An investigation into Norwegian EFL teachers’ perceptions about target language use

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Mother tongue (MT) use has been ostracized in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms as a form of poor teaching with negative effects on target language (TL) acquisition (McMillan & Rivers, 2011). However, neither research on the potential disadvantages of teaching approaches that integrate MT use nor on the positive effects of an all-TL learning environment is conclusive (Hall & Cook, 2012), which means that no clear guidelines for teachers are available. Unlike the curricula of other countries, where policy makers often suggest the maximal use of TL, the Norwegian curriculum for the subject of English does not contain any direct statements prescribing English as the sole language of instruction. The present study investigated the perceptions of Norwegian EFL teachers regarding their TL use. The study focused on the following research questions: (1) How often do teachers use English in the EFL classroom? (2) In what situations and for what purposes do teachers use the TL? (3) Is there a correlation between years of teaching experience and the amount of TL use in the classroom? (4) Do teachers who have college credits in English employ the TL to a larger extent than the teachers who do not? The participants’ self-reports suggest TL use up to 50% of the time, and that TL use varies from giving instructions and stating objectives to giving praise and criticism. Nevertheless, no relationship was found between the amount of TL used and teachers’ expertise in and experience teaching the TL.

References:


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