



**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NECESSITIES OF L1 USE IN THE  
EFL CLASSROOM**



**BY  
TARIKU ANEGA**

**MAY, 2011  
ADDIS ABABA**

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## **Abstract**

*The primary intent of this descriptive study was to assess the necessities of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom based on which English teachers would make use of L<sub>1</sub> in teaching English. To this end, 100 randomly selected grade 9 students and their English teachers available in two schools, Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools, were used as the subjects of the study. Two instruments, questionnaire and interview, were used to gather pertinent data from the participants.*

*The quantitative data obtained through the close-ended items of both teachers' and students' questionnaires were tallied and the frequencies were changed into percentage in order to make the results suitable for discussions, interpretations, and conclusions or generalizations. On the other hand, the qualitative data gathered through the interview and few open-ended questions of the questionnaires were summarized and presented in the form of reports. The analyses of both the quantitative and the qualitative data were immediately followed by discussions and interpretations which were also attempted to be linked with some of the reviewed literatures.*

*The findings of the study indicated that both the student and the teacher participants found the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom useful. It was also found out that there are instances when they find L<sub>1</sub> use the most useful. For example, 'to give the meanings of new words'; 'to explain difficult concepts'; 'to check for comprehension'; 'to give instructions' and 'to explain difficult grammar points' are the ones to be given the higher priority for the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. Moreover, the fundamental reasons of the students' and teachers' preferences for the use of L<sub>1</sub> were found to be 'its great aid for comprehension, its effectiveness as a way of learning and for that it saves time. Evidences also appeared which indicated that about 1-30% of English class time or 'sometimes' use is suggested to be appropriate for the use of L<sub>1</sub>.*

*Finally, based on the findings, sound conclusions were drawn, and some useful recommendations were forwarded to some concerned bodies expected to use the results of the study.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In a world where probably more people speak two languages than one, the acquisition or use of second/foreign languages is vital to the everyday lives of millions. Hence, helping people acquire second/foreign languages more effectively is an important task for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Cook 2001).

Therefore, there can be no doubt that all agree upon the importance of English language teaching. If that is so, the next most important step must be thinking about ways of teaching. These may include a number of methods among which translation/L<sub>1</sub> use/in the classroom is the one.

The use of L<sub>1</sub> or translation in the EFL classroom is not something that can be avoided on demand, but it is inseparable component of L<sub>2</sub> (foreign language) teaching and learning. About this issue, Stern (1992) in Kenenisa (2003:15) states, “The L<sub>1</sub> L<sub>2</sub> connection is an undisputable fact of life, whether we like it or not the new knowledge is learnt on the basis of the previously acquired knowledge”. In fact, L<sub>1</sub> use deserves due consideration not only because of its obvious effect on EFL classroom but also for its importance as a resource for the promotion of the target language learning. Duff (1989) substantiates this, and he writes:

*Translation, as the process of conveying messages across linguistic and cultural barriers, is an eminently communicative activity; one who uses it could well be considered in a wider range of teaching than may current be the case (p. 3)*

Similarly and even more persuasively Danchev (1982 in Harbord 1992) argues that translation (or transfer in general) is a natural phenomenon and an inevitable part of L<sub>2</sub> acquisition even where no formal classroom learning occurs. He adds therefore that methodology should attempt to work with this natural tendency rather than against it. Giving the use of L<sub>1</sub> the place it deserves as a

method of foreign language teaching has also something to do with maximizing the efficiency of students' learning of the target language as Ellis (1985) states, "The L<sub>1</sub> is a resource of knowledge which learners will use both consciously and sub-consciously to help them sift as best as they can in the L<sub>2</sub>" (p. 40).

Despite all the worthwhile aspects of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom, stated above by some scholars and many others (e.g. Atkinson 1987; Cook 2001; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002), the use of the students' mother tongue is currently either undervalued or avoided, or it is not being considered as a valid activity in the foreign language classroom (Duff 1989; Atkinson 1987).

However, though L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classes is thought to have certain limitations (Atkinson 1987: 247), avoiding it in all costs cannot be the solution, but exploring the proper ways of making use of it should be given due attention. This is because the great value it can have in teaching English as a foreign language is easily exploited when it is used systematically as Duff (1989) explains that its great originality lies in having totally changed the emphasis from learning translation as a separate element to using translation as a resource for the promotion of the target language learning (p. 3)

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In my personal experience, when I was a student at high school and other lower grades, I strongly used to demand translation into my mother tongue in the middle of learning English, for further elaborations of some language aspects. In fact, many of my English teachers had always been using it though it was not in the optimum amount to which I was seeking them to do so. However, the teachers didn't use my first language on the days when supervisors came to the classroom to observe and evaluate them, and I also didn't understand well the lessons of those

days. Besides, when I was teaching English for some two years in high school, I used to help my students by using their L<sub>1</sub> whenever their problem of understanding forced me to do so. This, to some extent, is indicative of the need for the exploration of the proper uses of L1 in the English classroom.

Regarding some local research works, there have been attempts to assess the status or practices of L<sub>1</sub> use and the beliefs of English teachers and students towards the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. For example, Kenenisa (2003) studied the extent to which teachers use L<sub>1</sub> and the attitudes of teachers and students towards using L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom at Adama Teachers college. He found out that small amount (less than expected) of Oromo language (L<sub>1</sub>) was used, but even that amount was found to play supportive and facilitative roles in the English classroom. His findings also indicated that teachers and students held positive attitude towards L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom.

In addition, Tafesse (1988) conducted a research on the use of vernacular in junior secondary schools of Addis Ababa Zone Four of the time. And, he found out that there was an overuse of L<sub>1</sub> by teachers of English in the classroom which, as he recommended, resulted into inefficiency of English teaching because the teachers often mistranslated and confused concepts while translation.

Similarly, Nuru (2008), assessed teachers' views about how they use English and the extent to which they see themselves using students' vernacular in the English classrooms in Addis Ababa High Schools. He found out that teachers did not uphold the view that suggests the exclusive use of the target language in performing all classroom activities.

From the three local research works presented above, three most important findings can be drawn: 1) Teachers and students do have positive attitude towards L<sub>1</sub> use in English classroom 2) Teachers tend to use L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom, and 3) The extent/amount of L<sub>1</sub> use inappropriately varies among different teachers i.e. some overuse while others under use.

The first two findings were said to be desirable as far as L<sub>1</sub> use is concerned while the third one was found to have adverse effect on the teaching-learning of English. It could also create inconsistent use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. Therefore, the fundamental aim of this study is to address this problematic area with the assumption that it could have been created because of the absence of prior assessment of the necessity of L<sub>1</sub> use in the given situations. In fact, the assumption is based on the following two recommendations: “Although needs are theoretically of primary importance..., needs analysis rarely carried out in the general English classroom.” (Seedhouse 1995:59). And, specifically coming to L<sub>1</sub> use, Nuru (2008:16) recommends that “... the use of L<sub>1</sub> must be treated with great care, and decisions to switch to the mother tongue should be based on prior assessment of its necessity in a given situation” (p. 16).

Concerning the research setting, Debre Birhan town-the researcher work place, where this study is conducted, is located in Amhara region North Shewa zone. There are two higher secondary schools in the town. Though it might be difficult to find linguistically homogeneous classes in Ethiopia, it is thought that the majority of the high school students of the area seem to have higher possibility to be able to speak Amharic as their first language. This is because Amharic is dominantly spoken in the area in particular and in the country in general. Therefore, it is probable that the other students who speak other languages as their first language may also be able to communicate in Amharic and; maybe all students could be the beneficiary of the proper use of Amharic in the English classroom. The area therefore is thought to have relative suitability for

the application of the results of this study, but there is nothing special to it with regard to the problem as the problem is common to all EFL students and teachers.

Hence, to avoid the unfairly varying use of L<sub>1</sub> among teachers, it is of great importance to explore the ideal uses of L<sub>1</sub> claimed by teachers and students on the basis of which all teachers decide to switch to the students mother tongue in the English classroom. Thus, this study is intended to answer the following basic questions: 1. When do teachers and students think it is appropriate to use L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom? 2. For what reasons do teachers and students prefer the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom? 3. What proportion (amount) of L<sub>1</sub> use do teachers and students believe to be appropriate in an English class time?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

*1.3.1. General Objective*-the study was generally intended to assess the ideal needs of students and teachers for the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom based on which English teachers would make use of L<sub>1</sub> in the classroom.

*1.3.2. Specific Objectives*- this study was particularly aimed:

- 1) identify students' and teachers' views on the importance of L<sub>1</sub> Use in the English Classroom.
- 2) identify the appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> suggested by students and teachers
- 3) distinguish the basic reasons/rationales for which students and teachers prefer the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom.
- 4) specify the proportion of L<sub>1</sub> use teachers and students think to be appropriate in an English class time.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The role of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom, in fact, is not something that can be avoided at any cost since our mother tongue controls our mentality and our use of the foreign language. Duff (1989:5) substantiates this and states, “Our mother tongue shapes our way of thinking and to some extent our use of the foreign language (Pronunciation, choice of words, tone, word order, etc)”.

The basic assumption underlying this study is that assessing the necessities of making use of students’ mother tongue (L<sub>1</sub>) is an essential component of English (L<sub>2</sub>) learning. In relation to this, for example, Stern (1983), when elaborating how to make use of L<sub>1</sub> in L<sub>2</sub> (foreign language) classroom, says that a more constructive role for the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom requires a principle of language use governing ‘why’ ‘when’ and ‘to what extent’ it can be used in the classroom.

Therefore, this study creates an opportunity of specifying the proper/ideal place of L<sub>1</sub> in facilitating and supporting English teaching and learning. Hence, it helps all concerned bodies to treat the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom based on verified set of principles so that the current inconsistency on the use of L<sub>1</sub> will be avoided or minimized.

Thus, curriculum designers, course book writers, English language teachers, teacher training institutions and interested researchers on/around the area could be the main bodies to use the results of this study.

#### **1.5. Scope of the Study**

As it has been presented in the ‘statement of the problem’, there have been a few research works conducted on the areas of L<sub>1</sub> use in English classroom. For example, Kenenisa (2003) has

addressed some areas namely, the attitudes of teachers and students towards L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom; the English teachers' actual practices of the L<sub>1</sub> use and to some extent the relationship between the students' preferences and the teachers' actual classroom practices of the use of L<sub>1</sub>, in college level. Indeed, Kenenisa had addressed wider researchable areas about L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom, and provided fundamental basis for my present study.

In addition, Nuru (2008) has assessed high school English teachers' views about how they use English and the extent to which they see themselves using the students' vernacular. This study, as well, has contributed fundamental things/inputs to the present study. Moreover, Tadesse (1988) has conducted a research on the English language teachers' classroom practices of the students' vernacular use in junior secondary schools.

Although the above research works provide some indications about English teachers' practices and the attitudes of both students and teachers towards L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom, as far as my knowledge is concerned, there appear to be no attempts to assess the ideal needs of students' L<sub>1</sub> uses in the English classroom in the higher secondary school level. Thus, the primary concern of this study is to explore when, why and to what extent students and teachers need the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom of grade 9. This study is based on the assumption that the prior assessment of the necessity of L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom creates verified basis for decision to switch to the students' mother tongue. Hence, the actual practices of L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom and issues in relation to plasma teacher, in general, fall out of the scope of the present study.

## **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

This study had been initially intended to involve high schools of two regions, Amhara and Oromia, with the assumption that the study can have a national importance. However, one region, Oromia was excluded for budget and time constraints. In addition, to adjust the scope of the study with the time given, one objective of the study which was aimed to assess the students' and teachers' needs of L<sub>1</sub> in the English textbook' was reduced in the later time. As a result, the questions developed for this objective were cut and left out.

## **1.7. Acronyms Definition of a Term**

### ***1.7.1 Acronyms***

EFL= English as a Foreign Language

TL= Target Language (English)

L<sub>1</sub>= Students' first language-the language that they have full command of. It is used interchangeably with mother tongue and vernacular with no meaning difference. It also refers to Amharic in the context of the research setting.

L<sub>2</sub>= English Language

### ***1.7.2 Definition of a Term***

Translation $\approx$  L<sub>1</sub> Use= Reproducing the closest meaning of words, expressions, sentences, etc mainly from English to L<sub>1</sub> and sometimes the vice versa during teaching learning in the English classroom.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter treats the review of the key literature which provides background information regarding the use of the mother tongue or L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. It reveals the controversial ideas concerning the use of L<sub>1</sub> thereby presenting various arguments favoring and disfavoring L<sub>1</sub> use. It also discusses the current avoidance of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom along with the chief contributing factors for the rejection. In addition, the chapter briefs the opportunities of the L<sub>1</sub> use just by providing a number of empirical studies and views which give justifications for the appropriate times and/or situations, the right reasons and judicious amount for allowing L<sub>1</sub> use in EFL classroom. What is more, in contrast to the current prevailing views, evidences of different sources confirming the communicative nature of L<sub>1</sub> use and the importance of the assessment of its necessity in the general English classroom have been disclosed in the chapter.

