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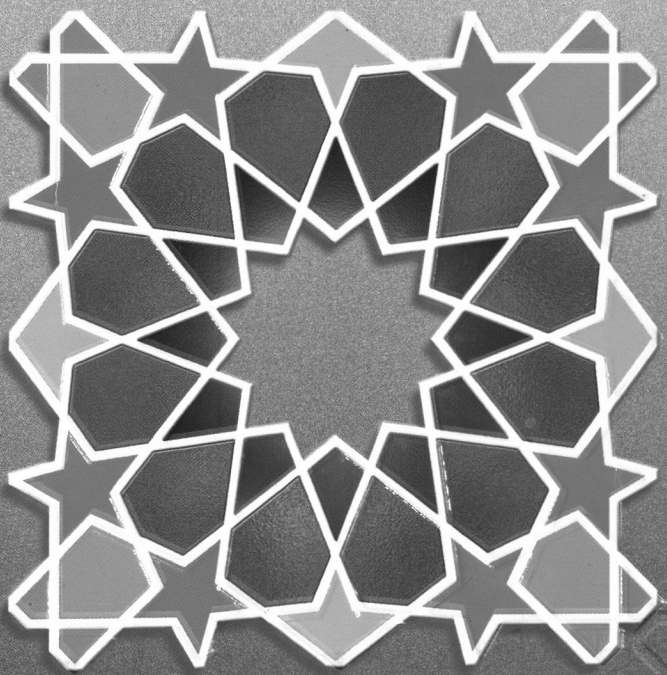

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Using the Mother Tongue (Arabic Language) in EFL Teaching

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Abstract

This paper explores the instructors' and students' reactions to using Arabic language in teaching English as a foreign language in the Department of English and Modern European Languages at the University of Qatar. Therefore, a two-form questionnaire was developed: one for the instructors and one for the students. As regards instructors' responses, it was found that all of the native speakers and 62.5 of non-native speakers of English felt that it was okay to use Arabic in EFL teaching. With regard to students' reactions, it was found that 42.85% of freshmen, 54.23% of sophomores, showing a 13% increase over freshmen; 57.64% of juniors, showing a 4% over junior students and finally 61.53 of senior students favored the use of Arabic, showing an increase of 4% over juniors. Finally, the paper was concluded by recommending a judicious use of Arabic in EFL teaching, and when it is the shortest possible route to make learners understand, since it is believed that the mother tongue does have a vital, facilitating role in teaching the foreign language.

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Research Theme

The issue of using the learners' mother tongue in EFL teaching has been completely ignored in teacher training courses and in discussions of methodology on the assumption that it has no role to play. As a result, teachers, experienced and inexperienced alike, have not been at ease to permit its use in any EFL learning situation (Atkinson, 1987:241). However, it has recently become a topical issue in the literature on EFL teaching, for there has been, among a number of EFL specialists, the conviction that L1 has a necessary and facilitating role in L2 learning.

Having been a teacher of English as a foreign language for over 20 years, and after having thoroughly examined the recent literature on the topic undertaken, I contend that this issue should be given due consideration.

In this study, therefore, the instructors' and students' reactions to the use of the mother tongue, Arabic in this case, in teaching English as a foreign language in the Department of English at the University of Qatar are examined through responses to a questionnaire developed for the purpose.

Before shedding some light on the previous research that looked into the use of L1 in L2, the value of the mother tongue as envisaged by a number EFL specialists is given.

Value of the Mother Tongue

The mother tongue is not just for verbal communication. It is the language through which one's whole concept of the world is formed with different languages having different concepts. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, cited in Hopkins,1988:18) sets out various criteria to define the mother tongue. According to Kangas, the mother

tongue is " the language one thinks in; the language one dreams in; the language one counts in." She also develops her definition to include the following:

" The language a child learns first
The language a child knows first
The language a child uses most
The language one identifies with
The language with which one is identified as a native speaker by others"

It is obvious, then, that the mother tongue is associated with a person's emotions, concepts of the world, and identity to a cultural group, that is, the essence of who a person is".

