



The Saudi 2030 vision and translanguaging in language learning in Saudi Arabia: Looking for concord in the future

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APA Citation:

Alqahtani, M. H. (2022). The Saudi 2030 vision and translanguaging in language learning in Saudi Arabia: Looking for concord in the future. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(Special Issue 1), 556-568.

Submission Date:08/08/2021

Acceptance Date:16/11/2021

Abstract

This study reviews the methods and findings of earlier translanguaging research with special emphasis on their implications in view of the national development plans stated in Saudi vision 2030. Notably, Saudi Arabia is striving to adjust to the multilingual immigrant workforce on its soil, while the Kingdom envisages a larger role for its people on other soils. In this changed paradigm, strengthening the Saudis' English communicative proficiency is an emergent need. To make pertinent pedagogical recommendations on the use of translanguaging in language learning, the study gathered data using a questionnaire administered to 72 participants from separate EFL departments at King Faisal University, and a focus group interview with three participants from one Department. Findings revealed that the Saudi EFL students strongly support the use of translanguaging in the EFL classrooms, but they are worried that it may not bring their proficiency to the desirable standard. They, thus, showed greater faith in the conventional language learning approach, viz., using only English in the EFL classes. The study concluded that learners' exposure to translanguaging is apparently not adequate in KSA for them to fully fathom its benefits, and teachers who, so far strictly keep to the English-only approach, too need to be oriented and trained in its use.

Keywords: translanguaging; Saudi Arabia vision 2030; english language learning; teacher training; student attitudes; teacher awareness

1. Introduction

1.1. Translanguaging in the English language classroom

The origins of translanguaging go back to the 1980s in Welsh bilingual education (Lewis et al., 2012) when both English and Welsh languages were used interchangeably for teaching and learning in the classroom. It takes the position that acquiring two language underlying systems, all language users including multilinguals and bilinguals use among their linguistic competence specific language features to express communicative functions paying attention to the social context (Vogel & García, 2017, p. 21).

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The idea of translanguaging is relatively new in sociolinguistics and Wei (2011) defined it as a language phenomenon that occurs between two language systems, but is not necessarily limited to them. Canagarajah (2011) called the term a ‘neologism’ while stating that what has brought academic interest to solidify around translanguaging is emerging understanding of multilingual communication. The realization of the efficacy of translanguaging in second or foreign language learning is just dawning with its growing dissociation from ideological and socio-political dimensions. Given its departure from the ‘norm’, translanguaging, as a learning tool may appear as a risky proposition in the language classroom, but with its proven communicative dimension as in public spaces (Tsokalidou, 2017), its use in the learning process is worth trial. In contrast to the L2 learning scene of a few decades ago, linguistic diversity is valued and conventional approaches to language perception are under question (Garcia & Seltzer, 2016).

Al-Ahdal (2020a) argues that in translanguaging language learners make use of all their language competence to communicate and negotiate meaningfully and in social context. He also asserted that such meaning-making via translanguaging arises new methodology for foraging/second language teaching. Nevertheless, the recognition of translanguaging as an advantageous pedagogical tool for language learning has only been addressed recently in places like the UK (Conteh, 2018). In translanguaging, language is seen as an ongoing process rather than a static concept, and therefore, the focus shifts from how many languages an individual is capable of speaking to how well could that individual use his or her language(s) knowledge to achieve their goal (Conteh, 2018).

However, Conteh (2018) argues that translanguaging has not gone unchallenged in research, policy, and practice. When it comes to research, Conteh (2018) points out that some researchers undermine the necessity of the notion itself since there are concepts such as code-switching and code mixing which provide a framework for multilingual language use. In response, Blackledge et al.(2014) argue that using such concepts provide simplistic and reductive distinctions between monolingual, bilingual and multilingual speakers. Conteh (2018) claims that communicating whether oral or written in one language suggests multilingualism because an idea can be expressed by several of ways. Therefore, translanguaging challenges traditional notions such as ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘standard’ or ‘target’ languages which have been necessarily proposed for maintaining and developing the language. (Al-Ahdal, 2020a), which in turn have created linguistic, cultural, and racial hierarchies amongst language users (Vogel & García, 2017). For this reason, translanguaging has raised questions related to social justice in language education (Conteh, 2018) uncovering the deployment of linguistics resources in communities, and how the implementation of such resource’s replicates, debates, and defies difference and dissimilarity in society (Blackledge et al., 2014).