#### 2.2. Historical Background of L<sub>1</sub> Use in the EFL Classroom

Scholars in the field of language teaching have been looking for the best method of language teaching learning over the last centuries. Though 'no best method has been found yet' (Prabhu 1990) there have been a number of innovations introduced which could bring the method of language teaching to its maximum efficiency possible. Among the innovations and new directions is the use of the native language in the teaching of another language (Richards and Rodgers 1986).

L<sub>1</sub> use as a method of foreign language teaching is thought to have begun in relation with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). And the Grammar Translation Method is one of the oldest

methods of foreign language teaching in the history of language pedagogy (Larsen-Freeman 1987; Richards and Rodgers 1986; Stern 1983). This is because it was basically an adaptation of technique used to teach classical languages and as its name implies, its cornerstones are the teaching of rules of grammar and translation of sentences and passages into the target language which prompt the use of the rules taught (Brumfit and Roberts 1983). The primary purpose of the method was to help the students read and admire foreign language literature by the help of their native tongue (Erton 1998). The translation from the target language to the mother tongue and the vice versa was the component of the method (Brumfit and Roberts 1983).

In fact, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c the method has fallen from favor as some language educators began to criticize for that it failed to address learners real life communication need. This gave rise to a number of alternative methods one of which was the Direct Method. This method actually was not only an alternative but also a hazard and was primarily aimed to totally ban the Grammar Translation Method (Stern 1983).

Whatsoever, the use of L<sub>1</sub> as a method of foreign language teaching has been the victim of the long years' war targeted to avoid the Grammar Translation Method. Edge (1986) states, "the thirty years' war [Now over fifty years] (still going on in many countries) against Grammar Translation method as the basic method of language teaching seems to have made us see foreign language teaching (FLT) and translation as unconnected" (p. 121). Therefore, several weaknesses which are attributed to the particular Grammar Translation method have influenced the issue of L<sub>1</sub> use in the foreign language classes.

## **2.3. The Issue of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL Classroom**

### ***2.3.1. The Controversy***

The issue of whether or not to use the mother tongue (L<sub>1</sub>) in the EFL (L<sub>2</sub>) classroom has been the subject of much discussion, a considerable controversy and hot debate among linguists and language teachers for a long time (Duff 1989; Nuru 2008; Littlewood and Yu 2009; Atkinson 1987; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002; Ferrer 2004). Therefore, there exists a division among scholars in that some advocate the use of L<sub>1</sub> while others firmly deny the relevance of the mother tongue in the foreign or second language classroom. Opinions differ and there is little consensus. Positions range from insistence on total exclusion of the L<sub>1</sub>, towards varying degrees of recognition that it may provide valuable support for learning, either directly or indirectly (Littlewood and Yu 2009).

#### ***2.3.1.1. Rationales for Advocating Only TL Use***

As has been stated above, there is a wide dispute/debate among educators/ scholars over the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the foreign or second language teaching. So, each group of the scholars forwards their own arguments which support their position. Hence, there are some rationales advocating the independent teaching of the target language with giving no place for the importance of the first or the mother tongue languages.

For example, Krashen (1981), a proponent of monolingual approach, argues that "Adults learn the L<sub>2</sub> similar to the way children pick up their mother tongue". This argument tells us that children do not need any translation or other language help when they acquire their mother tongue and therefore this is also true for adults learning other languages. But the question here is whether this sounds true as L<sub>1</sub> acquirers are not the same as L<sub>2</sub> learners. Mackey (1965 in Erton

(1998) gives an argument which disproves this one and says, "The learning of one language in childhood is an inevitable process; the learning of second [foreign] language is a special accomplishment" (p.1)

Besides, Cook (2001) states a detail and enriched justification which makes the idea of the monolingual approach stated by Krashen unacceptable. He argues:

*But there is no intrinsic reason why learning a second language/foreign language] should be the same as learning a first. ...people learning a second language already know how to mean and know that other people have minds of their own. L<sub>2</sub> learning is inevitably different in this respect from L<sub>1</sub> learning. The similarities between learning the first and second languages have to be established rather than taken for granted. In some respects, the two forms of learning may well be rather similar, in others quite different-after all, the outcome is often very different. Evidence about how the child learns a first language has to be interpreted with caution in L<sub>2</sub> learning and seldom in itself provides a basis for language teaching. (p. 14)*

He further goes on providing his justifiable reasons appealing to be convectional regarding the similarity and difference of learning first and second languages. He claims that L<sub>2</sub> learners in fact are different from children learning a first language since there is already [at least] one language present in their minds. There is no way that L<sub>2</sub> learner can become a monolingual native speaker by definition, however strong the similarities may be between L<sub>1</sub> acquisition and L<sub>2</sub> learning. So our belief about how children learn their first language cannot be automatically transferred to a second/ [foreign] language: some may work, some may not (Ibid).

In addition to the Krashen monolingual approach, opposing the use of L<sub>1</sub> in second or foreign language classroom is because of the fear that the freedom to use L<sub>1</sub> results in to the overuse of L<sub>1</sub> and harms the L<sub>2</sub> exposure. For example, Turnbull (2001) in Littlewood and Yu (2009:11) claims that, "... if we 'license' the use of the L<sub>1</sub> in the foreign language classroom by taking away positive pressures to use the TL, this might 'lead to an overuse of the L<sub>1</sub> by many teachers' ". However, Butzkamm (2003 cited in Littlewood and Yu 2009) a strong advocate of the value of

the L<sub>1</sub>, provides counter idea for this argument stressing that the aim is not to take away time from TL use but to help to establish it as the general means of communication in the classroom.

Furthermore, the total exclusion of first language or the independent learning of the target language is praised by the argument that allowing L<sub>1</sub> would bring about students' overdependence on the L<sub>1</sub> and failure to think in the target language (Nuru 2008). It is also believed that L<sub>2</sub>/foreign language is successfully acquired when it is kept totally separate from the L<sub>1</sub> so that the fear of interference will be avoided (Cook 2001).

However this argument lacks a convincing power because of two fundamental reasons: one is that L<sub>1</sub>-L<sub>2</sub> connection by itself is not seen as an obstacle to language learning but as a beneficial element as Schweers (1999) in a report of the outcomes of his research on the use of the mother tongue in English classes, concludes that 'a second language can be learned through raising awareness to the similarities and differences between the L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub>'. The other reason is that it is ideally impossible to treat L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> (foreign language) as separate entities as Stern (1992: 282 cited in Kenenisa 2003) states that "the L<sub>1</sub>-L<sub>2</sub> connection is an undisputable fact of life, whether we like it or not the new knowledge is learnt on the basis of the previously acquired language". He also adds that "L<sub>2</sub> learners often use their L<sub>1</sub> for reference, [and] it is impossible to avoid the interference errors at any cost; rather we need to acknowledge them as a psycholinguistic given" (Ibid).

All the above arguments and many others in different books, against the use of the L<sub>1</sub> in the foreign or second language classroom seem to have been raised to avoid the dangers that might be emerged as a result of using the mother tongue or L<sub>1</sub>. But they do not seem to uphold the view that L<sub>1</sub> by itself is problematic or irrelevant. So, the rationales for the use of L<sub>1</sub>, in addition to the counter attack provided so far, in the foreign or second language classroom, in the next section, may eradicate the mistrust over the use of the mother tongue.

### *2.3.1.2. Rationales for Advocating L<sub>1</sub> Use in the Foreign Language Classrooms*

Considerable numbers of scholars have been fighting against the monolingual approach to maintain the pedagogical importance of the first/mother tongue language in the foreign/second language classroom. They provide a lot of arguments with sound justifications admitting the danger of the overuse. In fact, some arguments have been presented in the last section as counters to each opposing argument, and that the following are some more ones which provide a framework for using L<sub>1</sub> in the L<sub>2</sub> (FL) classroom.

One of the first and main advocates of mother tongue use in the communicative classroom has been Atkinson (1987:249). He states, "It is true that total prohibition of the student's native language is now unfashionable but the potential of its use in the classroom clearly needs further exploration".

David Atkinson also discusses the methodological gap overwhelming in the history of language teaching, and he claims that the gap is partly attributed to the issue of whether to use or not to use the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. Therefore he argues:

*...this gap in the methodological literature is presumably partly responsible for the uneasiness which many teachers, experienced or inexperienced, feel about using or permitting the use of the students' native language in the classroom (p.241).*

As here as David Atkinson, as an advocate of L<sub>1</sub> use, is Alan Duff (1989) who has contributed fundamental ideas to help educators understand the positive aspects of mother tongue use/translation/ in the foreign/second language classroom. He argues, "Our mother tongue/first language shapes our way of thinking, and to some extent our use of the foreign language (pronunciation, choice of words, tone, word order, etc)". So, the assumption underlying his idea is that the mother tongue/first language is very essential element of foreign language learning and it is impossible to bring about effective teaching learning in the absence of it.

L<sub>1</sub> is also praised as a valuable resource having much worthwhile aspects to help students learn the target language. Ellis (1985) explains, "the L<sub>1</sub> is a resource of knowledge which learners will use consciously and subconsciously to help them sift the L<sub>2</sub> data in the input and perform as best as they can in L<sub>2</sub> (p 40).

Perhaps the most important rationale to make clear the vital place of L<sub>1</sub> is what is pointed out by Stern (1992 Cited in Kenenisa 2003). He argues that "the L<sub>1</sub>- L<sub>2</sub> connection is undisputable fact of life, whether we like it or not the new knowledge is learnt on the basis of the previously acquired language" (p.15). Therefore, L<sub>1</sub> is not what we use when we want, and what we avoid when we do not; it is rather a necessity as far as the L<sub>2</sub>/foreign language teaching-learning is concerned.

Similar point substantiating the advocacy of L<sub>1</sub> is also given by Appel and Muysken (1987). They discuss that it is a common sense notion that second language learners use elements or structures of their native language in speaking a second/foreign language. They also claim that the influence of one language on the other is extremely important in situations of prolonged and systematic language contact. (p. 82)

In fact, it is indeed exhausting and tiresome to list out all the other or even many of the ideas raised to favor the value of judicious use of L<sub>1</sub> in the foreign or second language classroom. Many writers/scholars (e.g. Cook 2001; Edge 1986; Edstrom 2009; Ellis (1985, 1992); Harbord 1992; Heltai 1989; Littlewood 1984; Littlewood and Yu 2009; Pica 1994; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002) strongly argue for L<sub>1</sub> use and they claim that avoiding it at all costs at least handicaps the effective learning and teaching of the target language.

To wind up, it is of great importance to brief how the majority of teachers and students have been the victims of the problems of the 'target language only' principle, and have chosen finally to fall back to L<sub>1</sub> use. Hevrbord (1992) writes:

*Over the years, the effect of this on those non-native speakers who make up the vast majority of language teachers has been to make them feel either defensive or guilty at their inability to 'match up' to native speakers in terms of conducting a class entirely in English. Many may have tried to switch to an 'all-English classroom' only to find themselves inadequately equipped with L<sub>2</sub> [or foreign language] strategies with which to get their meaning across; faced with student in comprehension and resentment at this new game, they revert to use of the mother tongue. (p. 350)*

Therefore, I argue based on literatures provided above and similar others that 'if there is no best method that different methods are best for different teaching contexts' but 'there is some truth (or value or validity to every method' (Prabhu 1990: 166). L<sub>1</sub> use should also be considered as a method having its own worthwhile aspects in teaching foreign language. Again 'if every method is a partial truth, to adopt any single method is to settle for much less than one can get by adopting all or several of them' (ibid); hence, the judicious use of L<sub>1</sub> with lion's share given to target language is more beneficial than insisting on only target language use.

### **2.3.2. The Avoidance (the Rejection) of L<sub>1</sub>**

Regarding the issue of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom, what is frequently mentioned in many literatures is the rejection or denying of the pedagogical importance of it (L<sub>1</sub>). (e.g. Atkinson 1987; Cook 2001; Duff 1989; Edge 1986; Ellis 1985; Ellis 1992; Harbord 1992).

For example, Cook (2001) states:

*The emphasis on the second language in the classroom was part of the revolt against the older methods by the late ninetieth methodologists, most famously through the direct method ...with their rejection of translation as a teaching technique (p 4).*

In addition, Duff (1989:3) claims that "Translation has long languished as a poor relation in the family of language teaching techniques. It has been denigrated as 'uncommunicative', 'boring',

'pointless', 'difficult', 'irrelevant', and the like". He also goes on questioning whether it could serve some useful purpose after all, if it was renovated, reinterpreted, humanized, made communicative. And he optimistically answers 'yes' with the hope that it can easily get revival (Ibid).

