EXPLORING TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN GRADES 11-12 EFL CLASSROOMS IN OMAN:
AN IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATION OF EFL PEDAGOGY

A Thesis submitted by

Khalifa Mohammed AlKhamisi

B.ED., Dip. (Educational Supervision), MA in TESOL

For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

2019

ABSTRACT

The argument over whether or not the learners' first language (L1) should be applied in English language as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms has been a contentious matter for a long time. This pedagogical discussion is not only constant but also uncertain. The ongoing debate surrounding this issue needs further research, as proposed by the present study, with a focus on the Omani EFL context. This study therefore aims to add new insights into this continuous controversial issue of applying L1 in EFL classrooms. Furthermore, this mixed methods study aims to fill the specific gap in the current literature connected to the practical field of using Arabic language (L1) in Omani grades 11-12 EFL classrooms pedagogy. It explores teachers' and students' perspectives and possible reasons for using Arabic during the English language (L2) in Omani EFL contexts.

Aiming to explore and understand this subject from different broader perspectives, a mixed methods approach has been applied. Therefore, data was collected by adopting two forms of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations as data collection instruments. The study was conducted based on a convenience sampling method from eight male and female grades 11-12 schools in 4 different governorates in Oman. The participants were composed of 50 male and female EFL teachers and 240 male and female students. Data were interpreted and analysed from both EFL teachers and students' responses.

The outcomes of this study showed that both EFL teachers and learners, throughout the lesson time, frequently used the Arabic language for different teaching and managerial reasons. The Arabic language facilitates learners' understanding of meanings of new vocabulary words, in explaining difficult grammatical rules, in classroom management and discipline, and to motivate and encourage low proficiency level learners. This highlights the need for a curriculum framework that includes a systematic use of Arabic based on practical EFL teacher training programs whereby both teachers and learners recognise the reasons behind their L1 usage in EFL classrooms. The study also found that students are eventually able to eliminate their L1 use and improve the L2 learning process. The findings further help educators, administrators, and policymakers in fostering EFL pedagogical improvement in Omani English education.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

This thesis is entirely the work of Khalifa Mohammed AlKhamisi except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and, to my best knowledge, no material or parts are included that have previously been submitted for any other award, and any work of others incorporated form any sources have been acknowledged.

Candidate: Khalifa Mohammed Al Khamisi

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Sang-Soon

Associate Supervisor: Prof Shirley O'Neill

Student and supervisors signatures of endorsement are detained at the University.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Admiration and praise to Almighty Allah for guiding me to achieve this great goal. I would like to acknowledge the influence of a number of helpful people who were fundamental to the completion of my research. Firstly, my deep and sincere appreciation goes to my supervisors: Prof. Shirley O'Neill and Dr Sang Soon Park for their instructive and invaluable feedback, guidance, and extensive support throughout each step of my research development. I would also like to extend my thankfulness to my family, parents who keep praying for me, my wife who has given me her extensive support to accomplish this study, and my little kids whom I missed all the time during my stay in Australia. My gratitude also should be forwarded to my brothers, sister, and great friends who have all given me honourable support to complete this study.

A warm thanks goes to all schools and the EFL teacher and student participants for their time, co-operation and allowing me to share their remarkable experiences and let me access their lessons during the data collection stages to gain invaluable perspectives.

I am thankful to the University of Southern Queensland, staff and colleagues of the School of Linguistics, Adult, and Specialist Education for their endless assistance and encouragement.

Lastly, very special thanks and gratefulness go to the Ministry of Education in Oman, which has allowed me to accomplish this great aim.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MOE	Ministry of Education

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The exclusion or inclusion of L1 in EFL classrooms is a complex issue and it has been debated for a long time (Alseweed, 2012; Hisham Salah & Hakim Farrah, 2012; Tang, 2002). Many teachers and students have different perspectives, and each group has their explanations and justifications (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Machaal, 2012). According to Littlewood and Yu (2011), there is still an absence of agreement on whether learners' first language has a role in EFL classrooms or not. A number of important recent studies emphasises the use of L1 but in a judicious way (Enama, 2016; Shabir, 2017; Sipra, 2013). According to Richards and Rodgers (2005), a foreign language (L2) teaching has constantly been a significant pedagogical topic. For many researchers, teachers' use of the L1 in EFL classrooms teaching and classroom manangement, and learners' L1 usage in asking and answering questions, in student-student interaction and in student-teacher interaction have been a critical but controversial subject among bilingual and monolingual supporters for several years (Alseweed, 2012;Cook, 2002; Cummins, 2009; Hisham Salah & Hakim Farrah, 2012; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Miles, 2004; Tang, 2002). As to this point, Cook (2001), ascertained that over the last 120 years, the main approach in EFL teaching has been to discourage learners' first language use in language teaching.

The main discussion about L1 use in teaching language happens between monolingual and bilingual supporters. Both sides have different assumptions towards L1 use in EFL classrooms. A monolingual approach would emphasise avoidance of L1 use in EFL classrooms, while bilingual method supports the use of L1 in EFL classrooms. With regard to this point, a number of researchers tried to explain the support or opposition to L1 use in EFL classrooms in different contexts (e.g. Al-Nofie, 2010; Macaro, 2009; Song, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Recently, Trent (2013) argued that "these negative sentiments need to be weighed against a series of supposed benefits around the use of the L1 in L2 learning and teaching" (p. 215). According to Tang (2002), most studies carried out on this issue have produced results that seem to recommend a change in perspectives towards the L1 usage in L2 classes; from complete opposition suggested by the audio-lingual, direct or communicative approaches, to a partial acceptance of the practice by other approaches.

Monolingual method supporters claim that in order to develop linguistic competence in learning L2, the L1 should be excluded. Thus, L1 is not always welcomed in EFL classrooms. Philipson (1992) as cited in (Yi Du, 2016) asserted that "when L1 is used too much, standards of English will drop" (p.1). Monolingual supporters argue that the more L2 is used, the better it is for learning it successfully. L2 and least exposure to L1 are of vital importance, and the use of L1 may hinder the L2 learning progress. Thus, L2 is seen as best learned and taught using the language itself. As shown by Macaro (2001), opposing stances taken by researchers reflect their pedagogical philosophy, and it is clear that approaches to pedagogy have changed over the years from grammar translation and learning from a text book to a focus on the quality of classroom interaction and an understanding of how the pedagogical dialogue that is created and guided by the language teacher is acknowledged as necessary for providing a language learning environment that encourages learners to use the L2 language for meaningful purposes. Moreover, the main approach in EFL teaching was monolingual, rather than cross-lingual. In this regard, Butzkamm (2003) claimed that L1-free lessons were a "badge of honour" (p. 24). As a result, EFL teachers regularly feel ashamed for drifting from the route of teaching applying only the target language (L2) and believe that L1 practice is pedagogely unsuitable (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Swain, Kirkpatrick & Cummins, 2011). Similarily, Cook (2001b) also claimed that "the L1 should not be adopted in L2 teaching but to be set separately" (p. 404). She asserted that L1 should not be utilised at any time in L2 classes; instead, what important is maximising the implementation of L2 in EFL learning and teaching context.

Monolingual proponents tend to consider L1 use a serious risk in L2 teaching. The use of L1 is considered to be a fence that stops learners from obtaining the valuable input in the L2 (Ellis, 2005; Mahadeo, 2006). For instance, Ellis (2005) claimed that teachers who 'overuse' learners' L1 deprive their students from the necessary language practice through which learners try to learn in their EFL classrooms. Turnbull (2001) claimed that the "judicious and principled use" of L1 remains an unresolved issue (p. 536).

On the other hand, many studies have confirmed that using L1 carefully provides educational benefits rather than disadvantages. Only more lately have researchers ascertained that interpretation from learners' L1 to L2 offers an accessible path to improve linguistic awareness (Cook, 2001). In this regard, according to study results conducted by Brown (2000) and Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) argued that students' L1 has a central role in L2 learning and practice. Furthermore, the usefulness of learners' L1 has been recommended in the literature as a device to simplify the primary stages of L2 learning. The bilingual method

supporters of L1 use claim that it can be conducive to most EFL classrooms activities. They argue that a well-planned use of L1 in EFL classrooms can have positive consequences. Since most of the current research outcomes tend to encourage the careful inclusion of L1 in EFL classrooms, this concern deserves more research to highlight its importance and to gather more practical data, which may eventually lead to identifying more appropriate teaching practices and better implementation of pedagogy for EFL learners.

The link between proficiency level and L1 use seems to be an important issue to consider. In this regard, Nation (2003) and Larsen-Freeman (2012) pointed out that students' language should not be prohibited from EFL classrooms. They further emphasised that a careful and well–planned use of the students' language can give encouraging outcomes related to learners'L2 achievement. Similarly, Anh (2010) stated that L1 is believed to be an essential teaching instrument in learning whenever it is not overused. Still, the choice between using L1 and L2 in the L2 classroom is may be linked to the level of L2 proficiency that students have. With novice beginners, teachers would find it much more difficult to run the class in L2, therefore, they would consciously adapt their use of the L2 to give students the best chance of making meaning in the L2. In addition, Mouhanna (2009) argued that L1 could be used in L2 classrooms, especially with students of low proficiency in L2 learning classrooms. Jabbar (2012) also argued that L1 can help L2 learners understand new vocabularies and explain difficult grammar, and it allows for more explicit instructions as well as suggestions.

Most of these studies above focused on the use of L1 in L2 classrooms without exploring the perceptions, functions and purposes both teachers and learners share that might lead them to adopt or avoid L1 in EFL context. Therefore, it is vital to explore the usage of the learners' L1 in EFL classrooms in more details to understand this phenomenon from different perspectives.

Keeping this controversy in mind, this mixed methods research aims to explore the teachers' and learners' prespectives of Arabic language usage in the EFL classes, aiming to identify the ways in which students are being expected to learn English (L2) and the way teachers are teaching in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in the Omani context.

This introductory chapter explains the rationale of the study and highlights the research problem, its significance, aims, and research questions related to teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of the Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. It also presents the background information about the study's context where the study takes place.

This includes in formation Oman as a country, an overview of the educational system in Oman, EFL coursebooks, schools, teachers, and student numbers. Finally, the chapter concludes with the thesis structure and an outline of its chapters.

1.2 The importance of teachers' and students' perception in this study

Teachers' perceptions can be described as a powerful tool to make decisions about why L1 is used in language teaching. According to Ferrer (2011), there has been little research on the perceptions of teachers' and students' emphases on what learners feel about their teachers' foreign language and L1 use. For example, Freeman and Johnson (1998) reported that:

> ".....teacher educators have come to recognize that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms." (p. 401).

Similarly, in regards to the role of students' perceptions, Mouhanna (2009) stated that L2 students as "autonomous learners should reflect on the potential benefits of various learning tools and methods at their disposal" (p. 6). This is in line with Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) who argued that discovering students' views concerning the inclusion or exclusion of L1 would be helpful for increasing communication in the classrooms. In his observation about Arab English learners in particular, Kandil (2002) asserted that "Arab learners rarely have input in their language teaching context" (p. 1). He also pointed out that "the learners' needs have not yet received sufficient attention from researchers and language teaching professionals in the Arab World" (p. 1).

Another critical issue related to the problems facing Arab English learners is the attitude of teachers and learners to use Arabic language in EFL classrooms. Al-Nofaie (2010) argued that "the use of Arabic was an unavoidable phenomenon" (p. 77). She also pointed out that "teachers' and students' use of Arabic appeared to be systematic, though there were a few cases in which they did not make the best use of it" (p. 77). By reflecting on these thoughts, it can be said that Arabic utilisation in EFL classrooms should be considered and both L2 teachers and learners to be informed of how L1 could be judiciously used through the L2 class time.

Although there seems to be a developing agreement with the previous researchers in favour of L1 use in the EFL language classroom, a number of significant concerns need further

exploration. Through the history of EFL teaching methods some researchers and EFL teachers have supported completely rejecting L1 use with a view to imitating the natural process children follow in acquiring their mother tongue. They claimed that only the L2 should be used in the EFL classrooms and it should be taught through different ways, including gestures, actions, and mime, as any L1 use would interfere with the learners' efforts to learn the L2 (Cook, 2001b; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 2001; Swain, Kirkpatrick & Cummins, 2011).

Gorter and Cenoz (2011) reported that there is little research on multilingual language practices focused on the opportunity of using more than one language in EFL classrooms, despite the fact that the use of both L1 and L2 is considered to offer significant communicative support for both learners and teachers. This has led to the present state in which monolingual assumptions are being defied and bilingual discourse has started to be seen as the standard, by referring to teaching and learning practices that use bilingualism as an advantage instead of a problem. Therefore, EFL teachers' usage of learners' L1 could be adopted as another and last teaching device to make sure that learning has taken place and planned aims are achieved.

According to Macaro (2009), using the only-English method has been challenged by research findings. Firstly, this is because it has been noticed that the majority of teachers use L1 to varying degrees, even in those EFL contexts where an only-English policy is likely to be applied; secondly, because L1 could be used as a cognitive device in L2 settings, and teachers can simplify learning by making reasoned references to the learners' L1; and finally, because translation is a natural part of bilingual interaction. These findings lead language teaching practioners to the ideal position, which states that translation can improve L2 acquisition better than the only-English approach in classrooms can. The optimal position guides teachers not to miss the chance to take advantage of learners' L1 while teaching L2.

