



## The Use of Arabic in English Classes: A teaching Support or a Learning Hindrance?

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### **Abstract:**

The role of students' first language (L1) in foreign language (L2) classrooms has generated increasing debates in the field of the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The present study, which took place in a Saudi college, approached the subject from a sociocultural angle and used Activity Theory (AT) to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of EFL stakeholders and sought as well to determine the role of Arabic in EFL classes. The research also made use of a mixed methods approach and involved only male participants. Thus, it surveyed 197 students, observed 8 EFL classes and interviewed 13 EFL teachers and 3 policy-makers. The findings indicate that most participants support the use of Arabic in EFL classes and suggest that Arabic served mainly as a teaching/learning mediation tool. In view of these findings, an EFL teaching methodology that takes into account the use of Arabic as a teaching/learning tool is suggested.

*Keywords:* L1 and L2 - Arabic in EFL classes – Activity Theory – teaching-learning mediation