Similarly, Harbord (1986) states that the idea of avoiding the mother tongue in language teaching dates from around the turn of the century, with the appearance of the direct method. He adds that the subsequent growth of a British-based teacher training movement out of the need to provide training for teachers working with multilingual classes served to reinforce the strategy of mother tongue avoidance.

In general, as it can be seen from the above literatures on the one hand translation ( $L_1$  use) in the EFL classroom is praised for its various facilitative and supportive values. On the other hand, it is being rejected/avoided/ as a valid technique of teaching-learning. So, what are the contributing factors for the avoidance? Are the reasons really persuasive enough to be taken for granted? The preceding section gives incites of points to answer these and other related questions.

### ***2.3.2.1. Reasons for Avoiding (Disfavoring) $L_1$ Use***

The use of  $L_1$ /translation/ in the EFL classroom has always been a whipping boy (to use Heltai 1989 expression) for inefficiency about language teaching and learning and therefore yet today largely ignored as a valid activity for language practice and improvement (Duft 1989; Heltai 1989). Heltai (1989) continues to claim that  $L_1$  use has been unfairly made responsible for interference errors, lack of communicative competence, boredom in the classroom, and for learning about the language instead of learning to speak it. (p. 288)

The many reasons/factors/claimed, after all, are not sound reasons directly justifying the irrelevance of  $L_1$  use, but they appear to contribute a lot to the avoidance of it. Atkinson (1987) argues that translation, at all levels, has a variety of roles to play which are at present undervalued

for reasons which are for the most part suspect. Cook (2001) also asserts that there is no principled reason for avoiding L<sub>1</sub> and that it should be used systematically. Anyway, the following reasons are the main ones to be responsible for the avoidance or the ignorance of L<sub>1</sub> use/translation.

#### ***2.3.2.1.1. The Power of Arguments against L<sub>1</sub> Use***

The arguments favoring only the target language (TL) use are indeed the most important factors which have been strengthening the warfare against L<sub>1</sub>. Cook (2001) points out three important arguments against L<sub>1</sub> which are the chief contributing factors for avoiding it. The first one is that children learning their first language do not have a second language available-which is irrelevant in itself. So 'the natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of a good modern language course'. This argument is called the L<sub>1</sub> acquisition argument. The second one is that the students should keep the two languages separate in their minds rather than linking them: this argument is known as the language compartmentalization view. The third is that many EFL classes justifiably avoid the first language for practical reasons, either because of the mixed languages of the students or because of the teacher's ignorance of students' first language- this is the argument of language mix (p. 4).

Note that the proponents of these and the counter arguments of L1 advocates are presented under section 2.3 1.1.

#### ***2.3.2.1.2. Association with Grammar Translation Method***

Cook (2001) claims that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century a revolution took place against the stultifying method of translation of texts and grammatical explanation which was then popular, insisting on the importance of only using foreign language in the classroom. He adds that this belief is largely still with us today, either explicitly instilled into teachers or simply taken for granted (p. 1).

Therefore, the bad press of Grammar Translation Method, perhaps, can be the chief contributing factor for the avoidance of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. Edge (1986), for example, explains that the hatred towards the Grammar Translation Method has resulted in the disassociation of L<sub>1</sub> use and language teaching and writers as: “the thirty years of war, [now over fifty years], (still going on in many countries) against the Grammar/Translation as the basic method of language teaching seem to have made us see foreign language teaching (ELT) and translation as unconnected” (p. 121).

Associating translation/L<sub>1</sub> use/with the traditional Grammar Translation Method results in to gradual fossilization of translation. Therefore, what should have been a vital and challenging discipline can be generated in most schools into a pointless, routine exercise, a chore, and a punishment as a result of the inappropriate association (Duff 1989).

Heltai (1989) also makes clear the fact that failures which should have been attributed to Grammar Translation Method have made translation blame-worthy, or translation has become ‘a whipping boy’ (in his own expression) (p. 288).

Note that the explanations of Grammar Translation method are given in section 2.2.

### ***2.3.2.1.3. Assumptions of Teachers about the Practice of L<sub>1</sub> use/ Translation***

The other reason for the avoidance of translation is that over the centuries it had gradually become fossilized. It became less and less associated with the excitement of innovations, more and more with the tedium of book learning (Duff, 1989). Duff goes on discussing this issue and points out several reasons in relation to teachers’ view which made translation disfavored. He writes:-

*If translation has fallen from favor in our times, it is largely because teachers feel, with some justifications, that:*

- a. It is text-bound, and confined to only two skills-reading and writing; it is not communicative activity because it involves no oral interaction.*

- b. *It is not suitable for classroom work because the students must do the writing on their own; it is also time consuming and wasteful.*
- c. *It is associated with 'different language', with literary or scientific texts, and is not suited to the general needs of the language learner.*
- d. *finally, it is boring-both to do and to correct (p. 5)*

However, he argues that though those may have been the case, it need not be so, as translation doesn't have to be mere, pointless struggle between student and text, but many other approaches are possible. Translation should be introduced purposefully and imaginatively, into the language learning programme (Ibid).

Despite the many reasons, if they are reasons after all, for avoiding translation, there are still opportunities to help the judicious use of L<sub>1</sub> in facilitating and supporting foreign language learning. The preceding section deals with the opportunities or ways of making the proper use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom.

### ***2.3.3. The Opportunities (Ideas of Reconciliation)***

Many researchers, after conducting research on the use of L<sub>1</sub>, have concluded and recommended from their findings that inevitably English must be the primary vehicle of communication and should be given a far more larger proportion in the classroom, but limited and judicious L<sub>1</sub> should be used as a valuable aid to the teaching and learning of the target language (Atkinson 1987; Harbord 1986; Kenenisa 2003; Nuru 2008; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002). For example, (Littlewood and Yu 2009: 12) explain the issue as follows:

*The L<sub>1</sub> can be the 'single biggest danger' in the foreign language classroom if it threatens the primacy of the TL or 'the most important ally' a foreign language can have if it is used systematically, selectively and in judicious doses.*

Duff (1989) provides a reconciliation idea for the rights and wrongs of using L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. He comments, "its great originality lies in having successfully shifted the emphasis from learning translation as a set of discrete skills to using translation as a resource for the promotion of language learning" (p.3).

As far as L<sub>1</sub> use is considered as a resource (as Duff explains) in the EFL classroom, it has to be used in the appropriate time, for the right reasons and in a judicious amount to function as an effective resource in the EFL classroom. Stern (1983) suggests that a more facilitative and supportive role of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom demands a principle of language rule governing 'why', 'when' and 'to what extent' it can be used in the classroom. The 'why', 'when' and 'to what extent' of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom are treated in the next consecutive three sections respectively.

### **2.3.3.1. Reasons for Using L<sub>1</sub>**

The fundamental reasons for preferring to use the students' first language in the EFL classroom is the obvious effect it has on the foreign language and the facilitating and supporting role it plays to help students learn the target language (Auerbach 1993 cited in Scheweers 1996; Cook 2001).

Duff (1989) has also specified factors which oblige teachers of English to use the students' mother tongue. He points them out as follows:

1. *Influence of the mother tongue: Our mother tongue or first language shapes our way of thinking and to some extent our use of the foreign language (pronunciation, choice of words, tone, word order, etc). Translation helps to understand better the influence of one language on the other, and to correct errors of habit that creep in unnoticed (such as the misuse of particular words or structures). And, because translation involves contrast, it enables us to explore the potential of both languages-their strengths and weaknesses.*
2. *Naturalness of the Activity: Translation / [mother tongue use] / is a natural and necessary activity. Moreover so indeed than many of the fashionable activities invented for language learners- outside the classroom-in offices, banks, factories, shops and airports-translation is going on all the time. Why not inside the classroom?*
3. *The skills aspect: Language competence is a two-way not a one way system. We need to be able to communicate both ways: into and from the foreign language.*
4. *The reality of language: The proper material of translation is authentic, not 'made up' language. And all language is relevant to translation-all styles and registers of both speech and writing. Translation need not be confined to literature. Because the material is authentic and wide-ranging in scope, the learner is being brought into touch with the whole language, and not just those parts isolated by text-book. This is an aim to be found in almost all course descriptions: 'to increase the students' power and range of expression'. Translation will certainly do this.*

5. *Usefulness: As language learning activity, translation has many merits chief among these are:*
- a. *It is an activity, by its very nature, invites speculation and discussion*
  - b. *Translation develops 3 qualities essential to all language learning; accuracy, clarity and flexibility. It trains the learner to search (flexibility) for the most appropriate words (accuracy) to convey what is meant/ (clarity) (pp.6-7).*

The discussion of Alan Duff clearly indicates why many scholars have insisted on using the L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom and therefore provides tangible justification for those who are against the use of L<sub>1</sub>. Duff actually is not alone in providing fundamental basis of using L<sub>1</sub>, but Atkinson (1987) also offers three basic reasons for allowing limited L<sub>1</sub> use in the classroom:

1. It is 'a learner preferred strategy'. Given the opportunity, learners will choose to translate without encouragement from the teacher.
2. It is a humanistic approach. To let students use their mother tongue is a humanistic approach in that it permits them to say what they want.
3. Efficient uses of time- L<sub>1</sub> strategies are efficient in terms of time spent explaining. This is certainly the reason most commonly given by teachers who advocate L<sub>1</sub> use in the class (p. 422).

David Atkinson generally favors L<sub>1</sub> use, but he warns the overdependence which is likely to result in some or all of the following:

1. The teacher and/or the students begin to feel that they have not 'really' understood any item of language until it has been translated.
2. The teacher and/or the students fail to observe the distinctions between equivalence of form, semantic equivalence, and pragmatic features, and thus oversimplify to the point of using crude and inaccurate translation.
3. Students speak to the teacher in the mother tongue as a matter of course, even when they [are] quite capable of expressing what they mean.

4. Students fail to realize that during many activities in the classroom it is essential that they use only English [p. 246].

To conclude this section, it is quite essential to echo what Harbord (1992) pointed out regarding the ultimate purpose of using L<sub>1</sub>. He says that the most important point to be made in the discussion of the rights and wrongs of using the first language in the classroom is that translation, and indeed use of mother tongue generally, is not a device to be used to save time 'for more useful' activities, nor to make life easier for the teacher or students. Instead, as Duff (1989) says, it should be used to provoke discussion and speculation, to develop clarity and flexibility of thinking, and to help us increase our own and our students' awareness of the inevitable interaction between the mother tongue and the target language that occurs during any type of language acquisition.

Though it is quite beneficial to clearly identify why of the L<sub>1</sub> (the underlying reasons of using L<sub>1</sub>) as it has been discussed so far, another most important thing seeking due consideration is to distinguish when it is appropriate to fall back to the L<sub>1</sub> in English classroom. This is briefly discussed from various views of literatures in the preceding section.

### ***2.3.3.2. Suggested Uses for the L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL Classroom***

Arriving at a consensus regarding the judicious use of L<sub>1</sub> in EFL classroom and persuading others who are against the issue are not the final goals of the L<sub>1</sub> advocates. Rather, they are also greatly concerned about when to use L<sub>1</sub> as a valuable aid to the teaching and learning of the target language.

In agreement with this, Erton (1998) says that the purpose of using L<sub>1</sub> should be to achieve the goals and objectives of the course by the help of the mother tongue through translation at the

correct time, where appropriate and makes sense. Ernesto Macaro (1997 in Cook 2001: 154-55) has found out factors that most commonly lead to L<sub>1</sub> use:

1. Giving instructions about activities- the teacher has to balance the gains and losses of using the first or the second language. Some teachers resort to the first language after they have tried in vain to get the activity going in the second language.
2. Translating and checking comprehension-teachers feel these 'speeded things up'.
3. Individual comments to students- made while the teacher is going round the class, say during pair work.
4. Giving feedback to students- perhaps it is more surprising that students are told whether they are right or wrong in their own language and presumably the teacher feels that this makes it more 'real'.
5. Using to maintain discipline- saying, 'shut up' or 'you will get a detention' in the first language shows that it is a serious threat rather than simply practicing imperative and conditional constructions.

In addition, a research conducted by Carole Franklin (1990) cited in Cook (2001) also reveals that more than 80% of teachers use the first language for explaining grammar and for discussing objectives; more than 50% for tests, correcting written work and teaching background; less than 16% for organizing the classroom activities and for chatting informally.