1.3 The importance of teaching English language in Oman

Oman is one of several fast emerging countries whose markets need growing numbers of English speakers. It is a significant device for the country's socialization stage into the world, and for the 'Omanization' process, which consists of the government trying to substitute the expatriate workforce with Omani citizens (Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2010). In this regards, Al-Issa (2007) described that "Oman needs English, the only official foreign language in the country, as a fundamental tool for 'modernization', 'nationalization' and the acquisition of science and technology" (pp. 199-200). Additionally, for employement in Oman, a good competence in using English have undoubtedly proven to be a viable benefit (Al-Issa, 2007;

Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2010). Although the Arabic language is the official one, English language is extensively used in Oman mostly in banks, medical clinics, business, chemist shops, restaurants, factories, hotels, general trade stores, insurance agencies, and companies (Al-Issa, 2006).

The English language teaching and education process, in all times, aims to offer learners with the elementary skills in the language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. For all these reasons, Oman has seriously invested in teaching English as a foreign language at all levels beginning in the early years of schooling and including public and private schools, colleges and universities. The English language is taught as a textbook-based and teacher-centered compulsory subject from grade one to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees (Al-Mahrooqi & Asante, 2010) in gender-separated schools. However, in public schools, for cultural reasons, female teachers teach in female schools and male teachers teach in male schools in big classrooms, with a regular number of 30-35 learners of diverse abilities. Students have 5-7 English language sessions per week; each session lasts for 40 minutes with a total of 4-5 hours of English language learning exposure per week.

Teachers and students are asked to strictly use similar textbooks and teaching resources provided. The textbook series used in EFL classrooms in Oman are called 'English for Me' for grades 1-10 and 'Engage with English' for grades 11-12 (MOE, 2017). The ultimate goals controlling the Ministry of Education design and use of these textbooks are, to provide socially proper education that encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and an appreciation of English language's global value. Moreover, the MOE stresses that the textbooks have been designed to support a student-centred, communicative approach to English language learning.

The English language course books for grades 11-12 are 'Engage with English' (EWE) and were initially designed to help learners' academic progress, and to preserve motivation and interest. The general aims of the EWE course are to raise learners' language levels to a good general standard so that they are prepared to enter the career they have chosen and develop their specific language skills further. The curriculum design is meant to serve the needs of all Omani learners during their last year of secondary education, not just those going on to further education. Generally, the EWE course has a number of linguistics and non-linguistic aims, including:

- to provide learners with a functional command of English as preparation for work or future studies;

- to develop and consolidate functional skills in English;
- to give leaners the skills and confidence to use English outside the classroom;
- to develop learners' awareness of learning strategies they can apply to further their learning of English both inside and outside of schools;
- to enable learners to acquire active mastery of the core grammar of English;
- to establish a basis for both fluency and accuracy within specific domains; and
- to use English as a medium for learning about other cultures and contrasting it with their own (MOE, 2017).

In addition to the linguistic objectives, there is also a range of non-linguistic aims embedded in this course. For example, the course materials offer opportunities for learners to become familiar with self-help strategies and stress the appropriate use of a range of resources for independent learning and reflection, and monitoring strategies. Additionally, basic skills such as dictionary skills, library and research skills, and paraphrasing, referencing, and accurate citation of sources, are built into the class materials in grades 11 and 12 for a more comprehensive L2 learning. Moreover, the themes and topics of the course deliver an international outlook and cover a range of matters that have a global impact, and through which learners will be encouraged to reflect on these issues and relate the subject matter and its implications to their own specifically Omani experiences. For instance, a number of topics link either directly or indirectly to the various vocational fields that many of the learners will be entering, such as the tourism and hospitality industry, computer technology, office management and electricians.

According to Brown (2007), there seems to be an unavoidable relationship between a language and the society in which it is taught. However, students in Oman are infrequently properly exposed to English language, and only a limited number of Omani teenagers have the chance to listen to English language being practiced and used by their fathers and mothers at home. Indeed, these children are given the chance and exposed to English through the televion canals and the internet if they have access to it at homes. This might generates difficulties for teachers trying to implement the EFL syllabus where they suppose to deliver more communicating settings to use English language properly in their EFL classrooms.

1.4 EFL context in Oman

In the Omani context, where English is believed to be a foreign language, EFL teachers often find themselves in challenging situations, due in part to learners being less capable in the English language. In both Omani schools and universities, English classes tend to be teacher-centered. This means that the teacher speaks most of the time during the class session and students are rarely given the opportunity to have student-student interaction in the context of communicative language pedagogy..

In addition, in the EFL context of Oman, which is the key focus of this study, teachers and students are asked to strictly use the same textbooks and materials that are provided by the Ministry of Education. The exams are entirely based on the textbooks and focused on non-critical and lower thinking skills, which cannot check learners' capabilities to analyze, discuss, evaluate, and argue (Al-Issa 2009b, 2010b). In grade 12, which is the final year level in Omani pre-unversity education system, learners appear for end of semester national exams in different subjects including English language. Depending on the results, students can apply to different majors of study in and abroad Oman both in government and private universities/colleges. However, a diligent student who obtains a high mark (according to the general result of the end of year exam) in the English language and the science track subjects, such as physics, biology and mathematics ,has more opportunities to join the prestigious universities and specialized colleges that require a high proficiency in the English language. In addition, these students often have more opportunities to work in the private sector such as in commercial banks and private companies with high financial allocations compared with those who graduate with low marks. This therefore encourages many students to compete seriously to master the English language so that they can compete with others to get more opportunities to continue their education and thus get a prestigious job and a brighter future.

Based on this background, the researcher has been motivated to further explore what issues are involved in the use of Arabic (L1) in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman: from the perspectives of EFL teachers and their learners in both male and females' schools. As per the researcher's knowledge, very few studies have been done to explore using the Arabic language in EFL classrooms. These studies' (Al-Buraiki, 2008; Al-Hadhrami, 2008; AI-Hinai, 2006; Al-Jadidi, 2009; Al-Shidhani, 2009) shared denominator is that most of these studies were quantitative studies relying on descriptive statistics without deeply looking into the determinants behind the teachers and students' purposes for using the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms, or examining the nature of the learning environment and the pedagogical approach. As the researcher is aware, none of these studies conducted in Oman, explore and

analysethe perceptions of both EFL teachers and their grade 11-12 students regarding the usage of Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman. This research, therefore, aims to fill this gap by exploring the reasons and function of Arabic language in the Omani EFL context from both teachers' and learners' perspectives.

The following lines offer a brief introduction to Oman as a country and its educational system. The Sultanate of Oman, the focus point of this study, is located in the Eastern part of the Arabia Peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the west and Yemen to the south with a population of 4,669,326 (National Centre for Statistics and Information, May 2018). The Arabic language is the official language in Oman, in which all government and business transactions are conducted. Figure 1.1 below shows the map of the Sultanate of Oman.

Figure 1.1 *Sultanate of Oman map.*
Retrieved from https://depositphotos.com/vector-images/muscat-oman.html

In Oman, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for education in schools in all its levels (grades 1-12). Education is free throughout all levels of school and children are registered at age six for grade one. Omani public schools are single gender, with males and females attending separate schools. The educational system in Oman is 12 years in duration

and called ‘Basic Education Curriculum’ (BEC). The aim of the renovated BEC in Oman is rooted in the following principles:

- The comprehensive development of the learner’s personality to be integrated within the framework of the principles of the Islamic faith and culture of Oman.
- Encouraging national, Arab, Islamic, and humanitarian affiliations, and the development of learners’ ability to interact with the surrounding world.
- The provision of an opportunity for the learner to actively participate in the overall development of the Omani society.
- Providing equal opportunity in education for all.
- The provision of a learner-centred education that gives the learner life skills such as communication competencies, self-directed learning, the ability to use methods of critical scientific thinking and to deal with science and contemporary technologies.
- Ensuring the preparation of learners for the requirements of higher education and the labour market, and life in general.
- The reduction of the dropout rate among pupils.
- The eradication of illiteracy and raising the pupils’ awareness and knowledge (MOE, 2017).

It is worth noting here that these aims have an emphasis on personality, attitude, skills, and other features. The BEC considers skills to be an important stage in preparing learners for different attitudes, whether academic or professional. The basic education consists of two cycles. the first cycle is from grade (1-4). In this level, learners are of mixed gender and taught in the same classrooms where the teachers are exclusively females. The second cycle comprises grades (5-10). In this level, male and female students are taught in separate schools and the teachers staff can be accordingly males or females. This is followed by a grades 11 to 12 cycle, which is called ‘Post-Basic Education’ (MOE, 2017). This level is designed to continue developing basic skills such as, personal and social skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills and information technology literacy (MOE, 2017).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) offers all textbooks for free to all learners. Teaching aids, equipment, tools, and all needed resources are also made available in all schools where learners and teachers are capable to get a practical experience in the classrooms equipped with all teaching & learning tools. Moreover, each school has a learning resource centre room (LRC) which are prepared with 15 computers and a variety of audio-visual services and print

materials. Additionally, a separate computer laboratory equipped with 30-35 computers is also being provided for each school such that class groups can take it in turns to use computers in their learning. In other words, each school has its computer labs where learners can apply what they learn in the Information Technology subject, including researching the web to find extra materials for their study, which is aimed at motivating learners to learn how to apply a variety of technologies to develop their learning in general and L2 in specific. For example, computers help teachers and learners to perform the targeted tasks using the teaching material, and also help the learners to choose and get access to some extra pedagogical material by using content from the internet.

1.5 Relevance of current teaching and assessment practices to the research problem

Assessment is a significant element in the educational progression. It plays an important role in learners' progress and achievement throughout their courses of study. Therefore, systematic educational reform should revolve around what students should learn, how they learn, and how teachers measure the progress their students are making. While recognizing the importance of the role of assessment in the educational process, the assessment methods practice in Omani schools is an obstacle to all attempts to reform teaching and learning development. For example, exams have become the only way to measure outcomes from the information prescribed in textbooks, which has made the exam a goal in itself. In other words, the assessment is limited to the examinations that measure achievement, and tests are the only means of assessment despite their weakness as they focus on minimum levels of knowledge and they omit aspects of performance and thinking skills.

Regarding assessment of learners' performance, the Omani educational system has traditionally used formal exams, particularly the school-leaving end of year exams (grade 12). Al-Issa (2005b) criticised assessment in EFL in Oman for overlooking the significance of assessing performance. Teachers often train learners to mainly concentrate and understand the teaching tasks and getting high scores through repetition and memorization, which, in turn, has destructive implications for teachers' and learners' EFL performance. Thus, instructors become more concerned about assisting their learners to attain better results than about acquiring the language through various assistances and different approaches. This teach-to-the-test setting can also influence harmfully on learners' motivation and opinions and consequently drive them towards looking at English language as a fact-based subject, which involves memorization (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2011).

The current assessment scheme in Oman has two forms of examinations: central and school examinations. The EFL teachers prepare the school examinations where learners sit for mid-term examinations according to a scheduled timetable prepared by schools. The Ministry of Education prepares the final central semester examinations (in Oman the academic year has two semesters). By the end of each academic semester, learners in all grades 1–11 get a statement card, which comprises the marks gained in each studying subject and any positive records or observations and feedback from teachers of all subjects. On the other hand, grade 12 students receive a Diploma Certificate with a description of all their subjects' marks and grades.

Learners continue to graduate from schools with insufficient English language skills and most of them, consequently, need corrective or concentrated courses in a "foundation" program before starting college-level study (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). Unfortunately, most school learners are not concerned in to learn English language because of their bad attitudes to it. Learners believe that English language is problematic subject and less important than other subjects. Moreover, they lack suitable study skills and inadequate experience to practice English outside the classroom; therefore, they depend on memorization to pass exams. Similarly, since the curriculum aims mainly regular and average learners, it fails to test learners with better learning abilities. These factors influence teaching and learning English among learners in Oman.

Lately, the Ministry of Education has made numerous educational improvements including the introduction of a continuous assessment (CA) system. CA was introduced to ensure that learners are given credit for their work during the school year. Under CA, teachers are expected to assess their learners' performance in accordance with the principles stated in the related student assessment document (MOE, 2017). In addition, this system aims to present teachers with the chance to make a closer connection between teaching, learning, and assessment. Moreover, it aims to increase the diversity of assessment methods such as, quizzes, projects, short written or oral tests and student self-assessment. In addition, this system helps teachers to know their learners better, lowering learners' anxiety, increasing their motivational levels, making the assessment more authentic, helping teachers to identify learner and teaching weaknesses and specify how these might be addressed, and enhancing the overall validity of the assessment process (MOE, 2017).

The CA assessment is practiced in all grades in public schools in the Sultanate. For example, in Basic Education Cycle 1 (grades 1–4) the learning outcomes for the English

language are grouped into four elements: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These elements provide the framework, not only for assessment but also for record keeping and reporting (MOE, 2017). Marks and grades are awarded for these outcomes on the basis of two methods of assessment: Continuous Assessment (CA) and Class Tests (CLTs). In the summative assessment, the 'weighting' (percentage of marks awarded) for each element at each grade-level is shown in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Weightings for each element in grades 1-4 (modified from MOE, 2017)

Elements	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grades 3&4		
			CA	CLTs	Total
LST	30%	25%	15%	10%	25%
SPK	30%	25%	25%	-	25%
RDG	20%	25%	15%	10%	25%
WRT	20%	25%	15%	10%	25%
Total	100%	100%	70%	30%	100%

Learners are evaluated using written paper printed tests arranged by their teachers at the end of each model unit/theme in every subject. They are evaluated using classroom accomplishments such as written activities, practical exercises, and oral presentations along with non-classroom activities such as research tasks and portfolios. Thus, if a learner does not get 50% of the total subject mark, he/she will be registered for a remedial plan at the end of the school semester (MOE, 2017). In this case, teachers are asked to plan extra activities, adopt different teaching methods; including assigning simple homework activities, engaging the target learners in different school events where the English language is often spoken, and asking learners to keep notebooks and portfolios to record their development throughout the remedial plan schedule. This plan aims at helping these learners to develop their potential and solve any difficulties in their L2 learning. Moreover, teachers must find creative ways, such as repeating every basic instruction, keyword and concept time and again without being boring, so that the whole class is not affected. However, if a learner still fails in English language course, he/she will be listed in another remedial plan at the beginning of the following year to support his/her learning in the next level.