Further, when it comes to policy and practice in ELT, translanguaging faces the challenge of “entrenched monolingualism” that are deeply rooted in these aspects (Hall & Cook, 2012, p. 297). Despite the growth of multilingualism due to migration and mobility, Cummins (2008) argues that there are two situations remain prominent; languages are kept separate and learners’ home language is neglected (Conteh, 2018). As a result, “language policies, curricula, and assessment practices retain their preoccupation with national and standard languages” (Conteh, 2018, p. 446). However, pedagogical concepts have been changing. Teachers who are aware of the importance of translanguaging for creating equal relationships with their learners in order to achieve mutual empowerment “have the potential to develop translanguaging pedagogies in the future” (Conteh, 2018, p. 446).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Translanguaging and multilingualism in Saudi Arabia

Similar to other countries in Kachru's expanding circle (1985) English in Saudi Arabia is used and taught as a foreign language. It is widely presented in professional spheres such as the media and education (Al-Rawi, 2012). The use of English in Saudi Arabia came into effect after the discovery of oil in the early decades of the twentieth century. After the establishment of the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in 1933, English was the language of communication between the American staff and their counterparts from different nationalities (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Further, the emergence of the USA as a leading power in the world after the Second World War and its interest in the region had cemented the status of English as an international language (Elyas, 2008). Even after regaining full ownership of Aramco by the Saudi Government in the 1990s and the initiation of the Saudization policy (Looney, 2004), the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the USA continued to increase in several domains such as military affairs (Elyas et al., 2020). As a result, English continued to be the main language of communication between Saudi staff and their American counterparts, and also continued to be taught as the main foreign language.

This long history of the use of English and its teaching in the country has resulted in the emergence of a new variety of English, that Mahboob and Elyas (2014) call "Saudi English". They argue that there are a number of grammatical features that distinguish this variety of English such as variation in the use of articles, variation in marking subject-verb agreement, variation in use of tense markers, and number (singular/plural '—s') (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014, p. 135). They further point out that Islamic phrases such as *Assalamu Alaikum* (peace be with you) and *Insha'Allah* (God's willing) are normalised and widely used when speaking in English.

Moreover, there are other studies that have investigated this emerging form of English and its "Saudi flavour" (Elyas et al., 2020, p. 2). For example, Al-Rawi (2012) reaches a similar conclusion to that of Mahboob and Elyas (2014) and highlights four grammatical features that Saudi individuals use when they speak English: deletion of *be*, irregular use of the article *the*, omission of the definite article *a(n)*, and deletion of the third person singular *-s*. She argues that such features have resulted from the influence of Arabic. Further, Alwazana (2020) goes further to argue that there is a sub-variety of Saudi English, which she calls *Saudi Hijazi* English which is spoken by the people of Hijaz in the western region of Saudi Arabia. She points out eighteen consonants that form the sound system of the Saudi Hijazi English, which is influenced by the phonology of both urban Hijazi dialect and Modern Arabic (Alwazana, 2020). Bukhari (2019) also acknowledges the emergence of Saudi English as changing and evolving phenomenon that, like any other language, is influenced by cultural, social, religious and contextual dimensions.

The emergence of Saudi English does not pertain to spoken language, but it is also observed in written discourses. Fallatah (2016) analysed a number research writing style composed by Saudi researchers. He concluded that Saudi researchers did not use textual signals to guide their readers throughout the text for easier comprehension. Instead, they left their readers to figure out the main idea of the text by understanding the context. He also noticed the use of listing when writing research abstracts which is unusual in a typical English writing style.

Despite the evidently existence of Saudi English and its sub-varieties such as the Saudi Hijazi English, translanguaging is hardly present in English classrooms in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ahdal, 2020a) which indicates a traditional view of English language teaching, that forbids the use of the first language in the classroom, and has been inherited in the system.

However, attitudes towards translanguaging are changing positively in Saudi Arabia. Al-Ahdal (2020b) studied a number of university students and their attitudes towards translanguaging and he explored that they positively disposed to the practice. This positive attitude towards translanguaging, nonetheless, may be a result of their insufficient linguistic proficiency, which explains their comfort to explain themselves better to their teachers when using Arabic alongside English. They also pointed out that their English language skills did not improve when they used both English and Arabic in the classroom. Therefore, this positive attitude towards translanguaging in the English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia seems to be resulting from the practicality and easiness of using both English and Arabic rather than an attitude about translanguaging as a pedagogical practice.

