

# Monolingualism to Bilingualism in Tertiary-Level EFL Classrooms: Readiness and Perceptions of English Language Teachers at Saudi Universities

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## Abstract

Bilingualism, in general, is a process of using two different languages in different context of language contact to share the ideas and concepts. It is not only a characteristic of people but also a characteristic of societies. Saudi Arabia, for example, is somewhat a bilingual society since a significant number of Saudis speak both Arabic and English despite that English does not have official status. Taking advantage of this situation, Saudi Arabia has launched a vision for 2030 in which the shift from monolingualism to bilingualism in education is one of its major concerns. Accordingly, this study aims at investigating perceptions and preparedness of EFL university teachers toward moving from employing a monolingual approach to a bilingual one in their classrooms. The primary data collection instrument utilized in this study was a Google-based questionnaire based on a quantitative research methodology. Data were collected from 146 teachers who teach English as a foreign language at universities in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study suggest that the bilingual approach is superior to the monolingual one in every respect of EFL teaching and learning. They also indicate that English language teachers at Saudi universities are ready to employ a bilingual method in their EFL classrooms. They also showed that deploying a bilingual method assists students in understanding lessons much better than using a monolingual approach.

## Keywords

Bilingualism, EFL Classrooms, Monolingualism, Multilingualism, Saudi Universities, Tertiary-Level, 2030 Vision

## 1. Introduction

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has launched a vision for 2030 which is concerned with

building a prestigious society, boosting the economy, and being a self-assertive nation. More precisely, it aims to 1) establish the country as a worldwide investment powerhouse, 2) expand its trade and tourism, 3) and reform its educational system (*Vision Realization Program, 2021: para. 1*). As per the vision of 2030, the nation is focused on the improvement of the educational factors and market outputs with the labour's intentional for the ailment of the bilingualism. One of the prerequisites for achieving this goal is to move from monolingualism to bilingualism in various sectors particularly in education (*Vision Realization Program, 2021: para. 1*).

Since English is the international language of, commerce, medicine, technology and science, being the most dominant language, it is the solely foreign language offered as a fundamental subject at schools in Saudi Arabia. It is not only a major field of study but also an elective course offered in other majors in all Saudi universities (*Al-Abdan, 1993*). According to *Al-Rawi (2012)*, English has been widely used in Saudi professional spheres such as the media, trade, etc. Hence, it is necessary to employ effective approaches to its teaching and learning in Saudi education, especially within tertiary contexts, so as to develop graduates' linguistic skills and help them succeed in the labour market. To exemplify, employers in Saudi's private sectors such as companies, hospitals, and hotels require candidates who have a command of English (*Fareh, 2010*).

As outlined above, the whole Saudi society, especially the youth, would need to shift from monolingualism towards bilingualism to fulfil inspirations of the 2030 vision. Accordingly, the present study has a focus on one aspect of this vision: the notion of bilingualism in education. More specifically, it is directed at investigating the shift in English language teaching (ELT) from monolingualism to bilingualism in Saudi universities. It also explores the advantages of having bilingual education, with particular reference to the 2030 vision.

The concept of bilingualism extends beyond a mere binary classification of "yes" or "no". The term "bilingualism" is derived from Latin that has two particles as "bi" stands for "two" and "lingua" for languages. Accordingly, someone who speaks two languages is basically considered bilingual. "Multilingualism", in contrast, is the capacity of a person or a community to proficiently communicate in three or more languages. This stands in contrast to monolingualism, which denotes the ability to use only one language. A person who is able to use multiple languages is often referred to as a polyglot or a multilingual individual.

As teachers having many years' experiences in English language in Saudi tertiary education, we observe that a significant number of students only have the intention of passing exams in English-language courses. Although prior to higher education, they study English for twelve years in Elementary, Middle and High Schools, they struggle to communicate in English. More precisely, they do not have the language needed to communicate effectively and sustain longer periods of interaction (*Rababah, 2003*). They are not proficient enough to comprehend simple directions. The majority of them are still unable to compose even a single

line without any errors. Accordingly, due to such issues in English language learning, successful programs must be integrated into Saudi educational system and carried out efficiently, starting from the Elementary Stage. As noted by Khan (2011) “despite good planning, curriculum, textbooks, qualified teachers and effective administration, the teaching-learning process sometimes seems to be futile when the actual skill development is not up to the mark” (p. 1251).

One of the useful programs to teach English language in schools and universities is to implement bilingual education. Jiménez and Fitzpatrick (2014) assert that the students’ background, first language and culture, which are integral to their identity, should be considered when teaching EFL. Accordingly, using students’ mother tongue as a linguistic resource would be of assistance to them in learning the target language since they will have the ability to retain their prior knowledge and utilise their innate learning abilities (Cook, 2001).

With the Saudi Arabia’s vision for 2030 in view, along with these two assertions, the present study looks at to what extent the English language teachers at Saudi universities have switched, or are going to switch, from monolingualism to bilingualism in their classrooms.

EFL Saudi university students are well on their way to becoming bilingual with the significant financial and academic support provided by the English language education system. However, there are still several unaddressed concerns, such as when and under what conditions a shift from monolingualism to bilingualism occurs; and what aspects of the learners’ sociolinguistic background facilitate this shift in every walk of life. It is anticipated that research on these issues will advance the creation of a favourable environment for EFL learners. This highlights the importance of the present study, which is directed at exploring the role of bilingualism in EFL classrooms with special reference to perceptions of Saudi tertiary teachers.

