

Is It Justified To Use Arabic In English Class? Efficacy Of English-Arabic Bilingual Teaching For Teaching English At Elementary Level

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the impact of integrating Arabic within teaching English as a Foreign Language in an elementary school environment in Saudi Arabia. Generally speaking, English language teachers strive to emphasize using the English language in their classes. They are confronted with a severe dilemma due to their efforts, namely a lack of communication between professors and students. These kids have difficulty comprehending what they perceive as a challenging foreign language. 20 English teachers have been chosen as the participants in the study were chosen. The researcher employed a random sampling technique to select participants for the study. The researcher gathered information from participants using a questionnaire survey and a test administered by the researchers. Using Arabic as a facilitating aid in English classes in Saudi Arabia may positively or negatively impact teaching English as a foreign language, as per the findings of this study. The findings of this study necessitate future research to identify and examine the many sorts of relevant issues related to this study in a wide variety of fields.

Keywords: Arabic; Bilingual Teaching; English Teaching; Mother Tongue; Teaching Methods.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is perceived in Saudi Arabia and the difficulties connected with employing L1 (Arabic) in the classroom to boost second language acquisition. It has been a point of conflict for decades that teachers should converse with students in foreign classes in their native language. According to Kachru (1992), while teaching English as a foreign or second language, the ratio of non-native speakers to native English speakers is four to one for every native English speaker. Many individuals believe that using the students' original languages when teaching English is the most effective method of instruction. People such as Chung and Nation (2003) and Schweers (1999) stress the necessity of using students' mother tongues in the classroom. Using the mother tongue in a controlled manner and avoiding overuse, which gives the impression that foreign language knowledge

cannot be understood unless it is translated into their language, appears to be the key for the instructor (Athinson, 1987).

Even in countries where English is not the native language, it is unquestionably essential regardless of its origin. It is the universal language spoken by people from all walks of life, regardless of where they are from (Khan et al., 2020; Battle & Lewis 2002). According to Warschauer et al. (2002), English is the primary teaching language in many nations, including Arab ones. It helps pupils acquire the language as their mother tongue, primarily when used regularly in the classroom. Using the learner's native language as a starting point in the classroom, according to Brown (2000) and Schweers (1999), provide a sense of security and validates the learner's academic experiences, allowing them to express themselves.

Students are studying English in countries throughout the world, and the number of students studying English continues to grow (Crystal, 2012). Saudi's educational landscape has changed dramatically during the last 20 years. It is frequently regarded as having one of the progressive educational systems in the world. As a result, academic courses taught in English as a second language are demanding and challenging. It requires teaching and absorbing properly so that students will be recognized as the best in their particular classes. According to the official, English language programs at all academic institutions in Saudi Arabia have aided the country's advancement in higher education. Saudi's educational system has grown at a breakneck pace in recent years due to this accomplishment (Nunan, 2003).

With the spread of globalization, being fluent in English has become increasingly crucial in Saudi Arabia. As time passes, an increasing number of people are adopting it as their primary language. Despite being the country's official language, some say that English is more widely spoken in Saudi than Arabic among educated people. These people believe that learning English will help them enter the non-Arabic-speaking world, with a higher chance of professional success. English is widely utilized in the media, business, education, and technology industries, particularly on social networking sites like Facebook (Ajmal & Kumar, 2020; Kumar, 2021).

When it comes to teaching Arab students in Saudi Arabia, English teachers struggle to confine themselves to using English entirely as their primary language of instruction. Most students do not apply with a solid command of the English language (Rababah, 2000). For the most part, teachers of English as a foreign language have difficulty keeping from using their native language when teaching the language. Teachers complain that their students have difficulty understanding English because they tend to speak in English in the classroom (Duff & Polio, 1990). As this illustrates, learning English as a second language is extremely difficult for both students and teachers when the native language is not used (Rababah, 2000). Consequently, this research examines the effects of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabian elementary schools using Arabic. It will justify the use of English-Arabic bilingualism in elementary classrooms.

The research set various objectives, such as to examine the impact of using Arabic as a medium of instruction in the elementary school level of Saudi for teaching English as a foreign language. It also investigates the most effective tactics that an instructor can use in the classroom to assist students in improving their English as a foreign language skill.

Further moving to the review of previous kinds of literature, one can see that there have been arguments both in opposition to and in favor of various viewpoints on the subject of language learning. Some people believe that speaking in one's native language while learning a new language is beneficial for the learner. They believe that by introducing a new language, both teachers and students would deal with it more quickly than they would otherwise. However, although some believe that mastering a first language will inhibit students from acquiring additional languages, others believe that the inverse is true. Some of the studies that have been conducted on this subject over the years include the following: Language instruction in the target language is essential, as Rababah (2003) emphasized. To accurately describe the situation of EFL education in Saudi, he verifies this. Teachers use Arabic as a medium of education while teaching complex topics or explaining English literature. Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes contextualizing language while still teaching vocabulary in isolation. According to the research results, using the first language in the classroom has significant benefits.