This conclusion is supported by a similar study by Alsaawi (2019). He interviewed 14 students at the department of business in a Saudi university and investigated their attitudes towards translanguaging. He concluded that the students did welcome the use of Arabic besides English because their level of English was not advanced enough to fully comprehend their subjects that were delivered in English. Passing their exams with higher grades was their main priorities. At the same time, however, they expressed their concern that using Arabic besides English in the classroom would result in a lesser degree of language improvement. As a result, they may lead to disqualifying them when applying for jobs, which requires a certain level of English, after their graduation. Such attitudes show the positive perception of translanguaging in Saudi Arabia for the practicality of it.

Moreover, Al-Ahdal (2020a) studied English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and investigated their attitudes towards translanguaging. Similar to the students discussed above, the teachers in his study showed positive attitudes towards translanguaging and allowed their students to use Arabic for practical reasons such as making them more involved in the class and increasing their motivation to learn. However, they did not feel comfortable with the practice because they believed that using Arabic may slow the process of their English language acquisition. Therefore, implementing translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in the class is challenging, according to their responses. From the previous studies, it seems that translanguaging has not received great attention in the language classroom in Saudi Arabia, and when it is implemented, it is for practical reasons rather than pedagogically based.

Some studies have argued that, unlike Saudi Arabia, translanguaging is welcomed in other Arabian Gulf countries such as the UAE (Palfreyman & Al-Bataineh, 2018) because Saudi Arabia is more conservative than the UAE (Alsaawi, 2019). However, such traditional views on Saudi Arabia that described it as a conservative country (Baroni, 2007; Kumaraswamy, 2006; Nevo, 1998) where tribalism dominates its citizens (Baroni, 2007; Blanchard, 2010; Zuhur, 2005) creating a male-dominated society (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002) seem reductive. Saudi Arabia has been employing translanguaging for decades when millions of Muslims from around the world visit Mecca and Medina throughout the whole year. For example, the Hajj season received 2.5 million visitors in 2009, 2.8 million in 2010, 2.9 million in 2011 and 3.1 million in 2013 (Taibah et al., 2017) and the number kept growing every year since then, with the exception to the year 2020 that was influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although English serves as a lingua franca for a large number of speakers around the world, and therefore, may be the most useful language of communication with Muslim visitors to the holy sites, it is yet not guaranteed that all pilgrims have had access to English language learning. Some visitors may not have had the opportunity to learn it, whilst some may reject using it—especially in a Muslim holy site—due to the representation that English has as a language of a once colonising power (i.e., Great Britain) (Abdellah & Ibrahim, 2013). As a result, the Saudi Government has employed a number of speakers from more than 10 languages such as Farsi, Urdu, Malay, Turkish and others to communicate with pilgrims from the moment they arrive at the point of entry into the country (Saudi Press Agency, 2019) until their departure. The government has also constructed signposts in many

different languages to guide the pilgrims, especially in crowded places like Mina Shrine (Taibah et al., 2017). Therefore, translanguaging is not a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia. It has been operated in the country for decades and has created a very linguistically diverse environment.

2.2. Saudi 2030 Vision and the potential for translanguaging

Unlike other Gulf states, traditional studies on Saudi Arabia described it as a conservative country (Baroni, 2007; Kumaraswamy, 2006; Nevo, 1998) where tribalism dominates its citizens (Baroni, 2007; Blanchard, 2010; Zuhur, 2005) creating a male-dominated society (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). However, in 2005, Saudi launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' Scholarship Programme (KSP) to sponsor Saudi students from both sexes to pursue their studies in top universities around the world. The goal of KSP is to "equip [Saudi] students with knowledge and skills needed to be future leaders. Other objectives include cultural exchange" (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to USA, 2012, p. 1). Therefore, the main objective of KSP was providing Saudi international students with educational skills but it does not exactly state how this *cultural exchange* would be achieved.

The stereotype of a conservative tribal male-dominated country continued to describe Saudi Arabia until April 2016. In that spring, Saudi Arabia launched its ambitious Vision of 2030. It is based on three pillars: a *thriving economy*, a *vibrant society*, and an *ambitious nation*. Each pillar has a number of strategic objectives and realisation programmes that ensure an effective implementation of the 2030 Vision. The main goal of the Saudi 2030 Vision is to move the country's economy and society from their traditional reliance on oil revenue to a more diverse economy and a society that is willing to engage with the rest of the world with open attitudes, which, as a result, would result in an *ambitious nation* that position the country as a "global logistic hub" (KSA 2030 Vision, 2016, p. 22).