Hence, this study is original in seeking to investigate views of EFL teachers towards moving from a monolingual approach to a bilingual one in their tertiary classrooms, as well as in assessing whether the shift from monolingualism to bilingualism shapes the learning process of EFL Saudi learners at universities. It is also significant in carefully examining the role of L1 in L2 learning within a university context, thus making a contribution to the body of scholarship on approaches to English language teaching, particularly within EFL contexts. Therefore, this study might offer insightful conclusions as to the effectiveness of bilingualism in teaching English. It might also be of importance to English language teachers, chiefly in Saudi Arabia, with respect to making careful planning and strategic pedagogical applications that develop students’ English proficiency, prepare them for the job market, and ultimately assist in achieving the 2030 vision. With these concerns in mind, the present research study aims at providing answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are perceptions of Saudi university teachers towards the shift from monolingualism to bilingualism in English language teaching?

2) To what extent are English language teachers at Saudi Arabian universities ready to employ bilingual methods in their EFL classrooms?

3) What are advantages and disadvantages of employing bilingual approaches in EFL Saudi tertiary classrooms?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Use of English in Saudi Arabia**

In the Article 50 of the Saudi Arabian constitution, it is mentioned that a student must have knowledge of a foreign language (probably English) to share the ideas and expressions with the people who are belonging to the different cultures especially for the advancement of the Islam and humanity. This explains the justification for English instruction in Saudi schools, where students' capacity to converse with speakers of other languages is given close attention. As per the results of the survey, it is generalized that the Saudi Arabian policymakers, stakeholders, businessmen, academic institutions, decision making bodies, etc. are aware about the importance of English and its use in different domains especially in the advancement of the international relations, technology, and health.

Today, English is used for a variety of purposes and has a distinguished standing throughout all levels of the Kingdom. This apparent improvement in English's status is a result of Saudi Arabia's rapid social change over the past few years, which has included an increase in the number of established social institutions. All levels of education are being improved, and the nation's economy is also expanding rapidly along with its industrial and commercial basis.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has witnessed a notable surge in the prominence of the English language across various sectors of society. While Arabic remains the cornerstone of communication and culture in the Kingdom, the widespread adoption of English reflects a burgeoning global outlook and a strategic response to the demands of a rapidly evolving world. From business to education and from tourism to technology, English has established itself as a vital tool for connectivity and progress.

In the realm of business, English serves as a bridge to the international market. With Saudi Arabia increasingly opening its doors to foreign investment and trade, proficiency in English has become essential for conducting negotiations, drafting contracts, and engaging in global commerce. Multinational corporations operating within the Kingdom often operate in English, necessitating a workforce skilled in the language to navigate the complexities of the global economy.

Education stands as another significant arena where English has gained prominence. Saudi Arabia recognizes the importance of equipping its citizens with the skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace. As a result, English language instruction has been incorporated in curricula at various educational levels, from schools to colleges. Many institutions of higher learning offer courses taught entirely in English, particularly in fields such as technology, engineering, science and medicine, ensuring that students are equipped with the linguistic proficiency

required for success in their chosen fields.

The burgeoning tourism industry in Saudi Arabia has also fueled the demand for English proficiency. With the Kingdom's ambitious plans to transform into a major tourist destination, English serves as the lingua franca for communication with international visitors. Signs, brochures, and informational materials are often provided in English, catering to the needs of tourists from diverse linguistic backgrounds and facilitating their exploration of cultural heritage and natural wonders of Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, English has a crucial role to play in the realm of governance and diplomacy. While Arabic remains the official language of Saudi Arabia, English is increasingly used in official documents and international communications. As the Kingdom engages with the global community on matters ranging from diplomacy to trade agreements, proficiency in English is indispensable for effective engagement and negotiation on the world stage.

In addition to its practical applications, English also acts as a means of cultural exchange and artistic expression. English-language media outlets, entertainment venues, and cultural events provide avenues for Saudis to engage with diverse perspectives and artistic forms from around the world. The language serves as a gateway to global culture, enabling Saudis to connect with a wider audience and participate in the global conversation.

Furthermore, the significant expatriate community residing in Saudi Arabia contributes to the prevalence of English in everyday life. English is, thus, a common language of communication—or serves as a lingua franca—among expatriates from different linguistic backgrounds, encouraging a sense of unity and collaboration in the multicultural tapestry of Saudi society.

## 2.2. Key Issues with Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia

It is observed that teaching EFL in Saudi Arabian academic institutions is a challengeable task of teachers because of monolingualism. Lack of exposure to English in daily life leads to learners' inability to communicate in both spoken and written discourse effectively. Accordingly, the mindset of EFL teachers towards English instruction and learning needs to be changed from the ground up.

It is also noted that ineffective language teaching methods are not suitable to teach monolingual students a foreign language. For such students, a teacher must have trained to use new language teaching methods and represent successful results (Fareh, 2010). According to Fareh (2010: p. 3602) one of the key factors of the weakness of the Saudi students/monolinguals is to spend much time to conduct the classes in Arabic beside of English by instructors in the classrooms. Another key factor is not to select the appropriate books for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. According to Mahibur Rahman and Al Haisoni (2013), in terms of the selection of the textbooks for the purpose of EFL, it must be focused on the linguistic features that covers the shortcomings of the students at the time of the learning a new language especially English.

