comprehensible input and ample of exposure beyond the current competence. As a result, the major argument for not using L1 in L2 classrooms is to maximize input of L2 as students have no other source to get the input. Emphasizing the issue, (Phillipson, 1992) states that L2 is best taught monolingually. The idea is to promote the supremacy, prevalence and dominance of English language implicitly and explicitly. It is assumed that L2 is best learnt through full immersion in L2.

Argument for L1 use

In line with the argument of the proponents of L1, when, where and how to use L1 is the basic question rather than the use and not use of it. Therefore, the issue cannot adequately be addressed without referencing to the pedagogic, sociological and psychological roles (Makulloluwa, 2013).

Pedagogical Role

Re-examining the potential pedagogical roles of L1 in L2 classroom, (Auerbach, 1993, p. 20) argues that L1 is used as "a meaning-making tool and a means of communicating ideas". Adding the idea, (Schweers, 1999) claimed that L1 is a pedagogical resource to have authentic and relevant learning circumstances in L2 when communication fails. Similarly, (Tang, 2002, p. 39) claims that L1 serves a "supportive and facilitating role in the classroom" especially for lower proficiency students. (Kayaoglu ,2012, p. 34) stresses the idea saying "Teachers with their own pedagogic values should make realistic decisions about the use of L1 instead of half-heartedly or blindly adhering to an assumption".

Psychological Role

The use of L1 has a positive role on learners' psychology. (Harbord, 1992) states the fact that strictly eliminating the students' L1 in L2 context does not cultivate a humanistic approach that is vital for their self-confidence. (Auerbach, 1993) also puts that the use of L1 tackles the psychological obstacle of students to English learning and that it can alleviate the cultural shocks of learners. To put it differently, allowing L1 in the L2 classroom positively causes students' motivation and increases their participation as it reduces learners' anxiety and lowers their affective filter (Timor, 2012).

The Socio-cultural Role

According to (Auerbach, 1993), the use of translation can enhance the skills of cultural transfer and bring their cultural values into the L2 contexts; the role of L1 in L2 context helps to accept the cultural diversity. That is why (Kayaoglu, 2012) says that it sounds illogical to teach a foreign language without referring to students' culture.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed case study research design as the situation demanded much narration and exploration in-depth on limited number of participants (Yin, 2003).

Sources of Data

The research was done in Gondar town. In Gondar town, there were forty four elementary schools. From these, Felege Abiot Elementary School was selected in the study. The school was selected using simple random sampling technique (lottery) because random sampling technique offers equal opportunities to all schools without bias as the problem was common in all schools.

Participants and Sampling Techniques

In Felege Abiot General Elementary School, there were three English language teachers teaching English as a foreign language. Three of them were included as to be participants of the study using comprehensive sampling technique because they were limited in number.

Data Gathering Instruments

Two instruments such as semi-structured observation and interview were used in the process of collecting necessary data for the study.

1. Observation

The researchers used classroom observation method to observe to how and when EFL teachers practiced Amharic in English language classes. The observation checklist containing seven semi-structured questions were employed. The observation was mainly concerned with distinguishing the occasions in which L1 was practiced in EFL classroom. This was done because observational data afforded the researchers the opportunity to gather real data from the real occasions. It was believed that this enabled the researchers to understand the context of the study in a real way and endowed

the opportunity to see things that might be unconsciously revealed in EFL grammar classrooms. This observation was conducted in three sections three times in each teacher for forty minutes.

2. Interview

Interview is a useful tool to raise ongoing questions for better clarifications on the topic (Koul, 1996). For this reason, semi-structured interview was used by the researchers to gather data from participant teachers about their belief on the use of L1 in L2 classes. There were, first, five interview questions. Next, the researchers added one probing question which raised while the interview was held on. Finally, the interview was taken place for fifteen minutes, about 14 minutes for each teacher.

Techniques of Data Analysis

The data from both observation and the interview were analyzed qualitatively. Finally, the data obtained from all tools were crosschecked to arrive at sound conclusions.

