

## Use of Saudi EFL Adult Learners' L1 to Address Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

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### Abstract

This study highlights the major emotional and psychological factors related to the medium of instruction (use of First Language (L1) in the classroom) in the domain of bilingual education for adult Saudi English as foreign language (EFL) learners. The primary area of emphasis is to consider whether the use of L1 in the class reduces the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) or it deprives the learners of the real and constant language inputs, viz., the words of the teacher in the target language. Thus, the main research question of the study is how the medium of instruction (use/mixing of Arabic or use of English-only approach) impacts the FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) of Saudi adult learners. The quantitative research tool of survey has been administered on the teachers and students on five-point Likert-scale with the responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There are twelve items in the survey and each item tends to explore different psychological dimension of the issue. 100 adult Saudi university students and 100 EFL teachers have responded to these items. The main finding of the study is that learner's L1 speeds up the language learning process in a natural way if used occasionally and judiciously with the objective of keeping self-esteem and self image of the learners intact and bringing their FLCA down. The research study not only brings to surface the current state of bilingual EFL education in Saudi context, but also puts forth recommendations for learners, teachers, administrators, and policy makers to strengthen English language teaching/learning in EFL perspective in the bilingual context.

**Keywords:** bilingual education, foreign language classroom anxiety, medium of instruction, psychological factors, quantitative tool

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## 1. Introduction

The practices in English language teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) perspective usually go in opposed directions. On one hand learners' psyches and psychological dimensions are compromised in the name of discipline and class management. On the other hand, the learners are let loose in such an awkward manner that teaching becomes almost impossible. The first scenario is Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Lecture Method with excessive use of the first language (L1) where the purpose is to complete the syllabus without taking into account the learners' psychological selves. The other scenario is Direct Method (DM) with interactive and students' centered approach where again; the psychological dimensions and demands of the learners/learning are generally ignored.

Most adult language learners build up the highest level of anxiety when they find themselves unable to comprehend and express themselves in the presence of English speaking teachers. They develop the fear that they may be ridiculed if they try to communicate in the target language. Such a strong sense of discomfort, tension and fear induces an anxiety ridden need for defense, and the learners retreat into self-created cocoons. Resultantly, their minds never attain the ideal condition of calm as they get victim of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and block all the language input provided to them in the class. Such inhibition caused by this unwanted and undue anxiety becomes a big obstacle in the way of language learning—comprehensible input and productive output.

Secondly, Saudi university students face a new environment in the classroom during the initial days after leaving schools. Their school socialization makes them confident about themselves in establishing relationship with their teachers as it is done in their comfort zones viz., use of the medium of L1. This level of high self-confidence becomes vulnerable when it comes to building up a new relationship with English speaking teachers. Most often, they get victim to psychological pressure resulting in poor perception and assimilation of linguistic input. This leads to poor performance in the class in general and in the exams in particular. To add fuel to the fire, the expectation in language skill development, pronounced loudly and unprofessionally in most cases, can put them under more stress. Class fellows with better backgrounds and performing better in the class activities cause further damage to their morale, self-esteem and self image.

Thirdly, if the adult learners get completely disinterested in the classroom, for one reason or the other, (due to lack of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation) they cannot see the need for continuing the language class. The immediate negative impact is quite obvious: they find themselves unable to set a definite goal of learning. Their learning objectives and targets slip out of sight. Mental harmony, relationship and interaction between the teacher and the learner are keys to curb de-motivation. The language teacher can definitely be an important external motivator. However, if adult language learners are unable to understand and express themselves in front of the English speaking teacher and cannot build up a relationship with him/her, they cannot make him/her understand their needs and the ways in which they can be motivated. In such a situation the teacher cannot help them out. This may aggravate the severity of the situation. De-motivation can emerge due to learners' lack of trust in the teacher who shows disrespect to their language by

completely banning it in the class. An even worse situation would be when a conflict between a learner and a teacher emerges. This conflict, in some cases, arises from the learner's inability to establish a better teacher-learner relationship, and in others, due to the unprofessional attitude of the teacher. Such an unwanted situation can further de-motivate the learners.

Here, instead of expecting some positive and miraculous role to be played by the learner, the teacher's own energy level, self-motivation and self-faith on the unusual moves like occasional use of L1 can play a pivotal part in raising the morale of his/her bilingual adult language learners. Unskilled, ill-trained and unprofessional people involved in the English language teaching process tend to pollute the whole process and make this otherwise pleasurable experience of learning a new, modern, interesting lingua franca of the world, a dull drudgery with few rewards or signs of progress.

There is dire need to train teachers to teach the learners not the language or language system but the ways of acquiring a language. This study is an attempt to move some steps forward in this direction. This article explores the possibilities of making learners more enthusiastic towards English language learning by seeking their opinion on the occasional or excessive use of L1 in the class. It explores the possibilities of developing their sense of achievement, raising their morale and motivation and enhancing their participation with the help of innovative ideas. The present study analyzes the factors of excessive and continuous use of English, and occasional use of Arabic in the class to see their impact for the high/low affective filter between the brains of the learners and the language inputs provided to them. It tries to find out the ways and means whereby affective filter can be lowered, language inputs can be made comprehensible and FLCA can be reduced. This objective can be materialized when the teacher gives the complete performance at the sender's end, and the learner is ready, vigilant and open with as many barriers removed at the receiver's end. The variable explored at length is the use of L1 in the class.

In order to explore the impact of the medium of instruction on English language learning/teaching, various aspects of the research area at hand have been considered. The study analyzes holistically the psychological dimensions of bilingual education in EFL perspective by viewing different variables in relation to the use of L1 in the class: whether the learners feel free to tell their learning needs and problems; whether the learners are less afraid to speak English in the class; whether the teacher understands learners' background better and relates the teaching to their culture; whether through the contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, teaching of English can be made more effective and learners can have a good start; whether the use of Arabic in teaching English helps a teacher evaluate learners' comprehension level and identify learners' learning problems; and whether use of Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input. The stance of the teachers and the perception of the students on the use of Arabic to address FLCA of the learners has been given due consideration.

