

Abstract

This case study was intended to find out whether teachers are impelled or compelled to use L1 (Tigrigna) in teaching English. Two teachers of English participated in the study. Data were gathered through naturalistic observation (video recording), stimulated recall discussion and informal interview. The data were analyzed using qualitative method as well as simple descriptive statistics (percent). The results of this study showed that the teachers switch to L1 mostly because they were impelled 74.73 % which was caused by the teachers' estimated perceptions of their students' proficiency and lesson content; beliefs and attitudes of English and L1. However, contextual factors also found to compel teachers to resort to L1 Tigrigna in 25.26 % of the instances of Tigrigna use. The use of Tigrigna was considered inappropriate and ineffective in most of the instances 66.31%. It was recommended that EFL teachers should consider their thoughts, perceptions, about their students' and the context; assess their students' proficiency level, complexity of the lesson content; improve their classroom setting and use instructional aides to minimize the inappropriate use of L1. Experience sharing and self-evaluation on their teaching would also be helpful to minimize the inappropriate and unnecessary switch to L1 in the classroom. It was also recommended that the teachers should be assisted through training, workshops, seminars concerning the use of L1 that focuses on the teachers' beliefs and attitudes of English and L1 and teacher talk. Providing appropriate teaching materials and reconsidering the proportionality of the content and time provided to the courses would also be helpful.