Ethical Considerations of the Study

According to (Creswell, 2009), qualitative studies should consider the rights and values of the participants. Thus, a great care was taken in the study to keep the privacy, dignity and anonymity of participants while deep interaction on personal practices and attributes of the participants were maintained. Accordingly, grade six EFL teachers were informed the purpose of the study in order that they would not be exposed to any physically and psychologically risks because of providing the intended information.

Results

Classroom Observation Data

Observation 1

As far as the first day of classroom observation was concerned, Teacher 1 employed Amharic language in the following situations. Teacher 1 first asked students to recall the previous lesson using learners' native language (Amharic) by saying "በባለፈው የተማርነው ስለምን ነበር?" The English version is what did we learn about in the previous lesson? As long as the teacher enquired the question with Amharic, students also replied with in L1 (Amharic language) saying የተማርነው ስለ coffee process ነበር። The English version is it was about coffee process. After reminding students to recall the issue of last day, the teacher introduced the daily lesson with Amharic saying "የእለቱ ትምህርታችን present tense ነው።" This is to mean the lesson of today is present tense. While students were confused with concepts, he/she also repeatedly utilized Amharic language. Besides, Teacher 1 employed Amharic language again and again in giving instructions as the teacher demanded students to engage in tasks.

Again, Teacher 1 used students' native language while comparing and contrasting L1 and L2 structures. He/she said, "እዩ፤Yordanos bakes bread. ዮርዳኖስ ዳቦ ትጋግራለች ማለት ነው። በእንግሊዝኛ መጀመሪያ subject ነው፤ ቀጥሎ verb መጨረሻ ደግሞ object ይመጣል። በአማርኛ ግን መጀመሪያ subject ቀጥሎ object መጨረሻ ቨርቡ ይመጣል። የአማርኛው እና የእንግሊዝኛው አ/ነገር ቅደም ተከተል ይለያያል።" The English version is "Look! Yordanos bakes bread. In the structure of English language sentence, the first one is the subject; the next is verb and the last is the object. However, in Amharic sentence, the first is subject; the next is the object and the last, verb." Although it happened intermittently, Teacher 1 also employed Amharic language in situations that students were incapable of eliciting ideas and keeping discipline.

When the first observation of Teacher 2 was also considered, learners' first language was utilized for the following circumstances. Amharic was utilized to recall the previous lesson. Secondly, it was employed in order to maintain classroom disciplinary problems. Thirdly, Teacher 2 used stu-

dents' native language to introduce the daily lesson. What is more, L1 was utilized to check learners' comprehension. When students were not producing ideas in English language, Teacher 2 also used Amharic.

L1 was also noted that it was used so as to compare and contrast linguistic structures of Amharic and English languages. To give a typical instance, Teacher 2 said, " makes, coffee, Aster' እነዚህን ቃላት በቅደም ተከተል arrange ስናደርጋቸዉ Aster makes coffee ይሆናል፤ subject -verb- object ነዉ ሚሆነዉ። በአማርኛዉ ደግሞ subject- object- verb ነዉ። ስለዚህ በሁለቱም subject ይቀድማል።"

The English version is to say:

When you arrange these words: makes, coffee, Aster, the order is Aster makes coffee. The sequence in English language is subject-verb-object. But, the structure sentence in Amharic is subject-object-verb. Both languages are similar only with the placement of the subject in that it is preceding.

As the classroom observation was also evident, Teacher 3 used pupils' native language for reminding students to recall the lesson they treated before. The teacher said, "በባለፈዉ ክፍለጊዜ ምን እንደተማራችሁ ታስታዉሳላችሁ?" This is to mean that " Do you remember what you learnt previously?" as the teacher asked students with in first language, students were also replying the question using their first language. Besides, Teacher 3 utilized Amharic in English language classes to ease issues and illustrate concepts; L1 was also employed to offer comparison between Amharic and English language structures. Most dominantly, L1 was applied to manage students' discipline: to solve disciplinary problems like keeping them silent and mediating students' conflict. Concerning the intent of classroom instruction, L1 was most often employed to make students engage in activities. In other words, Amharic was used for providing commands or instructions. Furthermore, Amharic was utilized to motivate students while students seemed losing interest in English language lessons.