On the other hand, Deller and Rinvoluceri (2002) advise teaching EFL teachers about the drawbacks of using the native language in a haphazard manner in the classroom. If L1 is used correctly and for the right reasons, teaching English bilingually can positively impact students' English proficiency (Kumar et al., 2021; Machaal, 2012; Cuning, 1992). Further research by Miles (2004) suggests that it is possible to aid in acquiring a second language by restricting one's exposure to the native language (L2). According to Hadley (2001), in the majority of popular English language teaching methodologies, the native language of pupils is often considered to be a critical component.

Researchers Hamers and Blanc (2000) investigated the ways in which bilinguals complete a number of cognitive tasks in both languages as part of their research on bilingualism. Bilingualism requires not only command of the linguistic system that underpins each language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, but also the capability of cognitive separation between languages and methods of probing a memory store of one language in order to retrieve information contained within when necessary. In the last two decades, the importance of first language acquisition as a cognitive and pedagogical tool has grown. Çakmak et al. (2021) and Swain and Lapkin (2000), for example, suggest that a fundamental tool of cognition would be taken away if the L1 were to be kept out of tasks requiring both language and cognitive effort. According to Kumar & Supriyatno (2021), in the majority of popular English language teaching methodologies, the students' native language is often a significant factor.

METHOD

The data in this quantitative and qualitative study was analyzed using statistical techniques to bring the issue to the public's attention from multiple angles. A variety of study methodologies have been applied. The researchers obtained information from a varied set of language teachers through interview approaches. The participants were the 20 English teachers chosen at random from different schools of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the study. The researcher utilized a distinctive study approach, a questionnaire survey, to extract information from the target group. A variety of research approaches were used to validate the conclusions of this study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Following up on teachers' questionnaire responses, it becomes clear that while teaching English as a second or foreign language to elementary school children, they emphasize the Arabic language. They have all agreed that grammar should be taught predominantly in Arabic, believing that this will make it easier for children to understand. Excessive usage of Arabic in comprehension texts, vocabulary, and general activities was deemed inappropriate. They tried to focus on English in activities that were easy to understand, especially if there were pertinent questions or supplemental assignments related to the subject.

English-Arabic Bilingual Use In Teaching English: Statistical Analysis

During their session, the four core skills of English are intensively practiced and executed. Teachers also attempted to enhance their students' talents in every skill by exposing them to various techniques. Students, for example, believe that writing is the most challenging skill to learn, according to the survey's findings.

According to Ghahderijani et al. (2021), students are constantly losing words to utilize in their speeches and presentations. Teachers advise students to bring bilingual dictionaries (English-English-Arabic) (Khan et al., 2021). They believe that memorizing as much language as possible will help them improve their English proficiency by helping their students improve theirs. According to teachers who answered the study, children who are limited in their ability to communicate in English are overrepresented in the classroom, encouraging teachers to incorporate Arabic into their education to help these students retain contact with their classmates and peers. In conclusion, the best practices for teaching a foreign language in a classroom setting without interfering with the local language and the solutions provided by teachers were explored. Figure 1 represents the total number of responses based on instructors' responses about language learners' use of Arabic in the classroom.

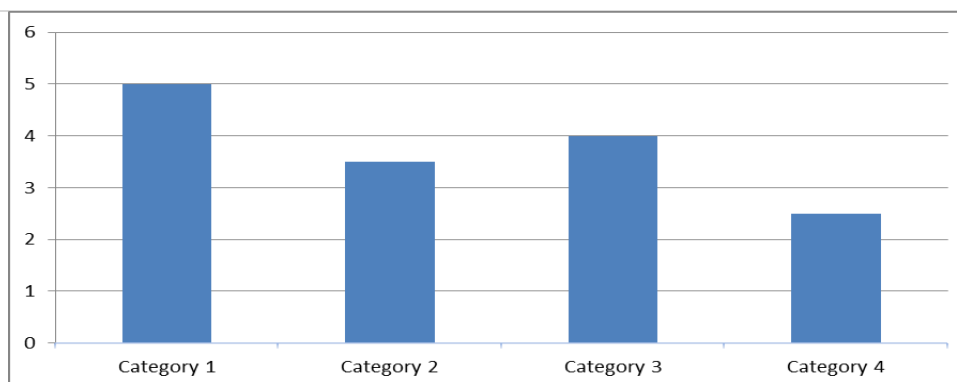


Figure 1: the degree of the use of Arabic in English class

As shown in the preceding picture (Figure 1), the researcher explored this issue using a test of the students and a questionnaire. Category 1 represents those who predominantly use Arabic to teach English as a foreign language. Category 3 represents those who frequently use Arabic to teach English as a foreign language. Category 2 represents those who never use Arabic to teach EFL, and Category 4 represents those who say they occasionally use Arabic. It was possible to calculate the percentage of teachers who utilized Arabic to teach English as a foreign language at various levels of education.