The study also explores negative impacts of the use of L1 in the class. With this end in view, the variables explored in relation to the use of L1 in the class are: whether use of Arabic in

English language class gives learners less exposure to English; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of the English culture; whether use of Arabic in English language class makes learners rely too much on Language<sub>1</sub> (Arabic) in learning English; whether use of Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less the need for practicing and using English inside and outside the classroom; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of colloquial/conversational English in their academic careers. The study will explore how far the teachers and the students agree on the negative impact of L1 in learning English effectively.

### Research Questions

- i) How does the medium of instruction (use/mixing of Arabic or use of English-only approach) impact the FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) of Saudi adult learners?
- ii) What is the difference in perception between EFL teachers and Saudi EFL students about the use of Arabic in the class?

## 2. Literature Review

There is dramatic increase in the number of non-native students in the classrooms of English-speaking countries in today's world. Researchers and academicians have been trying to find out the best ways to meet the special needs of these learners. Same is true with the students in the countries like Saudi Arabia where the cultural and psychological barriers towards learning English are breaking fast. This has led to two opposing schools of thoughts viz., give maximum English language exposure to the students; or provide instructions to them in the mother tongue as well as in English. Krashen (1981) is a strong advocate of the second approach, which finds its implementation in one of the forms of bilingual education. The point he stresses the most is to bring down the barriers, what he terms as affective filter, between the language inputs and the brains of the learners.

Mostly bilingual models build the hypothesis that academic proficiency such as knowledge, understanding, skills, etc. acquired in the native language/mother tongue/L1 are available to the student when learning takes place in English (Cummins, 2000). English as medium of instruction has to be combined with L1, mainly because English is lingua franca all over the world in general and a medium of knowledge and learning in the leading educational institutes in the world. Furthermore, this academic proficiency obtained through mixed medium of instruction promotes and facilitates the acquisition/learning of English because it helps to make listening & reading inputs more comprehensible by making the learners extrinsically motivated. Thus much immersion or English-only instruction becomes incomprehensible to non-native speakers like Saudi students who, therefore, learn neither English nor subject content. Resultantly, the need of using L1 (Arabic), at least occasionally, in the class, requires due consideration. It is an area worth researching for deeper understanding of the psychological dimensions of bilingual education in EFL perspective.

There is a large variety of bilingual educational models available for the EFL learners/teachers. The one suggested by Collier & Thomas, (2004) is probably the most effective as it recommends two-way bilingual instruction. According to this model, bilingual class in Saudi context should consist of approximately equal numbers of very proficient speakers of English and speakers of Arabic. The class remains together for all of their lessons, some of which are in English and the remaining ones in Arabic. If this model is to be adopted, there should be mixed ability classes and teachers should adopt learner centered approach. There is a research need to carry on an experimental study in EFL context in Saudi Arabia by implementing this model to know the impact and the results of using learners L1 in the class.

Behaviorism led the EFL practitioners to believe that a contrastive analysis of languages is useful in teaching languages to define the difficult and easy areas of the target language. The similar areas of L1 and the target language would be easy for learners, but points in which they were different would be difficult for them. From these theories arose the Audio-Lingual Method. This method focuses on using drills for the formation of good language habits. Learners are given a stimulus to respond. If their response is correct and appropriate, it is rewarded, so the habit is formed; if it is incorrect, it is corrected, so that it is suppressed. The Direct Method, like Audio Lingual Method, developed as a reaction against the Grammar Translation Method with a strict stress on only the target language use in the class. In order to get the desired results through this method, the teachers need to have competence in language, stamina, energy, ability and time to create their own materials and courses (Richard, 1986). Both approaches namely, excessive English approach and excessive Arabic approach make teaching/learning both difficult and unpleasant and build psychological barriers in the way of learning/teaching. If planned and focused efforts are not made to remove such barriers, and teachers are not vigilant in doing their tasks, foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) can go very high.

The EFL teachers need to be aware that there are methodologies, including the Natural Approach, which emphasize active communicative interaction, language acquisition and creation of a pleasant classroom environment to address learners' FLCA. These new methodologies have been found helpful for the learners to develop the language proficiency in a better way as compared to the traditional methodologies like GTM (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993). In these non-traditional methodologies, language is acquired through comprehensible input instead of conscious learning of rules (Krashen, 1983). This leads to the hypothesis that the occasional use of L1 may help in lowering FLCA and facilitate language acquisition.

There are many renowned researchers who favor the use of L1 in the class. Littlewood (1981) argues that L1 use, if intended for social interaction and classroom management, could contribute to well-motivated communicative opportunities (pp. 44-45). Moreover, selective and occasional use of L1 helps understand what they are supposed to be learning. Thus, the linguistic input must be mixed with learners' L1 as an aid to address learners' FLCA. In the same way, Atkinson (1993) also stresses the need for more L<sub>2</sub> use in the TESOL classroom while supplemented by occasional L1. Harbord (1992), though favouring the Direct Method, defines L1

use as a time-saving strategy. He supports L1 use for cross linguistic comparisons to facilitate a second/foreign language acquisition.

Latest research in the field of English as a foreign language also favors the use of L1 but in a prudent way (Shabir, 2017; Enama, 2016; Sipra, 2013). L1 is important as it is already known to the students and they usually rely on their previous knowledge to learn new things; therefore, it is pertinent to use L1 in the teaching of L2 for the ease and the comfort of the students in the learning process. "If human beings learn systematically by relating new knowledge to prior experience, then, the learning of any additional language takes place within the framework of the L1, and, therefore, the L1 should have a place in the EFL classroom (Enama, 2016, p.19). Shabir (2017) investigated the opinion of Australian teachers about their students' demands regarding the use of L1 and concluded that English should be the main language for classroom communication because it would help the students practice English; however, excessive use of English is also found to have negative effects; therefore, use of L1 was recommended for specific activities like explaining complex grammar concepts, instructions for class activities and classroom management etc.