In a nutshell, Teacher 1 employed Amharic language in recalling the previous lesson, introducing the daily lesson, explaining sophisticated concepts, giving instructions, comparing and contrasting L1 and L2 structures, eliciting ideas and keeping discipline. In the same token, in observation of Teacher 2, first language (Amharic) serves in recalling the previous lesson, maintaining classroom disciplinary problems, introducing the daily lesson, checking learners' comprehension, producing ideas in English language, comparing and contrasting linguistic structures of Amharic and English languages. It was also seen that Amharic functions in reminding students to recall the lesson, illustrating concepts, offering comparison between Amharic and English language structures, solving disciplinary, providing commands or instructions and arousing students' interest in Teacher 3 classrooms.

Thus, from the first classroom observation data, one may infer that recalling the previous lesson, introducing the daily lesson, explaining concepts, comparing and contrasting L1 and L2 structures, giving instructions and keeping students' disciplinary problems were commonly utilized occasions of Amharic language use in EFL grammar classes.

Observation 2

As the second observation was evident, Teacher 1 used Amharic language to greet students. It was also noted that the teacher employed Amharic language for offering permission when learners were came late and asked permissions to get into class. Immediately after allowing students to get into the class, the teacher dealt with their personal problems via Amharic why they were tardy. Then, the teacher introduced the daily lesson utilizing students' L1. Moreover, he/she clarified more of concepts using Amharic. The teacher employed students' first language while comparing the patterns of Amharic and English languages. "I am dancing ሚለዉ እኔ አየዳነስኩ ነዉ ማለት ነዉ፤ የእንግሊዝኛዉ am + verb +ing በአማርኛዉ 'እየ -ነዉ' የሚል ሲሆን አገልግሎቱ የአሁን ጊዜ ቀጣይነት ያሳያል።" The English version: the Amharic 'እየ -ነዉ' is the English language structure of 'am –ing' to indicate the present con-

tinuity. While praising and motivating students in asking and answering students' questions, the teacher frequently used Amharic language. And, the teacher also applied learners' native language in giving meaning of vocabularies in EFL grammar lessons.

During the classroom observation of Teacher 2, the following utilities of Amharic language were noticed. Teacher 2 was seen using Amharic to let students remember the lesson they had learned. Teacher 2 also employed L1 in acquainting the daily topic. When students were confused to understand concepts, the teacher also implemented L1. What is more, Amharic was used while comparing as well as contrasting the structures of both languages (Amharic and English) was maintained. As asking and answering, the teacher was also frequently observed using learners' first language. Regarding the disciplinary of pupils, Teacher 2 was mostly seen employing L1 in establishing classroom security.

Teacher 3 used L1 while exemplifying concepts and providing commands to engage students in activities. Moreover, Teacher 3 was observed that he/she encouraged his learners to feel confident and get rid of anxiety using Amharic language; that is to encourage students to participate in the lesson. Moreover, Amharic language was used to managing distracting students and checking learners' understanding.

In summary, Teacher 1 used Amharic language to greet students, offer permission, dealt with their personal problems, introduce the daily lesson, clarify concepts, compare the patterns of Amharic and English languages, praise students and give meaning of vocabularies in EFL grammar lessons. Teacher 2 also utilized L1 to remember the lesson, acquaint the daily topic, clarify confusing issues, compare as well as contrast structures of both languages (Amharic and English), ask and answer questions and settle down learners' discipline. Moreover, Teacher 3 used Amharic to exemplify concepts, engage students in activities, encourage his/her learners to feel confident in Amharic language, manage misbehaving students and check students' comprehension.

According to the above data analysis, one may infer teachers used Amharic for acquainting the daily topic, clarifying concepts, comparing the patterns of Amharic and English languages, praising students, asking and answering questions, providing instructions and settling down learners' disciplinary problems were frequented situations in English language grammar lessons.