K. Piasecka (1986, cited in Hopkins,1988:18) augments the above position when she advocates " a standpoint which accepts that the thinking, feeling, and artistic life of the person is very much rooted in his/her mother tongue". She also states : " One's sense of identity as an individual is inextricably bound up with one's native language...If the learner of a foreign or second language is encouraged to ignore his/her native language s/he might well feel that his /her identity is threatened."

This shows us that the value of the mother tongue stems not only from its use as a medium for human communication, but also from its being a person's social, political, emotional, affective, and psychological innermost being.

Previous Research

Using the mother tongue in teaching English, as mentioned above, has recently become an important and a topical issue. There has been, among EFL/ESL professionals, the conviction that the

mother tongue plays an important and facilitating role in learning English.

W. Schweers, Jr. (1999) conducted research on the use of Spanish in EFL classes at the University of Puerto Rico, Baymon Campus, during the first semester of the 1997-1998 academic year. The subjects were 19 professors and three sections of basic English. The results showed that 88.7% of students felt that Spanish should be used in the English classroom. The results also showed that students would like Spanish to be used to explain difficult concepts, help them feel more comfortable and confident, check comprehension, and teach new vocabulary items. The students felt that Spanish helps them when they feel lost. In other words, it facilitates their comprehension of what is happening in class. By contrast, teachers felt that Spanish should be used to some degree. Some teachers used Spanish to establish rapport with students, help students write better reports, and to explain difficult concepts, for they believe that it is more important for students to understand a concept than it is for that concept to be explained exclusively in English. They also suggested another advantage, which is that students identify better with a teacher who speaks their language. In turn, this identification leads the students to feel that the teacher respects and values their native language.

W. Schweers, Jr. (1999) concluded his research by saying that a second and a foreign language can be effectively learned through raising awareness of the differences and similarities between L1 and L2. He also added that the prudent use of L2 in the English classroom affirms the value of L1.

Al-Taha & El-Hibir (1990) in their discussion of the characteristics of successful EFL teachers maintained that a foreign language teacher should be trained in both the foreign language and

the mother tongue; they say that ".....knowing the learners' mother tongue doesn't in the least undermine the teacher's dignity. We are not talking about code-switching in the classroom, but rather a passive knowledge that helps the teacher teach more effectively certain concepts in grammar , phonetics, and lexis if these concepts have a frame of reference in the learners' mother tongue. This enables the teacher to communicate knowledge to his students via the shortest possible route." (43)

David Atkinson (1987:241) is in favor of using the mother tongue in EFL classrooms. He states that "the prohibition of the students' native language is unfashionable, but the potential of its use in the classroom clearly needs further exploration." He provides a list of appropriate uses of the mother tongue in the foreign language classroom. These uses are: eliciting language, giving complex instructions to basic levels, using translation to highlight a recently taught language item, checking for sense, testing, and developing circumlocution strategies. He concludes that " although the mother tongue is not a suitable basis for a methodology, it has, at all levels, a variety of roles to play, which at present are consistently undervalued, for reasons which are for the most part suspect." But he also adds that " ... not using the mother tongue in a monolingual classroom is almost certainly to teach with less than maximum efficiency".

Concerning the use of L1 in an ESL situation, Elsa K. Auerback (1993:29) justifies the current preference for using L1 in the ESL classrooms for sociopolitical factors. She suggests using L1 in negotiating syllabuses and lessons; record keeping; classroom management, scene setting; language analysis; presentation of rules governing grammar; phonetics; morphology and spelling, discussion of cross-cultural issues; instruction or prompt explanation of errors; and assessment of comprehension. She also maintains that " every day

classroom practices, far from neutral, have ideological origins and consequences for relations of power both inside and outside the classroom." Finally, she concludes her article by saying that " starting with L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners' lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English."

