

BENEFITS OF L1 USE IN ADULTS' EFL CLASSROOM IN ALGERIA

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ABSTRACT

For decades, using the mother tongue (L1) has been a controversial issue in EFL teaching/learning process. Whilst traditional views on FL teaching prescribe the exclusive use of target language (TL) in language classrooms, recent studies recommend that learners' L1 should be treated as a resource rather than a hindrance. Those advocating this idea argue that learners are equipped with a language system already in place from which they draw when learning a new language. Hence, denying such prior knowledge can have detrimental effects on EFL learning success. Learners should be allowed to use their L1 when necessary during classes. A questionnaire was distributed to 20 EFL learners to elicit the reasons for code-switching during English classes. The results showed that using L1 judiciously was beneficial for linguistic functions (explaining grammar rules and new vocabulary) as well as social ones (time-saving, reducing anxiety, developing fluency).

Keywords: L1 use, code-switching, EFL, Adults' learning, Target Language.