Students' needs, interests, and expectations should be taken into account in the learning process. In other words, the teaching learning process must be engaging and enjoyable for EFL students in various educational environments, i.e. high school, college, and university. Teachers must set goals based on students' needs prior to designing any course materials. They must employ effective teaching strategies if they are to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

So, these are some selected aspects that lead to the weakness of Saudi students and they faced many challenges in colleges or universities because of schooling education is not considered in English. Apart from it, they do not have command over in English communication skills due to the lack of vocabulary. The capacity of the Saudi students related to English language skills is very limited and they do not have caliber to express their thoughts and expressions in speaking and writing form because of schooling education conducted only in mother tongue that is Arabic. They were unable to communicate "comfortably and efficiently either when dealing with "academic matters" or common everyday topics" due to their persistent syntax, morphology, and pronunciation mistakes (Mukattash, 1983: p. 157).

### **2.3. Bilingual Approach to ELT**

Because the infant learns the mother tongue in context, he or she develops a variety of thoughts and concepts through direct experience. Teaching a second or a foreign language, by contrast, involves several strategies and techniques. One of such techniques is "bilingual method" which was developed by Cenoz and Gorter (2006), and focuses on vocal production while teaching languages. It specifically refers to teaching English to students utilizing their mother tongue in another language. The mother tongue is used to clarify grammar points, mostly to aid understanding and save time, even though the majority of the lesson is in English.

The three qualities comprising accuracy, clarity, and flexibility are developed through bilingualism (Ross, 2000). The language abilities of the students are enhanced in the classroom through the usage of bilingualism. By way of exemplification, a bilingual person's brain is active and receptive to learning new things, especially a language. A multilingual learner will be more imaginative and will value cultures from various lands (Abbad, 1988). Furthermore, bilingual students maintain a healthy balance between their two languages, and this allows for further intellectual growth (Baker, 2001).

### **2.4. Monolingual Approach to ELT**

A monolingual approach to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction would entail teaching English solely through the English language itself, without relying on the students' native language for explanations or translations. This approach is sometimes advocated for immersive language learning experiences, in which students are constantly exposed to the target language in various contexts, fostering faster language acquisition and proficiency. This approach has some advantages. For example, using only English in the classroom accelerates students'

learning process by forcing them to actively engage with English in various contexts. In addition, constant exposure to English encourages students to think and communicate directly in the target language, leading to an increase in fluency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, this approach has also some disadvantages. For instance, students may find it challenging to understand instructions and explanations given solely in English, especially if they have limited proficiency in the language. It might also be difficult to find teachers proficient enough in English to deliver lessons solely in the target language.

## 2.5. Some Bilingualism-Based Studies in an EFL Context

Macaro (2001) carried out a study to investigate linguistic choices made by six English-speaking teachers who taught French in the UK. This study specifically focused on teachers' decisions about their language preferences (both L1 and L2) in the classroom. The study found that within the context of bilingualism, an individual has an opportunity to use a particular language in a particular context, and may immediately switch the codes of another language.

Sipra (2013) also conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of bilingualism as an approach to English language teaching (ELT) within a university context in Saudi Arabia. The study's data were gathered from 150 students and 25 teachers through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The study found that bilingualism had been a useful technique, playing a supportive role in ELT, as well as assisting students in understanding complex ideas, abstract words, and phrases. In language teaching, it is evaluated that the learning of a foreign language is based on the competence of the first language. It may be easy or tough based on the similarities and differences between L1 and L2.

Finally, Nakatsukasa and Loewen (2015) undertook a study to explore teachers' use of English during interactions with students at a US university studying Spanish. It also looked at the English pedagogical uses by examining form-focused episodes (FFEs). Nakatsukasa and Loewen (2015) found that the teacher had used English (first language) in a strategic manner without any intention. They also discovered that the teacher had employed Spanish (foreign language) in FFES for about half of the class period, recording dominance of L2 over L1. They also observed that the learners tried to find out the easiness in the way of meaning of the target words and have the intention to create new words. They concluded that the method employed by the teacher to incorporate students' L1 demonstrates how teachers might function as language brokers so as to encourage L2 acquisition with adequate exposure to the target language.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study was employed a quantitative approach through an online Google-based questionnaire. This electronic survey had two parts, in which the first collected

information about participants' demographic background, whereas the second was intended to elicit their viewpoints about the deployment of bilingualism in EFL Saudi university classrooms. It was also designed based on the five-point Likert Scale using a single-answer design with these choices: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree.

Before circulating the survey to gather the actual research data, a pilot study was carried out with a few expert colleagues—majored in ELT—to make sure that the respondents would fully understand the survey. Accordingly, some adjustments were made to it in order to avoid a likely misinterpretation (by respondents).

### **3.2. Participants**

The study's data were collected from a total of 146 English language teachers at Saudi universities who held academic qualifications ranging from Bachelors to Doctorates in various fields, such as English language teaching, linguistics, literature, and translation. They had a minimum of four years of classroom teaching experience. They were all Arab nationals who were fluent in both Arabic and English.

### **3.3. Research Procedures**

The researchers first designed an online Google-based survey. They then sent it to a few ELT experts for a review. They then revised it based on reviewers' feedback and circulated it among English language teachers at Saudi universities. After that, they waited for a couple of weeks to collect data from participants. Finally, they analysed the gathered data through Excel and reported the associated findings.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The study's findings are divided into three sections: demographic information about participants, use of bilingualism to teach EFL in the classroom, and teachers' perceptions towards the shift from monolingualism to bilingualism in English language teaching.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Demographic Information about Participants**

The data collected for this study indicate a diverse demographic profile among the participants, consisting primarily of trained and qualified EFL teachers with extensive teaching experience exceeding 10 years. Both male and female participants were represented, reflecting a balanced gender distribution within the sample. Participants were drawn from various universities across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, suggesting a broad geographic representation. Moreover, they possessed rich experience in the field of English language education. **Table 1** demonstrates the demographic information about participants.