Sheona Hopkins (1988) conducted a survey using two questionnaires to find out (a) the number of teachers who used L1 and the extent to which it was used, and (b)the attitudes of both teachers and students to using the learner's mother tongue in teaching English. She concluded her study by saying that teachers who filled out the questionnaire vary in the extent to which they use L1 and in their methods. These uses included explaining a topic or as student's activity and when giving instructions either personally or through translations by most of the teachers. Half of the teachers used L1 in comparing cultural differences. The teachers who used L1 were bilingual teachers and teachers working with bilingual assistants.

In her survey, the majority of students at all levels in community classes felt that the use of L1 in learning English is helpful. However, students at the college of further education did not. The students' attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue were influenced by the academic situation , but not by the level of competence in English. A bilingual teacher was seen, by the majority of students at all levels, as the most helpful means of learning English. Finally, she said that it is appropriate to encourage more bilingual teachers to produce bilingual materials and give training in their use to monolingual teachers so that as many students as possible can benefit from the vital tool for language learning each student has at his/her fingertips, -their mother tongue.

K. Piasecka (1986, cited in Schweers,Jr.1988:6) takes a similar stand to Auerback (1993) with regard to using L1 when she addresses the value of teaching English to immigrants, that is in an ESL setting: " One's sense of identity as an individual is inextricably bound up with one's native language....If the learner is encouraged to ignore his/her native language, he/she might well feel his/her identity is threatened."

Yet, there are a number of studies, such as those conducted by P. Hubbard et al. (1983), J. Haycraft (1978) and G. Moskovitz and E.Stevick (1980), which completely ignore the usage of L1 in teaching English, Secondly, other studies have taken a middle stand, such as J.Harmer (1983), who refers to using the mother tongue in passing, and R.Gower and S. Walters (1983) who cautioned against the overuse of the mother tongue in EFL/ESL teaching.

It is noteworthy here to point out that using the learners' mother tongue in an ESL setting is completely different from using the mother tongue in an EFL situation for political, social, ideological, cultural, psychological reasons.....etc. Accordingly, very little attention will be given to the former topic throughout this study.

Hypotheses

The researcher hypothesizes that

(1) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between speakers of English and response.

(2) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between native speakers and non-native speakers regarding their preferences in using Arabic.

(3) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year and response.

(4) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year, first and second, and response.

(5) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year, first and third, and response.

(6) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year, first and fourth, and response.

(7) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year, second and third, and response.

(8) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year , second and fourth, and response.

(9) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year , third and fourth, and response.

(10) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year and the frequency of using Arabic.

(11) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year and when to use Arabic.

(12) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year and the subjects' preference to use Arabic.

(13) There are no significant differences at = 0.05 for the independency relationship between academic year and whether L1 improves students' achievement.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects were 19 instructors (three native speakers and 16 non-native speakers) and 390 female students (freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors) in the Department of English at the University of Qatar during the spring semester of 2004.

Instrumentation

A two-form questionnaire, one for instructors and one for students, was constructed for the purpose of the study after having examined previous studies on the topic under investigation. The instructors' form included 3 items and the students' form included 6 items (see appendices 1 and 2).

Validity

The two-form questionnaire was given to five professors, three linguists and two English literature specialists in order to have the content validity of the instrument. A few minor changes were made. Upon the recommendations of the five professors, all items were included in the final version.

Reliability

By using the Split Half Formula the reliability was found to be 0.84 for the students' questionnaire and 0.87 for the instructors' questionnaire. Both of them are suitable for this kind of research.

Data collection

The instructors' questionnaire was distributed and its purpose was explained. All of the instructors responded to the questionnaire, which makes a percentage of 100%.

The students' version of the questionnaire was given to the colleagues in the department, who distributed and collected it. The

students were made aware of the purpose of the questionnaire and the instructions were read out carefully. Three hundred ninety (390) forms were distributed, but only three hundred seventy (370) were returned, which makes a percentage of 94.87%.