In Basic Education Cycle 2 (grades 5–10), learners are evaluated using the same system applied to learners in grades 1–4. However, in grades 5-10, the learning outcomes for the

English language are grouped into five elements: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar and Vocabulary. Marks are awarded for these outcomes on the basis of three methods of assessment: Continuous Assessment (CA), Class Tests (CLTs) and End-of-Semester Tests (SMTs) (MOE, 2017). Different elements are assessed in different ways, using different combinations of these methods. The weightings for each element at each grade-level are as shown in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 Weightings for each element in grades 5-10 (MOE, 2017)

Elements	**Grades 5-9**				**Grade 10**		
	CA	CLTs	SMTs	Total	CA	SMTs	Total
LST	-	5%	10%	15%	-	15%	15%
SPK	15%	-	-	15%	20%	-	20%
RDG	10%	5%	10%	25%	5%	20%	25%
WRT	10%	5%	10%	25%	10%	15%	25%
Grm / Vcb	5%	5%	10%	20%	5%	10%	15%
Total	40%	20%	40%	100%	40%	60%	100%

These students also take short written tests and they should get a total score of 50% in each subject to pass to the next grade. However, if a student fails an examination in any given subject, up to a maximum of three subjects, he/she will be permitted to do a re-sit exam at the end of the year. If the student fails the exam again, he/she must repeat the grade/class in the following school year.

On the other hand, in the Post Basic Education grades 11-12, which is the key focus in this study, the central examinations are produced by the Ministry of Education for students in grade 12 in order to obtain a General Education Diploma Certificate by the end of the academic school year., Furthermore, in both grades 11-12, there is now a single course, (Engage with English), taken by all learners. The learning outcomes for these core courses are grouped into five elements: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary. A total of ten key learning outcomes have been identified as Table 1.3 shows below.

Table 1.3 Learning Outcomes (MOE, 2017)

Elements	**Important learning achievements**
LST	Can recognize a range of spoken texts
	Can conduct presentations

SPK	Can interact with others
RDG	Can understand a variety of written texts Can read independently
WRT	Can write and reply to emails (Interactive) Can write a text to provide information (Informative) Can write short stories and narrate actions and events in the past (Narrative) Can write texts to express and justify opinions (Evaluative)
GRM & VCB	Can understand and apply grammar and vocabulary

Marks are granted for these results, based on two methods of assessment: Continuous Assessment (CA) and End-of-Semester Tests (SMTs). Different elements/skills are evaluated by different means: some using only CA, some using only SMTs, and others using both methods (MOE, 2017). Table 1.4 below illustrates the marks weightings for each element/skill for both grades 11-12.

Table 1. 4 Weightings for the five elements in grades 11-12 (MOE, 2017)

	GRADE 11			**GRADE 12**		
Elements	**CA**	**SMTs**	**Total**	**CA**	**SMTs**	**Total**
LST	-	15%	15%	-	15%	15%
SPK	20%	-	20%	15%	-	15%
RDG	5%	20%	25%	5%	25%	30%
WRT	10%	15%	25%	10%	20%	30%
GRM/VOC	5%	10%	15%	-	10%	10%
Total	**40%**	**60%**	**100%**	**30%**	**70%**	**100%**

1.6 The purpose and aims of the study

Exploring the field of EFL learning and teaching in recent times has shown a shift towards investigating classroom practices and the nature of the learning environment. To address the research problem as outlined above, this study aims to provide new insights into the situation in contemporary Oman. These include why and for what purposes EFL teachers in particular, and their students, in Oman tend to use the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms, if they do. Additionally, in what pedagogical contexts do they tend to use the

Arabic language, how do learners understand the underlying relationship between the motivation to learn the English language and their practices in the classrooms, potential similarties and differences and are there any discrepancies between teachers and students' perceptions and practices in the classrooms? Consequently, this research aims to explore this phenomenon in depth and fill this gap by adopting a mixed research approach composed of the questionnaire, classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments. According to Macaro (2005), factors such as teachers' experience and learners' age have been reported in previous studies as main reasons to use L1 in EFL classrooms. Participants' substantial practices in the classrooms are compared to check if their perceptions were reflected in their performance.

Overall, this study aims to provide both the descriptive and deep understanding of the Arabic language functions and pedagogical practices/solutions in EFL classrooms in Oman and has the following aims:

- Explore EFL teachers' and students' perceptions related to Arabic language use in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman.
- Explore pedagogical situations and contextual practices in which the Arabic language is used in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman.
- Identify the functions and purposes of L1 (Arabic language) utilisation in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman compared with the use of the English language.
- Raise/seek awareness around the role of Arabic language in Omani EFL classrooms and provide advice to improve future practice.
- Identify successful and effective English language teaching methods and how they can be improved in the Omani context.

1.7 The significance of the study

Since the late 1800s, the use of the L1 has often been out of favor amongst L2 philosophers and specialists (Hall & Cook, 2012). In response, Cook (2001), stressed the significance of considering the use of L1 in EFL classrooms, by arguing that "it is time to open a door that has been firmly shut in language teaching for over 100 years, namely, the systematic use of the first language (L1) in the classroom" (p. 403). Moreover, changes to traditional practice and the importance of teachers' awareness and control of classroom dialogical interactions and experiential language learning are at the forefront of most recent findings (Shamsipour & Allami, 2012; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016; O'Neill, 2017). This research

aims to contribute to the body of the knowledge by exploring teachers and learners' perceptions on the use of the Arabic language (L1) in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. It explores in what pedagogical settings both teachers and learners tend to use Arabic and whether there are any contradictions between teachers' opinions and practices in the classrooms regarding the way Arabic language use impacts on students' acquisition of English.

Although there has been much research in the EFL field finding support both for and against using L1 in EFL classrooms, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first mixed methods study carried out to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers and their students on the use of the Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. This research is also significant because in the Omani EFL teaching and learning settings, teachers and learners share the same L1 (Arabic), such that students are tempted to converse in Arabic and teachers are under pressure to create opportunities whereby students need to use the English language for meaningful purposes in their classrooms. The findings of this research will hopefully help teachers to appreciate in which situations they and their students might use their L1 (Arabic) to best support the learning of English rather than hinder it. This research will contribute to the body of the knowledge in the EFL field by illuminating current language pedagogy and practices in the teaching of EFL in year 11-12 classrooms in Oman. It will explore teachers' and learners' perceptions and likely pedagogical and other purposes for using their L1(Arabic) if the goal is to acquire English in an EFL learning environment. This research may provide good information about the resources and techniques which can help their students to acquire and practice the English language more proficiently. The outcomes will also assist learners to gain a better understanding of their perceptions about language learning and its purpose, besides providing strategic advice to schools and education authorities. In turn, the research findings have the potential to inform all stakeholders of the specific situation of EFL in Oman and possible improvements for students in order to have a better opportunity to enhance their English language skills as well as being relevant to other EFL contexts.

Thus, the findings will further help policymakers, administrators, and educators in the education field by outlining for L2 teaching, and the functions and purposes of the use of L1 (Arabic in this case) that are relevant to EFL teaching and learning for future curriculum improvement applicable in Oman and elsewhere. In the context of contemporary language learning pedagogy and practices, thus preparing the ground for a more reasoned use of L1 in the EFL classroom learning environment for year 11-12 students.

1.8 The research questions

The research questions underpinning this study have been constructed from the results of the review of current literature in the field in relation to the research problem and the above aims, while also drawing to some extent from my own knowledge and understanding of the Omani EFL context:

RQ1. To what extent do teachers and learners believe that the Arabic language should be used in the teaching of English in Omani EFL classrooms?

RQ2. What are the contexts in which teachers use Arabic in Omani EFL, and why?

RQ3. What are the contexts in which students use Arabic in Omani EFL classrooms, and why?

RQ4. To what extent does teachers' use of the Arabic language as L1 in practice support or hinder students' learning of English?

1.9 Outline of the thesis chapters

This part includes a summary of the contents of each of the six chapters in this study.

Chapter 1: This chapter introduces the study's background, providing details about the EFL teaching context in Oman, and it identifies the research problem.. Chapter one also outlines the study's purpose and aims, and the research questions. An overview of the educational system in Oman is further provided with particular attention being paid to the Ministry of Education's focus on improving students' English language learning during the school years 1 to 12 through acknowledgment of the need for change to pedagogy and assessment practices.

Chapter 2: This chapter provides a review of the existing related literature about the study. It commences with the theoretical framework and current literature pertaining to teaching practices and methods of teaching English as a foreign language, from Grammar Translation to recent methods. The argument then moves to the fundamental elements of the study including using learners' L1 from a sociocultural theory point of view, and the importance of individual differences and motivation in the L2 teaching and learning process. Moreover, the type of discourse that occurs between teachers and learners in EFL classrooms, and its importance, are also analyzed and elaborated upon. This is followed by an clarification of practice and reasons for L1 usage in EFL classes. The perceptions of both teachers and learners, arguments for and against L1 use, and functions and purposes of L1 use in EFL

classrooms are subsequently reported on. Since this study considers using Arabic language in EFL classrooms, there is a brief section about studies of the Arabic language usage in different contexts including in Omani EFL context in particular.

Chapter 3: This chapter includes three sections. First, the theoretical methedology background used in this study is discussed. The second section presents the definitions of the mixed methods approach. Next, the methodology part of the present study, including questionnaires design, classroom observation, and semi-structured interviews and the study context and participants, is outlined. Details of the questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews are explained. Next, the validity and reliability of these methodological tools are discussed, as well as the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: This chapter describes the study's findings. Detailed reports of the consequences gained from the three data collection tools adopted in this study are presented. First, the quantitative data from the teachers' and students' questionnaires and Part One of the classroom observations are outlined. Next, the results of the qualitative data obtained from Part Two of the classroom observations and the semi-structured interviews are presented. Each section concludes with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 5: This chapter discusses and presents the summary, interpretation and the triangulation of the data and results overall in relation to the study questions. In order to appropriately situate the study within its field,this chapter specifically contacts the agreements and differences with the earlier studies and draws attention to the key results of the current study.

Chapter 6: This chapter concludes the study by considering the results of the study relative to the research theoretical framework and contribution of the study to knowledge. Next, the pedagogical implications are deliberated, and limitations are identified. Finally, recommendations are made for improving EFL pedagogy in general in relation to the "English only" debate and the constructive use of students' L1, in particular for the Omani context. Then, on the basis of this study, implications for future research are identified and suggestions for further studies are made.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter elaborates the background information about the study. It also highlights the research context and the importance of teaching the English language in Oman. The research problem and aims of this study, which are related to providing insights into the EFL

teachers' and students' perceptions on using Arabic language in grades 11-12 in Oman, have been described. The relevance of current teaching and assessment practices have been reported. The research questions and the significance of the study were also presented and a summary of the chapters of the dissertation was provided.

The next chapter presents the literature review related to the study's research context and the principles of L1 use in L2 classrooms and language teaching supporting the research ground.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There is a complete agreement between the students and teachers about the benefits of using Arabic language in the EFL classroom despite the presence of multiple studies that discuss the disadvantages of using L1 in an English classroom (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). There is high level of similarity in studies that have been conducted to determine students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the use of Arabic language in the EFL classroom. Findings from these studies demonstrate that students' mother tongue has positive impact when used by both teachers and students in the EFL classroom (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). In other words, these researches suggest that Arabic language should be used by both students and teachers to aid the learning of English which in this case is a foreign language.

Minor differences were noticed in relation to the purposes and occasions under learners' first language should be used. Some of these differences were as a result of the level of proficiency of the students. According to Al-Ta'ani (2019), 54% of teachers and 72% of students think that it is important to use Arabic language in the EFL classroom (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). A majority of the study participants challenging or difficult political, cultural, traditional, and religious concepts should be taught in the EFL classroom by referring to the learners' first language. A majority of instances where Arabic language was used in the EFL classroom, learners appeared to respond notably higher compared to their educators (Al-Ta'ani, 2019) Large percentage of the students thought that using Arabic language helped them develop better understanding of the difficult concepts and at the same time improve ideas including new vocabulary and grammatical rules more efficiently.

The use of learners' L1 to aid the English learning played facilitative and supportive role even though English is considered to be the primary communication vehicle (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). Despite the fact that some students stated that English language had been imposed on them and that it was an identity threat, and more so while teaching religious, cultural, and traditional issues, its use demonstrated high level of significance (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). In summary, there are a wide range of reasons for which students and teachers use Arabic language in EFL classroom. For instance, Arabic language has proved to be very helpful when it comes to explaining the most difficult political, cultural, traditional, and religious issues and concepts (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). The learners' first language also helped the students to feel less stressed and more comfortable and confident. Arabic language was also important when

expressing things that were somehow difficult to say in English. Other significances include and are not limited to providing weak learners with a chance of improving, comparing between various structures in English and Arabic, and offering instructions for exams and tasks (Al-Ta'ani, 2019).