Effect Of English-Arabic Bilingual Use In Teaching English

This caption conveys whether Arabic is regarded as the most practical means of teaching English in a classroom setting. The above analysis conveys that elementary school teachers observed the most significant number of students speaking Arabic during EFL classes. However, they believe that using Arabic in abundance harms language acquisition. After examining both the positive and negative aspects of utilizing Arabic to teach English as a foreign language, the findings suggest that the negative aspects can be mitigated in the classroom.

Measures Suggested For Minimum Use Of Arabic In English Classroom

The negative features of using Arabic to teach English as a foreign language can be addressed in the classroom, according to the findings of a study into both the positive and negative aspects of using Arabic to teach English as a foreign language. The researchers suggest the following strategies for the minimize the use of Arabic in English classrooms:

1. In order to encourage students, the teacher should set precise goals for each session and expect the best from them, even if it is only during the preparation phase. Positive and motivating surroundings are the first step toward change.
2. As a result, both students and teachers must recognize the importance of a well-rounded education in English. There should not be too many restrictions, and it should abide by the rules that have already been established. Students need to be aware of the cultural differences between Arabic and English speakers. English classes should be used as an opportunity to teach students how to

communicate in a foreign language and how to navigate a much larger, more developed, and better-equipped world.

3. Listening activities are a great way to improve your listening skills. It can assist students to improve their language learning skills and their ability to talk with an accent and maintain focus. If you cannot find any educational audio cassettes, you may always force them to listen to a simple English song if they agree. It will look like the class is much fun.
4. To develop one's writing skills, one must practice regularly and employ various tactics. Along with knowing how to utilize dictionaries, they must also know how to use a term effectively and contextualize it. Students should start with simple daily tasks and work their way up to more difficult ones as their experience improves. Drawing as a means of communication appeals to me. As shown in the example, a student can tell a story by sketching the story's events and then expressing each drawing in a simple sentence. If he or she has trouble recalling the term, they should write it down in Arabic and then look it up in a dictionary.
5. Students' talents, motives for learning English as a second language, methods of thinking, personalities, and attitudes should all be considered by teachers.
6. Because students are more comfortable chatting with one another than with a teacher, they can benefit from working in pairs, groups, or even independently. The participation of students should take precedence over the participation of instructors. This will assist kids in developing their self-esteem, analyzing their abilities, and developing their primary language to be used in the classroom.
7. Consistent practice is a proven approach to improve skills. The better and faster students progress, the more time teachers spend helping them develop and practice their abilities.
8. Students are directed through memorizing, recalling, applying, creating, recognizing, repeating, and predicting, using all levels of reasoning.
9. Diversification in the course preparation process can help teachers keep students' attention in class, especially when they mix practical and pleasurable activities like dramatizations, singing, and data presentations.
10. Students can extend their vocabulary and learn new terms by using a monolingual dictionary (English-English) for at least five minutes at the start of each lesson.
11. Teachers should rectify their students' mistakes in a positive and supportive manner, including time-waiting and self-correction as needed.
12. If technology is available, it has the potential to be a huge asset. Using tools that are similar to those that students find amusing in the first place will encourage students to be more motivated in their learning.

CONCLUSION

Teaching English as a foreign language in a classroom environment has long been a source of debate. While some argue that English should be the only language used in class to help students improve their skills, others argue that Arabic should be included because the primary goal of teaching is to help students improve their skills, and the most effective methods should be used to convey and illustrate English comprehension texts, grammar, exercises, and speaking and writing skills. Despite being the most frequently spoken language on the planet, many people regard English as a difficult language to learn and master. This style of thinking is harmful to our students in general, but particularly in public schools. Certain ways for making English classes more pleasurable to teach and learn, according to the research, may help avert this problem in the future.

Because the learner is the intended beneficiary, we should concentrate our efforts on him or her. We should identify a key goal for each English class, choose the most effective teaching method, and determine how a teacher may communicate this goal to my students. If the primary goal is stated explicitly, everything in class will run smoothly. However, if a teacher walks into a classroom unsure of what to do, where to begin, or how to educate, you know you've run into a major problem. The integration of Arabic in English classrooms is not, in my opinion, a mistake. It offers a more favourable learning and understanding environment for children. We should not, however, rely solely on the Arabic language. It's important to strike a balance between the two. We don't want to lose sight of the fact that the class is termed a "English class" and that the goal of the class is to help students comprehend English as much as possible. To summarize, educational institutions have prioritised the use of Arabic as a teaching tool in English classes. The purpose of this paper is to look at the viewpoints, attitudes, and solutions to this problem from the perspectives of instructors and students.

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