Procedure

Prior to administering the questionnaire to the subjects, permission to proceed was obtained from the president of the university. After that the two-form questionnaire was given to all instructors. They were asked to respond to their version and to distribute the other version to students. The instructors were also asked to explain the purpose of the questionnaire to the subjects. The student's identity was not asked for, i.e., they were not asked to write their names on the forms. The questionnaire was divided into two groups: (1) instructors, who were divided into (a) native speakers and ((b)non-native speakers, and (2)students, who comprise four groups according to their year of study (a)first, (b) second, (c)third , and (4) fourth. Finally, certain statistical operations such as descriptive statistics and Chi-Square Test were used in order to 1) determine the instructors and students' reactions to using the mother tongue in the EFL classroom, and 2) find out whether or not there are any significant differences between the variables.

Research Results

The following is an analysis of the results of the questionnaire. First, the instructors' responses are shown. Second, the students' responses are presented.

First: analysis of Instructors Responses

Table (1)
Instructors' Responses to Question One and Percentage

	Native speakers responses				Non-native speaker responses				Grand Total			
Q1	Yes	%	no	0%	Yes	%	no	%	yes	%	no	%
	3	100	0	0	10	62.5	6	37.5	13	68.43	6	31.57
Total	3				16				19			

The instructors' responses to Q1were as follows: 100% of NS, and 62.5% of NNS of English felt that Arabic should be used in teaching English as a foreign language. This table shows that the total **yes** and **no** response is 13 (68.43%), and 6 (31.57%) respectively.

Table(2)
A Chi Square Test for the relationship between speakers and responses

Speakers / Response	Native	Non-native	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	3	10	1.644	No
No	0	6		

*** Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$) ,D.F=1**

A Chi-Square Test was used to determine the relationship between speakers and their responses. It was found that there were no significant differences between them, meaning that hypothesis number 1 was confirmed.

Table (3)

Instructors' Responses to Question Two and Percentages

	Native speakers responses				Non-native speaker responses				Grand Total			
Q2	yes	%	no	%	yes	%	no	%	Yes	%	no	%
A	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79
B	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79
C	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79
D	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79
E	2	66.6	1	33.3	5	31.25	11	68.75	7	36.85	12	63.15
F	-				-				-			
G	-				5	31.25	11	68.75	5	31.25	11	68.75
H	-				5	31.25	11	68.75	5	31.25	11	68.75
I	-				5	31.25	11	68.75	5	31.25	11	68.75
J	-				-				-			
K	-				5	31.25	11	68.75	5	31.25	11	68.75
L	-				-				-			
M	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79
N	1	33.3	2	66.6	3	18.75	13	81.25	4	21	15	79

As regards the instructors' responses to Q2, it was found that 33.3% of the NS instructors responded positively to items a, b, c, d, m and n; 66% responded positively to item e 'to point out the differences between Arabic and English', and no instructors responded to items f, j, and l. The responses of NNS to the same question were as follows: 18.75% of the professors responded positively to items a, b, c, d, m and n; 31.25% accepted using Arabic in response to item e, g, h, i, and k, and no instructors responded to items f, j, and l.

We can see from the table above that 21 % of all instructors recommend using Arabic in items a, b, c, d, m, and n;36.85% recommended using it in e, and 31.25% recommended the use of Arabic in g, h, I, and k. This gives us an average of 26.25% who prefer in one way or another the use of Arabic in teaching English a foreign language in contrast with 73.75 % who said no.

Table (4)

A Chi Square Test for the relationship between native speakers and non-native speakers and their responses

Speakers / Response	Native	Non-native	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
A	1	3	6.174	No
B	1	3		
C	1	3		
D	1	3		
E	2	5		
F	0	0		
G	0	5		
H	0	5		
I	0	5		
J	0	0		
K	0	5		
L	0	0		
M	1	3		
N	1	3		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$). D.F.=10

Using a Chi-Square Test, it was found that there were no significant differences between NS and NNS in their responses to Q2. This means that hypothesis number 2 was accepted.