On the other hand, there is some criticism on the free use of L1 in teaching of English as a foreign language. Polio (1994) criticizes the use of L1 as shortsighted strategy and a barrier against providing learners with exposure to L2, but admit that "limited, but timely, exposure to an L1 item with appropriate target language support is in fact warranted by recent research on fostering language awareness and selective attention to grammatical form(s) among instructed learners ...helping learners to notice specific gaps in their L2 knowledge and then proving them with the needed structures are fundamental aspects of L2 learning and teaching" (p. 325). Thus, if on one hand, the occasional and selective use of L1 may prove to be helpful in making the input more comprehensible, on the other hand, the L2-only approach (the use of the target language only) could give rise to FLCA resulting into misunderstanding and lack of comprehension (Modica, 1994; Stern, 1992; Weschler, 1997).

Auerbach (1993) criticizes the English-only approach or the DM declaring that it rests on unexamined assumptions. She further explains that a growing body of evidence shows the value of L1 and/or bilingual options. She is of the view that these options are effective and necessary for adult ESL learners with limited L1 literacy or schooling. Her survey displays the fact that 80% of the teachers allowed the use of L1 at times while they did not trust their own practice due to the L2-only theories. They regarded lapses into L1 as failures, thus, a cause for guilt.

There has been limited research carried out in the use of bilingualism or the use of Arabic (L1) in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. Sipra (2013) investigated the spoken aspect of L2 along with L1 in integrated skills classes and the proper use of vocabulary while communicating at intermediate level in King AbdulAziz University, KSA, and concluded that bilingualism is an aid in learning/teaching English as a foreign language and does not reduce students' exposure and capacity to communicate well in L2. AlAsmari (2014) focused on the EFL university teachers' perceptions about the use of Arabic in the interactional patterns of Saudi PYP EFL classrooms,

and found out that the teachers believed in the effectiveness of use of Arabic in EFL classes; however, they did not know about the extent of its use to cater to the needs of the students and find it difficult to create a balance between Arabic and English. He declared that this could be the main reason for the students' low proficiency in the English.

What is needed therefore is a different method. It should free the teachers from the clutches of GTM and DM by amalgamating indirect and direct methods. It should take into account data obtained from investigations into second language learning. The research can help find out an eclectic method which combines old/new teaching /learning activities to enable the learner to learn a language quickly, with little effort, less FLCA; and which gives the learner the opportunity to reach a level whereby s/he can think in that language and can transform the acquired competence into effective and useful performance.

### 3. Methodology

**Population:** The target population, in case of the present research study is the native and non-native teachers teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia and Saudi EFL students.

**Sampling:** In the present research, for the research survey, the researchers have used cluster sampling as it is the only feasible method of selecting a sample. Cluster sampling takes less time and is more convenient. According to this sampling strategy, any location within which a group has similar characteristics is chosen for data collection (Barnard, 1994) p.118.

**Research Tools:** The study uses the quantitative tool to serve the qualitative purposes. Creswell (2009) points out that "Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables" (p-22). In order to understand and reach some conclusion regarding the psychological dimension of bilingual education in Saudi Arabia and the role and relationship of use of L1 (medium of instruction) and FLCA along with their different variables in teaching English to Saudi university students, following quantitative tool of 12-items survey (6 items in favor of L1 use in the class and 6 items against it) on Likert's five point scale ranging from strongly disagree-disagree-no idea-agree-strongly agree was designed and administered at both the students (100) and the teachers (100) at the same time. First two items fall in the general category to know about the existing and the proposed medium of instruction in EFL classroom.

*Table 1. Quantitative Research Tool of the Study (adapted from Hussain, M.S. 2009)*

What is the medium of instruction in your English language class? <b>1. Arabic</b> <b>2. English</b> <b>3. English-Arabic mixed</b>
What SHOULD BE the medium of instruction in your English language class? <b>1. Arabic</b> <b>2. English</b> <b>3. English-Arabic mixed</b>

1. Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel free to tell their learning problems and needs.
2. Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less afraid to speak English in the classroom.
3. By using Arabic in English language class occasionally, the teacher understands learners' background better and relates the teaching to their culture.
4. Through the contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, teaching of English can be made more effective and learners can have a good start.
5. Using Arabic occasionally in teaching English helps a teacher evaluate learners' comprehension level and identify learners' learning problems.
6. Use of occasional Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input.
7. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less exposure to English.
8. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation.
9. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of the English culture.
10. Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners rely too much on Language1 in learning English
11. Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less the need for practicing and using English inside and outside the classroom.
12. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of colloquial/conversational English in their academic careers.

#### 4. Data Analysis

Following is the detailed data analysis with the help of bar charts having the comparative data/responses from the target populations of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia and Saudi EFL students:

The survey item to know about the existing medium of instruction in Saudi EFL context has revealed almost complete harmony between the teachers and the taught. Only 6% students reported about their teachers mixing Arabic in the class thus using the L1 of the learners as a tool to arrest the attention span of the learners and bring the FLCA down by involving the students in the input with the use of their mother tongue. Such teachers show their experimental bent of mind and do not consider it necessary to follow the institutional policy of English only approach in a slavish manner.