Therefore, shortly after launching the Saudi 2030 Vision, the country founded the General Entertainment Authority in May 2016 that has organised world class events to attract tourists (Elyas et al., 2020). Moreover, the country went further to issue e-visas for visitors worldwide in order to facilitate the visiting process to the country. KSA 2030 Vision, (2016) states that: "In the tourism sector and leisure sectors, we will create attractions that are of the highest international standards, improve visa issuance procedures for visitors, and prepare and develop our historical and heritage sites." (p. 44).

All of these initiatives show the extent that the country is willing to go in order to open its doors widely to the world. Such openness brings a number of implications when it comes to translanguaging, especially when hosting events or bands from non-English speaking countries, as will be discussed in the next section which deals with the aims of this research.

3. Research Objectives

The Saudi national development plan takes off from the Vision documents which lay out national objectives across sectors such as environment, culture, tourism, development of science and technology, research plans and, education. Broadly, the three key terms that make this document unique are Vibrant Economy, Thriving Economy, and Ambitious Nation, which also summarize the targets set by the administration. The Human Capability Development Program, one of the Vision Realization Programs, notably "focuses on developing a solid educational base for all citizens to instil values from an early age, while preparing the youth for the future local and global labor market" (Vision Realization Program, 2021, para. 1)

Listing the objectives under this head, two aims that figure prominently are: Ensuring alignment of educational outputs with labor market needs, and improving readiness of youth to enter the labor market. With the labor market in focus, preparing the youth to interact usefully in the international

arena is a primary need that comes naturally in the reckoning. Though English has been a part of the Saudi curriculum from the primary classes onwards and teacher training has stayed with the latest theories and practices, learning outcomes so far have not been as desired. One parameter to measure this is the communicative ability of the youth entering the universities, a rather dismal picture emerging with mandated bridge courses to help learners cope with the English language. Translanguaging with its language-blended approach to L2 learning may offer hope by reducing learners' foreign language anxiety in a classroom that rather encourages them to use MT freely. Being a new approach, especially in the traditional-learning orientation of the Saudi EFL classroom, its acceptability and learner-readiness to adopt it needs some investigation. This being the objective of the study, the following research questions are framed to base the study upon.

4. Research questions

1. What is the Saudi learners' level of awareness of translanguaging use in the EFL classroom?
2. How prepared are the Saudi university learners to adopt translanguaging as a method that can fulfil their learning needs and objectives?
3. Is the teaching staff aware, trained, and ready to use translanguaging in the EFL classrooms?

5. Methodology

The study took a mixed methods approach with the bulk of data coming from quantitative measures, results thereof being analysed in the light of the qualitative data. Dornyei (2007) states that it is best to make questionnaire items 'closed-ended', curtailing the freedom of respondents to write freely, keeping response options with possible alternatives such that they can later be numerically converted for analysis. For the former, an adapted version of the questionnaire design used by Tabatabaei (2019) was employed in this study. However, this study deviated from the questionnaire design of Tabatabaei (2019) by keeping the response options one-word only following the five-point Likert Scale as follows: Totally agree (1), Agree (2), Not sure (3), Disagree (4), Totally disagree (5). They alternative in the Table 1 below appeared in this order. (1 for strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree). Tabatabaei (2019), on the other hand, followed a more intricate option spectrum which, the researcher feels, would have been difficult for the Arab participants to tackle with their limited language proficiency. However, care was taken to include a wide array of statements to address the research questions multidimensionally. The questionnaire, consequently, had items focused on three previously mentioned objectives: Saudi EFL learners' awareness of translanguaging in language learning; the level of preparedness (with respect to the learning objectives and needs) of university learners to adopt translanguaging in their classrooms; and EFL instructors' awareness, training, and readiness to adopt translanguaging in EFL classrooms. The preliminary questionnaire was pilot tested with twelve EFL learners who shared all characteristics with the sample, but were not part of the final survey. Some modifications, especially in wording of the statements, students' lack of exposure to translanguaging, and clarifications to some items, were necessary, and hence, duly made. This draft was then validated by three instructors in EFL who further recommended dropping at least two redundant items. The final questionnaire consisted of 14 items. The next stage in the execution was the identification of the study sample. Following Dornyei's (2007) probability sampling guideline, the study comprised a stratified random sample of 72 EFL participants from separate EFL departments at King Faisal University, and a focus group interview with three random participants from one department. Apart from its effectiveness, the reason behind choosing this sampling method is that several departments in the university were identified for participation in this study, and having been treated as 'strata', a random sample could be selected from each group. Thus, both homogeneity of the