Conclusion

A close look at the percentages reveals that the ratio of NS **Yes** to **No** responses is 1:2 to items a,b,c, d, m, and n., but 1:4 to the

same items in the case of non-native speakers.; 2:1 to item e; it also reveals that the ratio of NNS **Yes** to **No** responses is also 1:2 to items g,h,i,and k, but 1:2 to item e. This shows that the ratio of the positive responses to the negative responses but for item e, is constant for both native and non native speakers of English.

Second: Analysis of Students' Responses

In what follows, the students' responses to the questionnaire are examined. First, their responses to Q 1 are shown and then their responses to Qs 2-6 are dealt with individually.

Table (5)
Number of students in each year

Year	Number
1	70
2	59
3	85
4	156
Total	370

Table (5) above shows the total number of students in each year and the grand total.

Table (6)
Students' Responses to Question 2 and Percentages

	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	Percentage		Percentage		Percentage		Percentage	
Q1	yes	no	yes	no	Yes	no	yes	no
	30	40	32	27	49	36	96	60
	42.85	57.14	54.23	45.76	57.64	42.35	61.53	38.46
Total	70		59		85		156	

Table (6) above shows the number and percentages of first, second, third, and fourth year students' responses to Q2 " Should Arabic be used in teaching English?" Their positive percentages were 42.85 for first year, 54.23 for the second year, 57.64 for third year, and 61.53 for fourth year. This table also shows that first year students have the lowest percentage of positive responses to the same question. The percentage increased by 13% for sophomores, then it showed a constant increase of about 4% for students in the third and fourth years.

The percentage of the **Yes** responses to Q2 in the first year, and its sudden increase for sophomores, and constant increase in the third and fourth years may be accounted for as follows: students interested in joining the English Department at Qatar University have (a) to meet the requirements of the Faculty of Humanities, and (b) to score 425 in the International TOEFL or the Institutional TOEFL that is usually held at the University of Qatar at the beginning of the Fall semester each year, and sometimes at the beginning of the Spring semester. Accordingly, these students feel that they had had a great achievement, since the intake is competitive and does not exceed one hundred students per academic year. These students are required to take English major courses, college requirements, and university requirements, which are all taught by nationals and expatriates, which exposes them to different ways of thinking, new visions of the world, and (sometimes) new cultures. This in many cases, I believe, results in a change of attitude due to maturity. So, second year students after finishing the first year had a notably high change in their responses, and these responses increased by 4% in each of the third and fourth year. This means that the same students had developed a greater cultural awareness, a senses of pride and loyalty to their language and had become more interested in the cultural differences between their

mother tongue and English irrespective of their positive attitude towards English and its native speakers(Al-Taha and Al-Easa,2001).

In order to find whether there was any significant differences between academic year and response, a chi-sq test was used. It was found that there was no significant difference between the two variables (see table 7). The relationship between the four levels and the subjects' responses is demonstrated in detail in tables 8,9,10, 11, 12 and 13. Tables 8,9,11,12,and 13 showed that there was no significant difference between first and second, first and third, second and third , second and fourth, and third and fourth. However, table 10 showed a significant difference between freshmen and senior students. Accordingly, one can conclude that hypotheses 4,5,7,8,and 9 were accepted whereas hypothesis 6 was not.