Many EFL teachers stated that they allowed the use of learners' first language to some extent when explaining vocabulary, building good relationship with the learners, and clarifying unclear meaning (Alshehri, 2017). These teachers expressed their belief that L1 can enhance the learning of a foreign language when used appropriately. This is a reflection of other current studies that have revealed that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is essential in performing other functions. For instance, L1 is very vital when explaining grammar, unclear meanings and vocabulary (Alshehri, 2017). Recent studies have revealed that the use of L1 is essential when it comes to preparing tasks and translating new words. That is despite the fact that some teachers believe that English should be used as the main language in the EFL classroom. These researches have however indicated that teacher-training does not promote the use of learners' first language (Alshehri, 2017). Educators are encouraged to use L1 to attend to the learning functions of their students. Of course, that does not imply that schools should endorse unlimited use of L1. It is important to develop more frameworks that demonstrate when and how L1 should be used (Alshehri, 2017). Teachers should also enhance their awareness regarding the practical benefits of using L1.

In trying to explore the functions of L1 in EFL classroom, some recent researchers have suggested that learners' first language can be used to carry out multiple functions like checking grammatical concepts, explaining lexical functions, giving instructions, and checking for comprehension (Alrabah & et al., 2016). Therefore, instead of relying on English language for all these functions, L1 can be used alongside the foreign language. Other appropriate use of L1 in the EFL classroom includes testing, using translation and eliciting language. Other studies have suggested that L1 can be used to teach spelling, morphology and phonology, analyzing language, managing the classroom, keeping records and negotiating the syllabus. Furthermore, L1 can be used to contact individual students, maintaining discipline, organizing tasks, organizing the class, explaining grammar, and conveying and checking meanings of sentences and words (Alrabah & et al., 2016). A majority of studies that have been conducted over the recent years have gone to the extent of exploring the factors behind the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. These researches have demonstrated that sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and affective factors have contributed greatly towards the use of L1 in the EFL classroom.

However, EFL teachers are not always well-conversant about the factors that contribute towards the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. For instance, some studies have showed that some teachers might be conversant about the overall factors behind their decision to use L1 in EFL classroom, but others could only realize that after being taken through episodes of their teaching (Alrabah & et al., 2016). The bottom line of this is that there are multiple factors that can influence teachers to change their teaching decisions from the use of English to L1.

When taking the low proficiency levels of EFL learners into consideration, the instructor's insistence on exclusively using English language can lead to stressful classroom environment for the learners (Alrabah & et al., 2016). The core role of L1 in the EFL classroom is to provide the basis for minimizing affective filters. Studies have indicated that for input of English language to be made more comprehensible, teachers can use L1 to attain a low affective filter for the learners and facilitating the acquisition of L2 (English). There are both affective and pedagogical factors that contribute towards the use of L1 in the EFL classroom. The decision to use English language and L1 interchangeably is generally complex and based on a wide range of factors such as cognitive factors (Alrabah & et al., 2016). When it comes to affective factors, educators responded to the contributions made by their students in a bid to create a learning environment that is free from stress. That means that when teachers use L1 in the EFL classroom, they create a sense of relaxation amongst the students rather than utilizing English alone. Far from that, EFL teachers tend to use L1 to become more comprehensible to their learners in their attempts to simplify the L2 input. As such, the language that teachers address to language use of L1 is to try and ensure that they become more comprehensible (Alrabah & et al., 2016). The deliberate process of the adult native speakers to try and simplify the complexity of their speeches to fit the level of the child-hearer is the same as multiple ways in which teachers try to simplify their talks so as to improve the proficiency of the students in the L2. In a language classroom, simplification of input could include having the instructors using L1 to try and accommodate the low proficiency levels of the students. For instance, the low English proficiency of students in the Omani context is the main reason why Arabic is used in the EFL classroom (Alrabah & et al., 2016). Experienced EFL teachers have intuitive feeling regarding the proficiency levels of their students. Hence, they usually try and adjust their input for English language accordingly in a bid to create room for the students to include the use of L1 in the teaching of EFL.

The sense of identity of the EFL teachers is bound up within their native languages. The use of L1 in the EFL classroom is closely related to the underlying sense of identities of

the teachers including their native languages. For instance, research has shown that in a classroom where both students and teachers are Arabic speaking, about 40% of the total time spent in the classroom is carried out in Arabic. Despite the fact that teachers of EFL might share the same L1 with their students, they tend to practically adopt surrogate identity in the classroom (Alrabah & et al., 2016). Nonetheless, the students will able to tell whether their teachers belong to their cultural groups or not. The moment teachers decide to accommodate the sense of cultural, linguistic and national identity through the use of L1, they end up increasing their overall rapport with the student thus facilitation the learning process of L2. Furthermore, the use of L1 by teachers can be viewed as a form of convergence to the speech patterns of the students. Such processes can be interpreted as sociolinguistic factors that support the learning process of the students. Furthermore, teachers' perceptions regarding the use of L1 in the EFL classroom is an important area that recent researches have been covering (Alrabah & et al., 2016). The issue of making use of L1 in the EFL classroom shows a contradiction that EFL teachers represent as they go about attending to their daily undertakings. Teachers also tend to employ L1 as the basic tool for improving classroom management and using it as a language tool. The contradiction is further compounded by seemingly apparent disparity that exists between the stated beliefs of teachers and their actual classroom practices. Desires of teachers about the use of L1 are clearly in conflict with their corresponding classroom practices. Hence, exploring teachers' attitudes about their use of L1 in the EFL classroom contexts provides a remarkable basis for exploring the functions of native language (L1) in teaching L2 (Alrabah & et al., 2016).

Furthermore, based on the researcher's own professional and personal experience of working as an English teacher and later as an English language supervisor, one of the most common difficulties in Omani EFL classrooms is that students are not willing to learn and participate in communicative English activities. They appear to prefer to learn mostly by concentrating on linguistic knowledge such as grammar rules, which they think can help them pass the examinations. Although they have acquired enough English during almost 12 years of learning it in their schools before starting university and college life, most of them cannot apply what they learn in the class to the situational settings in their daily life. Therefore, EFL teachers should support communication practices and monitor their learners' achievements during class time. Moreover, teachers need to motivate their learners, as well as provide them with a relaxed classroom atmosphere for language learning (Chang, 2011).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the actual practices of Arabic language (L1) use in EFL classrooms from the perspective of EFL teachers and their students in four governorates in Oman. It is based on the idea that understanding the actual practices of EFL teaching would assist both teachers and their learners in following the best practice in teaching and learning the English language in Omani schools.

This chapter critically reviews previous studies and relevant literature, which has reviewed the use of the first language (L1) in EFL classrooms. The literature review will be organised into different parts.. Firstly, the study looks into some important issues in EFL teaching including teaching methods and their relation to using L1 in EFL contexts, L1 use from a sociocultural theory point of view, individual differences, and classroom interactional competence. Secondly, this chapter reviews the arguments for and against L1 use in EFL classrooms. Next, the chapter examines the reasons for applying L1 in EFL classrooms. This includes teachers' reasons for using L1 in their EFL classrooms, followed by students' reasons for applying L1 while learning the English language. This is then followed by a review of previous studies on teachers' and learners' perspectives of using L1 in EFL classes. The latter contains two sections: first, previous studies on teachers' perspectives on L1 use, and second, students' perceptions of using L1 in their EFL classrooms. The chapter also highlights previous studies on the use of Arabic language in EFL different contexts. The chapter further reviews studies about Arabic language use in Oman where this research has taken place. The chapter concludes with the study's theoretical framework and knowledge gap identification. Finally, this chapter ends with a table of the key studies on L1 use in EFL classrooms in different EFL contexts, as well as a general chapter summary.

2.2 Pedagogical change from traditional to contemporary approaches to EFL pedagogy – Bilingualism, CLT and dialogism

2.2.1 Teaching methods and L1 use

Language teaching is regularly observed in relations to method, and aiming to increase teaching practices, teachers and researchers attempt to find out which way is the most effective. A number of English language teaching approaches have been developed aiming at finding the best way to teach L2 in different EFL contexts. According to Tochon (2014), teaching and learning methods have moved on from the traditional grammar translation method, and since the introduction of the communicative approach, which recognised the need for students to be able to experience using the language to communicate, there has been a shift towards students

being engaged in experiential learning, including project-based and problem-based learning. According to Brok and Gnnarsdottirs (2001), the greatest methods that the teacher may adopt are the methods that transform the students into active and dynamic learners who interact in the class through asking questions, which develops their communication skills. Similarly, Brandi (2008) has stated that "effective teaching is not about a method. It is about understanding and implementing principles of learning" (p. 1).

Teaching methods have contributed new features and have tried to deal with some concerns around language learning. They differ depending on their inclusive or exclusive utilization of L1 in L2 classrooms. These methods have been derived from different pedagogical settings and are focused on different social and educational requirements. Therefore, in order to apply them effectively, teachers should consider these questions: who the students are, what their present level of language proficiency is, what kind of communicative needs they have, the situations in which they will be using English (L2) in the future.

It seems that no single method can promise effective results. According to Harbord (1992), the two main teaching methods, which show different educational practices in applying L1 in EFL classrooms, are the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the Direct Method (DM). While the GTM motivates the use of L1, the Direct Method limits its use. In the following section, attention to different EFL teaching methods is considered, based on L1 employment in L2 classrooms.

The time between the 1950s and 1980s was a very active period in terms of teaching methods when. smaller methods emerged and were established in overall education, which have been protracted to L2 settings (Richards & Rodgers, 2005). In this period, diversity of teaching methods was encouraged under different titles as 'the silent way', 'total physical response', 'suggestopedia' ('desuggestopedia') and the 'new concurrent method'. In what follows, different teaching methods around L1 role and utilisation will be briefly described.

2.2.1.1 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

In language teaching practice, many of teaching approaches support L1 use as an instrument in L2 settings. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is believed to be one of the preliminary teaching methods that supports applying L1 in L2 teaching. Richards and Rodgers (2001) reported that the GTM had its origins in the teaching of Latin from the 16th to the 19th century. It has occasionally been called "the academic teaching style" (Cook, 2008)

or “the grammar school method” (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). A study conducted by Mondal (2012) has disclosed that this method is still highly applied in teaching L2.

The main aim of the GTM is to allow students to read literature in L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, the teachers who apply this method mainly focus on grammar rules, reading texts, vocabulary and writing skills. In this method, grammar rules, vocabulary, and patterns of the L2 are often taught using L1 translation; afterwards the learners will have to recall them and practice what they have acquired through translation exercises and drills. The GTM focus is to teach the grammar of the L2 through translation, which is supposed to finally make students better in their L1. The role of L1 in GTM is mainly significant because L1 is applied widely to clarify what L2 means, and translation is applied as a primary procedure of teaching. Therefore, learners are not advised to use the L2 until they achieve intellectual ability to do so. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), L1 is the medium of interaction in the classroom. Moreover, learning how to translate the words and sentences, the students also learn various grammar rules and very large vocabulary lists. Additionally, learners might use their L1 to talk and connect with the teacher to comprehend more about grammar rubrics and the L2 literature (Howatt, 2004). Both teacher and students use a comparatively minor amount of L2, and both teachers and learners frequently use L1 for interpreting the reading texts and exercises, grammar explanation, communication in the classroom and giving instructions (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

GTM as a teaching method was critiqued in the mid-nineteenth century for different reasons. For example, Howatt (2004) criticised the GTM for its reliance on the translation of the L1 and its focus on teaching grammar separately. Thus, it was seen as focusing on the knowledge of the learners rather than their communicative and interactive skills. While the application of L1 is largely supported because of its dependence on translation, this is considered to have an effect on learners’ fluency and communicative abilities in their L2 (Jadallah & Hasan, 2011). Richards and Rodgers (2001) mentioned that for example that educationalists recognised the necessity for speaking skills instead of grammar, reading comprehension or literacy appreciation as the aim in EFL contexts. Consequently, there was an increased call for methods that would help learners accomplish better chances for practicing their communication skills. Students required to effectively use the L2 they were learning for interaction in their daily practices.

2.2.1.2 Community Language Learning (CLL)

Community Language Learning (CLL) is another approach that supports the use of L1 in L2 classrooms. CLL is mainly based on the principles of teaching English as L2 for communication. CLL differs from other language teaching methods in terms of the procedures it employs to decrease learners' anxiety and to help them to have a stress-free class (Koba, Ogawa & Wilkinson, 2000). In CLL, learners learn not only how to use the L2 communicatively, but also how to take responsibility for their learning. Such learning takes place in a communicative context where teachers and learners are both involved in interactions through which both experience a sense of their wholeness (Richards & Rodgers, 2002). The classroom is seen as a community, of which teachers and learners are followers and learn by cooperating with each other. Learners mainly learn through their L1 followed by their L2. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) noted, "learners know the meaning and flow of the L2 message from their recall of the similar meaning and flow of an L1 message" (p. 91). The classroom work, activities, translations, and group discussions are initially conducted using the students' L1 followed by L2. As the goal is to teach the communicative use of the L2 in a stress-free setting, the main concern of the teacher is to reduce learners' anxiety towards learning a foreign language by translating the utterances they produce.

The use of learners' L1 has an almost equal importance to that of the L2 in this method since it is used as a facilitator for students. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) asserted that students' motivation is primarily improved by using their L1 throughout the class time. Furthermore, to motivate learners towards L2 learning, their L1 plays a significant role, both during learning and in reflection sittings where learners express their feelings about the course. Teaching activities in this method result in dialogue transcription to analyze the language that is being taught.