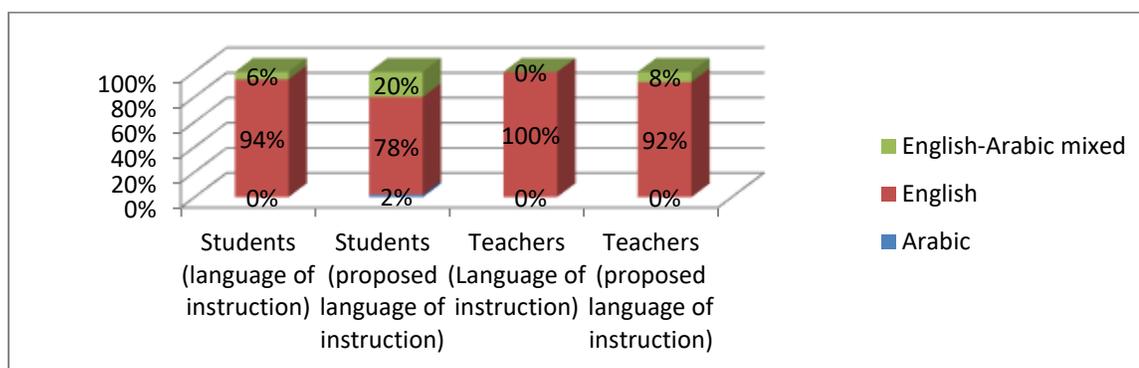


Figure 1. Existing and proposed medium of instruction

The survey item about the proposed medium of instruction highlights a small number of students and teachers who feel the need of Arabic mixing/use in the class. 8% teachers and 20% students are in favor of Arabic use in the class. 92% teachers show their agreement with the institutional policy of English only approach. 78% students also think on the same line and believe that the use of Arabic will lead to wrong habit formation and pollute the English speaking environment in the class. This approach also perhaps reflects their disgust about their past English language experience in the schools where English is taught with excessive use of Arabic in the class to such an extent that no English language learning/training takes place.

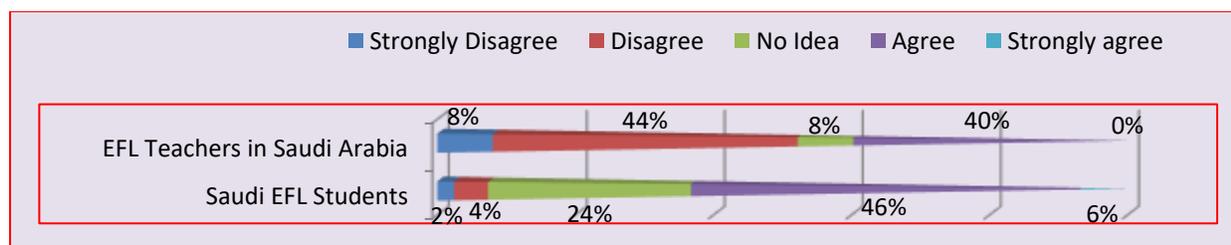


Figure 2. Questionnaire Item-1: Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel free to tell their learning problems and needs.

Knowing about the learning problems and needs of EFL learners is the issue of prime importance for any teacher if his/her objective is to bring FLCA of the EFL learners' down. Teachers show a scattered bent of mind in this regard. 8% strongly disagreeing, 44% disagreeing, 8% having no idea and 40% agreeing responses about the use of learners' L1 in this regard show a kind of chaos and lack of singleness of direction in the approach towards teaching. Almost the same scenario prevails among the Saudi EFL students with less intensity as just 6% among them strongly disagree and disagree. However 24% 'No Idea' response from the students and 8% from the teachers opens another research area on the same theme where an experimental study is carried out to eliminate this uncertainty. As for the role of Arabic in creating ease and comfort for the learners and the teachers to share learning problems and needs, sizeable majority from both camps (40% teachers and 46%+ 6% students favor the occasional use of Arabic.

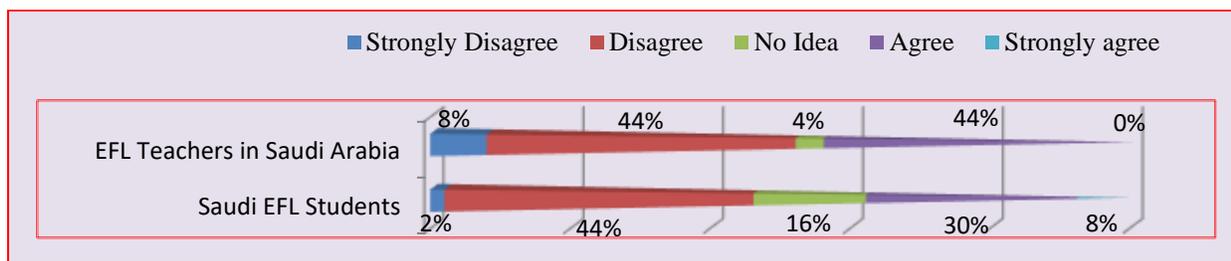


Figure 3. Questionnaire Item-2: Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less afraid to speak English in the classroom.

Language learners' inhibition and stage fright has to be treated by well thought out planning and strategies. The teachers as well as the students are divided on the proposition presented to them. Almost the same number of teachers (8%+44%) and students (2%+44%) disagree with the notion that L1 can play the role of removing the fear in the learners to speak English in the class. 4% and 16% of 'No Idea' responses by the teachers and the students respectively perhaps point towards the strict adherence to the institutional policy of complete ban on the use of Arabic in the class. 44% teachers and 30%+8% students favor the occasional use of Arabic to address the psychological problems of the learners which develop fear in them to speak English and participate in the class activities.