Table 7
A Chi Square Test for The relationship between academic year and response

Academic year / Response	1	2	3	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	30	32	49	96	7.015	No
NO	40	27	36	60		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F=3

Table (8)
A Chi Square Test for the relationship between first year and second and their responses

Academic year / Response	1	2	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	30	32	1.661	No
NO	40	27		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F = 1

Table (9)

A Chi Square Test for the relationship between first year and third year and their responses

Academic year / Response	1	3	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	30	49	3.360	No
NO	40	36		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=1

Table (10)

A Chi- Square Test for the relationship between first year and fourth year and their responses

Academic year / Response	1	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	30	96	6.836	Yes
NO	40	60		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$)D.F.=1

Table (11)

A Chi Square Test for the relationship between second year and third year and their responses

Academic year / Response	2	3	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	32	49	0.165	No
NO	27	36		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=1

Table (12)

A Chi Square Test for the relationship between second year and fourth year and their responses

Academic year / Response	2	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	32	96	0.947	No
NO	27	60		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=1

Table (13)

A Chi Square Test for the relationship between third year and fourth year and their responses

Academic year / Response	3	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
Yes	49	96	0.556	No
NO	36	60		

• Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=1

Table (14)

Students' Responses to Question Three and Percentages

	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q2								
a. rarely	9	30	5	15.63	10	20.40	31	32.29
b. a lot	1	3.3	1	3.12	-	-	2	2.08
c. no	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
d. sometimes	20	66.7	26	81.25	39	79.60	63	65.63
Total	30		32		49		96	

Concerning the students' responses to Q3, Table 14 above shows that 66.7% of freshmen, 81.25% of sophmores,79.60% of junior students, and 65.62% of senior students would like their teachers **sometimes** to use Arabic in the EFL classroom.. Furthermore, it was found that between 30%, 15.63%, 20.40%, and 32.29% would like their teacher to **rarely** use Arabic in EFL classrooms.. Finally, a very small size of students wanted Arabic to be used a lot, but no students rejected the use of Arabic in teaching English.

Table (15)
A Chi-Square Test for the relationship between academic year and the frequency of using L1(Q3)

Academic year / Frequency of using L1	1	2	3	4	Chi=sq value	Sig.*
Rarely	9	5	10	31	6.393	No
A lot	1	1	0	1		
Sometimes	20	26	39	63		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F=6

This question had four alternatives, but item c was dropped here because no students responded to it. Using the chi-sq test, it was found that there was no significant difference between academic year and the frequency of using LI. As a result, hypothesis number 10 was rejected.

Table (16)
Students' Responses to Question Four and Percentages

	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q3. a.	19	63.3	19	59.27	31	63.26	41	42.70
b.	12	40	17	53.12	19	38.77	31	32.29
c	6	20	5	15.6	4	8.16	17	17.7
d.	3	10	1	3.12	-	-	8	8.3
e	19	63.3	16	50	21	42.85	59	61.54
f	5	16.6	6	18.75	10	20.40	14	14.58
g	7	23.3	6	18.75	5	10.20	18	18.75
h	4	13.3	3	9.37	5	10.20	33	34.37
i	9	30	11	32.37	10	20.40	45	46.87
j	5	16.6	4	12.5	3	6.12	19	19.79
k	6	20	4	12.5	13	26.53	15	15.62
l	6	20	9	28.12	19	38.77	14	14.58
m	10	33.3	13	40.6	16	32.65	60	62.5
n	19	63.3	23	71.87	29	59.1	71	73.95

An analysis of the students' respective responses to Q4 shows that 63g.3%, 59.27%, 63.26%, and 42.70% of all students respectively thought it was okay to use Arabic to define new vocabulary(item a); 40%, 53.12%, 38.77%, and 32.29%, to use Arabic to explain syntactic concepts(item b); 63.3%, 50%, 42.85%, and 61.54% wanted Arabic to be used to point out differences between Arabic and English (item e); 33.3%, 40.6%, 32.65%, and 62.5% would like Arabic to be used to explain the contextual meaning of words that have many equivalents in Arabic (item m); and finally,63.3%, 71%.87, 59.1 % and 73.95% responded positively to using Arabic in the EFL classroom when it is the only possible way to make students understand certain items or concepts (item n).Moreover, the above table shows that between 10-

30% of freshmen, 3.12-28.12 % of sophomores, 6.12-38.77% of juniors, and 8.3-34.37% of seniors thought it was okay to use Arabic in the classroom to check comprehension, introduce new material, greet students, explain some cultural differences, dispel negative attitudes towards English, explain test instructions, and teach literature.