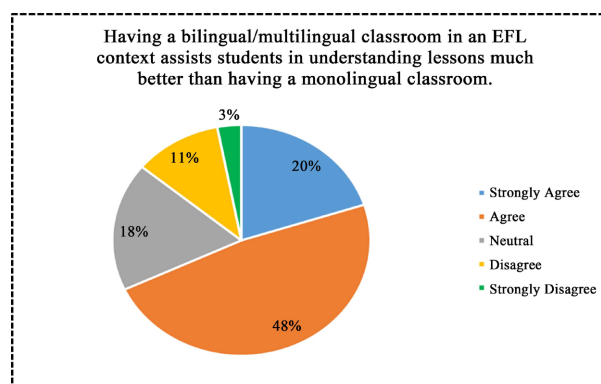
**Table 1.** Demographic information about participants.

Gender							
Male				Female			
No.		%		No.		%	
54		37		92		63	
Age							
Less than 30 years		30 - 40 years		41 - 50 years		51 - 60 years	
No.		%		No.		%	
14		10		72		49	
				46		31	
				14		10	
Educational Qualification							
Bachelor		Master		Doctorate			
No.		%		No.		%	
4		3		74		51	
				68		46	
Designation							
Teaching Assistant		Assistant Professor		Associate Professor		Full Professor	
No.		%		No.		%	
72		49		58		40	
				12		8	
				4		3	
Teaching Experience							
Less than 4 years		4 - 8 years		9 - 12 years		More than 12 years	
No.		%		No.		%	
24		16		30		21	
				26		18	
				66		45	

**Table 1** shows that out of 146 respondents, 54 (37%) were male counts while 92 (63%) were female counts. It also displays that more than 66 (45%) participants had more than 12 years of teaching experience, while 26 (18%) had between 9 to 11 years of teaching experience, and 54 (37%) had 8 years and less of teaching experience. Finally, it illustrates that 68 (46%) held doctorates in English Language teaching, 74 (51%) had masters and only 4 (3%) had Bachelors.

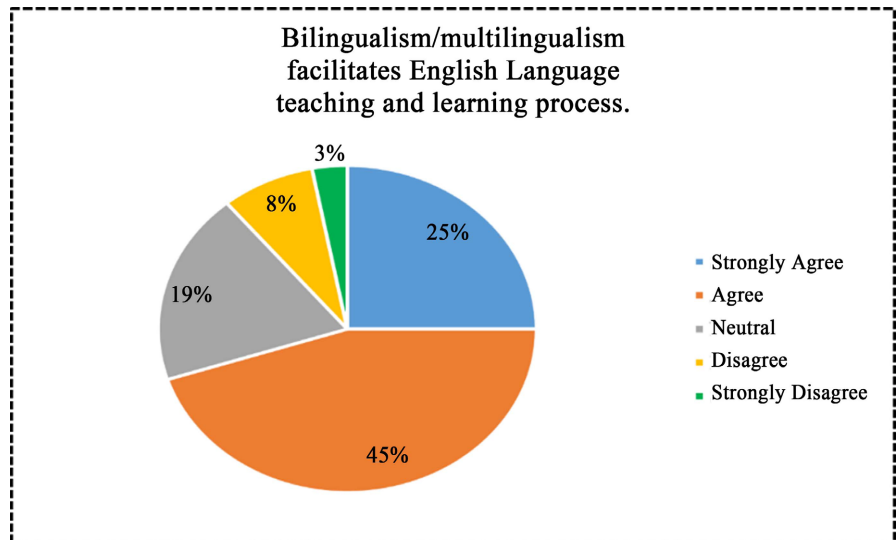
#### 4.2. Use of Bilingualism to teach EFL in the Classroom

This section reports findings on participants' use of bilingualism to teach EFL in their classrooms. It involves ten statements or questions as follows.



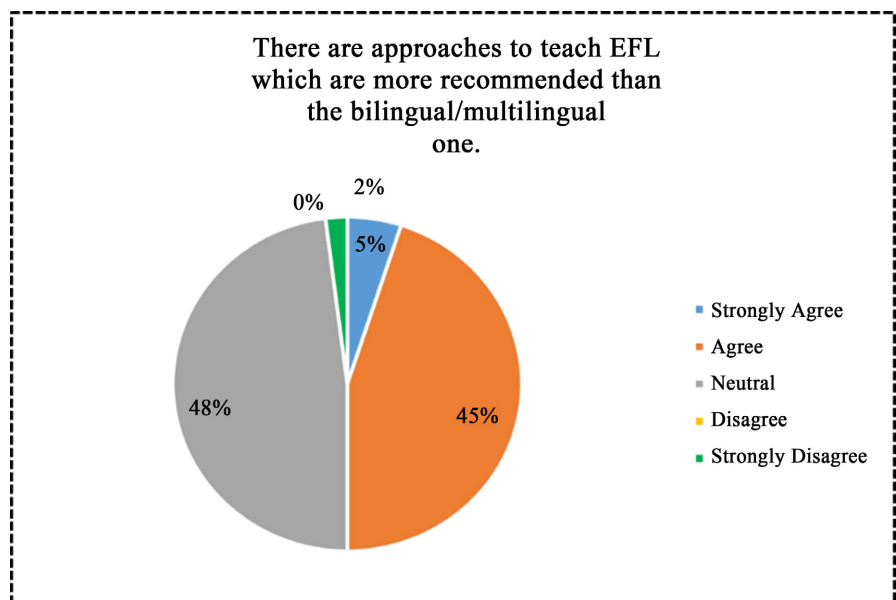
**Figure 1.** Having a bilingual/multilingual classroom in an EFL context assists students in understanding lessons much better than having a monolingual classroom.

