

استخدام اللغة الأم في مساعدة الطلاب على إتقان اللغة الإنكليزية في مهام التعلم الصفية صعبة الفهم في مدارس التعليم المهني

Using Native Language in Assisting English Mastery for Difficult-to-Understand Classroom Learning Tasks at Vocational Education Schools

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Abstract

Learning English using the mother tongue effectively enhances English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at Vocational Education Schools (VES). This strategy necessitates the teacher to act as a facilitator by incorporating Arabic into the English learning process. Using the mother tongue in teaching English can be beneficial for promoting the students' comprehension of diverse cultures and the development of positive communication with both the teacher and peers. A descriptive approach was used to get the information needed for this study. Achievement tests were conducted to see how significantly the students had learnt during a practical semester ended of the curriculum. The pretest scores were equivalent for the randomly selected groups before using Arabic as the mother tongue for the necessary activities in English teaching. At this point, the experimental group was ($M=2.04$, $SD=.883$), and the control group was ($M=1.73$, $SD=.622$), and $t(1,62)$, $1.60=.114$, $p<0.05$ was also equivalent. Conversely, the experimental group's mean score was significantly higher than that of the control group in the posttest following the switch to Arabic in the English syllabus ($M=2.46$, $SD=.918$), and ($M=1.79$, $SD=.693$), respectively, and $t(1,62)$, $3.28=.002$, $p<0.05$ was also significant. Based on these findings, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups. Spearman's rho test indicated a meaningful relationship difference

was found between the two variables, mother tongue use and English language proficiency. Spearman's rho value for pretest and language proficiency indicated no positive correlation ($x^2(1,62) = .031, p < 0.05$). On the contrary, Spearman's rho value for posttest and language proficiency was seen as ($x^2(1,62) = .229, p < 0.05$). At the same time, pre and posttest mean scores also have a strong correlation ($x^2(1,62) = .583, p < 0.05$). The primary conclusion of the study is that vocational education students can improve their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by placing a greater emphasis on the mother tongue.

Keywords: Vocational education, English for specific purposes, mother language use, multilingual education, English foreign context.

الخلاصة

إن تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية باستخدام اللغة الأم يعزز بشكل فعال اللغة الإنكليزية للأغراض المحددة (ESP) في مدارس التعليم المهني (VES). تتطلب هذه الاستراتيجية من المعلم أن يعمل كميسر من خلال دمج اللغة العربية في عملية تعلم اللغة الإنكليزية. يمكن أن يكون استخدام اللغة الأم في تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية مفيداً لتعزيز فهم الطلاب للثقافات المتنوعة وتنمية التواصل الإيجابي مع كل من المعلم والأقران. تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي للحصول على المعلومات اللازمة لهذه الدراسة. تم إجراء اختبارات الإنجاز لمعرفة مدى أهمية ما تعلمه الطلاب خلال الفصل الدراسي العملي الذي انتهى من المنهج الدراسي. كانت درجات الاختبار الأولي متكافئة للمجموعات المختارة عشوائياً قبل استخدام اللغة العربية كلغة أم للأنشطة الضرورية في تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية. في هذا الصدد كانت المجموعة التجريبية ($M=2.04, SD=.883$)، والمجموعة الضابطة ($M=1.73, SD=.622$)، وإن اختبار تي $t=(1, 62), 1.60=.114$ ، كان أيضاً متكافئاً، حيث كانت قيمة بي $p < 0.05$. وعلى العكس من ذلك، كان متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية أعلى بكثير من متوسط درجات المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي بعد استخدام اللغة العربية كلغة أم في المنهج الإنكليزي ($M=2.46, SD=.918$)، و ($M=1.79, SD=.693$)، على التوالي. وإن اختبار تي $t=(1, 62), 3.28=.002$ ، حيث كانت قيمة بي $p < 0.05$. وبناء على هذه النتائج إن هنالك فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية بين المجموعتين. وقد أشار اختبار سبيرمان رو إلى وجود علاقة ذات مغزى بين المتغيرين، استخدام اللغة الأم وإتقان اللغة الإنكليزية، وأشارت قيمة سبيرمان رو للاختبار الأولي وإتقان اللغة إلى عدم وجود ارتباط إيجابي بينهما ($x^2(1,62) = .031, p < 0.05$) وعلى العكس من ذلك، أظهرت قيمة معامل سبيرمان للاختبار البعدي وكفاءة اللغة هي ($x^2(1,62) = .229, p < 0.05$)، وعلى نفس المنوال، فإن متوسط

الدرجات للاختبار القبلي والبعدي لها أيضًا ارتباط قوي ($t(1,62) = 0.583$, $p < 0.05$). الاستنتاج الأساسي للدراسة هي أن طلاب التعليم المهني يحسنون لغتهم الإنكليزية للأغراض المحددة (ESP) من خلال التركيز بشكل أكبر على اللغة الأم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم المهني، اللغة الإنكليزية لأغراض محددة، استخدام اللغة الأم، التعليم متعدد اللغات، سياق اللغة الاجنبية.

1. Introduction

The linguistic identity of learners is significantly influenced by their mother tongue or native language, which also helps them connect to the culture of the society from which they come. The terms "mother tongue" and "native language" typically relate to the same language the learner speaks. However, some cases may differ due to the nuances associated with each term. In this regard, the L1 individuals learnt since birth or during critical times is called the first language (L1) they speak. It additionally goes by the name; "native language" (NL) or "mother tongue" (MT) in certain territories, which means the language of the individual's ethnic background that individuals have acquired first. Most of the time, an individual must be completely fluent in a language to identify it as the mother tongue. Essentially, both terms have similar meanings and are often used interchangeably.

The NL is widely used in the region where the learner is brought up and is employed daily in the first settlement. In line with Fredric Field (2011), cited in Nuessel (2013), a child's NL is typically the first one to which they are exposed, and they may have multiple NLs. In most cases, the term NL refers to the language a person acquires in early childhood because it is spoken in the family and/or the language of the region where the child lives. It is also called a mother tongue, L1, or systemic language. An individual who is multilingual or bilingual is considered to have more than one NL. The term "L1" is frequently employed by modern linguists along with teachers to indicate a first or NL. In contrast, "L2" is used to indicate a second or foreign language that is being studied. (Nordquist, 2023).

