

# Exploring the Perspectives of EFL Instructors toward the Employment of L1 in EFL Reading Classes

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## Abstract

In recent years, numerous studies have been concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of using L1 in EFL contexts. Nevertheless, there is no consensus so far on the usefulness of the use of L1 in EFL contexts. More specifically, there is a wide disagreement between scholars and researchers regarding the use of Arabic as an L1 in EFL contexts given the significant linguistic differences between Arabic and English. In light of this argument, this study is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness and usefulness of the use of L1 in EFL classes in the Saudi universities of the instructors' perspective. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve EFL instructors in four Saudi universities. Results indicated that the majority of the participants indicated that the integration of L1 in EFL classes can be usefully used to achieve a proper classroom discipline and keep the structure of the classroom activities in a way that makes the realization of the target outcomes possible. They also stressed that L1 can be used to help EFL learners develop their English language skills. They also indicated that the use of Arabic in EFL classes helps establish a good relationship with the instructor and reduces students' stress and anxiety. It can be finally concluded that the use of Arabic serves as a useful teaching and learning tool in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Arabic, EFL, L1, L2 reading, Saudi universities, stress

## 1. Introduction

Recent years have witnessed increasing research attention on bilingualism. The phenomenon is about using two languages for the purpose of teaching, especially with learners who are learning a foreign language along with their mother language. A heated debate has been launched over its validity. On one side, proponents of the bilingual behavior contend that it facilitates learning and alleviates the sense of alienness that might overtake FL learners in contexts where the foreign language is the dominant language (Piasecka, 1986). On the other hand, opponents argue that using the two languages is more likely to badly affect the acquisition of the foreign language due to the interference caused by the first language and the errors that ensue as a result (Krashen, 1981).

A characteristic unique to the EFL contexts is the most shared L1 between the instructors and the learners, which makes it relatively different from the immersive environment of the ESL settings. In such EFL contexts, the first language is inevitably used either by teachers or students at varying degrees. This raises the question of whether this use of the first language is beneficial or it might bring about the detrimental consequences on L2 learning. Students put pressure on teachers to use their first language, and teachers might see it useful to use it. However, the mixed views concerning the relevance of using the first language render teachers uncertain of the usefulness of such a practice, especially that the official institutional view is against the use or, at the best advocates the limited use.

L1 finds its way to the process of teaching a foreign or second language through different venues. From a broad perspective, L1 can be used to achieve a proper classroom discipline and keep the structure of the classroom activities in a way that makes the realization of the target outcomes possible. More specifically, L1 can be exploited to help learners develop their linguistic skills in the target language. However, the investment of L1 to enhance the four language skills is still narrowly addressed with scant research inspections.

The controversy over whether to use or not to use L1 in teaching L2 can be seen differently. In other words, a compromise can be reached. In fact, the question then is not so much whether to use or not to use L1, but when to use it and how much L1 is allowed. This presents the drive for this research. If teachers are to use L1 in their classrooms, the question that arises is how to effectively and systematically integrate it in the process of teaching so that maximal results are achieved and negative side effects, proposed by anti-L1, are optimally avoided.

The problem of this research is multifaceted. Teachers in most cases use L1 in introducing their lessons chaotically. There seems to be no systematic approach to guide the use, nor a clear image, on the part of teachers, as to how to integrate it purposefully. The personal experience of the researcher indicates that the user is often in response to students' pressure or the teacher's low resources as how to deal with challenging tasks. This is more evident when presenting the four language skills. This chaotic approach and the unresolved question of whether to use or not to use L1 are more likely to throw the shadow on teachers' perceptions concerning the usefulness of the use and the criteria governing the use. This foggy uncertain picture most often brings about a sense of guilt on the part of teachers when they use L1. This feeling of guilt experienced by teachers when using L1 can be attributed to the loud voice and the popularity of the ant-L1 view which is widely advocated (Tang, 2002). Cook, 2001 thinks that L1 use is unavoidable even when monolingualism is officially adopted, and teachers are supposed not to use it. That is why "Teachers resort to the L1 despite their best intentions and often feeling guilty for straying from the L2 path" (Cook, 2001p. 405).