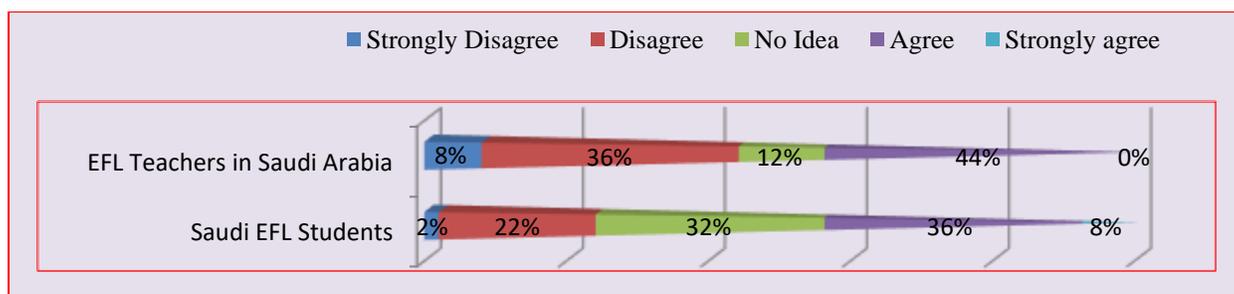


Figure 4. Questionnaire Item-3: By using Arabic in English language class occasionally, the teacher understands learners' background better and relates the teaching to their culture.

Use of occasional Arabic to understand learners' background with a view to relate teaching to their culture and thereby removing the psychological barriers and FLCA in the way of effective of English language learning is quite crucial. Almost half of the target populations from both the teachers and the learners (44% agreement from the teachers and 36%+8% agreement from the students) have shown their deeper understanding in this regard. The 'No Idea' response of 12% from the teachers and 32% from the students perhaps are the ones waiting for the change in the institutional policy which can allow them to make use of occasional Arabic in the class to bring harmony between the teacher and the taught whereby a smooth sailing in the learning scenario can take place. Also, perhaps, the disagreeing responses of 8%+36% from the teachers and 2%+22% from the students point towards this direction. They also seem to be from the school of thought who believes that language learning is in fact a habit formation process and even occasional use

of Arabic in the class will spoil the environment and the process instead of helping the teacher understand learners' background better and relate the teaching to their culture.

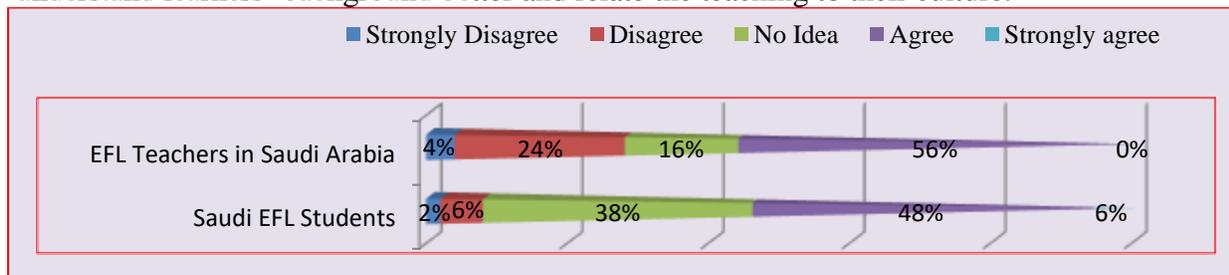


Figure 5. Questionnaire Item-4: Through the contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, teaching of English can be made more effective and learners can have a good start.

Contrastive analysis of English and Arabic is of vital importance in bilingual EFL education in Saudi Arabia. On one hand, it makes the teachers and the students aware of intra-language errors to carry on the remedial work and on the other hand it arrests the attention span of the learners and engages them in the class activities in a meaningful and purposeful way, thus reducing FLCA. A teaming majority from both the teachers (56%) and the students (48+6%) favor the proposition. Very few students (2%+6%) disagree perhaps because of the influence of their native teachers and the institutional English-Only-in-the-Class policy. Same goes for the 'No Idea' response of 16% from the teachers and 38% from the students.

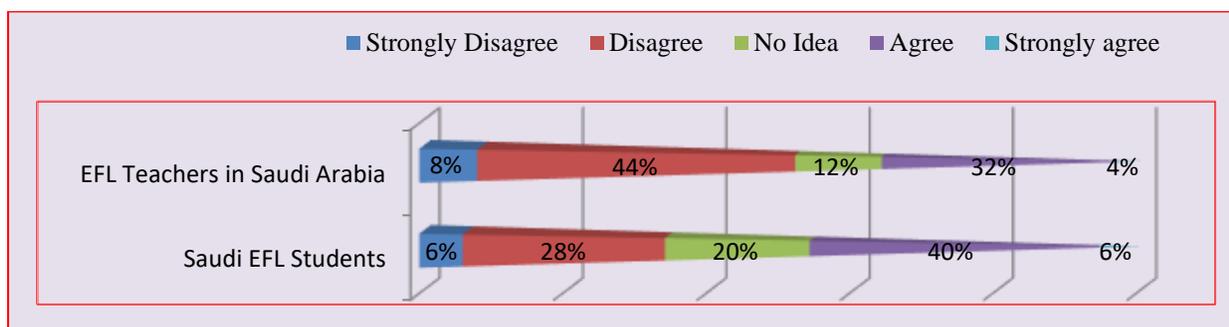


Figure 6. Questionnaire Item-5: Using Arabic occasionally in teaching English helps a teacher evaluate learners' comprehension level and identify learners' learning problems.

Imposing complete ban on the use of Arabic on the Saudi EFL learners in the class can have psychological repercussions as it may push the shy and weak ones in their isolated cocoons forever and take FLCA to uncontrollable heights. At the same time, a successful teaching/learning scenario demands a continuous check on the learners' comprehension level to know their learning problems and to work on them thereafter. On the question of occasional use of Arabic in the class in this regard, the target populations of the teachers and the students shape up in two schools of thought: 8% of the teachers strongly disagree and 44% of them disagree vs. 32% agree and 4% strongly agree. Same is the case with the students: 6% of them strongly disagree and 28% disagree vs. 40% agree and 6% strongly agree. What is interesting to note is that the students outnumber the teachers in agreeing to the proposition which indicates the pressing demand of the students to make

planned and occasional use of Arabic in the class so that teachers really get to know their comprehension level, identify their learning problems and work on their FLCA. 12% of the teachers and 20% of the students are uncertain who perhaps are waiting for the experimental study on the issue at hand to reach a concrete decision.

