

The Effects of the Use of First Language on Learning English as a Second Language: Attitudes of Arabic EFL Learners

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Abstract

Teachers may wonder whether the use of first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom is beneficial or detrimental to L2 learning. The present study investigates the attitudes of L1 Arabic speakers towards the use of English in the L2 classroom. The study examined the following: a) whether Arabic is used in English language classrooms; b) students' attitudes towards their English teachers' use of Arabic; c) students' attitudes towards their classmates' use of Arabic; d) whether the use of Arabic facilitates L2 English learning. The study was conducted with 149 male Saudi university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners studying in a Saudi English department. They were asked to complete two questionnaires: a) a background questionnaire; and b) an attitudinal questionnaire. The findings revealed that the participants believed that: a) Arabic is seldom used by their teachers; b) the use of English is more beneficial than Arabic to learning English; and c) Arabic can be used in some situations by teachers when communicating important information.

Keywords: Arab EFL learners, attitudes, English classroom, learning, using Arabic, second language

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