

# Transfer of L1 literacy capacity to L2: A study at the tertiary level

## Author:

P.Anand,  
Asst.professor, Dept of English,  
M.S.University Constituent College,  
Kadayanallur, Tirunelveli.

## Co-author:

S.Nelson,  
Asst.professor, Dept of English,  
M.S.University Constituent College,  
Kadayanallur, Tirunelveli.

## Abstract:

The use of L1 in an English Classroom (in L2 Contexts) has traditionally been unthinkable, because literary teaching is, accepted as a monolingual practice. This poses a big problem for students who have low proficiency in the English, especially rural students who sign up for English Literature with the mistaken belief that it will help them learn the language. Finally students memorizing guide books and notes without gaining any literary capacity. The attempt of the article is based on Cummins Common understanding proficiency hypothesis .The capacity of L1 can be (1984) transferred to L2 thereby enabling them to read, Understand, and appreciate English Literature through L1 (Tamil) assistance

## The L2 Literature Classroom and the role of L1

The traditional L2 literature Classroom, Still experiencing a Colonial Hangover does not care much for the use of L1. Even the incidental use of L1 is not by the exports in the field. Based on the using of L1 to teach these concepts the Literacy theories can be categorical into three groups with focus on (a) text (b) reader (c) culture. The Text as a central concept can make use of L1 in a variety of ways to make these concepts clear to the learners in L2 for Example all Such theories that employ close reading as a technique New Criticism and deconstruction or ideology based on the theories such as feminism, Marxism, and post-colonial studies –Can make use of L1 for better understanding use of L1 in the English Literature.

The use of L1 is quite prevalent in L2 literature classroom in the rural and non –elite institution because the learners do not have a functional knowledge of L2. When the text is understood by the learners in L1 later they use L2 to convey the same idea with a good comprehension. Ketkar in a paper presented in a conference at oxford titled. “*Translation and teaching of English literature in India*”. Discuss how translation is well suited for the Indian

English literature Classroom which does not share the typical western anxiety regarding recycled text. He also sees translation as “*an excellent task for studying a literacy text*”.

### **Literacy capacity of L1 and the teaching of L2**

It is to ensure the Students from rural background, Who for Circumstances beyond their control, do not have adequate proficiency in L2 and yet are interested in the study of literature in L2. Ought not to be discriminate again .This study discards the popular notion that such students are not meant to study L2 literature. Therefore the students existing knowledge of literature appreciation in L1 can be used in enabling them to appreciate literature in L2.

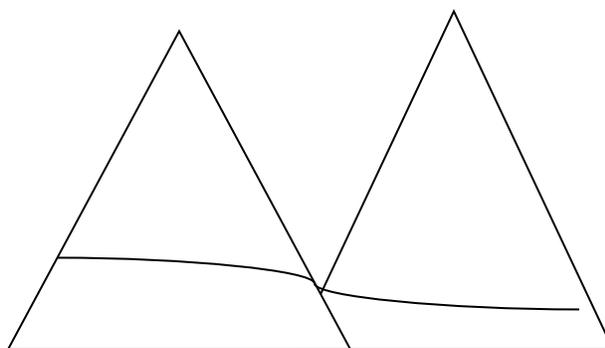
The learner’s Knowledge of L1, Particularly in his /her Understanding in L1 of literature, is seen as an effective tool, rather of learning to appreciate literature what the learner brings to the classroom is treated here as a resource so that he/she can build on what has already learnt, and not discard it thinking that whatever is associated with an inferior ‘L1 is not applicable in the source of learning the literature of a ‘Superior L2’.

### **Theoretical basis for the use of L1**

The positive effect of L1 for Cognitive development has come to be widely accepted because of the word of Jim Cummins in ESC /Bilingual research. He advanced the idea that a person who is learning a second language does not actually negotiate a totally unmapped territory. He possesses a common framework of Language structure and functions that can be described as common underlying proficiency (Cup) drawn from the Person’s Knowledge of one language to help to learn the L2 .The theory holds that there is interdependence (Cummins,1979) factor between languages . Given that instruction in the L1 is effective in promoting proficiency in L1, transfer of the proficiency in L2.

According to Cummins not all the features of L1 and L2 have common underlying proficiency (Cup) like pronunciation, Fluency etc. but the basic cognitive /academic proficiency help for learning.

### **Cummins dual iceberg model of Cup**



### Common Underlying Proficiency

Individuals who have meaning exposure and experience with two languages in school or other environment, develop CUP which enable the development of cognitive and academic skills in both languages. With enough practice and good instruction from a teacher or a more capable peer, the learning of both language become interdependent and at the same time, independent. The importance feature of CUP is the Concept learned in L1 is transferred to L2 and the only requirement is learn the Label in the Second Language for that concept.

### **Nature of Literary capability:**

The term literary capability is the ability of a reader to grasp literary meaning, implication and connections. It is not one-dimensional and has some facts. It has also been defined in many ways in literature like the Chomsky concept of linguistic competence which refers to the rules of a Language internalized by native speakers that enables them to understand generate and express grammatically correct sentences, literary capability posits that there is an implicit knowledge or internalize rules (Widdowson 1999) that help the readers to categorize texts as a literary or non-literary and also to read and make sense of literary works.

### **Pragmatic evidence of L1 literary capacity to L2**

As for literature is concern all the literary devices are similar the difference is only the labeling of the literary concept based on the language and culture. T.S.Eliot disassociation of sensibility is similar to tharkuripu anni when the concept is described in L1 the students comprehend it immediately

The regional literature is prescribed in English such text can't be learned without the support of the L1 for e.g. "karukku". The novel written by Bama is a Dalit literature, without the support of L1 the fullest of the text can't be achieved.

### **The translation of Thirukkural**

#### **The power of virtue**

1. Wealth flows only from virtue done

The rest is rue and renown gone

#### **Hospitality**

2. The goddess of wealth will gladly rest

Where smiles welcome the worthy guest.

## Conclusion

The idea of this paper is to analyze the role of L1 in L2 learning. The L1 competence may not support in all the perspectives of foreign language learning but the influence of the mother tongue will be reflexive in comprehend the concepts or compare and contrast the literary elements. The use of L2 need not be dismissed. The basic concept is to learn from known to unknown so familiarizing is an easy way of learning without much effort. Today English is Indian conscious so perspective in learning is also changed the novel like House of blue mangoes by David Davidar, or Girish karnad's Hayavadana, so many examples. The theme of the novels is in L1 (Tamil).

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