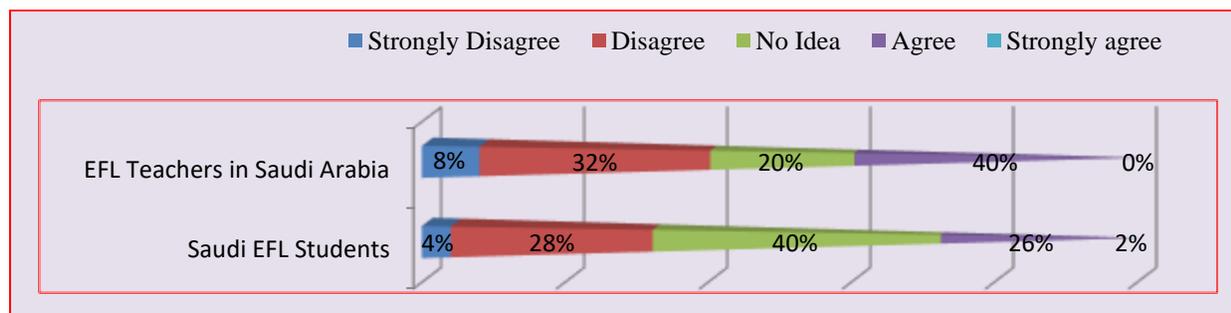


Figure 7. Questionnaire Item-6: Use of occasional Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input.

The data figure shows that the teachers and the students have difference of approach and perception on the proposition presented to them. They face the problem in the same way but want to resolve it in the different way. Learners' FLCA can only be addressed when psychological barriers between the input and the brain and communication barriers between the teacher and the taught are removed. 40% EFL teachers and 26%+2% Saudi EFL students give 'Agree' response to the proposition. It reflects their belief that they want the psychological barriers removed, input made more comprehensible and FLCA reduced by the use of occasional Arabic in the class as a tool. Almost same number of respondents from both sides opposed the proposition (4% students strongly disagreed and 28% disagreed vs. 8% teachers strongly disagreed and 32% disagreed) suggesting that they persist with too much of direct method, teacher centered approach and bombardment of continuous English language on the brains of the learners, which they do taking it as the right habit formation process on the pattern of behaviorism. The uncertain respondents from both sides (20% teachers and 40% students) invite the educational administrators and policy makers to take steps in such a direction that air of confusion can be cleared.

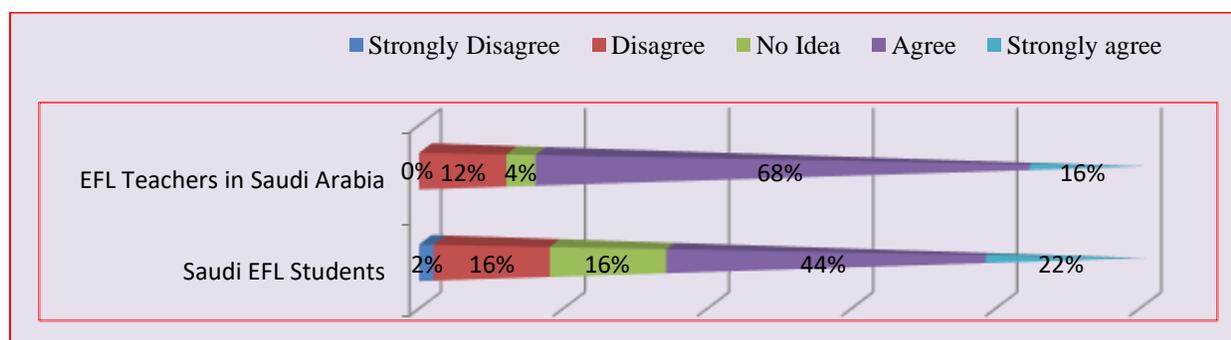


Figure 8. Questionnaire Item-7: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less exposure to English.

Use of Arabic in English language class has its obvious disadvantage. There is always a danger that allowing it 'a bit or occasional' will lead to 'a lot or excessive' which may lead to no language learning at all. Majority of the teachers (68%+16%) and the students (44%+22%) are well aware of this risk and agree to the proposition that use of Arabic will lead to less exposure to English in the class. However, there is a strong presence of a group of teachers and students with 12% disagreeing and 2%+16% disagreeing responses respectively who think that psychological advantages of the use of L1 to address FLCA outweigh the possible side effect which can be eliminated by disciplined and reflective teaching.



Figure 9. Questionnaire Item-8: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation.

Majority of the teachers as well as students (68% vs. 58%) believe that use of Arabic in the class negatively affects the pronunciation and intonation ability of the students in the target language. The response is according to this logic that when the students are partially exposed to the target language, they get a wrong impression that pronunciation and intonation are not important at all. Consequently, they just focus on the accuracy of grammatical structure instead of pronunciation and intonation. As a matter of fact, human ears play a vital role in the production of sounds; if they are not properly trained, the accurate pronunciation and intonation may not be possible. And the only solution to this barrier is the constant use of the target language in the class so that the learners should equip themselves with language competence in all the areas including the specified ones. However, some of the teachers and students (32%+42%) have expressed their disagreement which means that their experiences or perceptions are quite different and they prefer the use of L1 in the class which is occasional and planned, thus without impacting the learning of accurate pronunciations and intonation.