Part of the problem as well is that despite the shift in perspective from seeing L1 as interference to the more positive standpoint of a resource, there is still reluctance to use L1 in the process of teaching the target language. L1 is not systematically and strategically exploited in the classroom. What is clear is that research in SLA has gone a long way in the positive reconceptualization of L1 use, but the second language teaching still needs to catch up with this (Widdowson, 2001).

Given that, to the best knowledge of the researcher, little research has been dedicated to the exploration of the different aspects of using L1 in teaching L2 reading, especially in the Arab region, the current study is intended to examine teachers' perceptions in relation to the different aspects of using the native language in teaching reading in the EFL context. In light of this argument, this study aims at examining the perceptions of EFL instructors working for a number of Saudi universities concerning the validity of using L1 in teaching reading and how they perceive their personal experiences. It asks the following research question: What are teachers' perspectives on using L1 in L2 classes? This research question is further analyzed into these sub questions. (1) How do teachers feel about the use of L1 in L2 classes? (2) Why are teachers for or against the use of L1 in L2 classes? (3) What are the teachers' perspectives concerning how L1 should be used in L1 classes? (4) What are the teachers' perspectives concerning the possible effects of using L1 on students? (5) What are teachers' perspectives as to the conditions that might govern the use of L1 in reading instruction?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Use of L1 in Teaching L2: A Journey Back and Forth

The exclusive stance of the L1 usage in the L2 setting lasted for over 120 years, with a prevailing adoption of a mono-lingual approach to teaching L2 rather than a cross-lingual one (Cook, 2001). Monolingualism is about using only the target language as the only means of teaching without permitting the native language any role in the acquisition process. That way, as presupposed by advocates of the approach, learning the target language achieves the utmost effectiveness (Tang, 2002).

It is commonly thought that using L1 in the process of L2 teaching is pedagogically inappropriate if not a taboo. However, after a relatively long period of exclusion from the pedagogical scene, L1, employed as a pedagogical tool, has come to the fore again and has become a focus of a wide range of research projects. The debate over the integration of L1 in L2 instruction is informed by two seemingly opposing views. The two stances, the inclusion, and the exclusion, went through a cyclical process and kept coming and going over the last two centuries. Brooks-Lewis (2009) states that the argument about the use of L1 in EFL teaching has gone through ebbs and flows in intensity, with no last decision appearing on the horizon.

L1 flowed with the emergence of the notorious Grammar Translation Method (GTM) (Cook, 2001). The method appeared formally in the twentieth century with a primary focus on grammar and translation from the target language to the mother tongue (Mora Pablo et al., 2011). However, this prominent role of L1 in teaching L2 began even earlier than the GTM. The first language was traditionally the established venue through which learning a second language was pursued in the west (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). A representative teaching method of this approach was the 'double-translation' method which came into existence in 1570. The method aimed to "make the learner equally conscious of the structure and the resources of his own language as of the language being studied" (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, p. 39).

The anti-L1 stance dominated the pedagogical scenery since the 1880s. Falling under this category of methods are the direct method and the audio-lingual method. The more recent methods of communicative language teaching and task-based learning have indirectly banned it. This is to say that they did not so much ban it as ignored it. They did not say 'you must not use it', rather they emphasized that L1 use must be minimized (Cook, 2001).

The advent of the direct method, with its emphasis on speaking and the exclusive use of the target language, has caused the grammar-translation method to recede to the back seats and almost disappear. Since then, translation and the use of the mother tongue have been perceived as pedagogical sin (Timor, 2012). In the same vein, Brooks-Lewis (2009) contends that following the Grammar Translation Method and with the emergence of the direct method, the use of the mother tongue in teaching L2 became limited until it was finally completely excluded and seen as alien to the EFL/ESL setting. Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) argued that the widely used CLT approach with its overemphasis on the use of the target language as a means of communication was one of the major contributors to the marginalization of the L1 in the EFL/ESL settings.