Table (17)
A Chi Square Test for the relationship between academic year and when to use L1

Academic year / When use L1	1	2	3	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
A	19	19	31	41	67.039	Yes
B	12	17	19	31		
C	6	5	4	17		
D	3	1	0	8		
E	19	16	21	59		
F	5	6	10	14		
G	7	6	5	18		
H	4	3	5	33		
I	9	11	10	45		
J	5	4	3	19		
K	6	4	13	15		
L	6	9	19	14		
M	10	13	16	60		
N	9	23	29	71		

- **Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F=39**

Table (17) showed a significant relationship between the variables academic year and when the subjects want L1 to be used. This finding confirms our hypothesis number 11 stated earlier.

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Table (18)
Students' Responses to Question Five and Percentages

	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4th year	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Q4. a.	14	46.6	10	31.29	21	42.85	25	26.04
b.	3	10	4	12.5	3	6.12	25	26.04
c	14	46.6	23	71.87	20	40.80	53	55.2
d.	3	10	3	9.37	2	4.08	17	17.7
e.	5	16.6	2	6.24	3	6.12	20	2.83

As regards the subjects' responses to Q5, a small number of students preferred using Arabic because they feel more comfortable (item a).The percentages are as follows: 46.6%, 31.29, 42.85%, and 26.04% of all the years respectively. The percentages of the students who notably preferred using Arabic in their English classes were as follows: 46.6, 71.87,40.80, and 55.2. The reason for this high percentages is that the learners feel less lost (item.c). Furthermore, 10-16.6%, 6.24-12.5%, 4.8-6.12%, and 2.83-26% of all the students prefer the use of Arabic because they become less tense, for using Arabic gives them a sense of pride and they do not see the teacher as a stranger.

Table (19)
A Chi Square Test for the relationship between academic year and the reason for the subjects' preference to use L1.

Academic year / Reason for preferring to use L1	1	2	3	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
A	14	10	21	25	25.590	Yes
B	3	4	3	25		
C	14	23	20	53		
D	3	3	2	17		
E	5	2	3	20		

- Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=1

Table (19) showed a significant relationship between the variables academic year and the reason for the subjects preference to

use L1. This finding confirms our research hypothesis number 12 stated above.

Table (20)
Students' Responses to Question Six and Percentages

	1st	year	2nd	year	3rd	year	4th	year
Q5. a. rarely	1	3.33	-	-	-	-	-	-
b. a lot	4	13.33	6	18.75	10	20.40	13	13.54
c. no	9	30	7	21.88	8	18.36	20	20.83
d. sometimes	16	53.34	19	59.37	31	63.26	63	65.63
Total	30		32		49		96	

The percentages of the students' responses to Q6 (item d) are 53.34, 59.37, 63.26, and 65.63. These students feel that using Arabic sometimes helped them learn English better. Furthermore, 13.33, 18.75, 18.36, and 13.54 feel that Arabic helped them learn English a lot ;however, 30 % of first year students,21.88% of second year students,18.36 of third year students, and 20.83% of fourth year students did not feel that Arabic help them learn English. Finally, 3.3% of first year students responded with **rarely** to such a question.

Table (21)
A Chi Square Test for the relationship between students' response to Q1 and their view about L1's role in improving their achievement (Q6)

Students' responseto Q1 / Students' View about L1' s role in improving the subjects achievement in L2. (Q6)	1	2	3	4	Chi-sq value	Sig.*
A	1	0	0	10	12.306	No
B	4	6	10	13		
C	9	7	8	20		
D	16	19	31	63		

* Sig at ($\alpha = 0.05$).D.F.=9

Table 21 showed that there was no significant relationship between the variables academic year and students' view about L1's role in improving their achievement. Consequently, our research hypothesis number 13 is accepted.

