

A decentralization theory of L2 education in the EFL context of Iran

Masoud Khalili Sabet

University of Guilan, Iran

Abstract

Demographic studies of students in the University of Guilan/Iran reveal that most students with high English proficiency levels attended English classes in private institutes and received systematic education for more than five years. In the same line, the results of a questionnaire on the students' background experience demonstrate that most students think the English classes in the state junior and high schools in Iran fail to fulfill the requirement of an interactive context within which the learners may communicate real-life tasks. In addition, they consider those classes inefficient and boring as focusing just on some linguistic features, formal exercises and systemic properties of the English language. Furthermore, the abovementioned classes are demotivating as long as they suffer from old-fashioned textbooks, uninteresting topics, crowded with too many students and insufficient weekly time devoted to the subject. Meanwhile, externally-mandated summative tests also would function a continuous source of creating a threatening situation making students anxious, mentally stressed and engaged throughout the academic year. On the other hand, the same demographic and questionnaire analysis disclose that English classes in the private institutes make their best efforts to offer motivating classes involving the learners in communicative tasks using interesting and fresh material alongside with formative assessment. So, it is quite understandable when the learners express their perfect satisfaction and positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language in those non-state institutes. As the concluding remarks, the above discussion, most probably, would trigger to think of a decentralization theory of L2 education in the Iranian context of EFL in order to redefine and restructure the whole local TEFL program.

Keywords: decentralization theory, L2 education, communicative tasks, state English, private institutes, TEFL program