Observation 3

The third observation data in Teacher 1 disclosed that Teacher 1 used Amharic in situations stated below. From the beginning, the teacher greeted students using Amharic language. Then, acquainting the daily issue, the teacher used L1. Teacher 1 also made use of L1 for clarifying points which were confusing learners. In addition to this, the teacher served Amharic while giving instruction and teaching the patterns and arrangements of words in English language; that is L1 functioned as comparing and contrasting the structures of Amharic and English languages. Students' first language was applied not only for comparison but also for idea generation. The teacher helped students to produce new ideas using Amharic language. L1 was also used for encouraging students when they were involving in asking and answering questions.

As the observation in Teacher 2 divulged, learners' first language was used for the following contexts. The teacher reminded students about the previous lesson and introduce the daily one. He/she was also observed that he/she employed Amharic to calm down learners' disciplinary issues and assure learners' understanding. What is more, Teacher 2 used Amharic while comparing and contrasting linguistic structures of Amharic and English languages in EFL grammar classes.

According to the observation data in Teacher 3 grammar class, Amharic was used for remembering the past issues, asking and answering questions of students in English language classes. Again, the teacher used L1 for exemplifying discussions held in the class. This depicts that L1 func-

tioned for explaining concepts. Regarding classroom instructions, Teacher 3 commanded students to do activities using first language. Then, he/she made tasks clear employing L1. This also claims that L1 served for providing commands and instructions. Moreover, Teacher 3 was observed that he/she encouraged his learners to avoid fear of making errors and get rid of anxiety using Amharic language. With regard to students' discipline, Teacher 3 usually made use of Amharic language to control misbehaving students and confirm learners' comprehension.

To summarize the foregoing analysis, Teacher 1 utilized Amharic to greet students, acquaint the daily topic, clarify confusing issues learners, give instruction, compare and contrast the structures of both languages, generate idea and motivate students. The data in Teacher 2 also divulged that L1 was utilized to recall the last title, introduce the daily lesson, compare and contrast linguistic structures of Amharic and English languages, solve learners' disciplinary issues and check learners' understanding in EFL grammar classes. Teacher 3 used Amharic language to remember the previous lesson, ask and answer questions, exemplify discussions held in the class, provide commands and instructions, encourage learners to get rid of anxiety using Amharic language, control misbehaving students and check students' comprehension.

Based on the analysis above, it is possible to claim that Amharic was used while miscommunication occurs and teachers and students faced dearth of expressing ideas in English language, recalling the past lesson, acquainting the daily topic, clarifying confusing issues, giving instruction, motivating students, comparing and contrasting linguistic patterns of Amharic and English languages, managing learners' disciplinary cases and checking learners' understanding in EFL grammar classes.

Structure Related L1 Application

With respect to the data in classroom observations, an Amharic plural morpheme '-ኦች' pronounced as /-otʃ/ was inflected on English language words to make them plural. Elaborating this, 'sentenceኦች' pronounced as /sentənsotʃ/ (to mean 'sentences') was frequently used by Teacher 1 in lesson 1. In fact, the word 'sentenceኦች' /sentənsotʃ/ is the result of an English word 'sentence' and an Amharic inflectional morpheme '-ኦች' /-otʃ/. The same thing happened on words like 'verbኦች' pronounced as /vɜːbotʃ/ (to say verbs) in Teacher 1 lesson 2, 'ruleኦች' (to say rules), 'lawኦች' (to say laws) in Teacher 2 lesson 1 and 'wordኦች' (to say words) in Teacher 2 lesson 2. Thus, the data suggest that EFL teachers arbitrarily implemented the rule of L1 (Amharic) to L2 (English), and this imprudent implementation of L1 deviates the linguistic rules of L2 (English) though the sparing use of L1 in TL class can be used for comparison sake and help learners to detect the similarities and differences between L1 and L2.