Cook (2001) himself recommends that there is no principle reason for avoiding L<sub>1</sub> other than allowing the students to hear as much L<sub>2</sub> as possible, it can be more effective to resort to the first language systematically. Therefore, he suggests that L<sub>1</sub> may be used as a way into the meaning of the second language; as a short cut in explaining tasks; as a way of explaining grammar and in short as a way of demonstrating the classroom as real L<sub>2</sub> situation, not a fake monolingual

situation. Moreover, Auerbach (1993 in Schweers 1999) specifies some possible occasions deserving the aid of the mother tongue. Hence she suggests that L<sub>1</sub> is used in negotiation of the syllabus and the lesson; in record keeping; for classroom management; in scene setting for language analysis; in presentation of rules governing grammar in phonology, morphology and spelling; in discussion of cross-cultural issues; in instructions or prompts; for explanation of errors; and for assessment of comprehension.

Furthermore, David Atkinson (1987: 241) lists appropriate uses for L<sub>1</sub> in the L<sub>2</sub> (foreign language) classroom. These are:

1. *Eliciting language* -“How do we say ‘X’ in English?”
2. *Checking comprehension*- “How do you say ‘I’ve been waiting for ten minutes in Spanish’?” (also used for comprehension of reading or listening text)
3. *Giving complex instructions*
4. *Cooperating in groups*-learners compare and correct answers to exercises or tasks in the L<sub>1</sub>. Students at times can explain new points better than the teacher.
5. *Explaining classroom methodology*
6. *Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item*
7. *Checking for sense*-if students write or say something in the L<sub>2</sub> that does not make sense, have them to try to translate it into L<sub>1</sub> to realize their error.
8. *Testing*-translation items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings.
9. *Developing circumlocution strategies*-when students do not know how to say something in the L<sub>2</sub>, have them think of different ways to say the same thing in the L<sub>1</sub>, which may be easier to translate.

Similarly, Littlewood and Yu (2009) have surveyed literature for a research purpose and have sorted out some appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. Therefore, they suggest the following as crucial areas deserving the support of the L<sub>1</sub> and that L<sub>1</sub> is used to:

1. *talk with individual student about personal matter e.g. a problem*
2. *explain a difficult grammar point*
3. *deal with a serious discipline problem e.g. an argument*
4. *chat with the class about general matters e.g. a school holiday*
5. *give the meaning of unknown word*
6. *deal with a minor discipline problem e.g. not paying attention*
7. *set and explain home work*
8. *explain an easy grammar point*
9. *give instructions for carrying out a practice activity (p. 6)*

Littlewood and Yu generally divide the use of L<sub>1</sub> into three: establishing constructive social relationships; communicating complex meanings to ensure understanding and/or save time and maintaining control over the classroom environment (2009: 5). However, Qian (2009) cited in Littlewood and Yu (2009) classifies the reasons of using L<sub>1</sub> into two: 'methodological' (e.g. translating, clarifying, highlighting, efficiency) and 'social' (e.g. praising, encouraging, disapproving).

In general, the various use of L<sub>1</sub> suggested by many researchers as has been discussed so far imply that the students' first language plays an essential role in foreign language learning and teaching. They also tell us that identifying when and where to use L<sub>1</sub> ensures the facilitative and supporting value of L<sub>1</sub> thereby minimizing the fear of some scholars who argue that using L<sub>1</sub> decreases students' exposure to the target language.

### *2.3.3.3. The Amount of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL Classroom*

Ellis (1992) makes clear the importance of the appropriate amount of L<sub>1</sub> in foreign language teaching. He recommends that the extent to which the use of the L<sub>1</sub> is relevant and the particular uses for which it is appropriate are issues of real importance to many foreign language teachers.

The amount of L<sub>1</sub> used in EFL classroom is frequently specified in subjective terms like limited (Atkinson 1987) limited and judicious (Schweers 1999; Tang 2002) and these terms tend to be interpreted mainly through an individual teacher's intuition (Littlewood and Yu 2004) that decisions about using the L<sub>1</sub> or the L<sub>2</sub> is made by individual language teachers, oftentimes behind a closed classroom door (Edstrom 2009).

Therefore, evidences from variety of contexts show that the amount of L<sub>1</sub> to be used tends to vary. For example, Turnbull (2002) in Littlewood and Yu (2009) conducted a research in Canadian schools and found out that the use of L<sub>1</sub> ranging from 28% to 76% and in South Korea, Liu et al (2004) calculated the percentage of L<sub>1</sub> (Korean) and found out that it ranged from 10% to 90% (in Littlewood and Yu 2009:4).

Stern (1992) recommends that it would be preferred if certain amount of time can be allocated for the use of mother tongue to enable students ask certain questions, to verify meanings, to clear uncertainties and to explain things that may not be possible by using L<sub>2</sub> alone (cited in Kenenisa 2003: 35).

Though not clear where 'early level' exactly is, Atkinson (1987) on his part suggests about 5% of native language at early levels in a session of English language teaching.

In general, the exact amount of L<sub>1</sub> in EFL classroom hasn't yet been appropriately discovered (Stern 1992; Turnbull 2001 cited in Kenenisa 2003) and it is recommended that the issue deserves further studies (Turnbull 2001 in Kenenisa 2003).

#### **2.4. L<sub>1</sub> Use as a Communicative Approach**

On the one hand, communicative language teaching approach has currently got a wider acceptance (Cook, 2001). On the other hand, the proponents of the monolingual approach consider the L<sub>1</sub> use/translation/ as uncommunicative and disregard as a method of teaching (Duff, 1989). However, Edge (1986) argues that "there is no obvious reason why an ability to translate should not be seen as a type of communicative competence, or why translation class should not benefit from a communicative and interactive approach." (p. 121). According to him L<sub>1</sub> use can be made communicative in such a way that making translating the topic of peer discussion; bringing about immediate contrastive discussion of the native language (L<sub>1</sub>) and the target language in terms of accuracy and appropriacy and reinforcing understanding of relevant, known topics (p. 122).

As far as communicative strategies are concerned, there is a common notion that strategies involve existing knowledge as input and that one type of existing knowledge is L<sub>1</sub> knowledge (language transfer) (Ellis, 1985: 37). Therefore, the use of L<sub>1</sub> has to be regarded as communicative strategy. Similarly, in a counter to the current view of communicative approach and the use of L<sub>1</sub>, Duff (1989) has the following to say:

*Translation, as the process of conveying messages across linguistic and cultural barriers, is an eminently communicative activity, one whose use could be considered in a wider range of teaching than may currently be the case (p.3)*

Cook (2001) also regards 'to fall back to the first language as one of the overall types of communication strategies' (p. 107). And, Schweers (1999) also claims that recognizing and welcoming the students' first language into the classroom as an expression of their own culture could be one way of dispelling negative attitudes towards English (as positive atmosphere promotes communication (Atkinson 1987)) and increasing receptivity to learning the language.

If L<sub>1</sub> use is communicative, as pointed out above, I personally believe that it should also get the same acceptance as other communicative approaches in current foreign language teaching and learning.

## **2.5. The Assessment of L<sub>1</sub> Necessity in EFL Classroom**

Needs analysis tends to be associated with ESP (English for Specific Purpose) and is usually ignored in the general English classroom. In fact, what differs ESP from general English is not the existence of a need but rather an awareness of the need, that the traditions in general English that learners' needs can't be specified and as a result no attempt is usually made to discover learners' ideal needs (Seedhouse 1995). However, it is recommended that needs analysis is also fundamental to planning of general English courses (Cunningsworth 1984; Richards 1992 cited in Seedhouse 1995).

The importance of need analysis/assessment/ in general English classroom on the other hand entails that the necessity of L<sub>1</sub> should also be assessed so as to make recourse to the mother tongue based on verified needs. Nuru (2008) recommends that "... the use of L<sub>1</sub> must be treated with great care, and decisions to switch to the mother tongue should be based on prior assessment of its necessity in a given situation" (p. 16).

## 2.6 Summary

The issue of using L<sub>1</sub> in EFL has remained to be the subject of much discussion and considerable controversy among researchers and language teachers for many decades, and even it hasn't been settled yet. On the one hand, there are those groups who reject the use of L<sub>1</sub> altogether or fail to recognize any significant potential in it. On the other hand, there are those who insist on favoring a rational and judicious use of L<sub>1</sub> as facilitative and supportive roles in EFL classes.

Nowadays, the power of arguments against the L<sub>1</sub> use; the bad press on grammar translation method and the unfair assumptions of many foreign/second language teachers have chiefly contributed to the avoidance of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL or ESL classrooms. However, L<sub>1</sub> use has been blameworthy and even banned as a valid activity in the foreign language learning just for unconvincing reasons, as there are hardly research works which validate the advantages of avoiding it in all costs.

In fact, the recourse to the learners' L<sub>1</sub> can be made in English classes when appropriate, for justifiable reasons and in proper amount, to make it give valuable aid to the teaching and learning of the target language. Therefore, the prior assessment of the necessities of L<sub>1</sub> in various foreign/second language learning situations is essential to make the proper use of it. This is because L<sub>1</sub> use, indeed, is a communicative activity and a fundamental element of effective language teaching when used systematically, despite the current prevailing views claiming it to be uncommunicative.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

In this study, a descriptive research design of the survey type was employed with the assumption that this type of research design is suitable to adequately address the objectives of the study specified in advance.

#### 3.2. Subjects and Sampling

The subjects of the study were sample grade nine students of two schools, Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools and their English teachers available. Though this research could be applicable to almost all grade levels, these student participants were opted for the fact that they share one important feature throughout the country-they all learn all subjects, except their mother tongue or/and Amharic, in English. Therefore, it is thought that they need relatively more help in English, not only for learning English but also for the other subjects taught in English.

##### 3.2.1. Students

The number of participant students of this study had been decided to be small before the study began. This was done because of three fundamental factors: (1) the nature of the population (nearly linguistically homogenous): - “the more homogenous the target population the smaller the sample can be...” (Starantakos 2005: 171). The linguistic homogeneity of the students is something valuable, but it is not fully guaranteed in the context of the present research setting as there could be students who speak other languages than Amharic as their first language. For example, 2% of the student participants in this study do not speak Amharic as their first language. (2) the availability of time (the shortage of time given to the study): and (3) the fact that large

samples do not always guarantee higher degree of precision (ibid). Therefore, 100 students from two schools of 50 sections with each consisting of 50 students on average and about 2500 total students, were randomly selected in the following procedure. First 10 sections (20% of the total sections) were randomly selected and then 10 students (20% of the total students of one section) from each section were again randomly selected to participate in the study. This technique was favored for that it gives equal chance to all participants as the problem is supposed to be common to all the subjects.

### ***3.2.2. Teachers***

Fifteen English teachers of grade 9 were included to be the subjects of the study by availability sampling to fill out the questionnaire, and among those, four teachers were randomly selected to provide necessary data through interview. The sample size of the interviewee teachers was determined on the basis of the purpose of the interview i.e. it was ultimately intended to substantiate the data gathered through the questionnaires and therefore small sample was thought to be enough. All participant teachers were BA holders, and had more than five years of experience. Three of them were females while the remaining were males.

### **3.3. The Research Settings**

Two schools, Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools located in Amhara region Debre Birhan town were selected to be the study areas. The selection of the areas was on the basis of the assumption that the majority students are likely to speak one language i.e. Amharic as their first language, and that the study was thought to have more relevance in those types of situations. Both schools take students dominantly from around Debre Birhan town as there are other high schools located some 15 kms and thereabout away from the town. This, in fact, is likely to maximize the opportunity for students to be able to speak Amharic as their first language.

However, it should be noted that this is not always trustworthy as major cities are likely to be homes of peoples of various linguistic backgrounds.

### **3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

Two research tools, Questionnaire and interview, were used to gather relevant data for the study. Questionnaire was favored for its relevance to the nature of the study and to address large number of participants. Interview, on the other hand, was preferred to gather unlimited beliefs or opinions of the teachers. Questionnaires were administered to students and teachers, but interview was used for teachers only. This procedure was adopted from Ferrer (2004). It was adopted with the assumption that it would provide the study with more relevant data to address the objectives set in advance.

#### **3.4.1. Questionnaires**

Two types of questionnaires with similar content but slight difference in form, each of which had seven items were set and distributed to students and teachers. Both types contain the mixture of close-ended and open-ended questions. In fact, there was no independent item of the open-ended type, but all open-ended questions required the respondents only to provide any pieces of additional information if there were any.

The questionnaire of the students was translated into the equivalent Amharic version to avoid any problems which might have been emerged from misunderstanding, or inability to comprehend English.

The items of both questionnaires were adopted from Schweers (1999); Doff (1987 cited in Nuru 2008); Littlewood and Yu (2009) and Tang (2002) with the assumption that they attain the objectives of the present study. Both students' and teachers' questionnaires were aimed to elicit

data on three essential issues: the view of students and teachers about the ideal uses of L<sub>1</sub>; the extent of the use and the reasons for using L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom.