2.2.1.3 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

Since the 1980s, the Task-Based Language Teaching Method (TBLT) has emerged as an extension of CLT. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), TBLT refers to "an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching" (p. 223). In this method, the tasks are central to the learning activity. The L2 teacher plays a role in designing tasks to create the conditions for language learning and for communication that happens outside the borders of the L2 classroom. These activities need students to discuss the meaning and connect this to realistic and substantial communication.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) reported that the activities and tasks can be either "those that learners might need to achieve in real life or those that have a pedagogical purpose specific to the classroom" (p. 224). Teachers carry out these activities and tasks in the classroom using the L2. The goal is for learners' interlanguage to gain them implicit language knowledge that will then enable them to participate quickly and naturally in communication. The L2 teacher aims to develop teaching tasks that are as close to real-world tasks as possible. Learners communicate among themselves to organise and accomplish the task. Learners perform the concluding task (at times orally) and write a written or an oral report to present it to the class. Thus, TBLT builds tasks that are significant and related to learners. The task must expose real life situations and learners pay attention to meaning while they can use any language of their choice. Activities like playing a game, sharing information or experience, solving a problem can be considered significant and genuine tasks.

Although the L2 is the primary communication language between learners throughout a task, the use of L1 is unavoidable when learners do not have any task to accomplish in the classroom (Seedhouse, 2004). Learners' L1 is practised in positions where it is essential, such as giving commands or clarifying problematic grammar points. According to Ellis (2008), L1 is a valuable instrument and a useful resource in a specific framework such as the sociocultural framework.

Some teachers criticise TBLT for focusing primarily on fluency at the expense of accuracy. This method also requires a teacher with a high level of creativity and initiative who is ready to use teaching aids beyond the textbooks and related materials usually found in schools (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, Bruton (2005) noted the following additional weak points:

- no acquisition of new grammar or vocabulary
- the L2 teacher has to do everything
- learners might not be motivated
- students use a lot of their L1 rather than the L2 in finishing the tasks

2.2.1.4 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Another teaching method that supports L2 learning without heavily depending on the L1 use is the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) method. This method aims to use L2 to learn a particular subject such as mathematics, science or history (Calviño, 2012).

With its link to CLT, this classroom method is learner-centred. CLIL learning is based on learners' active participation in the learning process. Teachers offer tasks using the L2, and hence students learn subject content through L2 utilisation of these tasks. Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that CLIL is grounded in the idea that successful language learning is best achieved when learners take part in meaningful activities, as well as when they are interested in the given task, regard it as beneficial, and when it leads to a particularly desired aim.

Regarding the use of L1, CLIL allows for potentially systematic as well as functional L1 and L2 use in learning. With regards to learners' L1 in L2 classes that adopt a bilingual approach in CLIL, many researchers have more recently proposed language instruction that supports students' use of their linguistic repertoires in the learning process. According to Ruiz de Zarobe and Jiménez Catalán (2009), it is recommended that L1 be used when giving advices, particularly to novices in L2, but also during all steps when presenting language skills exercises related, to speaking and reading. Learners' L1 use seems to be unavoidable as they are encouraged to speak more in CLIL, either in group-work or with their L2 instructor.

2.2.1.5 Direct Method (DM)

The disagreement with GTM led to the rise of the Direct Method (DM) in the beginning of the 20th century (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Unlike in GTM and other methods mentioned above, the students' L1 is banned, and the focus on vocabulary over grammar is recognisable. According to Brown (2001) and Richards and Rodgers (2001), DM recommends that the L2 should be learned in the same manner as the L1 was learnt. It is a practice that was initiated with the observations on the learners' L1 practices. It intends to allow learners to use L2 for everyday talk and avoid using L1 or translation because the principle to learn a language naturally is to use L2. Hence, teachers applying the DM are supposed to inspire the learners to build a direct link between meaning and the L2.

The principal objective of the DM is to endorse spoken L2 without any dependence on the learners' L1. Therefore, unknown perceptions should be directly clarified in the L2 using other techniques like action, demonstration, regalia, and photos. The DM focusses on verbal communication skills, and terminology is offered over demonstration and images (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, grammar is skilled inductively where the learners find out the rule from the explained samples and grammar rubrics are not offered clearly. Modifying pronunciation is an important feature in DM. A native-speaking teacher is therefore recommended (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, it

has been criticised for broadly relying on the teachers' skills and entirely excluding the use of learners' L1.

2.2.1.6 The Audiolingual Method (AM)

The Audiolingual Method (AM) is another method that restricts the use of L1 in L2 classrooms (Cook, 2001b). AM emerged in the 1950s as a result of less emphasis on oral-aural skills in L2 classrooms. According to Celce-Murcia (2001), students learn the L2 by repetition until they produce no mistakes, "grounded on the statement that language is routine development" (p. 7). Richards and Rodgers (2001) reported that in AM "after dialogue has been presented and memorised, specific grammatical patterns in the dialogue are selected and become the focus of various kinds of drill and pattern practice exercises" (p. 59). Another learning principle underlying AM is that speaking and listening skills have the priority over reading and writing skills in L2 teaching.

Following the monolingual line, learners' L1 is limited, and translation is therefore ignored in this method. The L2 is principally used in the EFL classroom for diverse purposes such as clarifying difficult perceptions and giving instructions. However, Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that AM was criticised because learners "were regularly found to be unable to convey skills learnt through the AM to actual communication outside the L2 classrooms" (p. 65). Therefore, the lack of communication skills and the emphasis on spoken skills through mechanical drills, rather than ingenuity, were seen as the main drawbacks of this method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, some methods and approaches were needed to focus on communication rather than structured expertise.

2.2.1.7 The Silent Way (SW)

The Silent Way (SW) is a teaching technique that does not support the use of learners' L1. It was developed in 1972 based on the idea that the L2 teacher should be as silent as possible in the classroom setting to inspire learners to produce as much L2 language as possible. This method encourages students to individually produce and use L2 as much as they can and improve their internal standards for accuracy and accuracy (Larsen-Freeman, 2001). In SW, the L2 teacher uses the tools at his/her disposal to elicit the correct language from the learners. He/she should be helpful and active, using body language and facial expressions to show whether the language produced is right or not. Lessons generally include grammar items and vocabulary, and the teacher uses charts, bars, and gestures to draw learners' answers. L2

learning is simplified by using physical items and problem-solving (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that, the practice and implementation of these physical items is to "directly connect words and structures with their meanings in the L2 language, thereby avoiding interpretation into the native language" (p. 86). Learners are likely to have applied understanding of grammar and vocabulary but with more stress being sited in completing native-like fluency and fruitful communication using L2.

2.2.1.8 The Total Physical Response (TPR) method

The Total Physical Response method is a teaching method where teaching and learning take place through physical action and making use of learners' motor abilities while they response to their teachers' instructions as quickly as possible. This method avoids the use of learners' L1. The only time L1 is used is when clarifying the process of the way and the instructions (Asher, 1969). According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), most of the clarifications this method offers are through learners' body movements such as 'stand up', 'sit down', 'look at the door', 'move one step forward/back and so on.

2.2.1.9 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) forms on an educational scheme to a language instruction and includes ideas of achievement and inspiration. For some researchers, CLT is one of the most influential and effective language teaching methodologies, which increases learners' communicative competence (Laio, 2000; Savignon, 2002; Ying, 2010). The CLT was first introduced in the 1970s, and since then it has quickly become a significant method, getting language teachers' attention from all over the world. The purpose of CLT, as Richards and Rodgers (2014) stated, is to produce meaningful communication in a language. Using communicative activities will enable language learners to acquire language naturally. Moreover, Tsai (2007) and Pei-long (2011) argued that CLT primarily aims to develop language learners' communicative competence, and language teaching should, therefore, focus on communicative ability rather than sentence structure. Communicative activities create a friendly environment inside the classroom among learners, which helps in the language learning process. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), these types of activities provide an opportunity for language learners to engage in cooperative work with their peers, which also enables them to listen to each other.

CLT looks at English not as linguistic features, but as a communicative ability. The functions are more important than the structures where the key aim is to build communicative abilities including grammatical competence, discourse competence and sociolinguisic competence (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Similarly, Littlewood (2007) described CLT as "development within the communicative method, in which the vital feature of the communicative tasks serve not only as significant components of the methodology but also as units around which a course may be organized" (p. 244).

According to Cook (2008) the central educational principle of CLT is that fruitful learning of the L2 depends on the quantity of communication and the intervention of meaning that learners contribute in throughout the EFL classroom time. Littlewood (2007) stated that, this method emphases the language as it is applied in real life settings, so the learners are provided with chances to drill their beliefs and views. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2000), who also regarded CLT as a communicative method that recognises the connection between language and communication, asserted that CLT aims to improve the ability of language learners to communicate and use the target language appropriately so they can genuinely use it outside the class. She has also pointed out that language teachers aim to allow their learners to communicate by providing them with information about linguistic forms, meanings, and purposes.

In CLT L1 is rarely applied, although it could be used when using L2 seems to be difficult. In CLT, there seems to be very little room left for the learners' L1 in a communicative classroom where the main aim is to develop interaction using L2 (Cook, 2001b). The L2 should be applied not only during open class events but also for clarifying actions and performs or allocating homework to learners (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In addition, Nunan (1991) outlined five features of CLT that were considered to support good practice in developing learners' language competence:

- stress on learning to communicate through L2.
- introducing authentic materials into L2 teaching and learning practice.
- providing chances for learners to focus on their learning practices .
- enhancing students' class experiences as essential contributing features to classroom learning context.
- connecting L2 learning with language activities outside the school.

However, CLT, like all other teaching methods, has some drawbacks and has faced some criticism. According to Brown (2007), CLT requires a native speaking teacher, as it is a challenging task for a non-native speaking instructor to practise all its techniques. Therefore, a teacher with low L2 ability and short experience may find difficulties in applying this teaching method, and consequently, may use L1 to explain new terms and clarify difficult instructions might assist a non-native speaking instructor (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Moreover, learners who do not use L2 outside school classrooms, or those who are at elementary levels, might find CLT challenging to practice.

These teaching methods generally have some drawbacks and were criticized for different reasons. Teaching L2 around the world stresses a change towards more communicative teaching methods with collaborating student-centered learning setting. While the CLT approach, for example, encourages communication and interaction, learners do not have enough L2 to start with and often end up using their native language. But for students and teachers who have grown up in contexts which often have teacher-centered classes, syllabus limitations, exams and large number of students in classrooms, there is regularly a discrepancy between theoretical teaching methods and real practices. Syllabuses are often taught item by item instead of holistically contrary to the CLT approach. Teachers usually take it upon themselves to convey information rather than as a facilitator. Most importantly, exams are based on separate items rather than on communication alone. Learners face difficulties with reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar. As writing skill is a very compound activity which involves accuracy, writing ford different purposes such as writing emails with various use of vocabulary, it becomes the most challenging skill in the language. Teachers, therefore, try to support learners use sentences meaningfully in paragraphs which would make a meaningful piece of writing. The other aspect is the teaching of the English language at grades 11-12 levels where learners are taught fixed expressions and phrases, reading and writing passages which they are required to memorize and then reproduce for exams purposes.

Maybe the main challenge in L2 classes setting is the large number of students (classes normally comprise 30-35 students) and the inadequate teaching resources. Consequently, teachers fear the lack of classroom management and running pair and group work during the lessons with large numbers of learners.

2.2.1.10 Calls to adopt CLT in the Omani EFL context

The traditional teaching methods, which are adopted in different EFL contexts around the world ,regularly emphasise grammar, memorisation, interpretation and other practices that do not support the progress of communicative capability. This creates the need to implement a teaching method that encourages people to use English for real communication in the EFL setting. In Oman, one of the currently adopted methods to teach English as EFL is the communicative language teaching method (CLT) (Abbas, 2012). The purpose of CLT, as Richards and Rodgers (2014) have stated, is to produce meaningful communication in a language. Using communicative activities will enable language learners to acquire language naturally. Moreover, Tsai (2007) and Pei-long (2011) have argued that CLT primarily aims to develop language learners' communicative competence, and language teaching should therefore focus on communicative ability rather than sentence structure. Communicative activities create a friendly environment inside the classroom among learners, which helps in the language learning process. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), these types of activities provide an opportunity for language learners to engage in cooperative work with their peers, which also enables them to listen to each other.

Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2000), who also regarded CLT as a communicative method that recognises the connection between language and communication, has asserted that CLT aims to improve the ability of language learners to communicate and use the target language appropriately so they can genuinely use it outside the class. She has also pointed out that language teachers aim to allow their learners to communicate by providing them with information about linguistic forms, meanings, and purposes.

Al-Mahrooqi (2012), recommended the implementation of CLT in EFL classrooms to solve some of the Arab EFL fluency problems. She carried out research on 58 undergraduates to examine the teaching methods of English language skills in public schools and private institutions in Oman. Her study showed that 45 out of the 58 participants did not get the chance to learn the English language communicatively in schools. Her study showed there is an obvious need to enhance communicative skills in the Omani public schools' curriculum. She revealed an absence of fluency as part of speaking skills for Omani EFL learners. 2.2.2 L1 Use from a Sociocultural Theory (SCT) point of view

Sociocultural theory is a developing theory that looks at the significant influences of society on individual development. It defines learning as a social practice in which social communication and culture play a vital part in the progress of cognition. The term sociocultural theory (SCT) belongs to Vygotsky (1997), who developed a learning theory that brought together the cognitive and social features of language learning (Lantolf, 2004). It is a socially clear model for cognitive expansion in which the role of the social setting in cognitive growth is highlighted. According to Lantolf (2004), it is "a theory of mind that recognises the central role that social relationships and culturally constructed artefacts play in organising uniquely human forms of thinking." (pp. 30-31).