Moreover, the Amharic definite article '-ኡ' pronounced as /ʊ/was added on English language words. An instance for this was 'statementኡ' pronounced as /steɪtməntʊ/(to say 'the statement'), which is the combination of English language word 'statement' and Amharic definite article '-ኡ' in Teacher 1 lesson 1. The same was true on words such as'bracketኡ' /brakɪtʊ/ (to say 'the bracket') and 'procedureኡ' (to mean 'the procedure') in Teacher 1 lesson 1, ruleኡ (to mean 'the rule'), useኡ (to say 'the use') and weatherኡ (to say the weather) in Teacher 2 lesson 1, 'wordኡ' in Teacher 2 and 'blackboardኡ' in Teacher 3 lesson 2. From this evidence, one can claim that unsystematic rule of L1 that can create disastrous interference to learners' L2 development was employed to L2.

Furthermore, Amharic prepositions such as በ pronounced as /bʌ/, ለ /lʌ/, ከ /kʌ/ and ስለ/slʌ/ were directly attached to English words. To exemplify this, 'በsimple present' to say 'by or with simple present' and 'ከmain verb' to say 'on main verb' were employed in Teacher 1 lesson 1. The case was also true in some exemplary words like 'በhabitual' to say 'with habitual' in Teacher 1 les-

son 2, 'ስለroad' to mean 'about road' and 'ስለdriving' to mean 'about driving' in Teacher 2 lesson 1 and 'በsugar'(with sugar) in Teacher 3 lesson 2.

What is more, as the data witnessed in the observations, Amharic objective case (direct object) marker 'ን' pronounced as /n/ was added on English language words. The common instance was 'coffeeን'' pronounced as /kɒfin/ in Teacher 3 lesson 2. Illustrating this more, 'procedureኡን', 'verbኦችን', 'sentenceኦችን' in Teacher 1 lesson 2, 'ruleኡን', 'statementኡን', 'coffeeን, 'neverን' in Teacher 2 lesson 1, 'wordኡን' and 'wordኦችን' in Teacher 2 lesson 2 and 'spellingኡን' in Teacher 3 lesson 2 were common practices. Thus, from linguistic structural perspective, the data imply that EFL teachers and students implemented the rule of Amharic (objective case marker 'ን') to English language. If first language is applied in situations like this, learners might postulate and use this trend for the target language rather than applying the rule of target language in TL itself. The practice in turn leads to nurture negative structural linguistic habit on the production of the target language.

Translation Related L1 Application

As also be evident from the classroom observations, Teacher 1 implemented word for word translation saying, "Habitual action 'habit' ከሚለዉ ቃል የመጣ ነዉ። Habitual የተለመደ፣ action ድርጊት ማለት ነዉ።" The English language version is: "Habitual action is derived from the word 'habit'. 'Habitual' means 'usual' and 'action' means 'event'. And, Teacher 2 said, "Rule means ህግ; "Never means ማድረግ የሌለብን ነገር ነዉ." The English version is: rule mean law; never means it is something we should not do." Teacher 3 also said, "Stir means 'ማማሰል' and invite 'መጋበዝ' The English language version is: 'stir' means 'mix' and 'invite' means 'call for party'. These two were instances for word-for-word translation.

Besides, teachers implemented sentence-for-sentence translation in EFL grammar classes. To illustrate this, Teacher 1 said, "The earth rotates around the sun. መሬት በፀሐይ ዙሪያ ትዞከርከራለች።" Teacher 2 also said, "Why should people clear the bushes around their home? ለምንድን ነዉ በቤታችን ዉስጥ ያሉ ቁሻሻዎችን ምናፀዳዉ?" and Teacher 3 also said, "ቡና ሲፈላ ምን ቅደም ተከተሎች መከተል አለብን? What are the steps of making coffee? were some of evidential utterances of Amharic language together with their English versions side by side. On the basis of this, one may say that EFL teachers employed both word-for-word and sentence-for-sentence translation implementations. However, when such like translations are utilized frequently, first language may not be used in a pre-planned way; it might hinder the practice of L2.