Beginning from the mid-1980s, the adamant opposition to the L1 use began to lose grip to the extent that some scholars claimed that the ant-L1 viewpoint is not firmly grounded psychologically, linguistically, or pedagogically (Tang, 2002). The argument for L1 integration is

getting more and more solidified that “We have now reached the point where there are virtually no commentaries made in the SLA field advocating the exclusion or even the strong limitation of the L1” (Macaro, Tian, & Chu 2020, p.2). This restoration of the first language to the fore of the stage was supported by an emphasis on enhancing linguistic awareness through a comparative analysis between the mother language and the target language (Timor, 2012). Research has indicated that the exclusion of L1 is not such a practical practice, especially with low proficiency students where L1 acts as a compensating tool for communication purposes (e.g. Dörnyei and Kormos, 1988; Nunan & Lamb, 1996)

In the 1980s and the early 1990s, L1 was marginal on the agenda of SLA which was overwhelmingly influenced by approaches that encouraged that communication be carried out through a second language, and the whole process of L2 acquisition should be operationalized using L2. These approaches included input modification, meaning negotiation, forced output, and oral feedback. Since the mid-1990s, a theoretical shift favoring the L1 use has emerged. (Macaro, Tian, & Chu 2020). Out of the literature review, Macaro, Tian, and Chu (2020) came out with four reasons underlying the shift. First, there is recognition that L1 presents a useful pedagogical tool that should be made use of in teaching. Second, when L1 is shunned at any cost, this might make EFL learners feel their identity, with native language at its core, is being jeopardized. Third, this preferential status of L2 has given the monolingual teachers an advantage over the bilingual teachers in the job advertisement. Lastly, it is widely documented that code-switching occurs naturally within the bilingual settings.

### *2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of L1 Integration*

The pro-L1 view is theoretically grounded in the humanistic approach. The sociocultural approach to second language acquisition is also used to inform the view since it assigns some influential roles to L1 in teaching L2. These strategic roles are psychological and regulatory in nature (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). In addition, proponents of the L1 integration base their standpoint on cognitive and sociolinguistic perspectives. Cognitively speaking, they argue that the mastered L1 acts as a rich cognitive reservoir which individuals are bound to make use of to understand the world, the new concepts, and approach new languages (De la Campa, & Nassaji, 2009). Likewise, advocates of the employment of the mother tongue base their claim mainly on the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis. It presupposes that how proficient a learner is in the first language has its significant implications on their second language acquisition, especially with regard to the literacy skills (Cummins, 1981). The supposition of interdependence is supported by research on the transfer between the MT and the FL (e.g. Jessner & Cenoz, 2000) which revealed that transfer occurs between languages in the different linguistic subdomains including phonological, syntactic, semantic, and textual ones.

On the other hand, the opponents of using L1 ground their view on the naturalistic approach to language teaching which posits that language is acquired rather than learnt and that the immersion setting that allows learners lots of opportunities to practice the target language is the route that must be pursued (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Moreover, it can be supposed that the anti-L1 perspective seems to be incompatible with the widely applauded learner-centered classroom approach (von Dietze & Von Dietze, 2007). The reuse of L1 represented a paradigm shift from a monolingual approach to teaching FL to the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis that posits that L1 is a useful tool in teaching L2 (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cummins, 2007).

### *2.3 Related Studied on L1 in L2 Learning*

Wong (2020) attempted to explore the potential benefits of using L1, Chinese, in teaching reading lessons and the students’ and teachers’ perceptions about the use. More specifically, the study tried to examine the hypothesis that the judicious L1 use can be used to act as a mediating tool to convert the L2 input into the intake. Results revealed that two kinds of strategies, namely L1 bottom-up language focused teaching strategies and condition-oriented teaching and learning strategies, were significantly influential in teaching and learning in the English reading lessons. These positive perceptions of the teachers and students implied that the use of these two categories should be increased, unlike the Top-Down Language Focused, strategies whose use should be kept to the minimum for the L1 use to be strategically and judiciously applied. A negative correlation was found between English proficiency and L1 use. Teachers held positive perceptions about L1 use, especially in the case of low proficient learners.