One of the norm beliefs of SCT is mediation, or the use of items and tools to simplify an activity. For example, Vygotsky (1997) considered language a critical mediating instrument in social interaction and learning. He reasoned that everything is learned on two levels: first, through interaction with others, and then combined into the individuals' mental structure. In other words, learning happens in the first instance through interaction with others, who are more experienced and skilled, and who are in a position to guide and support the actions of the beginner. With regard to this point, Lantolf (2004) further stated that although humans use other cultural and social tools to learn, language remains the most important of these instruments. Indeed, a language, as Lantolf and Thorne (2007) stated, is "the most pervasive and powerful cultural artefact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves" (p. 205).

From a sociocultural viewpoint, language facilitates our learning and, therefore, students' L1 is seen by teachers as a resource in L2 learning. Students' L1 is seen both as an instrument for both communication and thought in students' speech. The L1 helps both social and metacognitive purposes in SCT classrooms. Thus, in a classroom, language assists not only a communicative purpose in teacher-student and student-students'dialogue but it is a psychological instrument as well. For instance, the common friendly greeting such as ' السلام عليكم' (Alsalam alaikuom) (peace be upon you) tends to be regularly used by learners and teachers in L2 classrooms in Arabic, as it represents both cultural and religious values. Thus, social and cultural functions cannot be separated.

Swain and Lapkin (2000) suggested that rejecting learners' admission to the L1 denies them a valuable cognitive tool. Other educational researchers see L1 as a mediational device and recommend that what happens in combined L2 discussions not only leads to learning but that it is learning in itself (Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Donato (1994), concluded

that “in social interaction, a knowledgeable teacher participant can create, using speech, supportive conditions in which the novice learner can participate, and extend current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence” (p. 52). In this regard, Vygotsky, (1978) stated that humans develop cognitively by building the meaning of what surrounds them; whether that is related to their societal setting or past actions. Both learning and development happen as a consequence of the individual’s interactions with their learning environment. Teaching aids usually simplify this communication; and when learning progresses, it results in the development and expansion of knowledge.

Ellis (2010) asserted that SCT is distinguished by theoretical variety and he defined the differences between cognitive SCT and social SCT in terms of language, representation, the social setting, learner identity, the learner's linguistic background, language learning, interaction, and more significantly, the methodology used in researching the L2 learning. The following table exemplifies these differences:

Table 2.1: Differences between cognitive and social SCT (Adapted from Ellis, 2010: pp. 28-29)

Dimension	Cognitive SCT	Social SCT
Language	Language seen as either a group of formalist rubrics or as a network of form-function mappings.	Language seen not just as a linguistic scheme but also as a varied set of a cultural practice, often best understood in the setting of broader relations of influence.
Mental representation	Two views: (1) as a group of rubrics that include the student's linguistic capability; (2) as a complicated network of relations among neutral modes.	In some social philosophies, representation is not deliberated at all. Vygotskyan methods highlight the semantic rather than the official features of the language that students adopt.
Social context	A complete circulation is prepared between 'second' and 'foreign' language settings. Social setting is understood as swaying the amount of acquisition and final level of aptitude reached, but not as touching the core developments responsible for achievement.	The social context is seen as both determining L2 use and developmental, and as something the participants equally construct. The social setting is where learning occurs and takes place.
Student identity	The student is seen as a 'non-native speaker'. Student identity is motionless.	The student is seen as having many identities that give chances to learn a language. Student’s identity is dynamic.

Learner's linguistic background	The student has a complete linguistic capability in his/her L1.	Students may be bilingual and may show variable degrees of ability in their various languages.
Input	Contribution is seen as linguistic data that helps as a cause for achievement. Contribution is viewed as related to, but distinguishable from interaction.	Contribution is seen as contextually built; it is both linguistic and non-linguistic.
Interaction	Communication is viewed as a foundation of input.	Communication is seen as generally a discussed incident and a means by which students are socialized into the L2 context and culture. Input and interaction are viewed as a socio-cognitive whole.
Language learning	L2 achievement happens inside the mind of the student as a consequence of input that encourages universal cognitive procedures.	L2 achievement is learning-in-action; it is not a mental event but a social and concerted one.

In fact, SCT suggests that students should create their learning within their setting and with the use of mediating tools. This building of knowledge covers understanding wholes, as well as parts, that are considered to be part of their environment. Similarly, EFL teachers need to understand what learners learn and what they perceive the world to be. EFL teachers need to be aware of their learners' learning styles. Thus, the role of teachers is to facilitate learning and learners should not be told everything, but they are encouraged, through questions, to formulate their knowledge.

In L2 classrooms in different EFL contexts, students have been motivated to participate by applying the L2. Indeed, researches from the EFL setting show that some students do not have the competence to use L2 only and consequently they tend to use L1 in their classrooms communications (Macaro, 2009; Sipra, 2013). In this regard, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that social communication facilitates cognitive progress and therefore, in the setting of a class, more social interaction, both student-teacher and student-student, is desired. L1 is essential to increase learners' class participation in the EFL classroom setting, where everyone's contribution is significant.

As amplified participation is necessary for better L2 learning, and as more recent research recommends that L1 use permits better participation, total rejection of L1 in an L2

learning classroom context may decrease learners' participation. In this regard, Anton and DiCamilla (1999) stated that the usage of L1 by the students has a significant cognitive part, offers scaffolding, aids to express interior speech, and also makes intersubjectivity. They added that in the practice of this combined arrangement, adopting a common L1 to explain the difficulties which might rise could support the L2 learning.

In the EFL classroom in Oman, which is the central focus of this research, interaction happens between teachers and learners and between learners and their classmates often through L2. However, at other times, this interaction is mediated by the use of Arabic language in the EFL context where all students speak the same L1. According to Brown (2001), these learners would use the L1 until such time that they have learned enough English to accomplish a short interaction with their teacher. For example, learners might sometimes get stuck and make use of Arabic to ask for their classmates' help. In a study by Reyes and Vallone (2008), they found that the use of L1 in students-students interaction supports the process of increasing learners' knowledge, and it is also an example of using what is known to progress and obtain what is challenging and new. Thus, a language class offers a situation where new learning builds on earlier knowledge and experience, where learning is facilitated through communications with others, where learning is a sequence of problem-solving, and where learning is a practice simplified by teachers and other learners.

2.2.3 Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)

In language learning and teaching contexts, the type of discourse between teachers and learners creates the main part of the educational process. In other words, what occurs in the classroom and how students and teachers co-construct information has become very important. The importance of classroom interaction is the critical component in communication, and it is in fact the heart of communication or what communication is all about (Brown, 2000). When the primary purpose of language teaching, which is to create communicatively competent learners, is taken into account, the role of classroom communication should be a strong consideration, since classrooms are one of the few contexts in which learners have the chance to use their L2 meaningfully, even if they are insufficient. According to Walsh (2006) good teaching "is concerned with more than good planning…Good decisions are those that are appropriate to the moment, not ones which 'follow the plan'" (p. 19). He further added that "interaction does not simply happen…in an acquisition rich classroom, [it] is instigated and sustained by the teacher… while learners clearly have a significant role to play, it is the teacher who has a prime responsibility" (p. 19).

Walsh (2011) further claimed that the main aim in classroom discourse analysis was not only to define the components of the classroom dialogue but also to confirm that teachers and learners developed the kind of interactional competence that would consequently lead to more active classrooms with learners being more actively involved in the learning practice. He also argued that anyone trying to develop learning and teaching should consider the classroom discourse and should consider the importance of classroom interactional competence (CIC). In line with this point, Walsh (2006) defined CIC as "teachers' and learners' ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning" (p. 132).

One feature CIC is the degree to which language usage and pedagogic aims meet, as language use and pedagogic objectives must be aligned. The idea of CIC builds on ideas connected to the importance of interactions in the language learning context and specifically focuses on how teachers' and learners' interactional choices produce learning opportunities in the classroom. Teachers establish CIC through their ability to use language that is suitable to both the classroom style and the students (Walsh, 2006).

Regarding the importance of classroom discourse adjustment, O'Neill and Geoghegan (2011) claimed that positive modifications in teacher-learners interactions depended on teacher-awareness of the lesson, discourse interactions, and the ability to self-monitor and self-evaluate to be able to modify their talk. Therefore, Walsh (2006) emphasised the importance of CIC as it "facilitates interactional space" in the classroom (p. 131). He argued that learners need space to contribute to the classroom interactions to enhance their learning. This could be obtained by increasing wait-time, reducing teacher echo (i.e. the repetition of a preceding utterance or learner's input) and helping extend learners' turns (Walsh, 2014), which will maximise the possibilities for learning chances in the classroom. For instance, in the classroom context, when the teacher aims to elicit ideas from the learners, CIC would be established if there were long pauses in the interactions (i.e. more than one second) after a teacher's question, giving learners the chance to form views and express them in their own time. In comparison, if the teacher frequently fills the silence in the classroom with needless teacher echo, he/she would not demonstrate CIC (Walsh, 2006a). Another feature of CIC, as Walsh (2006) claimed, is the teacher's ability to shape student contributions by "seeking clarification, scaffolding, modelling or repairing learner input", thus "helping learners to say what they mean" (p. 131). Walsh (2014) describes this feature as "shaping [which] involves taking a learner response and doing something with it rather than simply accepting it" (p. 5).

Walsh's (2006, 2006b) study was particularly important as it resulted in developing the SETT (self-evaluation of teacher talk) framework. This tool allows individual teachers to evaluate the level to which their language use and pedagogic goals are aligned and associated, in order to increase their interactional awareness and expand the quality of their teacher talk. As Walsh (2006b) described it:

> "This instrument was used, firstly, to enable teachers to analyse their own classroom data; secondly, to facilitate participation in reflective feedback interviews. Essentially, teachers made a series (5 or 6) of 'snapshot' recordings of their own lessons (each lasting about 15 minutes); analyzed their recordings by (a) identifying modes and (b) transcribing examples of interactional features using the SETT grid; finally, they discussed their assessments with the researcher in a post-assessment feedback interview" (p. 134).

The SETT tool contains a variety of analytical ideas and procedures that are planned to increase the awareness of teachers about the language they use in class, the suitability of these conversational designs to the pedagogic purposes they follow, and the learning chances they produce for their learners. This tool has been shown to be very beneficial as it offers accessible metalanguage for the teachers and learners to debate and analyse classroom dialogue in a perceptive way without being too difficult. Walsh (2006) identified four classroom modes, each of which has its own typical interactional features associated with defined pedagogic objectives (see Table 2.2). He claimed that by using a mode of analysis and the SETT framework, teachers can improve a fine-grained understanding of the connection between teacher talk, interaction and learning, which can then allow them to identify methods to expand their classroom performances and to make appropriate changes.

According to Walsh (2006), the first step of this assessment practice includes teachers identifying diverse steps and stages of the lesson, which he labeled "modes" (p. 66). Each mode has a set of 'interactional features' (e.g. display questions) aligned with certain pedagogic aims (e.g. to check and display answers). He recommended that teachers could use a mode analysis along with the SETT framework to analyse the suitability of the interactional features relative to the modes of the lesson practice. The framework provides teachers with a way of describing their discourse and connecting it to lesson purposes. It assumes that lessons are made up of a sequence of events or 'modes', each with different aims and interactional features, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: The SETT grid (Modified from Walsh, 2003: p. 3)

Mode	Pedagogic Aims	Interactional Features
Managerial	- To convey information - To organize the physical learning contexts - To present or accomplish any task - To move and change from a learning manner to another one	- A sole, extended teacher turn which uses clarifications and/or guidelines - The usage of temporary markers - The usage of conformational forms - A lack of student participation
Materials	- To run language exercise around a part of material - To produce answers in linked to the materials - To check and confirm responses - To explain when needed - To assess inputs	- Wide use of questions - Form intensive feedback - Helpful repair - The usage of scaffolding
Skills and systems	- To allow students to produce right forms - To allow students to use the L2 - To offer helpful feedback - To provide students with exercise in sub-skills - To show right answers	- To use of straight repair - The usage of scaffolding - Extended teacher opportunities - Show questions - Teacher echo - Explaining requests - Form intensive feedback
Classroom context	- To allow students to express themselves - To create a setting - To encourage spoken fluency	- Extended student chances - Short teacher turns - Minimal repair - Content response - Referential queries and questions - Scaffolding - Explanation requirements

Shamispour and Allami (2014) applied Walsh's (2006) list of interactional features related to turn-taking that either supported the scaffolding of learning or resisted it. Their research findings show that such interactional may be maximised through increasing wait-time, reducing teacher talk and supporting extended learner turns.

Generally, dialogic interactions are those communications whereby learners ask questions, comment on ideas that arise in class, clarify and state opinions, and are given extra time for thinking. Learners ask for the support of their teacher who also needs to care for learners' initiatives and be able to use dialogue to provide stability and confirm interchange.

The consequences for L2 learning in traditional textbook-orientated classrooms versus those that are using 'modern' pedagogy, based on social constructivist theory, are acknowledged by Tochon (2014) who has demonstrated that students actually acquire the language through opportunities to use it for real life purposes in order to make meaning. Similarly, Shamispour and Allami (2014) applied Walsh's (2006) list of interactional features related to turn-taking that either supported the scaffolding of learning or resisted it. Their research findings show that such interactions are maximised through increasing wait-time, reducing teacher talk and supporting extended learner turns. Wait-time refers to "teachers giving adequate time for a learner to reply, whereas teacher echo happens when the talk period is stopped as the teacher just repeats the learner's speech and, consequently, acts as a fence to supporting the scaffolding dialog or turn-taking opportunity of the dialogic conversation" (O'Neill, 2018, p. 9).