Discussion

Table 1 showed that 100% of the native speakers of English, and 62.5% of non-native speakers(Arabic native speakers) felt that Arabic should be used in teaching English to Arabic native speakers, which gives us an average of 81.25% of all instructors responses.

The percentages of the students' responses indicated that 57.66% of all the students felt that Arabic should be used in EFL classes. Secondly, above 53.61% of all students felt that using Arabic helped them become less lost. Thirdly, 60.4% of all the students felt that Arabic **sometimes** helped them learn English better.

Accordingly, one can say that over half of the subjects majoring in English at all levels feel the that the use of Arabic in learning English is helpful .

The results of this study concur with the results of study undertaken by D. Atkinson (1987:247) who says that "to ignore the mother tongue in monolingual classrooms is almost certainly to teach with less than maximum efficiency." Both studies emphasize the role of L1 in EFL teaching.

The results are also in line with E.R. Auerbach (1993:28-29) whose findings suggest " that we need, on the one hand, to rethink and expand the roles of native-English-speaking ESL teachers and, on the other hand, to expand the range of options and uses for the native language initial literacy and ESL instruction".

However, the results of current study are inconsistent with the study of Sheona H. Hopkins (1998:21). Her findings conclude that the majority of EFL students at all levels in community classes feel that the use of L1 in learning English is helpful. On the other hand, ESL/EFL students at the college of further education do not.

Yet, the results of the present study are not incongruent with Hopkins's study because the subjects' academic situation rather than competence at the University of Qatar affected the students' attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in English classrooms. Senior students showed the highest percentage (61.53%) for demanding the use of Arabic, the mother tongue, in teaching English as a foreign language, compared with junior students (57.64%), sophomores (54.23%) , and freshmen (42.85%).

Concluding Remarks

In view of the findings of this study on the use of L1 in the EFL classroom, it would seem apposite to encourage usage of L1so that EFL learners can benefit from the vital and facilitating role their native language can play in promoting their acquisition of English. Accordingly, I take a stand that does not call for code-switching, but a procedure that embarks on a judicious use of L1 in EFL classrooms. Teachers should use L1 when they feel that it is an essential vehicle for promoting EFL learning. Furthermore, I encourage the parties concerned with and involved in EFL teaching to give considerable attention and discussion to using the mother tongue in developing an approach to teaching English in a foreign context.

Note: 1. The author was an Associate Professor at the University of Qatar from September,1998 until June, 2004.

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استخدام اللغة الأم
(اللغة العربية) في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية

فايز محمد طه*

الملخص

قامـــت هذه الدراسة باستكشاف ردود أفعال المدرسين و الطالبات في جامعة قطر في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية حول استخدام اللغة العربية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية وذلك في خلال استبيان تكون من نموذجين : أحدهما للطالبات والآخر للمدرسين . وبالنسبة لردود أفعال المدرسين تبين أن المدرسين الأجانب وافقوا جميعا على استخدام اللغة العربية بينما لم يوافق سوى ٦٢،٥١% من المدرسين العرب على ذلك. وبالنسبة لردود أفعال الطالبات تبـــين أن٤٢،٨٥% من طلبة السنة الأولى و٥٤،٢٣% من السنة الثانية،أي بزيادة١٣% عن السنة الأولى و٥٧،٦٤% من السنة الثالثة أي بزيادة٤%عن السنة الثالثة و٦١،٥٣% من السنة الرابعة فضلوا استخدام اللغة العربية أي بزيادة٤%عن السنة الثالثة .وفي النهاية أوصـــى الـــباحث بـــناءاً على ما سبق باستخدام اللغة العربية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بطريقة حكيمة، وعندما تكون هي الوسيلة الوحيدة لتوصيل المعلومات للطلبة .

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