Consequently, multilingual learners may access various emotions across several languages. Likewise, they may find that their self-concept and identity transform (Costa, 2010). In conclusion, children acquire speech by observing their surroundings and experimenting with phonetics. Ideally, students then acquire literacy in the same language and study among the subjects in their native tongue. The starting point

established in their house language is essential for their growth and acquiring more languages.

In the current study, the effective use of English language skills can be fostered using Arabic, as is often the scenario with other languages in an academic environment. Besides, many English terminologies have Arabic origins and have been directly or indirectly influenced by Arabic words that entered Romance language families before reaching English. Arabic is the official language of the Arab population, composed of users who reside in Arab countries or other countries. It is an influential language with fascinating knowledge in academic and non-academic contexts. The term "mother tongue" is a relatively new term commonly used to refer to using NL in classroom activities. According to Yildiz (2012), the "mother tongue" is the affective knot at the core of the monolingual framework, and as such, it is a knot that requires breaking. As a result, the birth language is the mother's tongue, the L1 an individual acquires when learning to speak during childhood. The language is characterized by grammar, words, and pronunciation and is spoken in one world region (Turnbull et al., 2010).

Moreover, the Holy Quran and Arabic literature are the primary sources of this alive language. Subsequently, Muslims worldwide, and Arabs in particular, have historically regarded Arabic as a language that was bestowed upon them by God, and its magnificence and beauty distinguish it. There has been a growing interest in using the mother tongue to teach a foreign or second language in the last several years. It is deemed imperative to speak a foreign language in parallel with English (Chejne, 1968). In this regard, Arabic has been the backbone of Arab learners and various audiences worldwide because of its affinity to knowledge in expressing thoughts and ideas to others. Moradi et al. (2013) state that unlike the Arabic language, which is spoken in numerous countries and is international. They add that the Persian language lacks such power, and Farsi speakers worldwide are, too.

The Al-Quran and Arabian traditions have been made clear in Arabic and are greatly influenced by Arabic metaphors and semantics. Students must have a working knowledge of Arabic and an understanding of the specialized terminology and grammar used in the language to succeed in EFL classes. In the same vein., English is written from left to right, as Ali (2007) has noted. The most significant variations between Arabic and English are found in nearly all syntactical, morphological, phonological, lexical, semantic, rhetorical, and orthographical aspects. Arabic instruction is now regularly incorporated into the academic program in vocational schools. Furthermore, the necessity and uniqueness of enhancing one's Arabic language proficiency are underscored. Using the mother tongue is universally

recognized as a student's characteristic in the context of L1 and L2, as it is a means of communication with other students in a learning environment.

1.1. Mother Tongue and the First Language Acquisition

In a traditional family setting, the mother tongue is the predominant source of input for children during their first years of life, as the mother transmits the language to them. The entire procedure of language acquisition is divided into two separate stages, each of which involves distinct procedures:

"Researchers define language acquisition into two categories: first-language acquisition and second-language acquisition. First-language acquisition is a universal process regardless of home language. Babies listen to the sounds around them, begin to imitate them, and eventually start producing words. Second-language acquisition assumes knowledge in a first language and encompasses the process an individual goes through as he or she learns the elements of a new language, such as vocabulary, phonological components, grammatical structures, and writing systems" (Robertson and Ford, 2008)

The language a child has learned from infancy and spoken throughout their life is commonly called the NL (or first language). It is frequently employed in household settings and is spoken by the child's family. The current scenario is physically related to the acquisition of language by native mothers or the implemented NL role in the acquisition cycle. Nevertheless, the controversy regarding whether L1 acquisition should replace the mother tongue under the influence of language development in the academic context continues. As recent research has shown, the practical and strategic utilisation of one's mother tongue can substantially impact learning a foreign language and classroom teaching. (Koucká, 2007).

The distinction between the mother tongue and the L1 is interchangeable in the language environment. The language environment is conditioned upon whether a mother tongue speaker has an advantage over those who acquire L1 through formal education. A distinction is made between MT and L1; according to Mizza (2014), the term "**first language**" or "**mother tongue**" denotes the child's native or first acquired language. The second language is L2, which means the language acquired or studied in the learning environment, apart from one's mother tongue. In this context, individuals develop their mother tongue by listening to their homeowners and other family members communicate despite the need for official instruction. This is why the biological tongue offers a framework for comprehending the functioning of NL acquisition, which includes grammar, syntax, and vocabulary in a formal context.

1.2. Theories of Language Acquisition and Learning

Early in the 20th century, a collection of theories known as learning and teaching theories were established. These theories of first and second language acquisition are the main emphasis of this study. Individuals, particularly children, are highly adept at processing language. Bilingual or multilingual learners can become fluent in two or more languages. This summarises the theories that explain how language develops during the learning cycle.

1.2.1 B. F. Skinner: Operant Conditioning

The theory posits that operant conditioning is how children acquire language. In other words, children are rewarded for functionally utilizing language. Behaviours can be conditioned without a direct *cause-and-effect* relationship, as evidenced by this experiment (Mcleod, 2023). The term condition that Skinner posited as the foundation of language motivating operations, biased stimuli, response, and reinforcing stimuli—is followed by this. He also proposed that children acquire language through encouragement and copies of those around them. Conditioning is an instructional method in which an individual's behaviour is influenced by the presence of a stimulus in their immediate surroundings.

Operant conditioning is a reciprocal process in which the environment influences behaviour while action operates on it (Akpan, 2020). Consequently, learning is a temporary adjustment in the individual's behavior resulting from practice and is represented by the biological system's activity change. In this respect, the learning process results from what learners have experienced and adjustments in their responses to educational situations. The acquisition of language skills and the practice of the language of the environment are associated with the notion of feedback and outcomes in the learning cycle.

1.2.2. Noam Chomsky: Language Acquisition Device

The theory pertains to the biological foundation of language and asserts that children possess inherent capacities for language acquisition. This innate aptitude is called the "language acquisition device" by Chomsky. Without any formal instruction, he believes that children acquire language innately. Chomsky argues that children are innately equipped with a language acquisition device (**LAD**) for language acquisition. This device is an innate gift designed to clarify the potential components of grammar (Sihombing, 2022).

Furthermore, Chomsky also states that children are inherently compelled to use language without formal language. Natural languages often indicate innate knowledge, which may seem convincing. However, an in-depth analysis of the precise facets of innate knowledge usually given to children shows that none reduce learning problems (Ambridge et al., 2014). Chomsky noticed that all children, irrespective of the language of learning, demonstrate similar linguistic errors. Additionally, He advocates for a "Universal Grammar," which asserts that specific grammatical regulations are universally applicable to all human-spoken languages. Chomsky argues that the inherent aspect of human language is termed Universal Grammar. It demonstrates a tendency towards rationality in advancing a cognitive foundation (Barman, 2012). His research, however, struggles to figure out the particular parts of the brain or inherited framework that powers the intrinsic language capacity of people of all ages.