The questionnaires were administered in researcher's presence. Hence, for the sake of great cooperation and support of the schools' administrative bodies and some staff members, ample time was given to give corrections and/or orientations to the students and teachers whenever necessary. As a result, some of the misunderstandings they encountered were cleared up while they were filling out the questionnaires. Indeed, this had more or less compensated the pilot study which should have been made prior to the actual administration of the questionnaires to avoid some problems or irregularities. It should be noted that pilot study had not been made because of shortage of time. All the questionnaires distributed to both the students and the teachers were filled out and returned.

#### ***3.4.2. Interview***

Four semi-structured interview questions were set to gather relevant qualitative data from four randomly selected grade 9 English teachers, who also had filled out the questionnaires. All of them were males.

Semi-structured interview was preferred to give some freedom for the interviewees to express what they feel about each question of the interview and to control their ideas when they go out of the study focuses and start to provide irrelevant information.

The interview was conducted in such a way that each of the questions of the interview was clearly read to each of the interviewees followed by a serious note taking while they were responding to the questions. This method was preferred to the audio/video recording for two fundamental reasons. One is that the aim of the study had nothing to do with the interviewees'

speech/language, but it only required the information they provide. The other one is that, as Sarantakos (2005) explains, taking note is equally important with audio/video recording in this study type of data gathering except that the latter creates embarrassment or mistrust which hinders the amount of information to be provided.

### **3.5. Techniques of Data Analysis**

As it has been stated, questionnaires and interview were the two instruments used to solicit pertinent data for the study. Thus, the data gathered through both tools were analyzed in the following ways:

On the one hand, the quantitative data obtained from both the students' and teachers' questionnaires were tallied and the frequencies were converted to percentage. Percentage was preferred for the fact that it is suitable to quantitative data analysis, and it also describes well the relationship between the total participants and the subgroups-who responded to each item of the questionnaires (Sarantakos 2005).

On the other hand, the qualitative data obtained through few of the open-ended items of the questionnaires and the teachers' interview were sorted out and summarized.

The analyses of the data gathered through both instruments were immediately followed by discussions and interpretations useful to draw sound conclusions about the importance of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. An attempt was also made to relate some of the discussions and interpretations with the works reviewed in the literature section of this thesis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the results of the data gathered through the two instruments: questionnaire and interview are analyzed, discussed and interpreted. Some results, discussions and interpretations are also attempted to be linked with some of the related literature presented in chapter two of this paper

#### 4.1. Questionnaires Results

##### 4.1.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

**Table 1- The Students' First Language/mother Tongue**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1	What is your first language, or the language that you have full command of?	A. Amharic	98	98
		B. Afan Oromo	2	2
		C. Tigrigna	0	0
		D. Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The information from the Table above shows that almost all (98%) of the students speak Amharic as their first language. Only very few students (2%) have responded that they speak other language than Amharic i.e. Afan Oromo, as their first language. This might have been because of the fact that the research area (Debre Birhan) is located closer to Oromia region than any other regions. However, the few students who claimed to speak other language than Amharic as their first language may be able to communicate in Amharic since the language has a relatively dominant status in the country at large and in the region in particular.

This all leads us to evaluate one of the reasons raised by some EFL teachers for avoiding L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classes. Cook (2001) states that the mixed language of the students is taken as one factor contributing to the avoidance of mother tongue use or translation (p.4). The assumption behind this argument is that if the students speak different languages as their first languages it will be difficult to use translation in the English classroom. However, provided that the linguistically different students are able to communicate in Amharic, this fear hardly operates in the present research setting as Table 1 shows that almost all students speak one language as their first language. Actually, it could be dangerous and unethical to allow the use of the language (Amharic) where even one student is ignorant of it. Otherwise, avoiding using the reasonable amount of the students' L<sub>1</sub> in the classroom, at least, leads to teaching English with less than maximum efficiency.

**Table 2: The Responses of the Students on whether they need their first Language and the extent to which they need their teacher to use it in the English Classrooms**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
2	Should your first language be used in the English classroom?	A) Yes	90	90
		B) No	10	10
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Do you like, or would you like your English teacher to use your first language in class?	A) Not at all	10	10
		B) A little	21	21
		C) Sometimes	59	59
		D) A lot	10	10
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The information in the Table above clearly reveals that a high percentage of the student participants (90%), feel that their first language (Amharic) should be used in English classes. This figure can be comparable to the finding of Schweers (1999) i.e. (88.7%). Small number of

the participants (10%) favors not to use their L<sub>1</sub> in the classroom. The preference of the use of L<sub>1</sub> by the vast majority of the students shows that the use of L<sub>1</sub> in English classes has some roles to play for the success of their English learning. Therefore, as the students' need in the general English classroom should be assessed and considered (Seedhouse 1995); it is worth doing to recourse to their L<sub>1</sub> when necessary just to address the needs of the majority students.

Regarding the extent to which the students like their teacher to use their first language, the responses to the item 3 in the same Table show that a considerable number (59%) of the students claim that they like 'sometimes'. And, a notable number of students (21%) responded that they like 'a little'. Only 10% of the students answered that they would like 'a lot' if their teacher used their native language during English teaching, while other same number of the respondents (10%) claimed that they do not like it at all. In fact, there is a division among the students on the extent of the necessity of the teacher's use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. However, the responses of the majority students (90%) revealed that they agreed with the teacher's use of their mother tongue to the various degree and that only few number of students (10%) upheld the view that 'no L<sub>1</sub> use is favored'.

These all showed that neither the total exclusion nor the dominance of the mother tongue was favored by the students. But some amount of L<sub>1</sub> use was preferred by the majority of them. Therefore, the result substantiated the principle of Atkinson (1987) that 'limited use of L<sub>1</sub>' has a lot of roles to play while 'the overuse of L<sub>1</sub>' brings about several undesirable results.

**Table 3: Students' Preference of the Appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> in the English Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Freq	Perc.
4	When do you think it is appropriate to use your first language in English class? Please make a tick (✓) mark to indicate your choices. More than one answer is possible.	1) To explain difficult concepts	76	76
		2) To introduce a lesson	53	53
		3) To summarize a lesson	52	52.52
		4) To test (e.g. by translation from one language to the other)	36	36
		5) To check for comprehension	75	75
		6) To elicit language (e.g., How do we say 'X' in English?)	61	62.24
		7) To use native culture as a context for English classroom activities	46	46
		8) To chat with the class about general matters (e.g. school holiday)	54	55.10
		9) To explain difficult grammar points	69	69
		10) To give the meaning of a new word	82	82
		11) To joke around with students	47	47
		12) To correct errors	65	65
		13) To praise for correct answers	70	71.43
		14) To explain the relationship between English and your first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc)	59	59
		15) To help you feel more comfortable and confident	60	60.61
		16) To criticize for wrong answers	41	41
		17) To give instructions.	60	60.61
		18) To explain new concepts	70	70
		19) To set and explain homework and class work	53	53.54
		20) To keep discipline	59	59
		21) To give whole class feedback	53	53
		22) In asking and answering questions	58	58.59
		23) Others, please specify _____		

Adapted from (Doff 1987 in Nuru 2008; Littlewood and Yu 2009; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002)

*Note that the percentage is calculated from the total number of students responded to each option as 'Yes' and 'No' in the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The existence of few non-respondents to some of the options could bring some frequencies' and percentages' differences.*

It can easily be observed from the above Table that the reactions of the students towards the scholarly suggested uses of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom differ in a seemingly desirable manner. They ranked them (the uses) from the most important to the least one. Accordingly, the top three appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> (favored by the students) in the English classroom are:

1. To give the meaning of a new word (82%)
2. To explain difficult concepts or ideas (76%)
3. To check for comprehension (75%)

The use of the mother tongue of the students to define new vocabulary items could attract the responses of a large number of students probably because of the factor that grade 9 students have the shortage of vocabularies of the target language. It's is also likely that the students have the knowledge of words stored in their minds in their first language and that they demand the use of their mother tongue to get the equivalent meanings of words of the English language.

Many students (76%), according to Table 3 above, also showed their preference to use their L<sub>1</sub> to explain difficult concepts or ideas as an appropriate use in the English classroom. This showed that difficult concepts can be made simple and understandable just by falling back to the students' L<sub>1</sub>.

Similarly high percentage of the students (75%) claimed that the right use of their L<sub>1</sub> in the English classes is to check for comprehension. It is obvious that teaching or learning language is said to be effective when students could comprehend or understand the lessons. Therefore, the students response implied that it is of great importance to use their first language to check whether students have understood what is being taught so that the teacher could go back to revise if there are any problems.

The above three uses of L<sub>1</sub> claimed by the students as the most important ones are also recommended in some previous research works. For example, 'to check for comprehension (Atkinson 1987; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002); defining new vocabulary items and explaining difficult concepts or ideas (Littlewood and Yu 2009).

Therefore, the teachers' use of the students' vernacular to carry out these important pedagogical activities/tasks is likely to facilitate and support the teaching and learning of English.

In the same Table above, there are also other pedagogical activities suggested by notable number of students, which require the use of their L<sub>1</sub>. For example, using their L<sub>1</sub> to explain new concepts and to explain difficult grammar points are respectively chosen by 70% and 69% of the student participants. And, some considerable number of students (65%) also indicated the use of L<sub>1</sub> in correcting errors as a useful instance.

These all seem to suggest that new concepts will become familiar when they are translated into the students vernacular so that it will be easy to deal with the details of the concepts after the students' conceptual understanding is secured. In addition it can be inferred from their responses that L<sub>1</sub> use can be an aid to explain difficult grammar points maybe to help the students relate the grammar of their first language and English to arrive at clear distinction and similarity of the two. This may help them to understand the structure of English grammar very well. Moreover, falling back to the students' vernacular during error correction might have been preferred by the students to help them make get correction as quickly as possible.

A comparable level of agreement (62.24%) was also observed on the use of L<sub>1</sub> for eliciting language and this indicates that the students require their teacher to make some pauses in the middle of teaching to ask questions of eliciting language (e.g. How do we say 'X' in English?)

which can be a feedback for the teacher, and an aid for students' understanding. Considerable figure was also appeared on the use of L<sub>1</sub> in providing instructions (60.61%). This also implies that students can be in some sort of trouble when they are instructed only in English language, to perform certain activities. This, hence suggests that telling the students using their L<sub>1</sub> what exactly they should do will eradicate the problems of misunderstanding and confusion and helps them act as they are required to act.

Turning back and having a more glance over the general figure presented in Table 3, it can be observed that a relatively low, but significant number of the students appear to suggest some other pedagogical activities which require the help of their L<sub>1</sub>. For example to explain the relationship between English and their first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc) (59%); 'to ask and answer questions' (58.59%); 'to introduce a lesson' (53%); to summarize a lesson (52.52%) and 'to test (e.g. by translation from one language to the other)' (36%). These results again, indicate that it is important to use limited L<sub>1</sub> while performing the activities to address the demand of the significant number of students.

The participant students did not only appear to insist on favoring the importance of using L<sub>1</sub> for pedagogic/methodological/reasons, but as the information of Table 3 reveals, they also suggested some managerial (classroom management) functions which require the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. Accordingly, about 70% of them preferred the importance of L<sub>1</sub> in 'praising for correct answers'; 59% of them 'to keep discipline'; 53% 'to set and explain homework and class work', and 'to give whole class feedback'; 41% of them 'to criticize for wrong answers'; and 54% 'to chat with the class about general matters.'

So, the agreement of the considerable number of the students for the use of their L<sub>1</sub> in the above activities tends to remind English language teachers to resort to the students' mother tongue when they deal with the aforementioned managerial functions.

Going back only once more to the same Table (Table 3) above, we can read the information of the two suggested uses of L<sub>1</sub> (psychological uses); 'to help the students feel more comfortable and confident' and 'to joke around with students'. They were preferred by 60.61% and 47% of the student participants respectively. These data indicate that reasonable amount of the students L<sub>1</sub> has something to do with learner's psychological functions. Therefore, motivational activities successfully attain their objectives when they are aided by limited amount of the students' vernacular in the English classroom.

Generally, the reactions of the students to all the given suggested uses of their L<sub>1</sub> tell us that using their vernacular in the English classroom has a number of functions. Therefore, these various roles should be given due consideration in the English classroom. Otherwise, the total exclusion of the students' mother tongue is likely to result in teaching the target language with the absence of all or some of the functions preferred by the students, or this leads to what Atkinson (1987:250) stated, "teaching with less than maximum efficiency".

No student participant provided valid responses to option 23.