Inter vs. intra L1 use related application

As the observation data depicted, intra-sentential Amharic was implemented in English language grammar classes. For instance, "አሁን never በሚለዉ change አድርጉ ነዉ ያላችሁ" (the English version: what it says is that change with never) in Teacher 2, and "Discuss እያደረጋችሁ Wrong ይሆናል ብለህ አትጨነቅ፤እንግሊዝኛ wrong ነዉ ራሱ።።" (the English version: discuss; do not worry whether it is wrong or not; English itself is wrong.) in Teacher 3 were worth mentioning evidences.

From the inter-sentential L1 use point of view, utterances such as "What comes second? እያላችሁ እስኪ ሞከሩት።። We see it together" in Teacher 1 and "There is tomorrow morning. ይሄ ባለፈዉ ያያችሁት ነዉ።። Make sentence by the following verbs." were some of exemplary utterances. Thus, it would likely claim that EFL teachers were seen employing both intra and inter-sentential Amharic use in English language classes, and such trend might bring the habit of L1 use in L2 class.

Placement Related L1 Application

The issue of L1 placement has to do with the position of L1 use; it is whether before or after the utterance of the target language. As witnessed in the classroom sessiones, the Amharic utter-

ances followed the target language versions as in Teacher 1 lesson 1 "If no clear, I can help you. ግልጽ ካልሆነ አግዛችሃለሁ". Likewise, in Teacher 2 lesson 1, "You must buy important things. ምንፈልገዉን ብቻ ነዉ መግዛት፡፡" and in Teacher 3 lesson 2, "Don't worry about mistakes. የፈለገ ስህተት ቢፈጠር የመሰለህን በለዉ፡፡" were some of Amharic utterances correspondingly with their English versions.

By contrast, many of utterances to mention just a few: "በቃ enough, "አወዳድሩት፡፡ Compare." in Teacher 1; "መቶ አርባ ዘጠኝ ነዉ፤ one hundred forty nine" and "በለዋ ታዲያ በእንግሊዝኛ፡፡ say it in English." in Teacher 3 were employed the Amharic version at initial positions before target language utterances. Accordingly, it is possible to infer that Amharic utterances were utilized before attempts were done in English language, and the interaction between teachers and students were taken place in L1 even if they could say what they wished to convey in L2.

Analysis of Interview Data

Three grade six English language teachers were asked six questions. Regarding question number 1, *have you ever used Amharic language in English grammar classes? If you use it, for what purpose do you use it? and how often?*, all teachers said that they employed L1 in L2 classes. The purposes they used it was to give meanings of sentences and words. They also reported that they used Amharic language 'sometimes' when only necessary. In particular, Teacher 1 said, "Sometimes, I use. If it is necessary, I use Amharic language." Teacher 2 also reported that Amharic language is used to know the meaning of words. Similarly, Teacher 3 said that he or she used it 'sometimes' to make meanings of words and sentences clear.

Concerning question number 2, do you think Amharic language is important to use in English grammar classes? If yes, why?, Teacher 1 said, 'Of course, sometimes, it is important to teach English language and some difficult words by translation." Teacher 2 and 3 also reported that Amharic should be used in English language contexts. On the basis of this, one can infer that grade six EFL teachers believed Amharic should be used in English language classes.

With regard to question number 3, *what do you do when your students do not understand what you say in English grammar classes?,* Teacher 1 and 3 explained that they first used different methods like utilizing media, real objects and gesture; if students still failed to understand, they would employ Amharic language. This suggests that teachers believed that Amharic language should be used as a last option if learners do not comprehend the lesson as desired.

Concerning question number 4, what problems do you think you face while using only English in the English classes?, Teacher 1 and 3 said that the objective of the lesson would fail because learners could not understand it. Teacher 2 also said, "They (student) do not understand what the teacher said; only the teacher talks in the class." The speech of all teachers can indicate that using only English language could create confusion and failure of the objectives since students in this grade level are not matured enough with the target language.