1.2.3. Jean Piaget: Cognitive Development Theory

The theory relates to how everyone acquires and interprets information from the external environment. This encompasses how individuals reflect, recall, acquire knowledge, deal with issues, and develop conclusions. Piaget used biological ideas to explain how the mind grows due to the body's active exchanges with its surroundings (Dodonov and Dodonova, 2011). This implies that children employ both assimilation and accommodation to acquire language. Assimilation is modifying the individual's surroundings to integrate knowledge into an existing schema. Where as, accommodation is adapting the individual's schema to accommodate the requirements of the new environment. Through the lens of assimilation and accommodation, it is possible to conceptualise the design of activities that facilitate students' development of cognitive conceptions.

Biological concepts helped Piaget explain how the mind grows when the body interacts with its environment. Interestingly, this correlation is related to the cognitive development theory by Piaget, which is a key part of knowing how children's minds grow and how they learn maths during their formative years (Ikyegh, 2023). In this context, teachers endeavor to construct mental representations of the information processing in individuals' minds, including attention, language, memory, thought, perception, and consciousness. According to this assumption, individuals input information through their senses and interact with the environment. This process may entail a variety of mental operations and biological maturation, including problem-solving, decision-making, reasoning, and thinking. According to this theory, children initially establish mental structures (**schemas**) within their minds, which are then used to develop language through four separate stages of learning to acquire knowledge.

Cherry (2022) and Babakr et al. (2019) enumerate Piaget's four stages in cognitive development: (a) *Sensorimotor stage*: Birth to 2 years (b) *Preoperational stage*: Ages 2 to 7 (c) *Concrete operational stage*: Ages 7 to 11 (d) *Formal operational stage*: Ages 12 and older: In this context, older children do not merely think more rapidly than younger children. In this regard, early cognitive development is characterized by processes based on actions, which subsequently progress to shifts in mental operations.

1.2.4. Lev Vygotsky: Zone of Proximal Development

Social learning and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) are the primary focus of language development theory. The ZPD concept pertains to the distinction between the capabilities of a child to accomplish independently and those of a child who receives guidance and encouragement from a skilled companion. Therefore, creativity and learning are when children integrate what they already know with what they are learning and creating, and their thinking changes during the acquiring knowledge cycle (Glăveanu et al., 2019). He focuses on social interaction, which, according to the theoretical terms, is essential in forming perception.

The ZPD mainly pertains to social and collaborative learning, referring to the gap between what a child can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with assistance from qualified individuals (Ness, 2023). The child's cultural development is examined on two separate occasions: the first at the social level and the second at the individual level. The main objective for interacting with the outside world is mental growth, facilitated by the cultural transfer of skills and language. The theory is currently implemented in the development of instructional materials that encourage the engagement of language skills in the learning process through intellectual processes, including language, reasoning, and self-regulation, which are derived from social contact for reasons of interaction.

1.2.5. Stephen Krashen: Model Monitor Theory

It is the most frequently referenced theory for acquiring a second language, and it recommends that learners endeavor to augment their second language inputs to operate. In this regard, learning and acquisition are distinct procedures; the functions of learning are revision and guidance. Febriani et al. (2021) observe that this will happen if a child learns the mother's tongue. The process of picking up a language easily. This differs from what is known as Language Learning (LL), which means learning a language. This guarantees that language learners receive appropriate error correction in some capacity of their language proficiency. The learner possesses two completely separate cognitive systems: the acquired system, composed of unique skills, and the

learned system. Krashen notes that acquisition happens subconsciously in which individuals are exposed to different forms of language and naturally pick up the patterns of those language forms. Conversely, learning is when people consciously learn a second language (Maluleke and Mapindani, 2020). There are advantages to teaching foreign languages: Knowledge input must be frequently found in the teaching material. Assisting students in comprehending and speaking the significance of spelling and grammar rules in a second language context.

1.3. The Complexity of English Foreign Context

Mastery of other languages should enhance the complexity of students' learning of new information in the target language. Moreover, the structure and grammar of the mother tongue can also affect learning a new language. For instance, specific languages possess grammar structures that are considerably more intricate than others. If a learner's mother tongue has a complicated syntax structure, they may find acquiring a new language with a more straightforward grammar structure more complex. As a result, grammatical complexity is a continuously pressing issue in language learning growth (Beers and Nagy, 2011). Conversely, a learner's mother tongue can also be advantageous in language acquisition. The individual may find it simpler to learn and comprehend the new language if the new language shares similarities with their mother tongue. The individual may also identify and recall particular terms and expressions more readily.

However, learners would be motivated to interpret their growth in a second language as a positive experience if permitted to use their MT. Atkinson (1987) highlights some advantages of using the MT in ELT classrooms and states that there should be permissions for the applications on condition that they are not overused. Nevertheless, the prospect of neglecting their mother tongue is an overwhelming experience for numerous students who are disadvantaged in their understanding of the second language. Consequently, Nunan and Carter (2001) assert that the rules of the first and second languages are distinct, and errors may arise due to interaction between the two languages. The educational system is intended to be implemented in Iraq from the elementary school to the university level. Nevertheless, students of every academic level have not been able to acquire English as a foreign language due to the reliance on the Arabic MT in teaching English. Several conceptual roadblocks must be overcome for English language teachers to successfully navigate the EAP teaching profession (Campion, 2016).

The advantages of mother language use have led policymakers and educators to emphasize the language policy by incorporating Arabic as a supporting language in

teaching English rather than as the primary language in translating classroom materials. For instance, a number of participants concurred that they experienced anxiety when they lacked expertise in how to speak English. In this context, the mental processing during decoding is undeniably complex, requiring knowledge, analysis, modification, output, and evaluation of nonverbal and verbal communications. (Wu and Liao, 2019). Otherwise, they turned to the mother language translation, which was confusing, to make a sentence in English. This led to the idea that extensively using the target language should be adapted. Hence, students have perceived English-to-English translation as uninteresting, insignificant, useless, complicated, and uncommunicative in the classroom. In furtherance to the growth in the tendency of the MT to translate English tasks, there is a rising worry regarding the extensive use of the NL in FL contexts. A key issue for second language learners is L1 interference, which can significantly decrease their desire to acquire a new language, resulting in inaccuracies in their English employment (Alisoy, 2024).