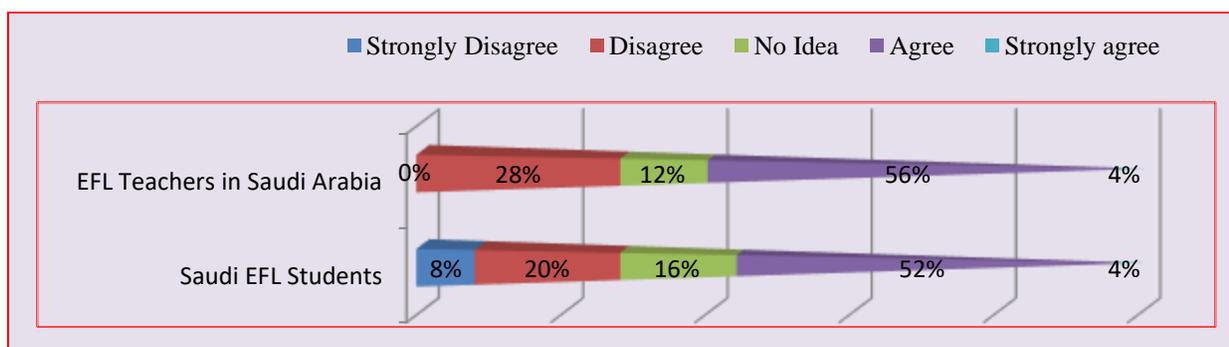


Figure 10. Questionnaire Item-9: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of the English culture.

The target population seems to be quite aware of the fact that culture and language are inseparable because language is a part of culture. Both the teachers' and students' responses (60%+56%) reflect that majority of them acknowledge the truth that the use of Arabic in the class deprives the students of understanding the true picture of the English culture. Therefore, the use of L1 is not recommendable in an EFL class. The same numbers of (28% vs. 20%+8%) teachers and the students have recorded their disagreement in response to this statement which indicates that they do not think they need to teach or learn about English culture or use of Arabic in the class becomes a barrier in this regard class. In fact, FLCA can be reduced in EFL perspective in Saudi Arabia if the learners' culture is given due regard and recognition.

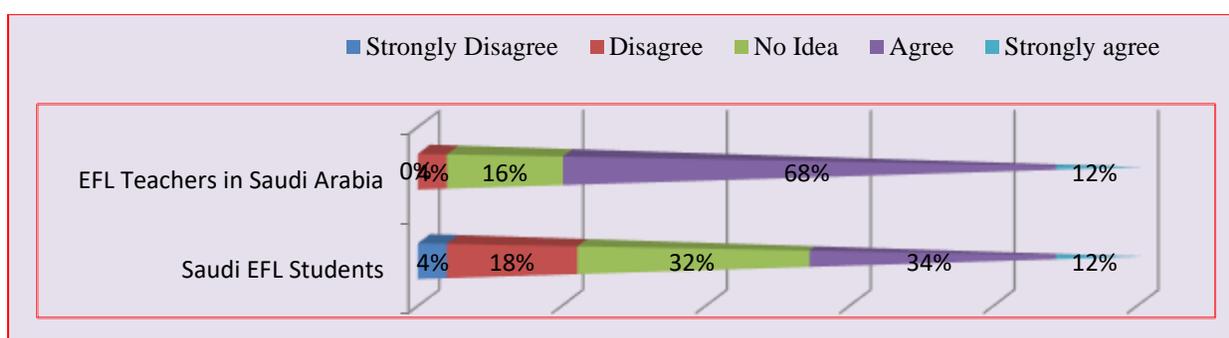


Figure 11. Questionnaire Item-10: Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners rely too much on Language1 in learning English.

Undoubtedly, the excessive use of L1 in an EFL class makes the students linguistically handicapped who fail to understand the target language. As a result, they rely too much on their native language which becomes a barrier in the process of learning L<sub>2</sub>. Thus, trying to reduce FLCA, one may sacrifice the real language learning/teaching objectives. In response to this question, 72% teachers and 46% students have endorsed the fact that use of L1 makes the students dependent on their native language. 32% students and 16% teachers expressed their unawareness of the fact by opting for the option "No Idea", which raises the importance of conducting further study in this area. There are sizeable number of teachers and students (20%+22%) who have expressed their disagreement which points towards the growing importance of use of occasional Arabic in the class in order to bring FLCA of the learners down.

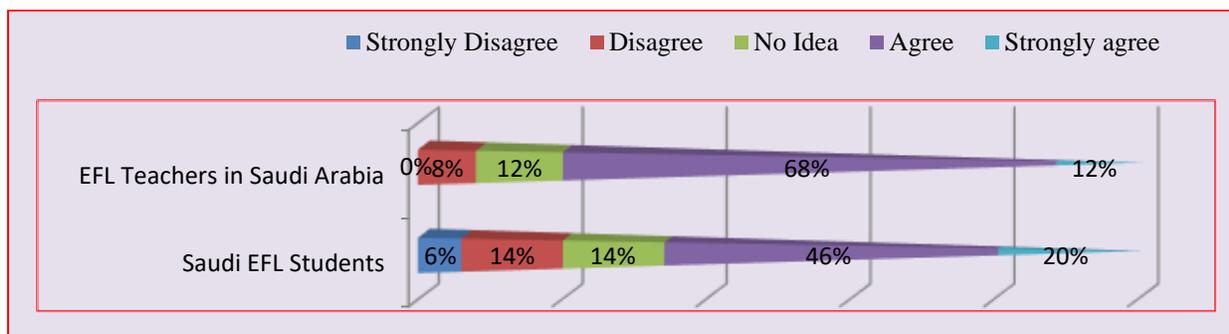


Figure 22. Questionnaire Item-11: Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less the need for practicing and using English inside and outside the classroom.