**Figure 1** shows that 68% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that having a bilingual/multilingual classroom in an EFL context assists students in understanding lessons much better than having a monolingual classroom. In contrast, 18% of participants were neutral, and 14% either agreed or disagreed.



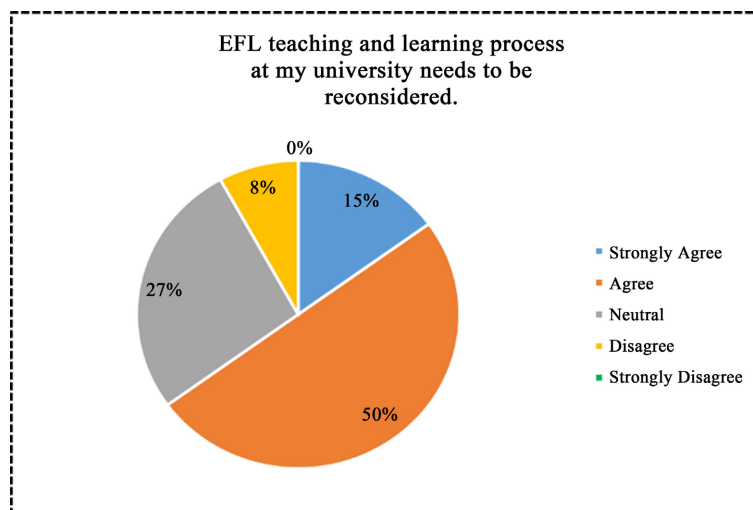
**Figure 2.** Bilingualism/multilingualism facilitates English Language teaching and learning process.

**Figure 2** above shows that 70% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that bilingualism/multilingualism facilitates English Language teaching and learning process. In contrast, 19% of participants were neutral, and 11% either agreed or disagreed.



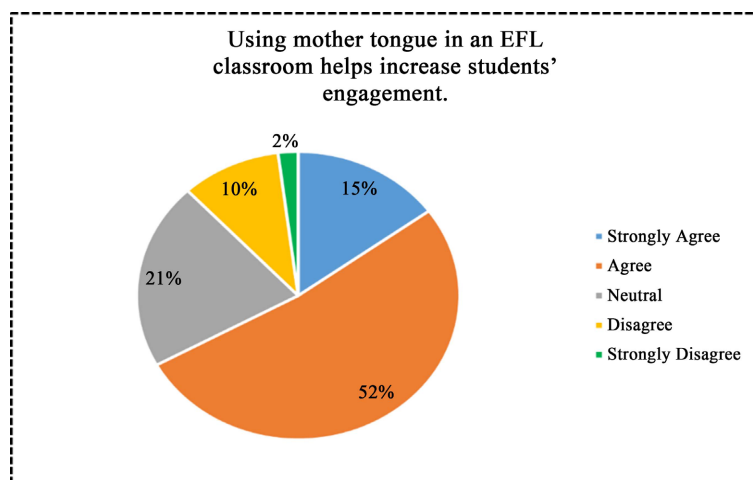
**Figure 3.** There are approaches to teaching EFL which are more recommended than the bilingual/multilingual one.

**Figure 3** above shows that 50% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that there are more recommended approaches to teaching EFL than the bilingual/multilingual one. In contrast, 48% of participants were neutral, and 2% either agreed or disagreed.



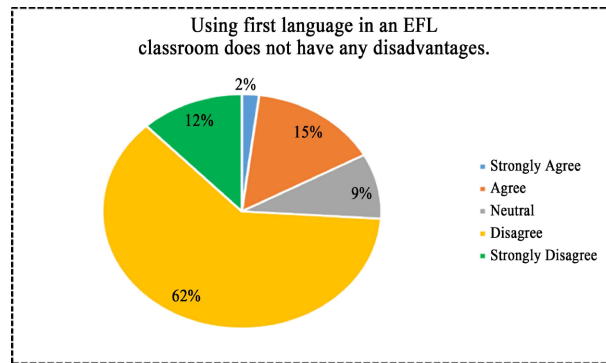
**Figure 4.** EFL teaching and learning process at my university needs to be reconsidered.

**Figure 4** above shows that 65% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that EFL teaching and learning process at their universities needs to be reconsidered. In contrast, 27% of participants were neutral, and 8% either agreed or disagreed.



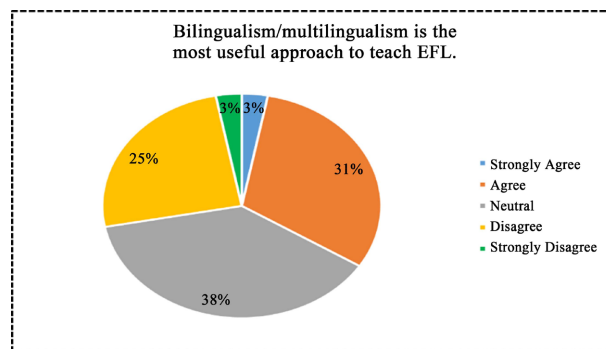
**Figure 5.** Using mother tongue in an EFL classroom helps increase students' engagement.