Interestingly, the primary goal of this study is to examine students' perspectives on how they use their mother to learn new things in the target language. Since MT and translation play a vital role in developing English knowledge and describing the instructional materials that enhance students' understanding of language employment. Learners can make more substantial cognitive adaptations through proper utilisation of the L1 during the acquisition of a language (Carson and Kashihara, 2012). Through translation, students can activate language usage and strengthen their English proficiency by comparing their first and second languages in various classroom activities.

1.4. Translanguaging Mother Tongue

The L1 an individual comprehends from their parents or family is the MT or NL. It is the medium of communication in which an individual is most proficient and feels most at ease when engaging with others who speak additional languages. As a resource, the MT may aid in learning. Subsequently, the L1 culture can be employed to promote the student's progression toward acquiring another spoken language they wish to learn (Prodromou, 2002). Additionally, there is a prominent link between students who possess a high level of proficiency in their NL and their success in acquiring a second or foreign language. Since MT can promote academic performance, a learner can gain all the experiences and knowledge (Nwali, 2014). The mental abilities and understanding required for language acquisition have already been acquired through the MT. The cognitive comprehension of L2 can be enhanced by translation tasks in the language classroom, as they are a natural, complicated, and creative means of interaction centred on the learner (Machida, 2011). In this regard, students are more

invested in identifying patterns and structures in the language they are learning because they have an access connection to their MT.

The focus of these studies is to investigate the influence of MT in the classroom, thereby contributing to the widening literature on language learning. Clarify the contexts in which the MT can aid in the mental processing and retention of new information effectively. When teachers explain concepts in the student's MT, it can help to clarify and reinforce the latest information. Shcrrmo (2006) points out that L1 facilitates the learning of English more effectively, reduces time, and creates a sense of ease and comfort for students when they have access to L1 replacements. It also helps to build a bridge between the student's existing knowledge and the new knowledge they are acquiring.

Cenoz and Gorter (2022) note that various tasks can be assigned to practices and activities, such as gaining a greater awareness of academic texts and accessing extra knowledge in language classes in multiple languages. Although many translation alternatives are accessible, finding the perfect fit between the beneficial use of the mother language in the context of teaching materials to support language learning can be challenging. Nevertheless, freshly acquired speakers of another language early cognitively translate the sentences and expressions from their MT to the new tongue language. This language translation process can be time-consuming in the lesson session.

Specific experts have found translation to be a helpful tool in the teaching and learning of languages. Others oppose the concept and regard it as time-consuming (Samardali and Ismael, 2017). Additionally, inaccurate translations may result in misinformation about the target language context. According to Turnbull (2001), the L1 serves a purpose in teaching second and foreign languages. Teachers should utilise the L2 as frequently as possible in the L2 class setting to allow learners to practise the L2 as their primary language and to be aware of the appropriate timing and degree of target language (TL) use in SL and FL learning experiences.

Most non-native academics argue that to learn a foreign language effectively, one must be exposed to the L2 as much as possible while using the L1 context. According to Lewis et al. (2012), a certain degree of proficiency in the English language is advantageous in VES when the NL is employed. To bypass linguistic translation activities in a classroom, it is imperative to differentiate between the foreign context and the original Arabic text. As a result, MT is vital to an individual's existence and should be completed in L2, such as conversation activities, which are more likely to

occur in classrooms involving learners who share the same L1 in learning (Nation, 2003).

Language is the cornerstone upon which all other languages are constructed, allowing individuals to articulate their thoughts, emotions, and ideas and eventually participate in a language. It is most effective to employ proficient language teachers in both languages to tackle these obstacles. Therefore, to accurately translate Arabic into English, it is crucial to consider cultural variations when translating information from one language to another. This necessitates a high concentration on detail and an in-depth knowledge of the language core. The L1 assumptions can be identified, anticipated, and corrected by teachers who possess knowledge of both the L1 and L2 languages. (Brown, 2014).

1.5. Using Arabic in Teaching English at VES

Assessing the positive and negative aspects of speaking Arabic in an English classroom requires carefully reviewing the benefits from both perspectives. Utilising Arabic in an English-learning environment may be beneficial, depending upon the context and intent of the language used in an academic setting. The result is why Arab English teachers must keep trying new ways to fix the speaking challenges in the classroom (Al-Sobhi and Preece, 2018). Regularly using the NL in instructional settings can facilitate the development of language skills at vocational education and education schools. VES equips students with fundamental skills that improve their employability and promote personal growth. Vocational education (VE) has multiple dimensions and comprises numerous levels of academic learning. VE can be defined as the comprehensive collection of experiences that enable individuals to gain knowledge as a vital part of their daily lifestyle (Singh et al., 2015). Besides, it encourages active engagement in various fields, such as computer science, media, and banking. In this regard, learning languages, including standard Arabic and English, for specific purposes (ESP). In a foreign English context. Non-native educators generally endorse the necessity of translation in language acquisition. English teachers contend that foreign language learning necessitates maximum exposure to the L2 during precious classroom activities. Translating from MT into other languages has become very popular in language lessons, especially regarding the four basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Consequently, most students continue to cognitively translate from L2 to L1 and vice versa, despite their proficiency in comprehending the instructional materials. This fact underscores the significance of the translation process in language learning environments.

Furthermore, incorporating Arabic into English lessons can help students maintain a solid connection to their cultural identity. It allows them to express themselves more comfortably and effectively, bridging the gap between their heritage and the new language they are acquiring. In addition, using Arabic in English instruction can be particularly beneficial for students who struggle with learning solely in English. Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb (2015) noted that most participants agreed with the Arabic language's diversity and capacity as a means of instruction, as indicated by the results. It provides a supportive environment that acknowledges and respects their linguistic diversity, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to employ English and Arabic appropriately in the classroom as a component of one's formal learning requirement. Each has unique features and characteristics, including some significant differences between Arabic and English, including their grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and sentence structure. Because Arabic is a foreign language, it has always been hard for EFL teachers to teach Arab children how to speak Arabic. For instance, Arab learners learning to speak English make many errors because English and Arabic are not the same spoken language. (Al-Sobhi and Preece, 2018). However, using Arabic too much could stop learners from improving their English. One of the main reasons MT should not be used to teach English is that many students depend on it and do not even try to figure out what something means from its context due to the lack of exposure to the target language. For illustration, Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) stated that Arabs learning English struggle with speaking because they do not use the target language enough and prefer Arabic in academic dialogues. This means that teaching English in a different tongue shows issues with using the MT when learning a language.