Table 2.3 below provides a comparison of the influence of dialogic and monologic learning settings on learners' experiences. The comparative features noticeably display the limits in monologic learning settings and explain the need for change towards a critical pedagogical approach whereby teachers could be transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988, as cited in O'Neill, 2018), able to be informed in the use of their cognitive and metacognitive processes to be able to lead the scaffolding of students' learning in the best possible means. This means that such teachers would be conscious of their thinking processes during a class and would be checking the pedagogical dialogue they run so as to make changes to exploit the scaffolding of learners' learning (e.g. extended wait time, modelling, extended learner turn, seeking clarification). This reflects the significance of the metalanguage that relates to the learning, and the necessity for learners to have learnt this to be able to join and understand the teacher talk and related debate (O'Neill, 2018).

Table 2.3 Comparison between dialogic and monologic teaching practices (Adapted form Edwards-Groves, Anstey & Bull, 2014, pp. 81-82)

Dialogic teaching practices are often experienced as:	Monologic teaching practices are often experienced as:
a learning focused partnership	directive compliance relationship
open, participatory and collaborative	a one-way transmission of knowledge
the typical IRE is disrupted with a 4th turn	a typical 3-part IRE structure
talk is a leverage for deep learning and reasoning	talk for organising students, behaviour and resources
more dynamic, active and activist	more static and passive
process orientated – making learning and knowledge public	knowledge driven – ideas often remain invisible
more students have a voice	more students being silent

active listening to teachers and peers	teacher centred, directed and mediated
equitable ways of relating	hierarchical ways of relating
shared responsibility for learning	students responsible for complying
more time for students thinking and talking	less time for students thinking and talking
more opportunities for thinking and talking	less room for negotiation of meaning
more time for rehearsing and consolidating ideas	'on the run' thinking and articulation of ideas
students develop from what they are thinking	students trying to guess what is in teachers' mind
students positioned as thinkers, theorises, holders of a position	students positioned as followers of instructions and more simply as being correct or incorrect
making learning and thinking and knowledge accountable	making compliance accountable or prioritised
more open-ended questioning enabling reasoning, hypothesising and 'thinking aloud'	questioning for known answers or more closed questioning
divergent ideas accepted and valued	having more convergence of ideas
more democratic	more autocratic
power and agency being dispersed more equally	having power and agency dominated by the teacher
time for talk being more equitable – the 'floor is shared'	the floor being generally the province of the teacher

2.2.4 Individual differences

Learning L2 should not only be limited in creating a communicative learning environment but also in considering other factors that enhance learning to take place. In fact, there are many other vital aspects that are specifically linked to the learners themselves and that are a significant factor in learning the L2, including individual differences. Thus, it was important for this study to consider learners' individual differences in terms of learning strategies, as the student participants involved in this study belong to a specific sociocultural L2 context where English language is a foreign language.

According to Arı and Deniz (2008), individual differences in students are personal differences specific to each learner, and they contain different variables such as intelligence, interest, socioeconomic status, background, opinions, gender, aptitude, language learning styles, physical features, and personality characters. As a result, not every student learns in the same way, and not every method attracts the interest of each learner on an identical level. Students who differ in achievement abilities need diverse activities and assignments (Good & Brophy, 2008). Therefore, during the lesson time, it is very important for a teacher to use different teaching methods and strategies where learners can use different abilities and skills in order to create a successful and rich L2 learning environment. Tomlison (2010) has stated that

learners' performance increases when learners' strengths and special needs are complemented by different teaching methods.

As the L2 education is concerned, researches have shown that learners with a diversity in intelligence capabilities can be successful in learning L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Consequently, this leads us to think about what really makes a good EFL learner. Moreover, the features of a good language learner could differ from one context to another. In this regard, Nunan (2005) summarised these features as autonomy, organization, creativity, and use of previous knowledge of languages, including their L1. Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (2006) suggested characteristics such as motivation, intellectual abilities, and learning preferences as the most important learning variables that should be taken into consideration when attempting to create what really makes a good EFL learner. These individual differences are also noticeable through learning styles and approaches that L2 learners apply.

The degree of motivation that EFL learners bring to the classrooms affect their learning accomplishment (Brown, 2007). Motivation is considered to be one of the vital affective aspects that positively influences language learning. Gardner and et al (1997) described language learning stimulation as the "degree to which a specific work or strive to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 10). Similarly, Renandya (2014) claimed that the success of language learning has been credited to the learners' motivation levels. During the process of teaching and learning, motivation plays an essential role in increasing learners' enthusiasm, commitment, and involvement. Furthermore, without sufficient motivation, even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to achieve any beneficial language learning improvement (Dornyei, 2001a). Therefore, students should keep their motivation during the classroom activities as their enthusiasm affects their learning success. In this regard, Dornyei (2001) argued that "teacher skills in motivating learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness" (p. 116). Teachers should observe conditions under which learners obtain language and make changes towards creating the best learning situations, or in Dornyei's (2001) words, "all students are motivated to learn under the right conditions, and that you can provide these conditions in your classroom" (p. 118).

Motivation in learning a foreign language is separated into four components: intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental, and integrative motivation. Thus, L2 learners may differ in their motivation based on their learning aims and the contexts in which they are studying. Additionally, Culhane (2004) stated that instrumental motivation relates to the learner's main

concern for language development, while integrative motivation considers the learner's readiness and interest in encouraging L2 learning through social communications with speakers of the L2. In other words, L2 learners would be recognised as instrumentally motivated learners if they were seen to learn the L2 with the aim to apply for a better job or to pass examinations.

Regardless of whether instrumental motivation or integrative motivation have a more significant part in L2 learning practice, Cook (2001) reported that integrative motivation was viewed as greater and superior to instrumental motivation for guessing the achievement of L2 learning. If learners appreciate the target culture, they may read literature or exercise the L2 and thus be able to increase their language abilities. Figure 2.1 illustrates the types of motivation involved in learning a foreign language.

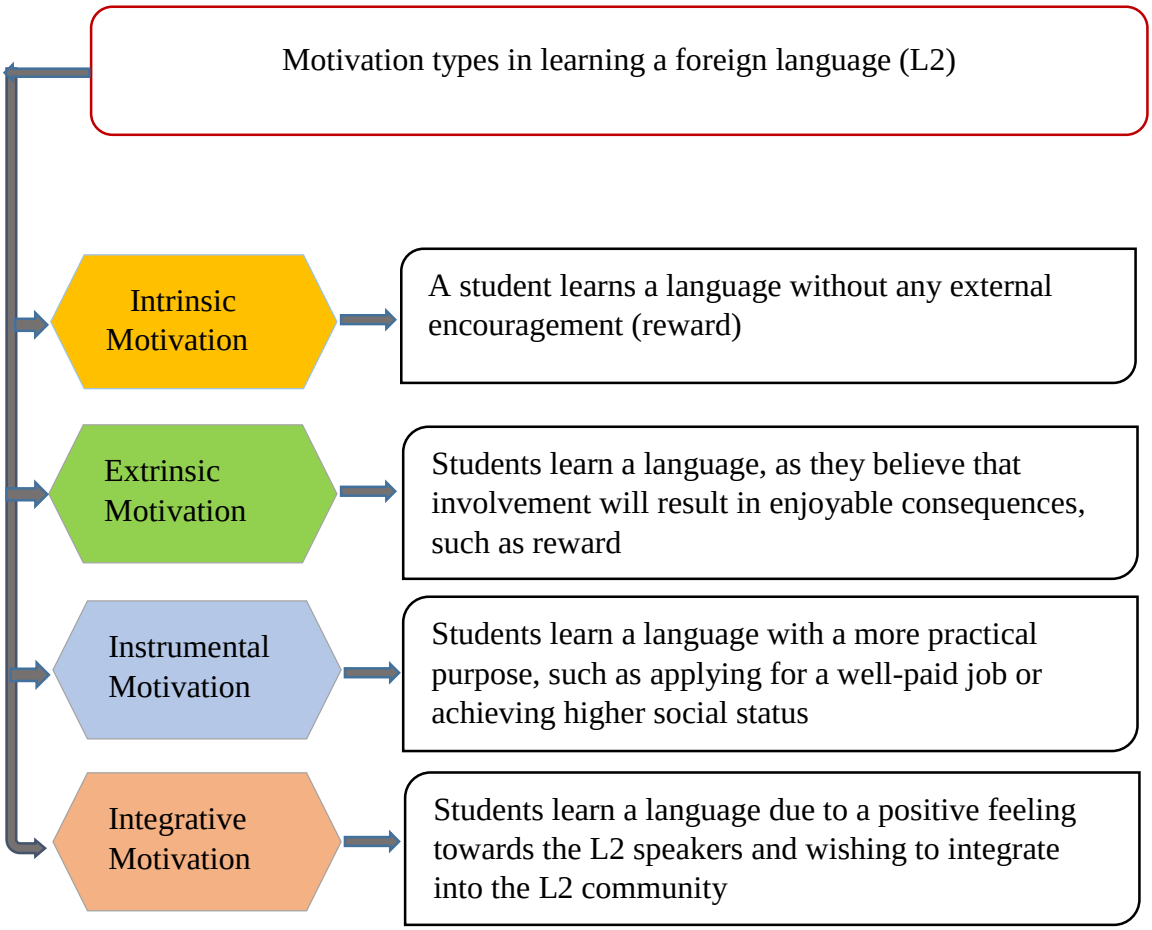

Figure 2.1: *Motivation types in learning a foreign language (L2) (developed for this research)*

2.2.5 Clarification of practice and reasons for L1 usage in EFL classes

A number of studies have been carried out in various EFL contexts around the world, which have explored the roles and functions of L1 in L2 classrooms (Al-Nofie, 2010; Cameron, 2001; Cook, 2005; Nation, 2001; Song, 2009; Tang, 2002). In the following section, some of the practical studies of using L1 in EFL classrooms are reviewed. It is significant to note that it is quite difficult to classify the functions of each teacher and learner's use of L1 because it is hard to find a specific reason for each use. In this regard, Ferguson (2009) argued that,

> "…switches between L1 and L2 are very often multifunctional, the implication being that it is therefore difficult to allocate a discrete determinate meaning to every switch. An issue here also, given the luxuriance of functions identified, is the absence of any agreed taxonomy of pedagogic functions, one reason being that, given the almost unlimited local meanings generated by code juxtaposition in discourse, any such taxonomy would be open-ended" (p.131).

In EFL classrooms, teachers may resort to L1 for many pedagogical purposes, and Ferguson (2009) highlighted that occasional use of L1 served many teaching and learning functions related to pedagogical purpose and classroom management. In this regard, Sali (2014) surveyed the purposes of teachers' practice of L1 in three Turkish EFL classrooms using observations and interviews. The results showed three primary functions of L1 used by teachers: first, pedagogical purposes related to communicating the academic content; second, management purposes to set classroom proceedings and interactions efficiently; and finally, cultural or social purposes to build up a rapport. This matches Edstrom's' (2006) study who stated that using L1 could be done in three main situations. First, L1 may apply to expressing feelings and building up relationships with learners. Second, using L1 may help learners to comprehend target cultures and to describe any connection between language and realities it presents. Finally, L1 use may be valuable in classroom management.

In a similar vein, Song and Andrew (2009) conducted a research in a Chinese context to examine teachers' opinions of the role of L1 in L2 teaching and learning. They adopted interviews and observations as collection tools. Their findings show that all teacher participants resorted to Chinese (L1) in different situations. Additionally, the core purposes of L1 in the observed classes were: explaining language aspects in each paragraph, defining the vocabularies' meanings, and understanding the structure or grammar. The aspects that influenced EFL teachers' practice of L1 were teachers' L2 capability, learners' receptivity and time limitations.

Still, researchers' interpretations about the suitability of different usages of L1 in L2 classes are diverse. For instance, Cook (2001) proposed two situations where the EFL teachers could use the L1 wisely. First, to express meaning, containing testing the words meaning or sentences and clarifying grammar. Second, to organise classrooms including forming exercise, communicating with separate learners and keeping discipline, He stated that the L1 might be used when "the cost of the L2 is too great" (p. 418). Similarly, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) claimed that the L1 was appreciated when used as a means of increasing the contribution to help students understand, for example, when checking understanding, emphasising important thoughts and opinions, or related terminology, and drawing students' consideration to what they previously know. According to Cook (2001b), teachers use their L1:

> "To offer a short-cut for giving commands and clarifications, to build up interlinked L1 and L2 understanding in the learners' minds, to carry out learning task through

cooperative discussion with clasmate learners and to develop L2 events such as code-switching for later real-life use" (p. 418).

Another study was done by Pei-Shi (2012) in a Taiwanese context and identified that the functions of L1 use were recognised by learners as clarifying compound grammar rubrics and complex ideas and defining new vocabulary words. The learners responded that using L1 in EFL class assisted them to comprehend complex concepts and it decreased anxiety. Moreover, the teachers felt they needed to use L1 in classrooms as they claimed that L1 was useful in their teaching, particularly to define and explain unfamiliar concepts.

Learners' L2 proficiency levels seem to be one of the important reasons for EFL teachers' use of L1 as shown in some studies. For example, Macaro (2000) found that the most important variables in teachers' attitudes to L1 use is the ability of learners. He claimed that low proficient learners generally refuse the exclusive use of L1 in their EFL classrooms. Correspondingly, Lo (2015) investigated the role of L1 in an EFL context in Hong Kong. He concluded that teachers' usage of L1 when teaching L2 varied depending on the students' levels of proficiency. In other words, teachers used more L1 when dealing with students who were less proficient in the L2 than when dealing with learners who were more proficient. For the less proficient learners, L1 was used to develop learners' metalinguistic awareness, to deal with learners, and to clarify the context content. This is in line with a study conducted by Pablo and et al (2011), who found that teachers believed that the frequency of their L1 practice varied according to the learners` levels of proficiency. They claimed that at foundation levels L1 (Spanish) was needed more, while at higher levels less use of the L1 was required.