**Table 4: The Students' Preference of the Extent of L<sub>1</sub> use in the English Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
5	What percent of English class time do you think your first language should be used? Choose one.	A) 1-10%	33	33
		B) 11-20%	19	19
		C) 21-30%	20	20
		D) 31-40%	5	5
		E) 41-50%	8	8
		F) 51-60%	8	8
		G) 61-70%	4	4
		H) 71-80%	2	2
		I) 81-90%	1	1
		J) 91-100%	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The Table above shows that most of the responses of the participant students are accumulated around the first three options i.e. a notable percentage of students would like L<sub>1</sub> to be used in English class either between 1 to 30%. These areas alone could attract 72 students or about 72% of the total respondents. From this the largest percentage of the participants (33%) preferred the ideal extent of their L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom to be between 1% and 10%. Other significant and equivalent percentages of the students (19% and 20% respectively) responded to the next two options, 11-20% and 21-30%. The information of the Table also shows that only small number of student participants' responses were scattered over the remaining options which suggest larger proportion of L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom. In other words, only 28% of the total respondents were interested to chose the various options ranging from 31%-100% with each option attracting insignificant percentage of responses (0-8%). This figure to some extent is comparable with the finding of Schweers (1999) conducted in the Spanish context.

This all tends to indicate that a small percent of the English class time should be allocated for the students' vernacular use so that the far larger proportion of the time should be dedicated to the use of the target language. Though there have been no literature works recommending the exact amount of L<sub>1</sub> to be used in EFL classroom (Stern 1992; Turnbull 2001 both cited in Kenenisa 2003), there exist ample amount of previous works which advise unquantifiable but small time or some time allocation for L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom (e.g. Atkinson 1987; Schweers 1999; Stern 1992 (in Kenenisa 2003); Tang 2002).

**Table 5: The Reasons of the Students for preferring to use L<sub>1</sub>, and their view on the Extent of the Importance of it (L<sub>1</sub>) in the English Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
6	If you prefer the use of your first language in English class, why? More than one answer is possible.	A) It is more comfortable	18	18
		B) I am less tense	15	15
		C) It facilitates my learning (I feel I learn more)	45	45
		D) It is more effective way of learning	46	46
		E) It aids comprehension greatly	45	45
	<b>Total</b>			
7	Do you believe that using your first language in your English class helps you learn the language (English)? Choose one.	A) No	5	5
		B) A little	16	16
		C) Fairly much	34	34
		D) A lot	45	45
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

As the data presented in the above Table show, it appears that the reasons of seeking the aid of L<sub>1</sub> in English class tend to vary among the participant students. However, the majority of them chose the following three rationales for preferring their L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom:

1. It is more effective way of learning (46%)
2. It facilitates my learning (I feel I learn more) (45%)
3. It aids comprehension greatly (45%)

Only relatively lower percentage of the students (18%) responded that they favor the use of their mother tongue because it is more comfortable, and the lowest percentage of them (15%) preferred for the factor that it minimizes their tension.

The results of item 6, of the Table, in general seemed to imply that in the first place students' preference of L<sub>1</sub> is based on certain reasons, and that no student needs the aid of the mother tongue for no reasons. In addition, the information interestingly indicated that the students' preference is more of for fundamental reasons than for pleasure/psychological reasons. This was shown by the majority students' choice of the three rationales all in relation to the teaching function.

Therefore, it should be noted that teachers' fall back to students L<sub>1</sub> and their permission to make them use their L<sub>1</sub> must be seen not in terms of the students' individual benefit, but it should be considered in terms its vitality for the effectiveness of the target language (English) teaching-learning.

On the other hand, the responses of the student participants to item 7 of the same Table revealed that the largest percentage of the students (45%) agreed that using their first language helps them 'a lot' to learn English language. Significant percentage of the students (34%) claimed that their L<sub>1</sub> use helps them 'fairly much' to learn the target language. Other relatively less number of students (16%) responded that their vernacular helps them 'a little' in learning the target language. The least number of students (5%) replied that their mother tongue does not help them to learn English at all.

From this all, it can be understood that though there are variation of degrees of agreement among them, the vast majority of the students see that their mother tongue helps them to learn English.

This, on the other hand, suggests that teachers of English should recourse to the students first language when and where necessary as far as the students' needs are concerned.

#### 4.1.2. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

**Table 6: The Responses of Teacher's on whether to use the Students' first Language and the Extent to which they like it to use in the Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Freq.	Perc.
1	Should students' first language (the language that they have full command of) be used in the English classroom?	A) Yes	10	66.67
		B) No	5	33.33
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Do you like, or would you to use the students' first language in class?	A) Not at all	2	13.33
		B) A little	5	33.33
		C) Sometimes	8	53.33
		D) A lot	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the information vividly presented in the Table above, notably high percentage of the teachers (66.67%) agreed that the students' mother tongue (L<sub>1</sub>) should be used in the English classroom. Only a small percentage of them (33.33%) are not in favor of the legality of using L<sub>1</sub> in English classes. The general figure shows that the English teachers themselves do not agree with the total exclusion of the students' mother tongue.

Logically following item 1, the responses of the teacher participants to item 2 of the Table similarly shows that the vast majority of the them desire to use the students' vernacular with certain variations of the degree of their like. Most (53.33%) of them responded that they like to use 'sometimes' while less but significant percentage of them (33.33%) replied that they like to use the students' L<sub>1</sub> 'a little'. Only few of them (13.33%) deny using it at all. Interestingly no teacher favored to use the students' mother tongue 'a lot' in English classroom. Therefore, most

teachers like to allow the use of L<sub>1</sub> in such a way that with neither total exclusion nor over dominance but in a limited amount.

**Table 7: Teachers' views about the Frequency of the use of the Students' L<sub>1</sub> in the English Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
3	How often do you think the students' first language should be used (to aid learning) in the English classroom?	A) Never	1	6.67
		B) Very rarely	5	33.33
		C) Sometimes	7	46.67
		D) Fairly frequently	2	13.33
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Similar to the information in the Table 6, the responses of the teachers to the extent of the students L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom (provided in Table 7 above) are concentrating mostly on two options: 'sometimes' (46.67%) and 'very rarely' (33.33%). But, only few numbers of teachers chose either of the options 'never' (6.67%) and 'fairly frequently' (13.33%). This all tells us that most teachers are in agreement with the notion that sometime should be allocated to the use of L<sub>1</sub> with the lion's share of time given to the target language.

Whatsoever, the results indicate that L<sub>1</sub> of the students' (Amharic) should be used to some degree in grade 9 of the two schools Debre Birhan and Baso Higher Secondary schools.

**Table 8: Teachers' Views of the appropriate uses of Students L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Freq.	Perc.
4	When do you think it is appropriate to use your first/language in English class? Please make a tick (✓) make to indicate your choices, More than one answer is possible	1. To explain difficult concepts	14	93.34
		2. To introduce a lesson	0	0
		3. To summarize a lesson	0	0
		4. To test (e.g. by translation from one language to the other)	0	0
		5. To check for comprehension	10	66.67
		6. To elicit language (e.g., How do we say 'X' in English?)	3	20
		7. To use native culture as a context for English classroom activities	7	46.67
		8. To chat with the class about general matters (e.g. school holiday)	5	33.33
		9. To explain difficult grammar points	8	53.33
		10. To give the meaning of a new word	3	20
		11. To joke around with students	3	20
		12. To correct errors	7	46.67
		13. To praise for correct answers	1	6.67
		14. To explain the relationship between English and the Students' first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc)	11	73.33
		15. To help them feel more comfortable and confident	2	13.33
		16. To criticize for wrong answer	0	0
		17. To give instructions	9	60
		18. To explain new concepts	3	20
		19. To set and explain homework and class work	1	6.67
		20. To keep discipline	5	33.33
		21. To give whole class feedback	0	0
		22. In asking and answering questions	0	0
		23. Others, please specify _____		

Adapted from (Doff 1987 in Nuru 2008; Littlewood and Yu 2009; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002)

The responses of the teacher participants about the appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> in English classroom (in the Table above) yielded very interesting results. There are seven most important uses of the students' L<sub>1</sub>

in the English classes according to the teacher respondents of this study. They all were favored by more than 45% of the teacher participants. Accordingly the students' L<sub>1</sub> is used to:

1. explain difficult concepts (93.33%)
2. explain the relationship between English and the students' first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc) (73.33%)
3. check for comprehension (66.67%)
4. give instructions (60%)
5. explain difficult grammar points (53.33%)
6. use native culture as a context for English classroom activities (46.67%)
7. correct errors (46.67%)

The responses of the teacher participants showing their interest in the above suggested uses of the students' first language indicate that they appear to admit the value of the students' mother tongue in teaching of English language. What is more interesting is that except the one written on number 6, all the above activities ranked by the teacher respondents were also favored by most students participated in this study (see Table 3 on page 39). Therefore it is quite worth saying that the use of L<sub>1</sub> plays a vital role if it is used to carryout activities which both the students and teachers chose as the appropriate ones demanding the aid of the mother tongue.

One or more of the activities suggested as the most appropriate uses for L<sub>1</sub> by students and teachers in this study are also supported by some previous studies or literatures (e.g. Atkinson 1987; Duff 1989; Cook 2001; Macaro (1997 in Cook 2001); Auerbach (1993 in Schweers 1999); Schweers 1999; Littlewood and Yu 2009).

Table 8 also shows that some activities attracted the interest of small number of teachers indicating that they also require some limited amount of the students' L<sub>1</sub> to be carried out. For

example, 'to chat with the class about general matters' (33.33%); 'to keep discipline' (33.33%); 'to elicit language' (20%); 'to give the meaning of a new word' (20%); 'to joke around with students' (20%); 'to explain new concepts' (20%). Only a very small percentage of them (6.67%) chose 'to praise for correct answers', and 'to set and explain homework and class work' as the appropriate uses for L<sub>1</sub> indicating that these activities hardly require the aid of L<sub>1</sub>.

Among the 22 options of suggested students' L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom, the remaining ones or six of them were totally ignored by the teacher respondents. This, perhaps, is because of the teachers' belief that falling back to the students' L1 is when the situation is strongly demanding and therefore in carrying out some limited important tasks.

For option 23 only one teacher participant suggested other but seemingly similar use of L1. S/he stated that it is quite useful to resort to the students' L1 when there are words which cannot be introduced with any other techniques and when using L1 has to be the only possible option. This comment appears to imply the fact that L1 is a resource to help the healthy teaching and learning of the target language and that certain situations force teachers to fall back to the students' L1.

**Table 9: Teachers' views on the Extent of the appropriate students' L<sub>1</sub> use in the English class time**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Frequency	Percentage
5	Please indicate the appropriate extent of the students' first language you think in English class time.	A) 0%	2	13.33
		B) 1-10%	11	73.33
		C) 11-20%	2	13.33
<b>Total</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 9 above clearly reveals that high percentage (73.33%) of the teacher participants agree that 1-10% of the English class time should be allocated to the students mother tongue use. Only 2% of the teacher respondents believed that 11-20% of L<sub>1</sub> use is appropriate. Other 2% of them

responded that no time should be allocated for the use of the students' vernacular in the English time. However, the agreement of the vast majority for some percent use of L<sub>1</sub> implies that limited time should be allocated for the students' L<sub>1</sub> in the English at least to deal with the most important activities ranked and favored by the majority teachers in the previous Table (Table 8 on page 50).

In fact, scholars are also reserved in quantifying the exact proportion of L<sub>1</sub>L<sub>2</sub> in EFL class time (Stern 1992; Turnbull 2001 cited in Kenenisa 2003) but they suggest that certain amount of time should be allocated for the use of mother tongue to carry out certain activities (Stern 1992 in Kenenisa 2003).

N.B: Though a number of options were provided to the teacher respondents on this item, no teacher participant responded beyond 20 % ( see Appendix B).

**Table 10: Reasons of Teacher Participants for the Necessity of Students' L<sub>1</sub>, and their views on the Importance of Using L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL Classroom**

Item No	Item's Stem	Options	Freq.	Perc.
6	If you think the use of the students' first language is necessary in English classroom, why?	A) It aids comprehension greatly	14	93.33
		B) It is an effective way of learning	7	46.67
		C) It is less time consuming	9	60
		D) Others, please specify _____ _____		
7	Do you believe using the students' first language helps them learn the language (English)?	A) No	0	0
		B) A little	7	46.67
		C) Fairly much	3	20
		D) A lot	5	33.33
	<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

As the data presented in the Table above vividly show, almost all teacher participants (93.33%) preferred the necessity of the students' L<sub>1</sub> use because it aids comprehension greatly. In addition,

notable percentage of them (60%) favored L<sub>1</sub> use because it is less time consuming while the lowest but still significant percentage (46.67%) of them attributed the reason for favoring the necessity of the students' mother tongue in the English classroom to its effectiveness as a way of teaching.