Arabic and English are very different, making it hard for learners to translate and learn languages in an academic setting. One of these problems is the mother-tongue conflict between the Arabic and English language systems. These distinctions indicate that English is an Indo-European language, whereas Arabic is a Semitic language. This may create issues for bilingual individuals due to variations in anthropology and epistemological systems (Alnuzaili, 2016). Also, the way Arabic is pronounced is substantially distinct from the way English is pronounced, which makes it hard to figure out how to connect the two. In the same situation, Farghaly and Shaalan (2009) assert that Arabic has many problems that have to do with how the language is structured and how it works. Arabic, for instance, is written left to right. Along with that, the letters in Arabic shift form based on where they are in a word.

In conclusion, incorporating the Arabic language into English instruction can be a valuable tool for facilitating language acquisition and promoting cultural inclusivity.

By leveraging students' language skills, teachers can create a supportive and effective learning environment that empowers students to succeed in their native and acquired languages. Eventually, teachers must be acutely aware that students may struggle to compose thoughtful answers without coaching. Students must understand the subject material to feel comfortable engaging in English activities. Thus, teachers need to carefully anticipate the learning and teaching needs in this scenario if they want to encourage students to try using their MT in their English lessons.

1.6. Problem of the study

This study emphasises the influence of mother tongue (MT) interaction on English as a foreign language (EFL) students, specifically examining how their NL affect their learning of English language skills in vocational education schools. This is most commonly linked with efforts to improve how students learn, which are currently low. The teacher has various options to address certain students' significant grammar inconsistencies or ambiguous vocabulary. If the teacher understands how rules or meanings work in the student's NL, it is easier to point out the difference between L1 and L2. Furthermore, suppose the learning process spent the whole time using English. In that case, they cannot learn anything positive since teachers think it is essential to switch to Arabic to explain and enhance their motivation. Then, the student understands the materials and can do the exercises in the target language. In the same vein, many students are nervous about working with a teacher one-on-one due to their lack of language proficiency. Besides, some students have never openly communicated with the teacher or peers in the class.

This study additionally provides significant potential to enhance the time-consuming learning process, as the process of shifting between languages can be a time-consuming factor in learning, which can have a detrimental effect on how learners learn and the flow of the lesson. Teachers may allocate additional time to translating or clarifying concepts, which can reduce the time available for instruction and practice. The teacher's responsibility is to facilitate the transition between Arabic and English, emphasising the language skills learners require assistance with and the topics they wish to acquire in Arabic. This occurs as learners continue to enhance their proficiency in two or more languages throughout their primary school years and develop a deeper awareness of language and its successful implementation.

1.7. Objective of This Study

This study investigates using the NL to assist English mastery in difficult-to-understand classroom learning tasks among students in vocational education schools in Nasiriyah Province, Iraq.

1. To examine students' perspectives regarding implementing their mother tongue in English learning.
2. To determine the extent to which the student's proficiency in the English language is affected by Arabic translation.
3. To evaluate the teacher feedback in promoting students' access to instructional content.

1.8. Research Questions

There are four research questions:

1. Do the experimental and control groups reveal any substantial differences in the posttest concerning enhancing students' proficiency?
2. Is there a relationship between using mother tongue translation and English proficiency at vocational education schools?

1.9. Null Hypotheses

1. H_{01} There are no experimental and control groups reveal any substantial differences in the posttest concerning enhancing students' proficiency.
2. H_{02} There is no relationship between using mother tongue translation and English proficiency at vocational education schools.

1.10. Limitations

The present study includes three limitations:

1. The study was conducted at VES in Thi-Qar, Iraq.
2. The procedures started during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.
3. Ethics committee approval sent the participants a written informed consent for the approval of enrolling in the current study.

2. Literature Review

The empirical literature conducted by numerous researchers between 1950 and 1980 has frequently been referenced in teaching methods. One of the recent movement's

primary objectives is to ascertain the MT's influence on students' learning of a second or foreign language. Several researchers have reported that the adoption of the MT in the teaching and learning process is essential for gaining new information in the target language, such as Krashen (1981), Dörnyei (1995), Nunan (1999), Douglas (2000), Lightbown and Spada (2001), seem fascinated by the notion of employing the MT in the educational process. Therefore, employing the L1 with students can be more successful and free up opportunities for more advantageous endeavours that develop the academic achievement and speaking skills required for academic success. The theory of using the MT, as Butzkamm (2003) highlights it, is distinguished by the gathering of three primary goals: (a) cognitive abilities, (b) communication skills, and (c) a natural comprehension of grammar. Consequently, the MT is the most critical resource for individuals in their successful learning cycle.

In a valuable foreign language context, Nguyen (2020) underscores the significance of the MT in the growth of new information for individuals. It underscored that using L1 and L2 in English language instruction to students from a wide range of cultural influences has been significantly constrained. The study's results on student-teacher's use of the Vietnamese language promoted the rise of positive and comprehensive language learning, enabling them to participate efficiently in the school setting. Similarly, Kecskes and Nde Papp (2000) investigate the cognitive-pragmatic implications of foreign language learning (FLL) on developing MT skills. As a result, they engaged in a discussion regarding adequate mastery of language-based MT use. Furthermore, English teachings are highly desired in Arabic; hence, the English and Arabic cultures come together, reducing the educational efficiency of classroom activities (Tepich and Akay, 2024). (Tepich and Akay, 2024).

In the same context, Faridy and Syaodih (2016) conducted a study to examine the role of the MT in the learning process and to identify any obstacles that learners may encounter when employing the MT outside of their hometown of Bandung. The findings suggest a strong correlation between the individuals' environment and MT. Using the MT (L1) in foreign language classrooms is unavoidable, according to Paker and Karaağaç (2015). The statistics of their investigation have demonstrated that the MT is a critical component of language instruction and serves distinct functions throughout the learning cycle. In the same vein, Owolabi et al. (2022) conducted a study to determine the impact of MT on preschool learners in Kwara State, Nigeria. The experimental research design sampled 39 students from the junior secondary school. The findings underscore the MT's critical role in forming preschool children's learning abilities. Most studies have demonstrated that language students automatically switch between languages, and translating into the NL is a crucial resource in effectively acquiring a second or foreign language.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2013) clarifies the educational challenges faced by linguistic minority children whose low status is utilised for their initial learning over a few years; the MT serves as a tool for acquiring the dominant language and material knowledge. A significant feature of globalisation for learners is the rising migration of individuals between regions. Population growth is crucial to emphasise policies that address the modern demands of globalisation, highlighting why multiple common countries that do not speak are starting to utilise English as their primary means of instruction (Tupas, 2015).