**Figure 5** above shows that 67% of participants strongly agreed and agreed that using their L1 in an EFL classroom helps to increase students' engagement. In contrast, 21% of participants were neutral, and 8% either agreed or disagreed.



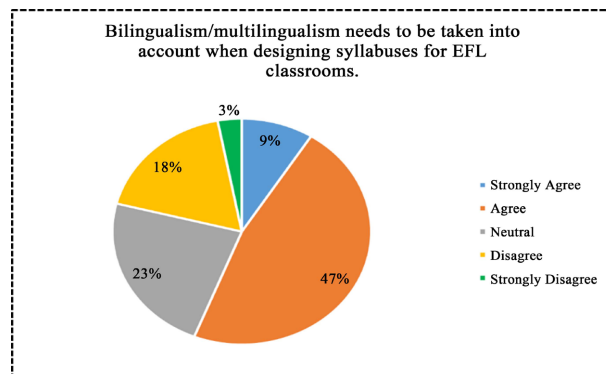
**Figure 6.** Using first language in an EFL classroom does not have any disadvantages.

**Figure 6** shows that 17% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that using L1 in an EFL classroom does not have any disadvantages. In contrast, 10% of participants were neutral, and 74% either agreed or disagreed.



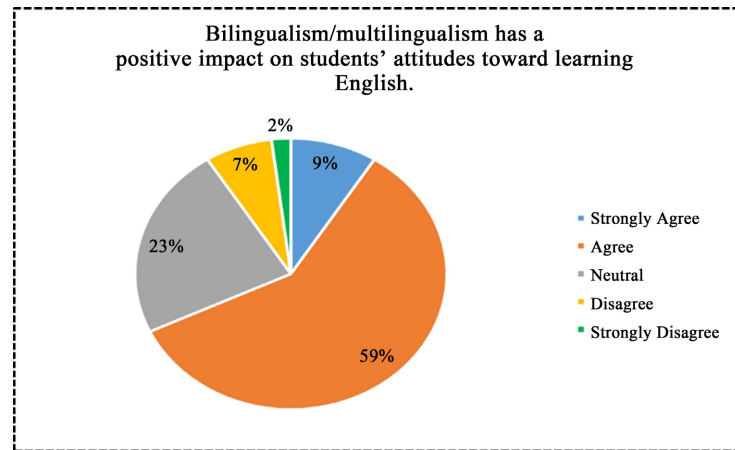
**Figure 7.** Bilingualism/multilingualism is the most useful approach to teaching EFL.

**Figure 7** demonstrates that 34% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that bilingualism/multilingualism is the most useful approach to teaching EFL. In contrast, 38% of participants were neutral, and 28% either agreed or disagreed.



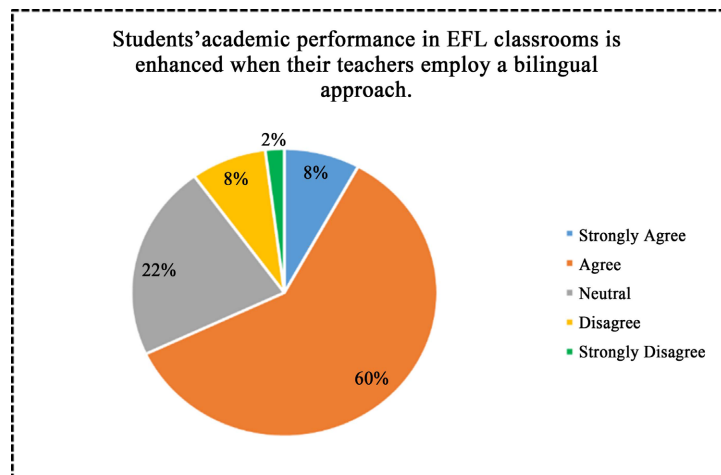
**Figure 8.** Bilingualism/multilingualism needs to be taken into account when designing syllabi for EFL classroom.

**Figure 8** illustrates that 57% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that bilingualism/multilingualism needs to be taken into account when designing syllabi for EFL classrooms. In contrast, 23% of participants were neutral, and 21% either agreed or disagreed.



**Figure 9.** Bilingualism/multilingualism has a positive impact on student's attitudes toward learning English.

**Figure 9** shows that 68% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that bilingualism/multilingualism has a positive impact on students' attitudes toward learning English. In contrast, 23% of participants were neutral, and 9% either agreed or disagreed.

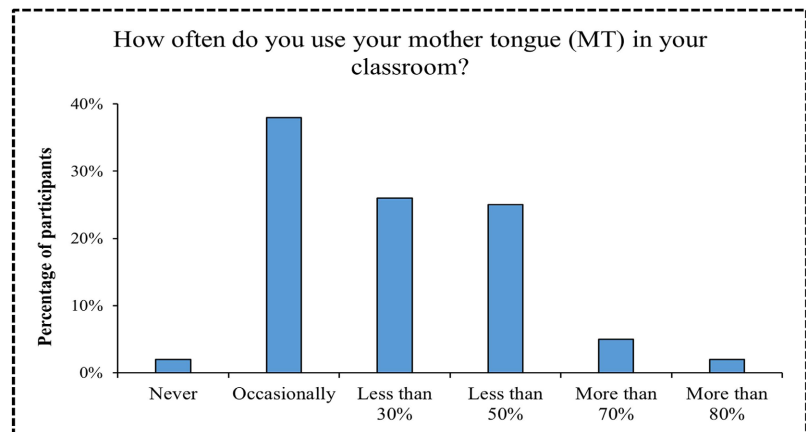


**Figure 10.** Students' academic performance in EFL classrooms is enhanced when their teachers employ a bilingual approach.