More importantly, the reactions of the teacher respondents about the fundamental reasons for which they prefer the students' L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom indicate that all the three suggested reasons deserve due consideration. This is because each suggested reason provided to them was able to attract the interest/attention of significant number of the respondents. Therefore, attributing the importance of the use of students' vernacular to these basic factors implies that the use of L<sub>1</sub> is very valuable in teaching the target language.

Regarding the last option of this question in which they were required to provide additional rationales for favoring the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom, only few teachers provided some reasons all of which are in one or other way categorized under the supplied options. This also indicates that the teachers fundamentally prefer the use of the students' L<sub>1</sub> for the provided reasons in the Table 6.

The responses of the participant teachers to item 7 of the same Table show that no teacher respondent did have the view that the use of the students L<sub>1</sub> doesn't help them to learn English. Rather, their responses distributed over the various extent of its importance to help the students learn English. Accordingly, most teachers (46.67%) agreed that the students' L<sub>1</sub> has a little role to play in helping them learn the English language. Other significant number (33.3%) of them claimed that they believe the students' mother tongue helps them a lot to learn English. The other percentage (20%) responded that it helps them (the students) fairly much in learning the target language.

These results generally indicate that regardless of the difference of their beliefs on the extent of the L<sub>1</sub> help for the students to learn English, all of them appeared to admit its value. Therefore, this shows that the use of L<sub>1</sub> helps the students as an aid to learning English, and it should be used to some degree in Debre Birhan and Baso Higher Secondary Schools.

## 4.2. Interview Results

### 4.2.1. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

This section consists of the summary of the four teachers' reactions to the four interview questions provided to them.

**Question 1:** Do you think that it is important to use the students' first language in the English classroom? If Yes, when? If No, why?

In response to this question the teacher participants' views appeared to be identical that all of them answered 'Yes' admitting the importance of the use of the students' mother tongue in the English classroom. Therefore, they suggested a number of situations or classroom activities which relatively demand the use of the students' L<sub>1</sub>. For example, teacher one commented that difficult concepts, new and difficult grammar points are areas requiring the aid of the students' mother tongue. He also added that sometimes some English words remain un-understood unless they are translated into the students' vernacular. Hence using L<sub>1</sub> in this kind of situations facilitate comprehension and also saves time. Teacher one further suggested that it is advisable to use the learners' L<sub>1</sub> to elicit their background knowledge regarding some concepts and, when it is recognized that the students have limited vocabulary knowledge on some lesson areas and when there are complex (technical) concepts which are common in the students' society in their first language: for example, uvulectomy=አንጥል ማስቆረጥ

Similarly, teacher 2 is in a position to favor falling back to the learners' L<sub>1</sub> during oral classroom discussion; in teaching vocabularies; to save time in certain demanding situations; and for making sure that everything is clear. Teacher 3 on his part suggested when to recourse to the use of the students' L<sub>1</sub> in a short expression i.e. 'whenever the understanding is impaired'.

The last teacher (teacher 4) listed some detailed ideas but related with the ideas of the other three teachers. He commented that the use of the students L<sub>1</sub> is necessary to explain difficult words i.e. when it is indicative that understanding the words necessarily requires the help of the mother tongue. In addition, according to teacher 2 it is important to use the learners' L<sub>1</sub> to set homework's and class works, to save time, to introduce the contexts of grammar points/lessons, to translate technical words when teaching grammar forms/structures.

Generally, the reactions of the participant teachers to the first interview question indicate that all of them are in agreement with the importance of the students' L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom. As a result, the teachers suggested that there are various particular areas which require the use of to mother tongue to facilitate and support the teaching and learning of the target language. The appropriate uses of L<sub>1</sub> the teachers suggested when they were interviewed are similar to the ones which got the highest priority in the students' and teachers' questionnaires (See Table 3 and 8 on page on pp.39&49), indicating that L<sub>1</sub> use should be given considerable attention when dealing with those areas/activities/situations.

**Question: 2** What Percent of English Class time do you think the Students' first Language Should be Used?

The reactions of the interviewee teachers to this question are to some extent similar to the suggested percentages which are preferred by the majority of the student and teacher respondents in the

questionnaires. Teacher 1 said that 1-10% of the English class time is enough for the use of the students' L<sub>1</sub>. He preferred this percentage because he believes that the areas demanding the mother tongue use are limited; therefore, limited time should be allocated to the use of the L<sub>1</sub>. He adds that using more than this percent of the time may reduce the students' exposure to English. Teacher 2 similarly said that 3-10% of the total English class time should be allocated for the students' mother tongue use. He estimated this limited amount to be enough because the ultimate goal of teaching is to help students communicate in English and therefore the use of L<sub>1</sub> should be minimized.

However, teacher 3 and teacher 4 respectively suggested that the time of L<sub>1</sub> use can range up to 30% and 25%. Teacher 3 attempted to rationalize why he preferred this much time, and that he said that though the priority should be given to the target language, if it is recognized that the students are in trouble, it is important to fall back to L<sub>1</sub> as necessary and as much as possible. Teacher 4 on his part is in a position to prefer the specified percentage of L<sub>1</sub> use in the English classroom because he believes that the frequent recourse to the students' vernacular is vital in maintaining good interaction and communication between teacher and students.

Interestingly, the data about the percentage of L1 use in the English class time found from the participant teachers through interview are highly comparable with the ones obtained by the students' and teachers' questionnaire( see Table 4 and 9 on pp. 44&51). Therefore it is advisable to allocate a time ranging from 1% to 30% of the class time to the students L1to facilitate and aid the teaching learning of the target language in Debre Birhan and Baso higher secondary schools.

**Question: 3** What do you think has to be done to make the proper use of the students' mother tongue or first language in English class?

In reaction to this question, the teacher interviewees appeared to hold the views that the use of the students' mother tongue in the English classroom should be as a useful source to aid the teaching

and learning of the target language; but it should not be the teaching of translation as a discrete element. So their view in general is in agreement with what is recommended by Duff (1989:3)

For example, teacher 1 said that teachers should be systematic when they make use of the students' mother tongue so as not harm the exposure of them (students) to the target language. He also commented that teachers should read from the face of the students and other indicative situations to fall back to the L<sub>1</sub> use; for example when the classroom is totally passive it is likely that the students are in need of some sort of translation. In agreement to teacher 1, teacher 2 also recommended that the wise use of L<sub>1</sub> as a facilitative and supporting function is by the teachers' decision to recourse to it (L<sub>1</sub>) only when the situation forces them to do so. Similarly, teacher 3 warned that the use of the students' first language should be with great caution, and that the priority should be given to English and falling back to L<sub>1</sub> should be based only on justifiable reasons. Teacher 4 on his part suggested that to make the students' vernacular an aid to the teaching and learning of English, the teachers should first study the students' background- .e.g whether they are from rural or urban areas, the students existing level of proficiency, the content areas where L<sub>1</sub> is coming, etc.

In general, regarding how to make the proper use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom, almost all the teacher participants of this study are in a position to support the principle that the primacy of the target language should be given the higher emphasis, and the use of L<sub>1</sub> should be employed when and where necessary. Therefore, they tend to share similar views with various advocates of L<sub>1</sub> use (e.g. Atkinson 1987; Cook 2001; Schweers 1999; Tang 2002).

**Question: 4.** Obviously, the current extent of students' first language in the English class differs among teachers of English; what do you think should be done to avoid this inconsistency?

This question, in fact, was ultimately intended to gather information from the teacher participants regarding the necessity of the studies of my present study kind. Fortunately, almost all of them immediately started recommending that the area should be researched and the use of L<sub>1</sub> should be accordingly. For example teacher 2 said that the area has to be researched and the necessity of the use of the students' mother tongue should be assessed before deciding to fall back to L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. This, according to him, is important to treat the use of L<sub>1</sub> based on verified standards or principles. In addition, teacher 3 commented that the use of L<sub>1</sub> should be implemented based on the results of experiments which identify the appropriate time and/or situation, the right reasons and optimum amount of its use in the English classroom. Moreover, teacher 4 recommended that the syllabus, the teacher guide or the text book should specify where, when and in what proportion the mother tongue is used. So that the present inconsistency can be avoided or reduced to the minimum level possible. What is more, teacher 1 and teacher 4 similarly commented that there have to be frequent class supervision, formal and informal discussion, experience sharing, etc, at least at a school level so that all teachers are likely to make use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classrooms in similar ways.

The reactions of the participant teachers to question 4 generally indicated that there should be prior assessments for the necessity of the L<sub>1</sub> in the given situation to eradicate the problem of inconsistency on the use of the students' mother tongue, among different English teachers. The teachers tend to agree with what is recommended by Nuru (2008: 16).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Conclusions

In this study, attempts were made to find answers to the following basic questions:

1. What is the attitude of students and teachers towards the importance of the use of first language (Amharic) in the English classroom?
2. For what reasons do students and teachers think L<sub>1</sub> should be used in the English classroom?
3. When do students and teachers think that it is appropriate to use L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom?
4. What proportion(amount) of L<sub>1</sub> use in the EFL classroom do students and teachers believe to be appropriate?

To this effect, 100 grade 9 students and their 15 English teachers were randomly selected from Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools as the subjects of the study. Two research tools, questionnaire and interview, were used to gather relevant data for the study. The data obtained through both instruments were analyzed in such a way that the quantitative data gathered through the close-ended questions of the questionnaire were tallied, the frequencies were changed into percentages and the numerical figures were presented in tabular form. Each Table was immediately followed by discussions and interpretations.

On the other hand, the qualitative data obtained through the few open-ended questions of the questionnaire and interview questions were sorted out, summarized and presented in the form of

reports. These were also accompanied by discussions and interpretations right after each summary of the results.

Therefore, based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

The data obtained through the research tools showed that both teachers and students of grade 9 in Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools believe that it is useful to use L<sub>1</sub> (Amharic) in the English classroom. It was revealed that they accepted the relevance of using Amharic in teaching English.

From the results of the study, it was also revealed that there are particular times/situations when students and teachers suggest the appropriate use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. For example, the students believe that using L<sub>1</sub> is mainly appropriate in performing some activities. Thus, the following are the most important uses of L<sub>1</sub> in their order of preferences suggested by more than 60% of the participant students:

1. to give the meanings of new words
2. to explain difficult concepts
3. to check for comprehension
4. to praise for correct answers
5. to explain new concepts
6. to explain difficult grammar points
7. to correct errors
8. to elicit language
9. to provide instruction

In fact, there are also other uses of L<sub>1</sub> which were favored by significant number of the students (see Table 3 on page 39).

Similarly, the teacher participants of this study have shown their agreement upon some uses of the students' L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom. Here are some appropriate uses which more than 45% of the teachers appeared to suggest, in their order of preferences:

1. to explain difficult concepts
2. to explain the relationship between English and the students' first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc)
3. to check for comprehension
4. to give instructions
5. to explain difficult grammar points
6. to correct errors
7. to use native culture as a context for English classroom activities

From the teachers' and students' appropriate suggestion of the uses of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom, about five uses are common to both-indicating that both of them appeared to suggest L<sub>1</sub> use for similar purposes.

Therefore, both students and teachers believe that there exist certain pedagogical activities requiring the use of L<sub>1</sub> for facilitating and supporting the teaching and learning of English.

In addition, from the findings of the study, reliable evidence appeared which indicated the fundamental rationales for which students and teachers favor the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom. Accordingly, both of them justified the necessity to allow the use of L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom basically for the reasons that L<sub>1</sub> use: 1) aids comprehension greatly 2) is an effective way of learning and 3) saves time. They attributed mainly these three essential reasons to the importance of the L<sub>1</sub> in the English classroom.

It was also found out that 'sometimes' or time ranging from 1% to 30% of the English class time should be allocated for the use of the L<sub>1</sub> depending on situations.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the general study and the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are made.

1. Baso and Debre Birhan higher secondary schools grade 9 English teachers should recourse to the students' L<sub>1</sub>(Amharic) based on the suggested uses, the right reasons and the ideal extent of L<sub>1</sub> use assessed and specified in this study (on pages 60-61) after making sure that no student is unable to communicate in Amharic.
2. With some reservations, it can also be recommended that the English teachers of other grade levels and other areas of monolingual classes may make the use of the students' mother tongue in EFL classroom on the basis of the necessities of L<sub>1</sub> assessed in this study.
3. It is advised that Teachers Training Institutions (Colleges or Universities) should equip English language teacher trainees with knowledge about appropriate uses of students' L<sub>1</sub>; justifiable reasons for using L<sub>1</sub> and the optimum extent (amount) of L<sub>1</sub>, to facilitate and support the teaching-learning of English.
4. Curriculum and syllabus designers and textbook writers had better indicate English language teachers some common basis about the proper uses of L<sub>1</sub> in the EFL classroom to aid the target language learning so that the current inconsistency on the use of L<sub>1</sub> among English teachers will be avoided or minimized in the country at large.
5. Interested researchers on or around the issue of L<sub>1</sub> use may use the results of this study for further exploration.