The strategy of use of L1 to address the learners' FLCA has its possible side effects. It may lead the learners to unwanted directions. Perhaps dependency on L1 is the worst thing in the acquisition of L2. It disrupts the cognitive process of the learner who is forced to feel more comfortable in L1 and avoids the use of target language. The target population (80%+66%) has explicitly acknowledged this fact which is a clear indication of the fact that excessive use of L1 in an EFL class eliminates the importance of L2 from the students' minds. Therefore, the use of L1 should be used with utmost care in the class to achieve the ultimate objective i.e., the acquisition of L2 without any FLCA. 8% of the teachers and 20% of the students show their disagreement and seem to insist on the occasional use of Arabic. This category of teachers and students reject any side effect of the use of Arabic in the class.

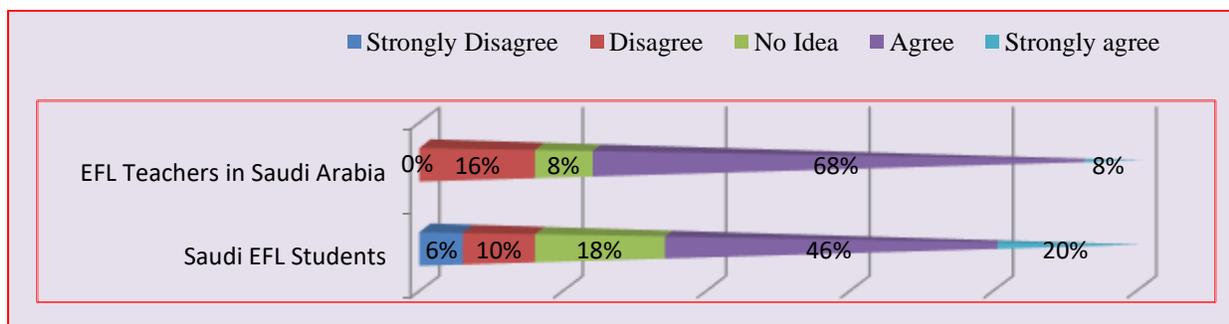


Figure 33. Questionnaire Item-12: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of colloquial/conversational English in their academic careers.

English language learning should intend to create communication competence including psycho/sociolinguistic aspect, non-verbal part, and paralinguistic features and body language aiming at making them speak effectively and successfully in different moods and situations. Above data chart shows that majority of the EFL teachers (76%) and Saudi EFL students (66%) agree that excessive use of Arabic can prove to be counterproductive in this regard. They fear that adopting the Arabic use policy will deprive them of the colloquial/conversational skills they need when they go to the practical life or abroad for job or higher studies. Other responses like 8% 'No idea' from teachers, 18% 'No Idea' from students and 16% 'Disagree' responses from the teachers and

students represent the group from the target populations who want to bring Arabic in the class at all costs. This leads us to conclude that L1 use in the class is like a double edged weapon which must be handed over to the trained and skilled hands viz., the teachers who may make its best use to address FLCA without compromising real language teaching/learning. There is need to conduct experimental further studies to make this strategy useful and effective.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present research directs the practitioners in the teaching field to follow the middle path which lies between GTM and DM to address FLCA. The research proves that L1 of the learner can be used occasionally and judiciously to speed up the language learning process in a natural way. Thus, GTM cannot be discarded altogether. However, it is recommended that its use should be selective, planned, and based on the needs of the learners. The moment it is felt that the input is no more comprehensible or interesting; the shared knowledge of L1 between the teacher and the taught may be brought in to save the students from going to the undesired directions. The caution to be taken in this regard is that the quantity of the input is to be taken care of while maintaining the quality by giving maximum input and making it meaningful and comprehensible at the same time.

Another conclusion drawn from the research in the present study is that the use of Direct Method can also prove to be counterproductive when it affects the quality of language input by bombarding English-only on the brains of weak and shy students. At time, DM strains the brains of the learners especially if the teachers remain oblivious of the psychological states of the students and are unmindful of the mounting FLCA. The brains of the learners switch off and they start dozing or getting involved in the unwanted activities such as playing with the mobiles or chatting with their friends. The teacher, on such occasions, needs to be knowledgeable of the psychological selves of the learners and make such moves which can stop the input from getting incomprehensible and uninteresting. This may include the occasional use of learners' L1 with the sole objective of addressing FLCA.

The research also points out both the positive and negative impact of the use of L1 in English language class. Excessive use of L1 has not been liked by both the teachers and the students. Occasional use of L1 has been received as a welcome move by sizeable number of the target populations with the objective of keeping self-esteem and self image of the learners intact and bringing their FLCA down. To achieve such targets, teachers should focus on fostering a sense of accomplishment within a positive learning atmosphere. For this, some directed training is desirable, so that teachers become more professional. Once the learners gain a good self- image, their self-confidence will go high and FLCA will subside to less troublesome levels. Puchta (2010) points out the significant influence of self-belief on learning outcomes, in that a learner with supportive beliefs will have a better basis and chances for success. This indicates that a learner's self-confidence and positive faith in his own capabilities are crucial for success in a foreign/second language classroom. It is recommended for the educational administrators and policy makers to allow the occasional, selective, planned and judicious use of learners' L1 as a key strategy to address this issue of great concern. This research study is a step forward in this direction in the

sense that it brings this crucial issue to the surface. Further research is needed to determine the occasions and timings of the use of L1 in the class.

The present study has also opened some researchable areas on the theme of bilingual EFL education. Future researchers can categorize the use of L1 of the EFL teachers into excessive users, occasional users and no-users according to the target population of Arab teachers, non-native teachers and the native teachers and see their psychological impact on the English language learning outcomes. Such studies can use the qualitative tools of interviews and classroom observation. Likewise, the theme can be further explored by conducting experimental studies. Two groups of Saudi EFL students can be targeted: one with no use of L1 and the other with occasional use of L1. Pre-test and post test can be administered on both the groups to find out the effectiveness of the approaches applied in EFL bilingual context in Saudi Arabia.

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