sample and randomness, or “randomization” and “categorization” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 97) were assured. Moreover, the research had a specific focus which made stratified sampling the most suitable for selecting the participants. Finally, the actual administering of the survey was done electronically via individual emailing of the questionnaire once the formal consent was sought from the entire sample. All responses received were then recorded onto Mics-Excel for statistical analysis.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the frequency distribution of the survey responses, followed by discussion of results with respect to each of the three research questions. Table 1 below summarises the survey results with all responses numerically represented as frequencies. The participants were not primed in the process or method of translanguaging before the conduct of the survey.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of survey responses

| S.No. | Statement ↓ Frequency of occurrence→ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | I find my current English lessons beneficial towards fulfilling my needs. | 01 | 01 | 03 | 12 | 54 |
| 2 | It is better that only English is allowed in my EFL class. | 24 | 19 | 05 | 11 | 13 |
| 3 | There is no way English can be learnt (as FL) by employing the mother tongue. | 21 | 26 | 01 | 16 | 08 |
| 4 | I am aware of translanguaging as an upcoming approach to learning a new language. | 07 | 11 | 37 | 09 | 08 |
| 5 | My instructor encourages us to discuss and think aloud in Arabic. | 00 | 00 | 02 | 14 | 56 |
| 6 | If I am allowed to discuss new knowledge in Arabic, I can write better in English. | 29 | 21 | 07 | 09 | 06 |
| 7 | Translanguaging will serve my learning needs better, especially as I think ahead of the job market. | 12 | 09 | 03 | 28 | 20 |
| 8 | Translanguaging can help less proficient EFL learners to tide over the comprehension hurdle. | 05 | 17 | 07 | 31 | 12 |
| 9 | The instructor is efficient in allowing and curtailing the use of Arabic for our best learning outcomes in the English class. | 03 | 12 | 02 | 24 | 31 |
| 10 | Translanguaging means translating to my mother tongue, Arabic. | 24 | 23 | 04 | 11 | 10 |
| 11 | I feel the need to use Arabic in the EFL class. | 21 | 28 | 03 | 05 | 15 |
| 12 | Oral expression is easier for me in Arabic. | 31 | 17 | 05 | 09 | 10 |
| 13 | I worry that by the end of the course, I may not know enough English grammar and vocabulary if I use Arabic in the class. | 27 | 23 | 01 | 13 | 08 |
| 14 | Writing in English becomes easier once I discuss ideas in Arabic. | 23 | 19 | 05 | 14 | 11 |

6.1. Factor loadings

The study worked around three factors as stated earlier. They will be presented one by one: i. Saudi EFL learners’ awareness of translanguaging in language learning; ii. The level of preparedness (with respect to the learning objectives and needs) of university learners to adopt translanguaging in their classrooms; iii. EFL teachers’ awareness, training, and readiness to adopt translanguaging in EFL

classrooms. These also correlated with the research questions framed earlier in the study. Referring to the survey items, statements 4, 8, 10 load onto factor i; statements 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 load onto factor ii; statements 5, 9 load onto factor iii.

The following Figures 1, 2, and 3 graphically represent each of the three factors respectively.