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# APPENDIX A

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**  
**Institute of Language Studies**  
**Department of English**  
**Questionnaire for Students**

Dear students! The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information concerning the importance of first language/mother tongue in the English classroom. The information will be used only for a research purpose and hence will be kept confidential. Hence, you are kindly requested to give your genuine responses thoughtfully to all the items of the questionnaire. Your participation is vital and contributes a lot to the effectiveness of the research and therefore highly appreciated. Please **circle** the letter(s) of your choice, **put a tick (✓)** mark or **fill** the blank spaces as required to indicate your responses. You are not required to write your name.

**Thank you in Advance!**

1. What is your first language or the language that you have full command of?  
A) Amharic                      B) Afan Oromoo C) Tigrigna  
D) Other, please specify, \_\_\_\_\_
2. Should your first language be used in the English classroom?  
A) Yes                              B) No
3. Do you like, or would you like your English teacher to use your first language in class? Choose one.  
A) Not at all    B) A little                      C) Sometimes    D) A lot

4. When do you think it is appropriate to use your first language in English class? Please make a tick (✓) mark to indicate your choices. More than one answer is possible.

Suggested Uses of L1	Yes	No
1) To explain difficult concepts		
2) To introduce the lesson		
3) To summarize the lesson		
4) To test (.e.g. by translation from one language to the other)		
5) To check for comprehension		
6) To elicit language (e.g., How do we say 'X' in English?)		
7) To use native culture as a context for English classroom activities		
8) To chat with the class about general matters (e.g. school holiday)		
9) To explain difficult grammar points		
10) To give the meaning of a new word		
11) To joke around with students		
12) To correct errors		
13) To praise for correct answers		
14) To explain the relationship between English and your first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc)		
15) To help you feel more comfortable and confident		
16) To criticize for wrong answers		
17) To give instructions		
18) To explain new concepts		
19) To set and explain homework and class work		
20) To keep discipline		
21) To give whole class feedback		
22) In asking and answering questions		
23) Other reasons, please specify _____ _____		

5. What percent of English class time do you think your first language should be used? Choose one.

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| A) 0% - 10%  | F) 51% - 60%  |
| B) 11% - 20% | G) 61% - 70%  |
| C) 21% - 30% | H) 71% - 80%  |
| D) 31% - 40% | I) 81% - 90%  |
| E) 41% - 50% | J) 91% - 100% |

6. If you prefer the use of your first language in English class, why?

- A) It is more comfortable
- B) I am less tense
- C) It facilitates my learning (I feel I learn more)
- D) It is more effective way of learning
- E) It is less time consuming
- F) If others, please specify, \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you believe that using your first language in your English class helps you learn the language (English)? Choose one.

- A) No
- B) A little
- C) Fairly much
- D) A lot

Thank you once more!

## APPENDIX B

Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies  
Faculty of Language Studies (FLS)  
Department of English

### Questionnaire for Grade 9 English Teachers

Dear Teacher! The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information for a research entitled, "An Assessment of the Necessities of L1 in the EFL Classroom". Hence, you are kindly requested to give your genuine responses thoughtfully to all the items of the questionnaire. Your responses will be used only for a research purpose and that they will be kept confidential. Your participation is very much vital for the effectiveness of the research and therefore highly appreciated. Please indicate your responses by circling the letter(s) of your choice, by putting a tick (✓) mark or by filling the blank spaces as required.

**Thank you in advance!**

#### *General Information*

Sex: A) Female B) Male

Qualification: A) Diploma B) Degree C) Masters

Service Years: A) 1-5 B) 6-10 C) 11-16 D) 16 and above

1. Should students' first language (the language that they have full command of) be used in the English classroom?  
A) Yes B) No
2. Do you like, or would you like to use the students' first language in class?  
A) Not at all B) A little C) Sometimes D) A lot
3. How often do you think the students' first language should be used [to aid learning] in the English classroom?  
A) Never C) Sometimes  
B) Very rarely D) Fairly frequently

4. When do you think it is appropriate to use the students' first language in the English class?

Please make a tick (✓) mark to indicate your choices.

Suggested Uses of L1	Yes	No
1) To explain difficult concepts		
2) To introduce the lesson		
3) To summarize the lesson		
4) To test (e.g. by translation from one language to the other)		
5) To check for comprehension		
6) To elicit language (e.g., How do we say 'X' in English?)		
7) To use native culture as a context for English classroom activities		
8) To chat with the class about general matters (e.g. school holiday)		
9) To explain difficult grammar points		
10) To give the meaning of a new word		
11) To joke around with students		
12) To correct errors		
13) To praise for correct answers		
14) To explain the relationship between English and their first language (e.g. phonology, morphology, grammar, etc)		
15) To help them feel more comfortable and confident		
16) To criticize for wrong answers		
17) To give instructions		
18) To explain new concepts		
19) To set and explain homework and class work		
20) To keep discipline		
21) To give whole class feedback		
22) In asking and answering questions		
23) ) Other reasons, please specify _____ _____		

5. If you think the use of the students' first language is necessary in the English classroom, why?

A) It aids comprehension greatly

B) It is more effective way of learning

C) It is less time consuming

D) Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please indicate the appropriate proportion of the students' first language you think in English class time:

A) 0%

B) 1% - 10%

C) 11% - 20%

D) 21% - 30%

E) 31% - 40%

F) 41% - 50%

G) 51% - 60%

H) 61% - 70%

I) 71% - 80%

J) 81% - 90%

K) 91% - 100%

7. Do you believe using the students' first language in English class helps them learn the language?

A) No

B) A little

C) Fairly much

D) A lot

Thank you once again!

## **APPENDIX C**

**Addis Ababa University**

**School of Graduate Studies**

**Faculty of Language Studies (FLS)**

**Department of English**

### **Interview Questions for Grade 9 English Teachers**

1. Do you think that it is important to use the students' first language in the English classroom?  
If yes when? If no why?
2. What percent of English class time do you think the students' first language should be used?  
Why?
3. What do you think has to be done to make the proper use of the students' mother tongue or first language in English class?
4. Obviously, the current extent of first language use in the English class differs among teachers of English; what do you think should be done to avoid this inconsistency?

# APPENDIX D

## አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ቤት የማህበራዊ ሳይንስና ሂማኒቲስ ኮሌጅ የቋንቋዎች ጥናት ፋኩልቲ የእንግሊዝኛ ትምህርት ክፍል

### ለፃኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች የተዘጋጀ መጠይቅ

ውድ ተማሪ!

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዓላማ በእንግሊዝኛ ክፍል ጊዜ የተማሪዎች የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋ ጠቀሜታ ላይ ለማደረገው ጥናት መረጃዎችን መሰብሰብ ነው። በመሆኑም መልሶችህ/ሽ ለጥናት ዓላማ ብቻ የሚውሉ በመሆናቸው እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በትንንት እንድትመልስ/ሽ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። መልስህ/ሽን የመረጥከውን/ሺው ሆሂያትን በመክበብ፣ የራይት(✓) በማድረግ ወይም ባዶ ቦታዎችን በመሙላት አመልክት/ቺ።

### በቅድሚያ አመለግናለሁ!

- የመጀመሪያ(ማለትም ያለምንም ችግር አቀላጥፊህ/ሽ የምትጠቀም/ሚው) ቋንቋህ/ሽ ምንድን ነው?  
 ሀ) አማርኛ                      ለ) ኦሮምኛ                      ሐ) ትግሪኛ  
 መ) ሌላ፣ ሌላ ከሆነ እባክህ/ሽን (ፃፈው/ፈው) \_\_\_\_\_
- የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋህ/ሽን በእንግሊዝኛ ክፍል ጊዜ መጠቀም ተገቢ ይመስልሃል/ሻል?  
 ሀ) አዎ                              ለ) አይደለም
- የእንግሊዝኛ መምህርህ/ሽ የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋህ/ሽን እንዲጠቀሙ ትፈልጋለህ/ጊያለሽ? አንዱን ምረጥ/ጩ።  
 ሀ) በፍጹም አልፈልግም                      ሐ) አንዳንድ ጊዜ እፈልጋለሁ  
 ለ) በጥቂቱ እፈልጋለሁ                      መ) ብዙ ጊዜ

4. በአንተ ወይም በአንቺ ግምት የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋ በእንግሊዝኛ ክፍለ ጊዜ መጠቀም ተገቢ የሚሆነው መቼ ነው? የራይት ምልክት(✓) በማድረግ መልስህ/ሽን አመልክት/ቺ። ከአንድ በላይ መምረጥ ይቻላል።

ግምታዊ የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋ ጠቀሜታዎች	አዎ	አይደለም
1) ከባድ ፅንፈ ሀሳቦችን ለማብራራት		
2) ለትምህርት መግቢያ		
3) ለዕለት ትምህርት ማጠቃለያ		
4) የእንግሊዝኛ ፈተና በሚሠጥበት ወቅት		
5) መረዳትን ለማረጋገጥ		
6) የትምህርት ግልፅ መሆን በተዘዋዋሪ መረጃ ለማግኘት (ለምሳሌ “X”ን በእንግሊዝኛ እንዴት እንላለን?)		
7) አገር በቀል ባህሎችን ለእንግሊዝኛ መማሪያ አውድ ለመጠቀም		
8) ስለአጠቃላይ ጉዳዮች ከክፍል ተማሪዎች ጋር ለማውራት (ለምሳሌ ስለ ትምህርት ቤት በዓላት)		
9) ከባድ ሰዎች ነጥቦች ለማብራራት		
10) አዳዲስ ቃላትን ለመተርጉም ወይም ለመበየን		
11) ለጭውውትና ቀልድ ጊዜ		
12) ስህተቶችን ለማረም		
13) ትክክለኛ መልስ የመለሱትን ለማበረታታት		
14) በእንግሊዝኛና በመጀመሪያ ቋንቋህ/ሽ መካከል ያለውን ግንኙነት ለማብራራት (ለምሳሌ በቃላት አጠራር፣ በድምፅ አፈጣጠር፣ የቃላት ወይም የአርፍተ ነገር አወቃቀር፣ የሰዎሰው፣ ወዘተ)		
15) የበለጠ ምቹትና በራስ መተማመን እንዲሰማችው ለማድረግ		
16) ትክክለኛ መልስ ያልመለሱትን ለመገሰፅ		
17) መመሪያዎችን ለመስጠት		
18) አዳዲስ ፅንፈ ሀሳቦችን ለማብራራት		
19) የቤት ሥራና የክፍል ሥራን ለመስጠትና ለማብራራት		
20) ተማሪዎችን ለመቆጣጠር		
21) አጠቃላይ ምጋቤ-ምላሽ ለመስጠት		
22) ጥያቄ ለመጠየቅና መልስ ለመስጠት		
23) ሌሎች ካሉ ግፍ/ፊ. _____		

5. ከአጠቃላይ የእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ክፍለ ጊዜ ምን ያህሉን ለመጀመሪያ ቋንቋ መጠቀሚያ ማድረግ ተገቢ ይመስልሃል/ሻል? አንዱን ምረጥ/ጩ::

- ሀ) 0% - 10%
- ለ) 11% - 20%
- ሐ) 21% - 30%
- መ) 31% - 40%
- ሠ) 41% - 50%
- ረ) 51% - 60%
- ሰ) 61% - 70%
- ሸ) 71% - 80%
- ቀ) 81% - 90%
- በ) 91% - 100%

6. በእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት ክፍለ ጊዜ የመጀመሪያ ቋንቋህ/ሽን መጠቀምን የምትመርጠው/ጩው በዋናነት ለምንድን ነው?

- ሀ) የበለጠ ምቹት ስለሚሰጠኝ    መ) የበለጠ ውጤታማ መንገድ ስለሆነ
- ለ) ጭንቀት ስለሚቀንስልኝ    ሠ) ትምህርቱን ቶሎ እንድረዳ ስለሚረዳኝ
- ሐ) የበለጠ እንድማር ስለሚረዳኝ
- ረ) ሌላ ካለ \_\_\_\_\_

7. ለእንግሊዘኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት ጊዜ የመጀመሪያው ቋንቋህ/ሽን መጠቀም እንግሊዘኛን ለመማር ይጠቅምሃል/ሻል? አንዱን ምረጥ/ጩ


- ሀ) አይደለም
- ለ) በጥቂቱ
- ሐ) በብዙ
- መ) እጅግ በብዙ

በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ !

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and that all sources or materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Tariku Anega

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 06/06/11

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