The current study reinforces prior findings and provides further evidence indicating that teaching English as a second or foreign language in vocational schools is difficult due to cultural disparities and the linguistic distinctions between Arabic and English resulting from differences in their systems of languages. Educational policymakers at the Ministry of Education regard English as vital for academic, commercial, and industrial objectives outlined in the vocational education curriculum. The adverse transfer of L1 might manifest in two structurally dissimilar languages, resulting in challenges and inaccuracies in second language acquisition. Cook (2001) highlighted three principal grounds for L1 avoidance. Initially, he asserted that L2 learning must imitate the acquisition of L1 in monolingual contexts. Secondly, effective L2 acquisition necessitates that L2 learners distinguish between L1 and L2 as independent entities. Thirdly, learners will not be satisfied that the L2 is a feasible and effective communication medium if the teacher fails to promote it.

Similarly, Zdorenko and Paradis (2012) maintain that L1 acquisition differs from L2 acquisition in that functional categories are constructed feature-by-feature, requiring relevant features to be recovered from phonological form input mappings onto feature bundles. Learners in L2 follow this strategy for functional categories not present in their L1. Learners are entitled to determine whether or not to employ their L1 due to the distinctive characteristics of language. The multicompetence concept enables language to be perceived as a component of a more comprehensive system rather than an autonomous entity in learners' minds. Similarly, Ortega (2014) confirms that a deeper awareness of the forces that influence cross-linguistic influence is not based on new language instances but on learners' psychological perceptions of the similarities or differences between L1 and L2. Then, students can select valuable tools and strategies to aid SLA, such as bilingual dictionaries or bilingual subtitles in videos and other authentic learning materials. Additionally, L1 may be implemented in specific classroom exercises, including collaborative writing and discussions.

In conclusion, English is a foreign language extensively spoken and used in the Arab world, particularly in countries where it is an official language, such as Egypt, Jordan,

Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (Tepich and Akay, 2024). The foreign culture and maternal tongue must also be considered in the learners' living environment, adequate exposure to the language target, and teaching-learning processes. Teachers must regard these factors as influencing factors that disrupt the learning process.

3. Methodology

The present study implemented a descriptive methodology approach for data collection and analysis. Consequently, quantitative statistics were taken from thirty-two male and thirty-two female students tested in experimental pre and posttests. The objective of this study was to determine whether the use of students' L1 in their learning of another language serves as a facilitator. It also demonstrates whether it assists in making students feel more confident when acquiring a foreign or second language in a formal setting by implementing Arabic. The study was conducted in experimental and control groups during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.

3.1. Sample

The selected sample comprised 64 students from VES in Thi-Qar Province. The participants were thirty-two male and thirty-two female students between 19–22 years old. Using the formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), who demonstrated a statistical formula (Confidence Level = 95%, Margin of Error = 5%) for determining the sample size for this study. These students attended the academic VES expecting to improve their English for a specific purpose (ESP) and develop fundamental communication skills in the target language. According to the equalization procedure, the researcher selected demographically equal participants based on age, language proficiency, technology experience, culture, and family income. The researcher would randomly assign the sample into experimental and control groups, preferably identical in size and English background distribution.

3.2. Instruments

The primary quantitative design includes Spearman's rho correlations to investigate the association between two variables: students' performance in English academic assignments and the MT use in the target language. Besides, the control and experimental groups employed an independent sample t-test based on a pretest/posttest to test the effects of implementing English for specific purposes in vocational education students in Thi-Qar. Furthermore, the pre-posttest was designed to evaluate four proficiency sections, including a new curriculum version 2023, which requires these students to take three years of English language classes as compulsory English

for specific purposes in VES. Moreover, it emphasizes basic language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing in vocational education contexts such as using English in industry, computer science, oil filtering, administration, and counting to enhance students' performance in English skills and basic communication skills supporting by the use of native Arabic language in the formal context.

Subsequently, the experimental and control groups were subjected to distinct treatments in the research. The first group was taught in English using Arabic translation, while the second group was taught in English without using Arabic in classroom activities. The research procedure involves the use of Arabic in a variety of academic tasks. This test aimed to ascertain the sample data's statistical significance threshold. The statistical tests were conducted using SPSS version 20 software, with an acceptable significance level of $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was H_0 , and the acceptance or rejection of the p-value was based on whether the significance value was more significant than or less than 0.05.

4. Data Collection

The province general directorate of education in Thi-Qar granted the necessary authorizations to clarify the procedures for the random sample of the study. The academic and VES subsequently conducted the current study. The data collection procedure was accessible in two formats: pretest and posttest. A pretest was administered to ascertain the preliminary outcomes of students who participated in the control and the experimental groups. Conversely, after both classes, a posttest was administered to the experimental group after managing numerous treatments that included Arabic-based activities focused on English for specific purposes (ESP).

5. Data Analysis

The statistical significance of the sample values was assessed using the independent-sample t-test. Consequently, the posttest was measured based on the pretest results and analysed using SPSS version 20 software. Additionally, the mean variation between the experimental and control groups was assessed before and following the treatment. In VES, the teacher's feedback regarding using Arabic support in learning was tailored to the student's requirements and the school syllabus. Spearman's rho test was used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship using two variables, including Arabic as the MT and the educational level in teaching English for specific purposes at VES.

6. Results and Discussion

This study makes a unique contribution to the MT, an acronym commonly used to describe the use of NL in education-related tasks. The pretest results indicated that the Arabic translation score has not significantly improved. It is corroborated by the t-test results of the students' posttest scores, which indicate no statistically significant variance between the experimental and control groups. The null hypothesis is accepted because the average likelihood exceeds the level of significance, $p < 0.05$. likewise, the student's learning of the four language skills is not significantly influenced by the treatment's influence. Due to the p-value ($p < 0.05$), the experimental and control groups are deemed to have no significant variations.

In the study's first phase, it was assumed that students had not received teacher feedback regarding implementing Arabic translation for English skills in the classroom. Therefore, a pretest was applied to both groups (Control and Experimental).