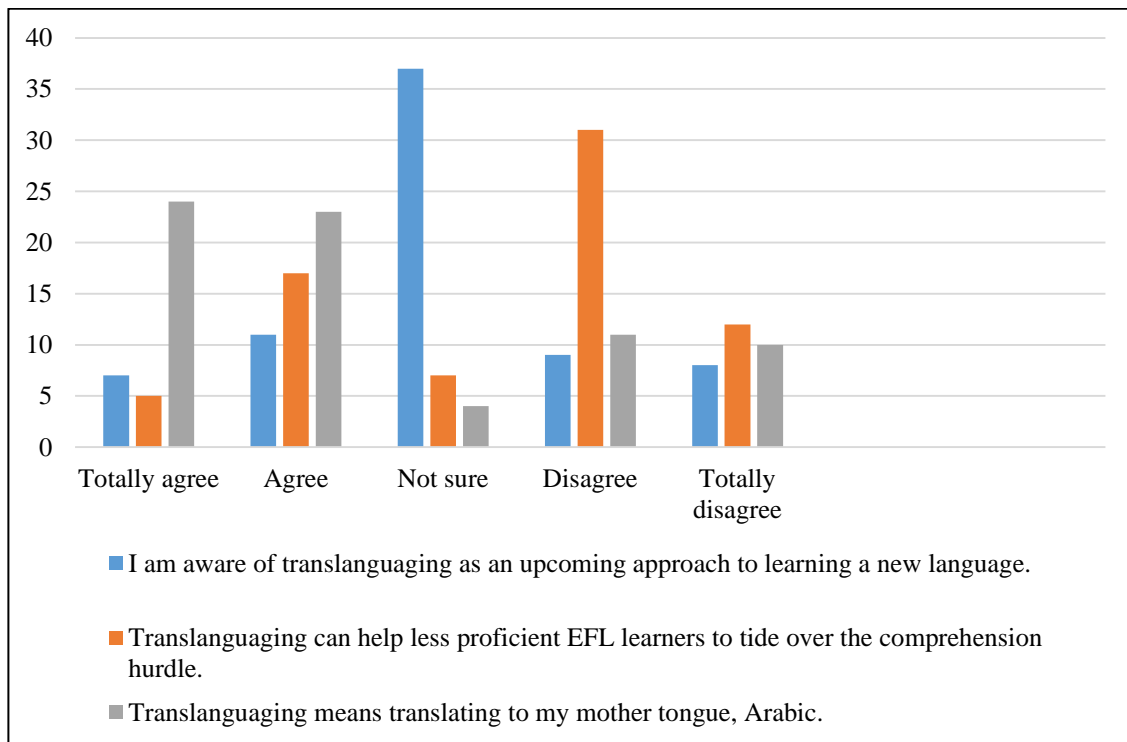


Figure 1. Learners' awareness of Translanguaging

Figure 1 shows the extent of learners' awareness of translanguaging in the EFL classroom. It also shows students' attitudes to the first research question, 'What is the Saudi learners' level of awareness of translanguaging use in the EFL classroom?' Responses bring out the fact that the Saudi EFL learners are largely unaware of translanguaging as a new approach in language learning. Figure 1 exhibits that 37 of the participants, (51.3%) are 'not sure' of their being in familiar with translanguaging. Peers' ignorance or language and learning practices and beliefs also may be a cause of poor use of translanguaging and hence, ignorance of learners to its efficacy in the EFL classroom. This finding echoes partly the results arrived at by Rajendram's (2021) in a study with Malaysian learners who found themselves translanguaging mostly out of necessity to communicate on the learning content with their peers, not being aware of how best to employ this, and mostly to the detriment of their teachers who reinforced an English-only policy. Likely, the three interviewees in this study showed that the subjects were surprised to learn that their use of Arabic to seek or offer help to peers in the English class was indeed translanguaging. However, all three subjects expressed concerns about their English proficiency being affected by this practice.