Bhatti, Shamsudin, and Said (2018) explored how and why Pakistani EFL teachers use L1 as a teaching method. Teachers’ performance in four speaking classes was observed and recorded. Analysis showed that teachers code-switched between L2 and L1 keeping L2 dominant. Code-switching served the functions of keeping classroom discipline, creating rapport with learners and presenting new vocabulary items. The study concluded that code-switching serves as a useful teaching and learning tool.

Timor (2012) examined 112 Israeli English language teachers’ attitudes towards using the mother language in the English classrooms. Results showed that teachers have a general positive attitude and that they primarily use the L1 for teaching purposes while a small number of them use it to keep discipline in the classroom. Likewise, the qualitative research conducted by Mora Pablo, et al. (2011) aimed to explore the reasons behind teachers’ and students’ use of L1 in the foreign language classroom. Results showed that most students have positive attitudes towards using L1 and regard it as a pedagogically useful tool. Only a small number preferred the use of the second language as the only medium of teaching.

In his qualitative research, Brooks-Lewis (2009) sought to examine the perceptions of undergraduate students of two universities in Mexico about the inclusion of their L1, Spanish, in the process of teaching and learning their target language, English, which was taught as a foreign language. Results showed that students held an overall positive attitude towards this inclusion. Williams (1999) explored the extent to which English instructors, who are Spanish native speakers, use their L1 in teaching English and the purposes L1 is employed to achieve. Results showed that most students were in favour of using Spanish in the process of teaching English due to the facilitating role it plays in their

comprehension. All the teachers revealed that they use Spanish in their classes to some degree.

Thus, the potential of L1 use in teaching L2 has been explored in different contexts and with different pairs of languages representing L1 and L2. Using Arabic as L1 in teaching English as a foreign language was also the topic of a wide array of research. Al-Taâ (2019) examined teachers and students' perceptions and attitudes towards using Arabic in The EFL classroom in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Alshammari (2011) examined the purposes and perceptions of teachers and students in two Saudi technical colleges concerning the incorporation of L1 in The EFL classroom. Results showed that clarification was the main purpose and the judicious and balanced use are guaranteed for optimal efficacy.

It is worthy to note that this brief review of previous studies on the use of L1 in L2 learning shows that most of these research studies are characterized by a generic nature. This means that they tend to explore the broad use of Arabic without specifying a particular skill or domain. To fill this research gap, this study seeks to bridge this gap by focusing on the use of Arabic in reading instruction

### **3. Methodology**

Since the aim of this research is to explore how EFL teachers perceive the use of L1 in teaching L2 and especially in instructing the reading skill, the qualitative research method will be adopted to study this phenomenon. More specifically the phenomenological approach will be utilized for this purpose. The researcher will conduct interviews with EFL instructors to elicit their beliefs and feelings about the potential use of the native language in hindering or promoting second language acquisition. Interviews with the instructors will seek to cover various aspects, including how they generally perceive the fusing of the native language in the EFL/ESL contexts, to what extent the native language can be used, and how to achieve the utmost gains out of it.

### **Setting**

The setting of the study is Saudi Arabia, a Gulf country where English is taught as a foreign language. Although English is introduced at the outset of schooling from grade one, the overall proficiency of learners is generally not up to standards. Instructors are often native speakers of Arabic. This means that using L1 in the classroom is always available resource and therefore it is often resorted to.

### **Participants**

Twelve EFL instructors working in four Saudi universities were recruited for this study. The participants have a working experience of at least five years in teaching reading courses for EFL university undergraduates. They will be accessed via e-mail. Localization of participants was intended so that the different regions of the kingdom are spanned. Initially more than 20 instructors were contacted, but only twelve agreed to participate. Participants will be briefed about the research topic and objectives through an information sheet. Their informed consent will be obtained in advance via the e-mail.

