

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

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Abstract

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

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

Cite as: Albeshar, K. B., Hussain, M. S., & Farid, A. (2018). Use of Saudi EFL Adult Learners' L1 to Address Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *Arab World English Journal*, 9 (2).

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no2.25>