According to question number 5, *some scholars say that the use of L1 reduces students' exposure to the target language; what's your opinion about this issue?,* Teacher 1 and 2 said that using other languages with much amount in English classroom might affect the exposure of English and have limitations. Teacher 3 also said, "I accept the idea, but the exposure of English language diminishes if we use excessively. As I said previously, if I explain everything within English language, students cannot understand the idea since they are not mature with the language." From the above data of the three interviewed teachers, one may claim that the use of Amharic may lose the exposure of English language if and only if Amharic is excessively employed in English language.

In relation to the probing question, *in your belief, what are limitations of using L1 in the English classroom?*, Teacher 1 and 3 reported that students inclined to use Amharic rather than English language and the exposure of English might diminish. Teacher 2 said, "It may have limitations; it may let students use excessive Amharic, forget and hate English language." Therefore, the above

presentation entails the researchers that three of the interviewed teachers felt that much amount of Amharic may have limitations to devastate the exposure of English language.

In summary, the data showed that Amharic should be used in English language grammar classes. This implies that all teachers held positive belief towards the use of L1 in English language grammar classes.

Discussion

As the findings of this study were seen against the findings of other researches, the following similarities and differences were discussed. The data revealed that all EFL teachers believed L1 could be used in English language classes. They assured that the total ban of L1 might make the English language instructional process ineffective. In this regard, scholars such as Turnbull (2001); Pan & Pan (2009) also clearly confirmed that mother tongue plays a facilitating role in the target language classroom if used properly.

Moreover, as the finding divulged in the interview and observation, the use of English-only-Policy in English classrooms would cause communication barriers and failure of the lesson. It was found that teachers and their students used L1 while they faced dearth of expressing ideas and mis-communication in L2. In other words, L1 was used when students were unable to comprehend the idea and both teachers and students failed to communicate in English language. It was also found that EFL teachers employed L1 when students were confused in L2 for clarifying abstract concepts, comparing and contrasting the rules of L1 and L2, defining words/phrases, giving instructions, con-firming comprehension and maintaining disciplines of students. This result has also been supported by (Pan, & Pan, 2009; Timor, 2012; Makulloluwa, 2013; Pakera, 2015; Rommel, 2017) who found the use of mother tongue is the way of compensating interlocutors' poor competence in L2, develop-ing lesson clarity and promoting harmonious relation between learners and teachers and/or learners themselves.

According to the classroom observation data, it was found that EFL teachers arbitrarily im-plemented inflectional morpheme, objective case and definite article markers of L1 (Amharic), for instance, '-ኦች', '-ኡ' and 'ን' consecutively to English language words. In contrast to this finding, linguists like Cortes (2005); Lipski (2014) and Kadhim (2016) stated that haphazard use of L1 would aggravate disastrous interference and possible occurrence of L1 errors in L2. All errors in L2 are due to the inappropriate interference of first language; the structure of L1 acts as an inhibitor in TL and becomes the source of difficulty. Lipski, (2014) says this mismatch application of L1 rule to L2 is infelicitous that causes to guarantee such structures to L2 and hinder the development of L2 later. Concentrating the negative effect of L1 when it is imprudently implemented in L2 context, Prodromou (2001) also said, L1 is "a drug though with therapeutic potential, it can damage your health and may become additive" as cited in (Kenenisa, 2003, p.29). Emphasizing the idea, re-searchers like Turnbull (2001) and Timor (2012) also explained that the complete freedom and the laissez-faire use of L1 may bring a series of problems in L2 betterment.

Conclusions

From the findings in the discussion section, one can conclude that teachers positively be-lieved the use of L1 in English language classes. EFL teachers used it while teachers and students were confused of understanding issues, acquainting the daily lessons, comparing and contrasting structures of L1 and L2, giving instructions, confirming comprehension and maintaining discipline. However, EFL teachers seemed to arbitrarily implement the rules of L1 (Amharic) to L2 (English language) words directly in a way that would create disastrous interference and possible occurrence

of errors within English language. Therefore, EFL teachers were recommended that they should have a proper training on when and how to apply L1 in L2 contexts.

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