### **Ethical issues**

The conduction of this research will not involve any sensitive ethical issues. However, all standards followed in qualitative research will be adhered to including getting participants informed about the aim of the study and methods utilized. Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed and the right to withdraw will be assured.

### **4. Data Collection and Analysis**

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted with participants via zoom. Based on the participants' permission, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Field notes were also taken during the conversation upon informants' approval. The adoption of the semi-structured interviews was to achieve consistency and a relative structure across the interviews and to focus more on the research interests and objectives. Typical to semi-structured interviews, prompting questions were added to the fixed questions to elicit more information and to stimulate the interview session. The interview questions were designed in a way that allows instructors to talk about their experiences about the different aspects involved in the phenomenon of using the L2 in presenting reading to EFL learners. Validity for the interviews was considered through the typical strategies particular to the qualitative research design. This included triangulation, trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility. In addition; the interview questions will be piloted before the actual administration

Data analysis went through the three steps of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification, which were suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). The aim was to extract relevant information to tease out meaning and reach general themes out of the meanings elicited that deeply reflect the participants' lived experiences. That is, the thematic content analysis is the technique utilized for the purpose of analyzing the data to be collected by the research.

Thematic content analysis has been proved as one of the most effective and reliable approaches in the qualitative analysis of interview data in different disciplines including Applied Linguistics. Thematic content analysis has been developed essentially developed with the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and viewpoints expressed by participants in interviews and focus-group discussions. In this sense, thematic content analysis has been extensively used over the recent years in different disciplines in social sciences including education and applied linguistics to provide a deeper understanding and more integrated insights of learners, instructors, faculty, and policymakers (Krippendorff, 2018; Lemke, 2012).

Broadly speaking, thematic content analysis is some sort of inductive analysis of qualitative data that tends to discover and identify the dominant themes that can be seen as the patterns and phenomena and relate them to the context and research questions of the study (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), thematic content analysis is a method of

identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (p. 808).

Thematic content analysis, Neuendorf (2016) defines as a ‘methodological framework for investigating texts and giving an accurate description of their contents. It is one of the most important and established analytical frameworks and it dates back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thematic content analysis can be done using different methods. This study adopts the purposive approach, also known as purposive sampling technique (Gerbic & Stacey, 2005). Purposive sampling, also referred to as “judgmental, selective or subjective sampling”, refers to sampling techniques utilized by researchers to judge units of study (Patton, 2014). A major aim of purposive sampling technique is to focus on certain features of a chosen population or samples which best provide the answer to the research questions. As a purposive sampling technique, *maximum variation* or *heterogeneous sampling* technique has been considered useful for this study. This technique allows the researcher to search for a variety of perspectives in the selected units, which exhibit a variety of attributes, experiences, incidents and situations. The underlying principle of this technique is to gain a greater insight into any particular phenomenon such as the issue of the linguistic needs in the Saudi courts and judicial system. Purposive sampling is thus helpful in identifying central or common themes across the sample.

Thematic content Analysis is based on a number of subsequent procedures. These can be outlined as follows: formulation of the research problem and questions, identification of the research community and tested sample, selection and definition of the analysis unit and the preparation of categories of the categories of content to be analyzed and defined procedurally, conducting an exploratory study to achieve stability, coding of the data, analysis of data, and finally drawing conclusions and interpreting quantitative and statistical indicators. Procedures of thematic content analysis can be summarized as seen in Figure 1.