Table 6.1 Pretest Results of the Experimental and Control Groups for Equalisation

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	Experimental	32	2.04	.883	2.86	1.60	62	.114
	Control	32	1.73	.622				

As seen in Table 6.1, a pretest was applied to both groups to verify this hypothesis, and they assessed the same language teaching techniques supported by the researcher. The experimental group's mean score was ($M=2.04$, $SD=.883$), and the control group's mean score was ($M=1.73$, $SD=.622$). Furthermore, $t=(1,62)$, $1.60=.114$, $p < 0.05$. No statistically significant difference was observed between the groups, as indicated by these findings. In this scenario, it can be asserted that the groups are homogeneous at the study's initiation and before the experimental group receives treatment in a class. The pretest data of each group displayed a singularity value that exceeded α (2.86) $\text{Sig} > 0.05$. This table shows that the singularity value of the pretest scores of each group was larger than the threshold for significance level ($p < 0.05$) in response to research question 1. In this regard, the conclusion illustrates the sample's normal distribution. Similarly, the control group students' posttest scores were also substantially greater than their pretest scores; however, there were no initial variations in values between the groups.

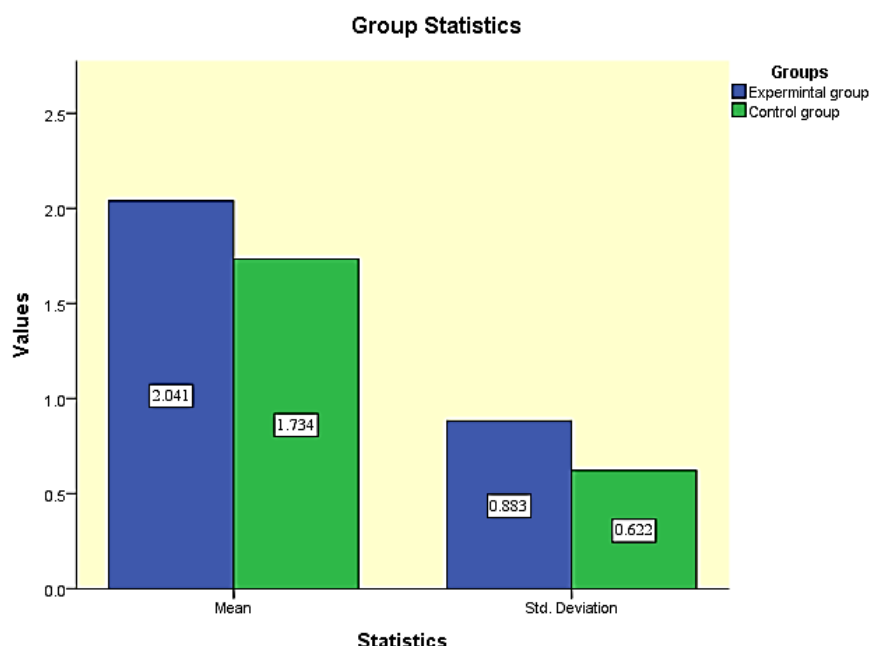


Figure 6.1 Mean-Score Difference Between the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pretest

As shown in Figure 6.1, It is evident that the mean variances of the two groups are minor, but they are not statistically significant. Further, the experimental and control groups noticed a relatively small increase in the student's academic results in the English learning-based MT translation process, as evidenced by the pretest/posttest scores. The significance level ($p < 0.05$) did not allow for the identification of significant variation between the posttest scores of the experimental and control group students in this regard. On top of that, the results of the experimental group students were comparable to or slightly different from those of the control group students.

Table 6.2 Posttest Results of the Control and Experimental Groups for Comparison

Posttest	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	f	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Experimental	32	2.46	.918	5.27	3.28	62	.002
	Control	32	1.79	.693				

As shown in Table 6.2, a posttest was administered to both groups following the treatment to ascertain whether there were any variations between the groups. Using an independent samples t-test, the scores were analysed to assess the pretest and posttest results of the experimental group. The comparison of the experimental group students represented by pretest and posttest scores indicated a significant difference in descriptive statistics. In this context, the experimental group's mean score was ($M=2.46$, $SD=.918$), and the control group's mean score was ($M=1.79$, $SD=.693$). Furthermore, $t(1,62)$, $3.28=.002$, $p<0.05$. These findings showed a statistically significant difference between the groups ($p<0.05$).

In other words, the efficient use of Arabic in VES has led to students' posttest scores being higher than their pretest scores. In response to research question 1, the findings indicated that the singularity value of the posttest scores of each group was less than the significance level ($p<0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis $H0_1$ is rejected, as the results do not correspond to the normally distributed sample, and a substantial disparity was identified between the groups. In this regard, the outcome does not indicate a typically distributed sample. Similarly, the posttest scores of the control group students were also significantly higher than their pretest scores after the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.

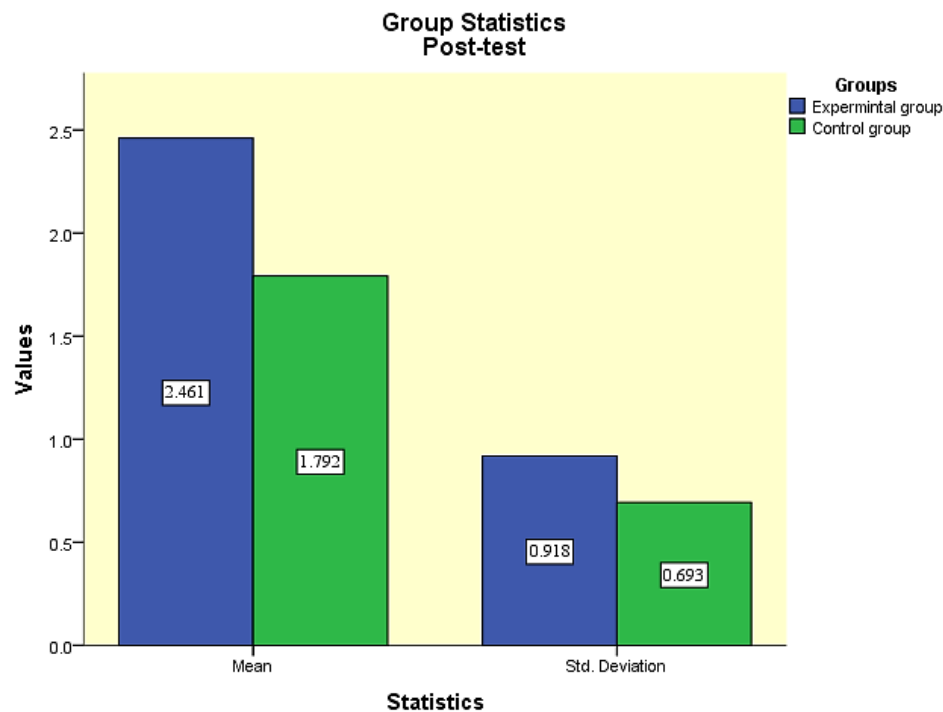


Figure 6.2 Mean-Score Difference Between the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pretest

