津田塾大学審査学位論文（博士）

The Effects of L1 and L2 Use in the L2 Classroom: Cases in L2 Reading

Comprehension with Peer-interaction Activities

by

Yuko Matsumoto

Summary

This paper investigates the effects of language use during peer interaction on reading comprehension and reading attitudes in the English classroom. It has been long debated whether students' first language (L1) should be allowed or excluded in the second language (L2) classroom. The current trend of English education in Japan has been oriented toward an "English-only" approach. That is, teachers and students are strongly encouraged to use English for instruction and production regardless of the proficiency level, the content of a lesson, or the purpose of a class. At the same time, the trend is toward eliminating students' L1 (Japanese), which is considered as an obstacle for L2 learning. Yet research to date in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has not proven the clear superiority of exclusive L2 use for teaching or learning. In fact, various researchers have pointed out the benefits of partial L1 use during the L2 lesson as a means of providing students with pedagogical and affective support. For instance, the L1 can be effectively used by students for regulating cognitive processes, enhancing vocabulary learning, raising the quality of L2 output, enabling higher-level text comprehension, and promoting collaboration. When it is used by the teacher, the L1 is beneficial for increasing efficiency and accuracy of instruction as well as for building rapport and maintaining discipline.

Considering such practical benefits of L1 support in the L2 classroom, it seems rather inflexible to insist on eliminating the use of the L1 in favor of only providing instructions via the L2. Instead, it would be more logical to seek effective ways to partially use the L1 as a support for promoting L2 learning, in light of empirical research as well as SLA theories. The current study, which has been designed with that purpose in mind, pursues two goals in particular. The first goal is to examine the effect of students' "language use in either the L1 or L2" (henceforth referred to simply as "language use") during peer interaction on L2 learning and reading. The second goal is to theoretically and empirically present effective ways of language use in the L2 classroom, drawing on theoretical support that includes Cummins' (2001) concept of "common

underlying proficiency," "multi-competence" proposed by V. Cook (2008), and the changing roles of English from a sociolinguistic perspective. Furthermore, in order to specify the circumstances of the L1 and L2 use, this paper's literature review examines the levels and settings of reading as well as the influential factors for L2 reading. The researcher hopes that the suggested models of language use will pave the way for a new teaching approach that can optimize the L1 use to promote L2 learning.

The current study conducted an experiment focusing on Japanese university students, who consisted of two cohorts: upper-intermediate and novice levels. Each cohort was divided into two groups: one group that engaged in pair work in the L1 (Japanese) and the other that conducted the pair work in the L2 (English). The procedure of the experiment was as follows. First, the participants read a short reading passage (a newspaper editorial) individually without consulting a dictionary. Second, after the reading text was removed, a buffer task was conducted, through which the participants provided information regarding their English learning experiences, their evaluation of text difficulty, and their background knowledge about the topic of the text. Third, the participants engaged in pair work to discuss seven focus questions intended to have them recall essential information about the text. As described above, for each level, half of the participants did L1 pair work and the other half did L2 pair work. Fourth, the participants took a text-removed summary completion test individually. Fifth, the participants answered the post-research questionnaire. Finally, one week after the class, the participants took a delayed summary completion test without consulting the reading text or a dictionary. The data obtained was analyzed statistically via a two-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-test, and Pearson's chi-square. Some of the data was also analyzed descriptively. The purpose of this data analysis is to answer the following five research questions that the current study has presented:

1. Does the language use during the pair work influence the results of the summary completion

test and the delayed summary completion test; and does this influence vary depending on the English proficiency levels?

2. Does the language use during the pair work influence the pair-work production; and does this influence vary depending on the English proficiency levels?

3. Does the language use during the pair work influence the numerical and survey evaluation of the pair work; and does this influence vary depending on the English proficiency levels?

4. Does the language use during the pair work influence pair-work language preference and the survey evaluation; and does this influence vary depending on the English proficiency levels?

5. Do the different circumstances of the reading lesson influence the participants' language preference, L1 or L2?

The results of the current study are summarized as follows according to each research question (RQ). RQ (1) explored the influence of pair-work language use on L2 reading comprehension. The study has found that for both proficiency levels (upper-intermediate and novice), there was no significant difference between the L1 and L2 pair-work groups in terms of participants' performance on the summary completion test or delayed summary completion test at statistically significant level. RQ (2) examined the results of pair work (i.e., scores of focus questions), which showed that the L1 pair-work groups significantly surpassed the L2 pair-work groups at both the upper-intermediate and novice levels. In addition, the elicited audio-recorded pair work (four pairs in each L1 and L2 pair-work group at each level: total 16 pairs' recording) indicated that L1 pairs in general had more active peer interaction (e.g., equal contribution between the participants, more turn-takings). This clearly suggests that the L1 pair work was

beneficial for promoting peer interaction and enhancing the quality of pair-work production. RQ (3) explored the evaluation of the pair work by the L1 and L2 pair-work groups at each level. Both L1 and L2 groups at the upper-intermediate level valued the pair work positively and there was no significant difference between the groups. The novice level, on the other hand, showed a significant difference between the two groups. That is, the L1 group valued the pair work significantly more than the L2 group. These results indicate that the L1 pair work was beneficial for the novice participants, and that this benefit is clearly recognized by the participants. With regard to RQ (4), the preference of pair-work language (L1 preference, L2 preference, or no preference) was significantly different between the L1 and L2 groups at the upper-intermediate level. That is, the preference by the L2 pair-work group split almost evenly among the three categories, whereas the vast majority of the L1 pair-work group showed an L1 preference. The novice level, on the other hand, did not indicate any significant difference between the L1 and L2 pair-work groups. The majority of them showed an L1 preference. Finally RQ (5) examined the participants' language preference in eight different circumstances during the reading lesson. The results showed that the L1 is preferred when the participants want to precisely understand the content of given information, such as when the teacher is explaining grammar rules or structures; explaining answers of reading comprehension questions, or making classroom announcements. The L2 is preferred, on the other hand, when certain patterns of interaction can be expected, such as when the teacher is providing the answers to reading comprehension questions or asking questions. These results indicate that participants' language preference significantly varies according to the circumstances of the lesson.

As for the first goal of the current study, which is to examine the effects of peer-

interaction language use on L2 reading and reading attitudes, the researcher has confirmed the following five points as conclusions. First, it is possible to use either the L1 or L2 flexibly during pair work for reading comprehension after carefully considering learners' proficiency level and the purpose of the lesson. Second, L1 use is beneficial to pair-work production, both quantitatively and qualitatively, regardless of proficiency levels. Third, the novice learners tend to appreciate L1 pair work much more than L2 pair work. Fourth, the upper-intermediate level seems capable of conducting L2 pair work if necessary, while the novice level seems to have difficulty in taking part in L2 pair work effectively unless sufficient support is provided. Finally, as the fifth conclusion, appropriate language use appears to change according to the circumstances of the lesson.

With regard to the other goal of this paper, which is to theoretically and empirically present effective ways of partially using the L1 to promote L2 learning, the researcher has suggested three models associated with (a) a twofold focus of L2 learning/teaching, (b) the process of the L2 lesson, and (c) the learners' proficiency level and circumstances of the lesson.

Although further research is needed to more clearly identify types of effective language use in the L2 classroom, this paper has been able to meet the two main research goals described above.