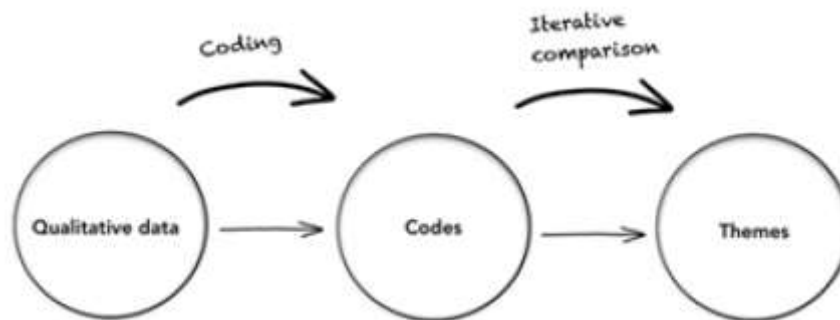


Figure 1. Procedures of carrying out thematic content analysis

## 5. Results

The responses of the participants can be summarized under the following three themes: (1) the potential benefits and drawbacks of incorporating L1 in EFL classes, (2) the need to use L1 in EFL teaching, and (3) the criteria of integrating L1 in EFL contexts.

### *The potential benefits and drawbacks of incorporating L1 in EFL classes*

The majority of the participants stressed that the incorporation of L1 in EFL contexts has positive implications to the EFL learners' acquisition of English language skills. They explained that the use of Arabic is useful in helping EFL learners understand the meanings of new words and the complex language items. They also indicated that they use Arabic to give clear instructions to the students, which establishes classroom discipline and keeps the structure of the classroom activities in a way that makes the realization of the target outcomes possible. They outlined that it is usually difficult for the learners to understand the instructions in English due to their poor proficiency. Other instructors also pointed out that the inclusion of L1 was useful in teaching English grammar. The use of Arabic made it easy to understand complex grammar questions.

Participants revealed that they used Arabic in the EFL classrooms for various functions and with different degrees ranging from low to high frequency. They explained that the use of Arabic in communicating with EFL learners was able to function as a psychological tool. The psychological function L1 serves allowed students to devote more cognitive resources to tasks enabling them to undertake higher levels of thinking that wouldn't be possible otherwise within the framework of the monolingual classroom.

On the other hand, some participants reflected that the use of Arabic in EFL classes has different drawbacks. They explained that one major problem with the use of Arabic in the EFL classes is that EFL learners are less exposed to English. Therefore, they suggest that the use of Arabic in EFL classes should be reduced to the minimum. They added that when using Arabic in EFL classes, learners are not willing to use English in expressing themselves. Furthermore, some participants indicated that the use of Arabic in explaining vocabulary and structures is time consuming. It takes a long time for instructors to explain in English then translate into Arabic. Others reflected that the use of Arabic in explaining English grammars and structures can be misleading due to the significant linguistic differences between Arabic and English.

### *The need to use L1 in EFL teaching*

The majority of the participants stressed that the use of Arabic is imperative in EFL contexts. In many cases, it was important for them to use Arabic for communication purposes. Some participants explained that the L2 acquisition process is usually frustrating for many learners. It

was important for them therefore to address the frustration felt by many EFL learners in their classes. Similarly, some instructors indicated that the use of Arabic is inevitable for English majors in the universities.

The participants indicated that the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms is needed for achieving two functions. They explained that Arabic should be integrated into EFL classrooms for teaching purposes and using it for the purpose of classroom management. They added that they need to use Arabic in EFL classrooms to provide students with information about the syllabus in general and the lessons specifically, carrying on the classroom management activities, explicating metalinguistic information during delivery of grammar, phonology, spelling and cross-cultural issues and checking for comprehension. Additionally, Arabic is needed in EFL classrooms so that teachers can clarify concepts, present grammar and manage the classroom and by students to facilitate their collaborative learning and their individual use of strategies. They added that they used Arabic to present difficult vocabulary items and clarify complex concepts and ideas that help students comprehend the text. In this regard, they found out that L1 acted as a facilitating tool that helped students choose meanings of words that fit in the text which eventually enabled students to make meaning of reading. Some participants also suggested that the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms is needed for psychological purposes. They explained that it is important to create an anxiety-free atmosphere and give students the comfort and a sense of control that aids them to develop more mature ideas.