As seen in Figure 6.2, the experimental and control groups demonstrated a substantial mean variation. Also, the pretest and posttest scores of the students indicated that their learning performance varied among the two groups. In this respect, the experimental group's more remarkable performance in learning suggests that it is superior to the control group. Consequently, a substantial disparity was identified between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). The empirical evidence suggested that the performance of vocational education students is significantly impacted by using L1 in language teaching materials, as it shifts the teaching process to Arabic translation. Switching from English to Arabic is crucial for comprehending English concepts or confusing information in the learning environment.

Table 6.3 Spearman's rho Correlations Coefficient for Pretest, Posttest, and Language Proficiency

Variables Mean Scores		Language Proficiency	Pretest	Posttest
Language Proficiency	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.031	.229*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.810	.004
	N	64	64	64
Pretest	Correlation Coefficient	.031	1.00	.583**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.810	.	.000
	N	64	64	64
Posttest	Correlation Coefficient	.229*	.583**	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.
	N	64	64	64

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As explained in Table 6.3, Spearman's rho test indicates a positive correlation coefficient between two variables, MT use and English language proficiency, which evidenced significantly more significant degrees of performance related to the participants' achievement than the control group due to the scenario interaction in the class. The results indicate that pre and post-mean scores positively correlate to English proficiency throughout the learning process. In response to research question 2, the mean pretest and posttest scores show a positive correlation between the groups. Besides, the posttest group's scores positively correlated with English language proficiency due to the significance level ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{02} is

rejected since a meaningful relationship difference was found between the two variables, MT use and English language proficiency.

Spearman's rho value for pretest and language proficiency indicated no positive correlation ($\chi^2 (1,62) = .031, p < 0.05$). On the contrary, Spearman's rho value for posttest and language proficiency was seen as ($\chi^2 (1,62) = .229, p < 0.05$). At the same time, pre and post-mean scores also have a positive, strong correlation ($\chi^2 (1,62) = .583, p < 0.05$). In this respect, the pre and post-mean scores reported a positive correlation between mean scores obtained by the participants at VES. Based on this statistical measure, the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, including MT use and English language proficiency, are determined. Concisely, the experimental group's pretest-posttest scores rose to 0.42%, while the control group's rose to 0.06%. Consequently, the experimental group's superior performance in learning reveals that it is superior to the control group.

Further analysis showed that taking the easy way out can help students understand complex concepts more efficiently by providing explanations and clarifications in an acquired language they know. This can help build a strong foundation of understanding before transitioning to English-only instruction. Moreover, using the MT helps ensure the retention of students' confidence and teacher feedback, particularly for those anxious when learning English as a foreign language during their schooling. It can also bridge the students' existing knowledge and the new English language concepts, making the learning process more accessible. Referring back to the study's primary objective, it is feasible to conclude that students with vocational education can gain from exchange language-based learning activities by enabling their interests to understand better the concepts they have mastered through achievable Arabic and English learning tasks.

According to the findings, incorporating the MT language in English teaching can help students express themselves more freely, particularly when discussing abstract or emotional topics. This can foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Overall, strategically using the MT in English teaching can provide valuable support for students, particularly during the initial stages of studying a language, and can enhance the openness and efficacy of the learning process. Using the Arabic language to learn English is intended to capitalise on students' existing linguistic skills to expedite the mastery of a new language. One of the main benefits of using Arabic in teaching English is that it provides a familiar foundation for students. By allowing students to learn English concepts in their NL, they can more easily grasp

the new language's structure and vocabulary. This can lead to increased confidence and motivation in learning English.

7. Conclusion

This study evaluated the efficacy of using the Arabic NL in vocational education settings to fulfill the required objectives. Teaching the English language is widely recognised as presenting many challenges in the academic environment. Therefore, several rationales for implementing Arabic L1 in formal settings have been addressed to accommodate the learning requirements of students. EFL students are interested in MT instructions and teaching in L2, a reality that can be linked to teaching in a language they do not fully understand. Therefore, cognitive development is vital to those students since it shapes their learning abilities in a foreign language. Hence, the MT enables teachers to teach effectively. In this respect, using teacher feedback in Arabic can accelerate language learning in the target language, including grammar translation and teacher feedback in English teaching that affects the student's understanding of the teaching materials and removes misconceptions or difficulty in learning activities.

Consequently, in VES, teachers frequently employ translation as a convenient and expeditious alternative to presenting topics to students exclusively in English when there is a lack of proficiency in particular materials. Teachers endeavour to reduce the gap by employing techniques that emphasise using L1 to enhance students' performance. The findings of the study suggest that the learning process of English as a foreign language can be made more enjoyable by adopting L1 as the learning support in an academic environment.

The findings observed in this study indicate that teachers can easily capture students' attention during lessons by incorporating Arabic teaching materials, which assist them in making their classes more engaging. This is particularly beneficial for further studies. English language teachers should be informed of the employment of L1 in language teaching materials in the event of learning difficulties. Consequently, they must be instructed to use L1 in language-teaching environments. As a result, it is imperative to establish a setting that fosters multilingualism in the education environment. The Ministry of Education in Iraq and VES should promote studying multiple languages based on Arabic. On top of that, teachers should motivate their students to acquire new languages to enhance how they interact in the target language.

8. Recommendations

1. In classroom activities, language teachers can achieve a harmonious equilibrium between English and the student's mother tongue (L1).
2. Translating Arabic to English can be intricate and complicated, necessitating English teachers who precisely understand the subtleties of both languages.
3. Educational policymakers can incorporate Arabic into the curriculum, and teachers can effectively foster bilingualism, cultural comprehension, and social integration between L1 and L2.
4. Teachers should permit students to develop their auditory skills by participating in English, including pronunciation, vocabulary, and structures, particularly when they cannot comprehend the English text.
5. Teachers need to be aware of the differences between cultures between the Arabic and English contexts, as these can impede the accurate communication of specific concepts from the initial version of the text.

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