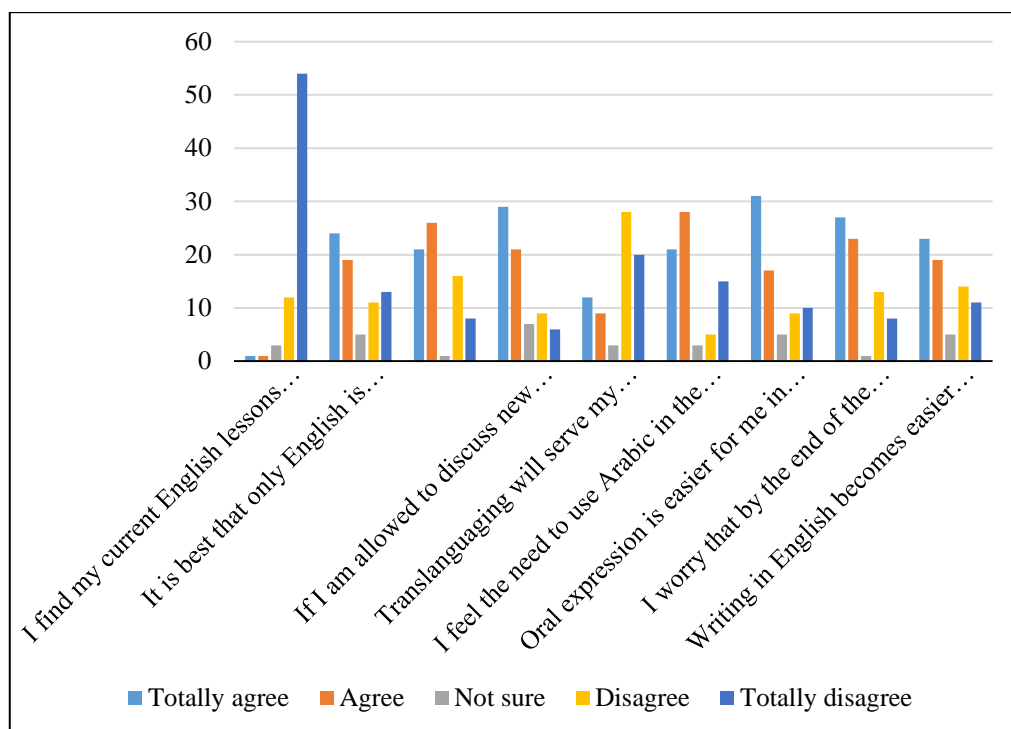


Figure 2. Learners' preparedness to adapt with Translanguaging

Figure 2 presents the level of preparedness of the Saudi learners to adopt translanguaging in their EFL classrooms. Answering survey item 1, fifty-four of the respondents or as many as 75% expressed dissatisfaction with the current English lessons as far as fulfilling their learning needs is concerned. As a policy, Saudi English instructed are trained to enforce the immersive English-only rule in their classes. However, the result is that learners' participation is negligible given their poor proficiency in communicative language with the entire system geared towards 'passing the exam' approach. Even with their learning needs not being met, however, learners feel that the English-only approach (survey item 2) is most suitable for them, betraying an ignorance of alternate methods possible in the EFL classroom. Not surprisingly, as many as 24 respondents totally agreed while another 19 agreed that using only English in class is the best approach for them as their entire language learning exposure has focused on keeping the MT out of the EFL class (survey item 3), an idea with which 21 participants totally agreed while 26 agreed. That the learners are unconsciously gravitated towards translanguaging is revealed by responses to items 6 and 7, both implying the same meaning but worded differently. As many as 29 and 21 learners totally agreed and agreed respectively that discussing in Arabic may enable them to express themselves better in writing in English while when the same is worded as 'translanguaging', 28 of them disagreed and 20 totally disagreed. Survey items 11 and 12 however, again bring out the learners' inclination to use Arabic with 21 and 28 being positive about the need, while another 31 and 17 participants feeling that they can express themselves orally better in Arabic. Translanguaging in this context can ensure greater learner participation in the learning process, and consequently boost their class engagement and motivation to learn. The same sentiment is expressed in item 14 with 23 and 19 respondents totally agreeing and agreeing respectively that writing in English becomes easier when they discuss ideas in Arabic. Survey item 13, it may be noted, is central to the learners' inhibition in adopting translanguaging as 27 participants totally agreed and 23 agreed that this may not prepare them well in terms of requisite language proficiency for the job market.