According to the responses of the participants, it can be suggested that the integration of Arabic in EFL classrooms is needed at three levels. First, the use of Arabic is an important set the psychological scene and provide for conditions that motivate students, and develop them into confident learners and risk-takers in a way that helps them engage actively with learning. Second, the use of Arabic is important for learners to help them decode English at the word level and/or the sentence level. Finally, the use of Arabic is needed to help students make use of their prior knowledge of the topic to pave the way for the more challenging tasks in L2.

#### *Criteria for Integration*

Although the majority of the participants agreed on the importance of using Arabic in EFL classrooms, they also agreed that the use of Arabic has to be governed and controlled. They indicated that the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms has to be well administrated to be judicious and strategic.

There seems to be no exclusion criteria, however, to govern the optimal dosage of L1 use in L2 teaching. Some participants indicated that it is situation-sensitive which is decided according to the proficiency level of learners, goal of use among others. Others indicated that that teachers' use of L1 depends mainly on students' level of proficiency in L2, the higher the level, the lower L1 is used in the classroom.

According to the participants, criteria for the effective integration of Arabic in EFL classrooms can be summarized as follows. The first criterion is about the efficacy and the expectation that the L1 use would yield more effective results that are not accessible otherwise. Second, the use of L1 should enhance L2 learning. The third criterion relates to naturalness; this is to do with the learners' preferences as to which language they prefer to address different functions and topics. The fourth criterion of external relevance is related to whether the bilingual practice would help students internalize some L2 uses which they are likely to need in the world outside the classroom.

## **6. Discussion & Conclusion**

The results indicated clearly that the majority of the participants favored the use of Arabic in EFL classes for different reasons. The results agree with the current mainstream of studies that have realized the importance of integrating LI in EFL classrooms. The use of LI in teaching English as a foreign language is not a taboo as it was used to be seen in the past.

Cook (2001) claimed that the anti-L1 attitude was clearly a mainstream element in twentieth century language teaching methodology (p.405). So he reexamined what he described as 'time-honored View' of exiling the L1 from the classroom teaching. He argued that this banishment of L1 is grounded, by its advocates, on three underpinnings; the supposition that a second language is acquired the way the First language is acquired, which is not yet research evidenced, the supposition that each language is localized differently in the brain for which there is no unequivocal evidence, the third reason underlying the exclusion of L1 is the desire to maximize students' exposure to the second language. In recent years, however, different studies have been conducted on the deliberate and systematic use of the first language (L1) in the EFL classrooms.

According to Wong (2020), EFL learners' struggle in the English-only classrooms due to motivation and low proficiency was the influential drive that encouraged researchers to reexamine the integration of the mother language in teaching the target language. In the same vein, the exclusive use of L2 might impede the conversion of input into the intake. In this case, L1 can make this shift easier acting as a catalyst. He adds that L1 stands up as a useful resource that enhances students' motivation, facilitates collaborative work, and builds knowledge in learning L2.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the learner is developing into a new bilingual individual, and L1 is the bridge over which the learner passes from their L1 identity of their new L2 self (De la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). That is why there is a kind of agreement that reading in L2 is inevitably a bilingual event in which the reader invariably employs L1 thinking all the time in the process of reading. In other words, L1 is used as a strategy to make sense of the reading text. (Tian, 2020). Moreover, the integration of the first language can achieve a number of vital psychological functions. L1 as a starting point helps learners to gain a sense of security, make use of their personal experience and easily express themselves. That way they are tuned to explore the new language and go through the demanding experience of learning it (Auerbach, 1993). Another concern voiced by proL1 scholars is that the deliberate and exclusive ignorance of L1 might get learners to feel that L1 jeopardize their identity of which their native language is the core (Piasecka, 1986).

To conclude about whether or not to recognize and integrate L1 in teaching a foreign or second language, it can be said that language contact is irreversible and it is the role of pedagogy to give it a sense of orientation. Hence, it can be argued that the two seemingly opposing views can meet half way. A common ground where they can reconcile is the judicious, cautious and balanced application of L1. That way, L2 maintains its central role as the goal of learning and L1 acts as a means to this end.

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