USE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN ESP CLASSES

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The revival of interest in using the mother tongue in English classroom is caused by the necessity to improve language accuracy and fluency. In the past, learners' mother tongue has been negatively viewed because of linguistic transfer or interference, such as under- or overproduction and misinterpretation. Students use their mother tongue in class if they are linguistically incapable of activating vocabulary. Another reason is that translation is a natural thing to do in language learning, and code-switching between languages is regarded as a naturally developmental phenomenon. There is an opinion that eliminating or limiting the native language does not guarantee better acquisition. Translation as a teaching tool needs to take into account grammar, syntax and other aspects of language. However good the students are at understanding authentic materials, some of them keep mentally translating from L2 into L1 and vice versa. This fact makes teachers of English consider the importance of translation for learning purposes. The article aims at examining students' attitudes to using the mother tongue in learning English for Specific Purposes. The respondents are the university students of two specializations, psychology and social work, who study English for their future profession. The findings demonstrate that all learners need the support of the native language in English classes, but the amount of translation depends on students' proficiency and specialization. The obtained data have been processed statistically using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to determine how comparable and reliable the data are. Internal consistency reliability was estimated by computing Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Computations of Spearman's correlation coefficients between the responses of students on translations from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1 revealed that correlations are significant at the level 0.01 (2-tailed) and Spearman's coefficients are equal to 0.839 and 0.701, respectively. The statistical processing of the research findings showed that the data are significant in spite of the small sample of recipients and may be extended beyond it.