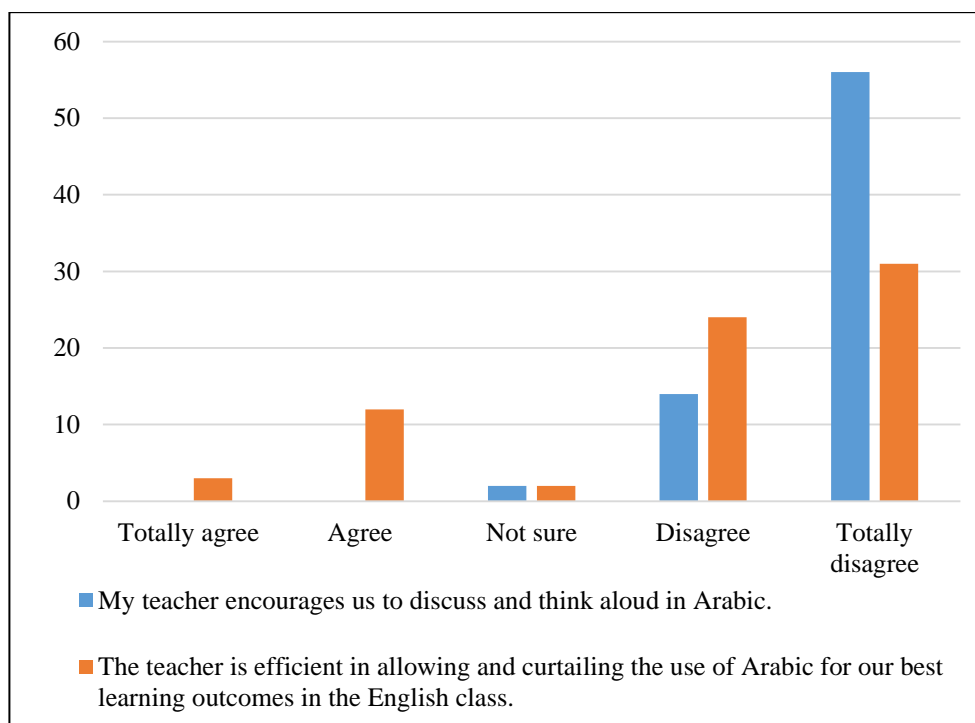


Figure 3. Instructors' awareness, training, and readiness to adapt Translanguaging

Figure 3 above shows that instructors' awareness, training and readiness as reflected in items 5 and 9 are not in favour of using translanguaging in the Saudi EFL classroom. This explains why the technique is not popular in Saudi Arabia, though it offers a limited multilingual and largely multidialectal learners base who might benefit from the technique. This finding is confirmed by Azaz and Abourehab's (2021) study who found that teachers were unfamiliar with the term 'translanguaging', they had multiple perspectives towards multilingual classrooms, and they were verbally generally resistant to the practice of translanguaging though they were using it in different ways in their classrooms. All these findings point towards teachers' complete ignorance of what 'translanguaging; actually entails. In the present study, responding to survey item 9, 24 disagreed and 31 totally disagreed that the instructor was competent to use Arabic in the EFL classroom judiciously and in the best learning interests of the learners. Similarly, as the interviews later showed, though Arabic was used by the learners in the EFL classrooms, it was not because the instructor encouraged them as responses to survey item 5 indicate. On the contrary, in the informal interviews in the second phase of this study, all the three interviewees clarified that Arabic was indeed used in the classroom whenever the learners found the content too heavy for them to take, the problem though developed when the teacher totally failed to check their use of Arabic and the class more or less turned into an Arabic rather than English class. Further, on being questioned about the writing output consequent to this 'translanguaging', two of the three subjects said that they failed to express themselves in writing even though the discussion in Arabic was rich, one subject, on the contrary added that in some classes, when the teacher focused on giving them key words and phrases, he was able to write better than when the instructor only lectured them in English exclusively.

7. Recommendations

The findings of the study lead to the surmise that teachers' perspectives on translanguaging and multilingual or multidialectal classroom needs a paradigm shift. Accordingly, changes at the grassroots levels as in teacher training need to be implemented and pedagogical preparation needs to

be broader based, and diligently oriented towards inclusion of new ideas in language research. Rajendram (2021, p.1) voiced a significant conclusion when she held that “even when translanguaging is welcomed into the classroom, the conflicting attitudes of teachers, students and families pose ideological constraints on translanguaging which restrict learners from selecting and utilising features from their whole translanguaging repertoire”. In this study too, participants acquiesce that they use Arabic in the classroom but are afraid that doing so would seriously hamper their facility in English and thus, not fulfil their needs with an eye on the job market. The study recommends that there is a need for greater openness in the Saudi context about the learner's needs and how best they can be addressed by involving learners in pedagogical choices. The current model of learner as the dormant recipient of knowledge needs a drastic change.

8. Conclusions

The study found that the Saudi EFL students strongly support the use of translanguaging in the EFL classrooms. Using one's full language repertoire in L2 acquisition has been the focus of recent research (Cummins, 2017; Mazak & Carroll, 2017). The basis of Translanguaging lies in diversifying the skills of the language learner: reading and discussing in one language and writing in another (Garcia & Li, 2014). The idea of translanguaging is to enable the learner to use the dominant language (in this situation Arabic) to support the weaker language (English). Despite of the students' preference to the use of translanguaging, they are worried that translanguaging may not bring their proficiency to the desirable standard. They, thus, showed greater faith in the conventional language learning approach, viz., using only English in the EFL classes. The study concluded that learners' exposure to translanguaging is apparently not adequate in KSA for them to fully fathom its benefits, and teachers who, so far strictly keep to the English-only approach, too need to be oriented and trained in its use.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the devoted English language teachers in Saudi Arabia who have committed themselves to achieve their educational mission.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank and express appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia, for the financial support under Nasher Track (Grant No. 216087.)

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