**Figure 10** above displays that 68% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that students' academic performance in EFL classrooms is enhanced when their teachers employ a bilingual approach. In contrast, 22% of participants were neutral, and 10% either agreed or disagreed.

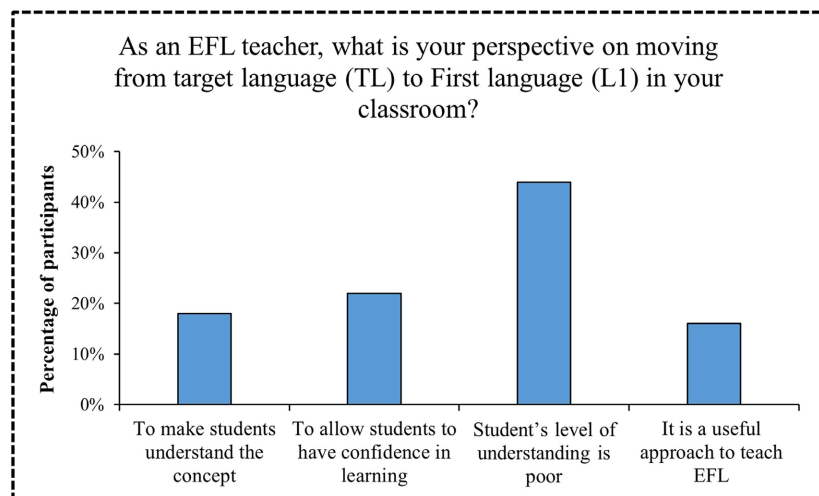
### 4.3. Teachers' Perceptions towards the Shift from Monolingualism to Bilingualism in English Language Teaching

This section presents findings on teachers' perceptions of the shift from mono-lingualism to bilingualism in English language teaching. It features four questions as follows.



**Figure 11.** How often do you use your mother tongue (MT) in the EFL classroom.

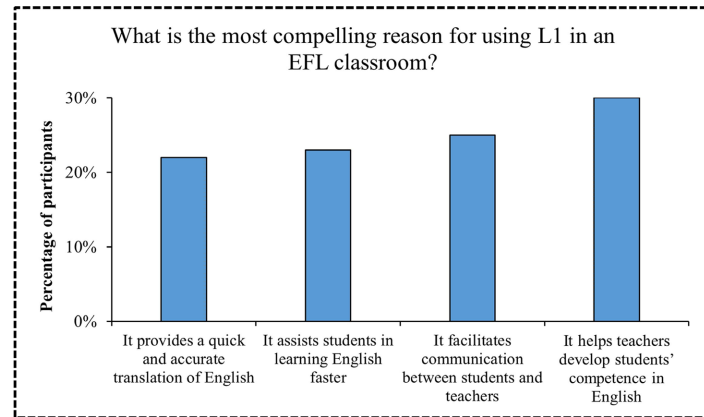
**Figure 11** depicts that 9% of respondents use their mother tongue in their EFL classrooms more than 70%. In contrast, 40% use it occasionally and 25% use it less than 50%.



**Figure 12.** As an EFL teacher, what is your perspective on moving from target language (TL) to First language (L1) in the classroom.

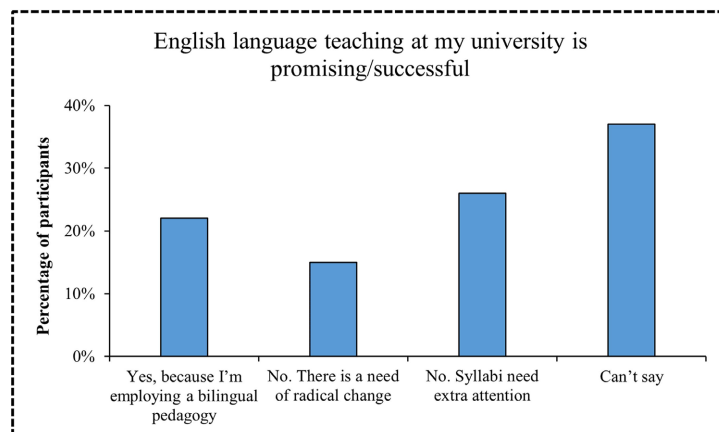
**Figure 12** displays that 16% of respondents believe that moving from TL to L1 is a useful approach to teaching EFL. 44% of respondents also believe that students' level of understanding is poor, and therefore it is mandatory to switch

from TL to L1. Additionally, 22% of respondents feel that students get confidence in learning if their teachers move from TL to L1, while 18% feel that switching from TL to L1 helps students understand the concept of learning a foreign language.



**Figure 13.** What is the most compelling reason for using first language (L1) in an EFL classroom.

**Figure 13** shows that 22% of respondents believe that using L1 in an EFL classroom provides a quick and accurate translation of English, whereas 23% of respondents feel that it assists students in learning English faster. 25% of respondents also feel that employing L1 in an EFL classroom facilitates communication between students and teachers, and 30% hold that L1 helps teachers develop students' competence in English.



**Figure 14.** English language teaching at my university is promising/successful.

**Figure 14** illustrates that 37% of participants did not express their opinions about whether English language teaching at their universities is promising/ successful. In contrast, nearly 40% of respondents believe that English language teaching at their universities was not promising/successful. Finally, more than

20% of respondents hold that English language teaching at their universities was promising/successful because they have employed a bilingual pedagogy.

## 5. Discussion

One of the key goals of the current paper was to examine the perceptions of EFL university teachers in Saudi Arabia toward the shift from monolingualism to bilingualism in English language teaching. This study found that EFL teachers exhibited the belief that bilingualism was useful in almost every context for various academic purposes in EFL teaching, despite some teachers were not clear about their stand on whether to shift from monolingualism to bilingualism in English language teaching. [Asif et al. \(2014\)](#) asserts that bilingualism and multilingualism are excellent resources for instructional aids that enable English as a foreign language acquisition in the classroom.

The current study found that bilingualism and multilingualism are more prevalent than monolingualism in English language teaching at Saudi universities. This trend facilitates cross-cultural communication and improves cognitive function. The present research has also highlighted bilingualism and multilingualism were regarded as important tools that increased students' understanding of EFL in the classroom. It is understood in the domain of ELT that bilingual brain has more ideas and expressions to explain something in two different languages for better comprehension, task switching, and mixing abilities than monolingual brain.

The current study also aimed to examine the readiness of English language teachers at Saudi universities associated with employing bilingual methods in their EFL classrooms. It has been observed that the availability of curriculum guidelines and pedagogical support for bilingual teaching affected teachers' readiness to employ a bilingual method. [Sipra's \(2013\)](#) research demonstrates the significance of bilingualism and multilingualism in the EFL teaching and learning at all levels. In EFL classes, bilingualism and multilingualism have been used as teaching strategies. The majority of teachers who participated in this research study stated that one way to facilitate learning of a foreign language is to translate difficult words, ideas, and phrases into L1. In reference to the such a claim, it appears that bilingualism plays a very influential role in English language teaching. It can also be used as an instructional strategy to support students' acquisition of the target language.

Finally, the present study was directed at investigating the advantages and disadvantages of using bilingual approaches in EFL Saudi university classrooms. It has been noted that many English teachers express apprehension regarding several factors that may impede English teaching. These factors include large class sizes, missing basic materials in the textbooks, and insufficient access to up-to-date technology. [Elyas and Algigri \(2014\)](#) similarly identify the over-reliance on traditional teaching methods, inadequate utilization of teaching aids, and restricted availability of modern technologies as significant barriers to effective EFL teaching.

The findings reported and discussed above can be useful to overcome challenges in English language teaching in Saudi Arabia. It is not uncommon for EFL teachers to face obstacles such as diversity of learner profiles, linguistic barriers, motivation levels, classroom management, and language anxiety. Accordingly, academic institutions, particularly Saudi universities, can use the present study as a guide to address such challenges and create an effective and engaging learning environment.

### **5.1. Diversity of Learner Profiles**

Students come from different economic, social, and educational backgrounds with various degrees of familiarity with English. This diversity can lead to differences in classroom dynamics, with some students feeling left behind while others are under-challenged. To counteract this, teachers can use differentiated teaching strategies along with a bilingual approach. This involves creating multiple learning pathways and ensuring that each student receives instruction tailored to their abilities.

### **5.2. Linguistic Barriers**

The complexity of English—with its irregular verbs, complicated grammatical rules, and extensive vocabulary—presents a major challenge especially for Saudi students whose primary and secondary schooling was in their mother tongue (Arabic), which has a very different structure. An effective approach to overcome this issue is to focus on communicative competence and not just grammatical perfection. Teachers can also employ a bilingual approach inside classrooms and encourage students to use the target language in real-life contexts outside classrooms, which allows for natural and engaging learning. In addition, the use of visual aids, realia, and technology can make learning more interactive and comprehensible.

### **5.3. Motivation Levels**

Keeping students motivated can be more challenging, especially for those who do not see immediate relevance or have no external reasons to learn English. It is, therefore, important that teachers set clear, achievable goals and provide regular feedback to their students in order to increase their motivation. Incorporating topics of interest to students, using game and puzzle techniques, and creating a supportive and positive classroom environment through bilingualism can also boost student engagement.

### **5.4. Classroom Management**

In order to ensure that every student is engaged effectively, teachers have to manage a classroom of diverse learners, each with unique needs and challenges. To create a supportive learning environment, teachers must establish clear expectations and rules, use cooperative teaching techniques such as bilingualism, and respond to behavioural issues with empathy and determination.

## 5.5. Language Anxiety

Many EFL learners struggle with language anxiety. The fear of making mistakes or being judged can hinder class participation and language acquisition. A bilingual approach can create a supportive and non-judgmental environment inside the classroom. By encouraging risk-taking and emphasizing that mistakes are part of learning, techniques such as pair work and small groups can reduce anxiety by fostering a sense of intimacy.

## 6. Conclusion

The results of this study have provided insights into the transition from monolingualism to bilingualism which represents a visionary shift in the landscape of language education within Saudi Arabian universities. This transformation in EFL teaching is not merely theoretical but grounded in tangible facts and figures that highlight the benefits and challenges associated with embracing bilingualism as a cornerstone of educational practice. This study offers insightful conclusions as to teachers' perceptions of a teaching strategy that indicates full support towards bilingual/multilingual teaching. It also shows that a significant number of EFL teachers, who took part in this study, had negative attitudes towards English language teaching at their universities. Hence, they believe that there is an urgent need for review of syllabi design. It has also observed how a language policy may affect teachers' perceptions about language use in a bilingual setting, which in turn may have an impact on how they teach in the classroom. This study contributes to the wider literature concerning to use of a bilingual method in EFL teaching.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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