Al-Nofaie (2010) also examined teachers and learners' perspectives to applying the Arabic language in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. She concluded that EFL teachers and students had optimistic attitudes towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms. Teachers tended to adopt the Arabic language with beginners for giving examination instructions, translating new vocabulary, and clarifying grammar rules. Regarding learners' perspectives towards the use of Arabic in their EFL classrooms, the consequences revealed that most were in favour of its use as it provided relax, although they believed that Arabic use should be minimised and only used in particular class situations.

Another common function of L1 use is to give instructions, and a number of research support using L1 in giving instructions for different purposes. For example, Cook (2008) indicated that using L1 in giving instructions is helpful. Similarly, a study conducted by Macaro

(2001) revealed that L1 could be applied for "giving procedural instructions" (p. 69). Additionally, Cameron (2001) stated that some guidelines and instructions might be more complicated than activities, so using L1 is reasonable in such cases.

Another significant purpose for using L1 in L2 classes is to save time. In this regard, Turnbull (2001) claimed: "I know from my personal experience that it is tempting to use the L1 to save time" (p. 536). Wharton (2007) indeed defined L1 as a "time-saving device" (p. 12). Similarly, Shimizu (2006) reported that "time-saving" is one of the principle arguments that researchers have identified about using L1 (p. 77).

Achieving natural communication between teachers and their students and between students themselves seems to be another important reason for applying L1 in EFL classrooms. According to Nation (2003), it is easier and more communicative to apply L1 in EFL classes in order to assist interaction and communication between teachers and learners. He reported that learners who discussed L2 tasks using their L1 succeeded more than those who used only L2 in their discussions. In line with the study by Nation (2003), Miles (2004) stressed that L1 might be used in EFL classrooms to break any barriers between teachers and students.

Moreover, L1 is a useful tool to give feedback and clarify meanings. According to Bouangeune (2009), L1 use to give feedback to students supports understanding. When teachers are convinced that students have comprehended what is presented to them, they go on teaching. If teachers feel that comprehension has not happened, they will have to modify their teaching plans. Additionally, Cook (2008) argued that giving feedback in L1 was more real and more satisfactory to learners.

In addition to the above L1 use situations, Cook (2008) highlighted some other L1 applications in EFL classrooms: "highlighting particular information, switching to a topic suitable for one language, changing the speaker's role, qualifying the topic, reporting someone else's speech and for interjecting" (p. 176). In another study by Copland and Neokleous (2011), their findings indicated that L1 was helpful in positions such as question and answer, markers, giving suggestions and thoughts" (p. 171). Jadallah and Hasan (2011) have emphasised the following practices of L1 use in EFL classes:

- "L1 helps learners to be stress-free and gives a sense of security
- L1 utilisation protects students from feeling frustrated during L2 class time
- L1 allows teachers to make use of more reliable texts, which consequently provide understandable input and faster L2 achievement

- L1 is beneficial to maintain communication in L2 classrooms where learners express their ideas in both languages" (p. 6).

2.3 Arguments for and against L1 use in EFL classrooms

2.3.1 Arguments for L1 use in EFL classrooms

Researchers, teachers, and learners have criticised the monolingual approach. Most of the previous studies explored the L1 inclusion in L2 setting revealed that both EFL teachers and learners have constructive ideas and attitudes towards its implementation in their classrooms. Researchers reported on the benefits of L1 inclusion and asserted that it could be used in certain situations, including for facilitating vocabulary, grammar instructions, classroom and behaviour management, checking comprehension, and interaction (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Macaro, 2001; Tian & Wang, 2009). In ths regard, Littlewood and Yu (2011) reported that L1 is more than welcomed in L2 classes. Additionally, Tsukamoto and et al (2012) argued that the L2-only method not be definitive in supporting language learning.

This is in line with Cook (2001) who also argued that L1 should be seen as a resource and a tool, rather than as something to avoid. Butzkamm (2003) also argued that "the mother tongue is the greatest asset people bring to the task of foreign language learning and provides a language acquisition support system" (p. 29). In addition, Nation (2003) and Larsen-Freeman (2012) declared that L1 should not be rejected from EFL classrooms. Nation (2003) noted that the opportunity to use L1 to discuss performance helps the learners to accomplish an advanced level of L2 performance. He added that there are numerous means of teaching new L2 vocabularies, but the translation to L1 is the most effective one. He further advocated using L1 when the meaning to be carried out in L2 was beyond students 'competences', and he believed that "a small amount of L1 discussion can help overcome some of the obstacles" (p. 3).

La Campa and Nassaji (2009) carried out a study on German as a foreign language in Canada and to find out real reasons why the two participated teachers used English rather than German. They found that interpretation of vocabulary from German to English was one of the most popular utilizations of the L1 (English). They also found that L1 was used to link and compare the two languages, for classroom management and to give instructions. In addition, personal comments and teacher-student interactions were run in L1 rather than in L2.

Al-Harbi (2010) claimed that using L1 in the EFL classrooms was a valuable device. Consequently, EFL teachers should spectacle the similarities and differences between the learners' L1 and L2 languages, particularly for beginning and intermediate learners. Furthermore, she pointed out that by utilizing L1 in the L2 classrooms, explicit mistakes could be reduced, and the learners might be able to identify and correct themselves when such faults occur. However, other studies confirmed the importance of L1 in the comparison between the two languages when teaching grammar. For example, Moore (2013) conducted a study in Japan that involved EFL students from a college level, which involved observation of L1 use by students during the preparation stage leading up to two verbal presentation activities, one in the first semester, the other in the second semester. The findings showed that in the second task, the quantity of L1 (Japanese) use between the same groups increased due to negotiations around use of forms in a content-creation activity.

Some other researchers trust that using L1 is a helpful teaching tool in EFL classrooms. For example, L1 could be used to enhance learners' understanding and L2 learning (Cook, 2005; Tang, 2002). Jabbar (2012) argued that L1 could help L2 learners understand new vocabularies, clarify problematic grammar points, and provide more explicit guidelines as well as recommendations. According to Cook (2005), using L1 in EFL classrooms is part of regular communication when both teachers and learners share two languages; therefore, there is no reason why learners should not be permitted to make use of their L1 in the EFL classroom. In addition, he emphasised that L1 enabled students' understanding of the resources presented in the EFL classrooms, which consequently saved time for both teachers and learners. He added that L1 could be used to check word meanings and explain some grammar points.

In this regard, Nation (2003) explained that using L1 in EFL class was supportive and could be used to save class time, to encourage learners and to decrease their anxiety and to present the significant differences between L1 and L2. He added that L1 use helped to make classroom instructions and rules clearer to learners and maintained their discipline.

Similarly, Tang (2002) reported that L1 could be used in low and average proficiency levels in EFL classrooms to clarify word meanings, complex ideas, to clarify compound grammar points, and to give instructions. Additionally, Alshammari (2011) and Machaal (2012) claimed that the L1 usage could increase learners understanding, save class time and make the learning process more effective.

In his study, Samadi (2011) emphasised the roles and benefits of L1 in EFL classrooms and mentioned that it could be used to establish a stress-free classroom environment, and for managing the classroom, giving instructions, translating new words, and explaining grammar points. Some other researchers stated that L1 is valuable to establish communication in classrooms. Therefore, students express their ideas in L1 if they could not understand or when they want to simplify a word meaning in L2.

Furthermore, Tian and Macaro (2012) found that a combination of both L1 and L2 helps in vocabulary and grammar learning. Similarly, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) reported that allowing learners to use their L1 could help them to achieve and do activities at a compound cognitive level. For instance, the L1 would not be used to make the commands and teachers instructions understandable and consequently to motivate the communicative value of the task. She recommended considering four diverse features in relative to L1 utilisation in the EFL classroom:

- The circumstances under which L1 may be successfully used
- Teacher translation in EFL classrooms as a valuable practical approach.
- The L1 usage as a cognitive link to L2
- "L1 usage in the EFL classroom as most valuable with low proficiency levels and beginning students" (p. 23).

Some researchers have confirmed that avoidance of L1 usage is doubtful especially if both teachers and learners share the same first language (Raschka & et al., 2009). Additionally, Macaro (2005) claimed that banning the L1 use in EFL classrooms deprives the L2 students of a critical communication strategy.

2.3.2 Arguments against using L1 in EFL classrooms

A number of researchers and teachers support the L2 usage in class as the merely teaching medium and communication. For example, Ellis (2005) stated that one of the central values of taught language learning is general L2 involvement, whether inside the class through communication and interaction or outside the class by producing chances for learners to make use of the L2. In addition, Hall and Cook (2013) claimed that "English is best taught and learned without the use of students' own language(s)" (p. 7).

According to Ellis (2005), teachers who overuse their students' L1 prevent their learners from accessing a critical language practice in which students try to learn about what is

being conducted in their EFL classrooms. Pan and Pan (2010) also stated that using (L1) in EFL classrooms contexts is often criticised for its possible interfering with the acquisition of the L2. Moreover, Turnbull (2001) asserted that learners do not yield when teachers depend extensively on using learners' L1, principally when the L2 teacher is the only linguistic accessible model and the core source of L2 input. He further stated that the L1 might be adopted only to assist learners' L2 learning process and teachers may use the learners' L1 only to guarantee the learners' understanding of grammatical rules or new terms.

In EFL teaching contexts, teachers are guided to maximise the L2 usage and practice, but this does not essentially mean that L1 should be fully banned. In this regard, Turnbull (2001) suggested that the "use of L1 and L2 should be seen as complementary" (p. 535). Similarly, Levine (2003) also supported 'maximising' L2 usage and at the same time allowing L1 for educationally sound purposes (p.343). Moreover, Meiring and Norman (2002) suggested that the "priority must be to establish the benefit of pupil use of target language and ways of maximising it" (p. 29).

Some other researchers consider that the L1 usage in EFL classrooms negatively affects learners' successes and ability in L2, because of the skills they learn in classes. In this regards, Sharma, (2006) stated that the rationale for using only L2 in the classroom was that "the more students are exposed to English, the more quickly they will learn; as they hear and use English, they will internalize it to begin to think in English; the only way they will learn it is if they are forced to use it" (p. 80). Additionally, for some other researchers, the use of L1 is considered to be a barrier that stops students from obtaining the appreciated input in L2 classrooms (Ellis, 2005; Mahadeo, 2006; Tsao, 2001).

In a similar study, Nation (2003) stated that if the classroom was the only place for learners to drill and exercise the L2, it would be better to have the maximism of L2 input in the class. He made some recommendations including role play activities and games to overcome this problem. In addition, aiming to enhance and maximize L2 input, he suggested that teachers should use a task that meets the learners' abilities and proficiency levels to encourage them to participate in the class discussion using L2.

Similarly, Sipra (2007) suggested the following recommendations to encourage L2 use: he advised that the EFL teachers should select suitable resources for learners according to their proficiency levels and they should prepare warm-up activities for students. Moreover, he added that teachers should encourage learners to become better English speakers by assigning

speaking based assignments including making interviews and voice recorded reports. He further suggested that teachers use some activities related to daily routine practices aiming to simplify the L2 comprehension. In this regard, Cook (2001) identified three essential values of the L2 use:

- The learning of L2 should be through maximum exposure to it.
- Active learning includes the separation and distinction between L1 and L2.
- The significance of L2 being taught through its repeated use.

2.4 Perspectives towards the L1 use

2.4.1 Teachers perspectives towards the L1 use

As previously mentioned, many studies have been carried out to explore using the first language (L1) in English language classrooms in varied EFL settings around the world. In the following sections, studies that have relevance to this study are discussed. These studies are categorized into two parts: first, earlier studies that have focused on teachers' perspectives on using L1 in different languages contexts and, second, a review of former studies about learners' insights on the use of L1 in diverse language contexts.

In a study conducted by Kovacic and Kirinic (2011) examined teachers and learners' perspectives on using Croatian (L1) in English classrooms in Croatia. They investigated whether the first language should be utilised in L2 classrooms or whether it should be banned. The findings show that both teachers and learners agreed that the Croatian (L1) could be used judiciously in the L2 classroom to support specific learning functions. The study findings also revealed that most participants agreed that Croatian use was necessary for explaining difficult concepts and ideas, clarifying grammar points and in speaking activities.

In a similar study carried out in Japan, McMillan and Rivers (2011) conducted a study on 29 native speakers teaching English in one of the Japanese university, adopting a questionnaire concerning their observations of the use of learners' L1 in an English-only policy institute. They found that L1 could simplify communication and support understanding in EFL classrooms. They also found that the EFL teachers with a less proficient in learners' first language had affirmative attitudes about applying it in their classrooms. In line with this study, Isamil (2011) reported that native speaking EFL teachers held constructive perspectives for applying learners' L1 more than the non-native speaking teachers.

In an another similar study, Hidayati (2012) investigated teachers' perspectives by conducting a study on the use of Bahasa Indonesia. Her study concluded with results show that when the teachers used a more and more of the Bahasa (L1), the degree of student communication and class interaction was higher. In the Chinese context, Tang (2002) carried out a similar study using interviews and classroom observation for data collection. The results showed that L1 was used by the majority of participating teachers and their learners. Moreover, he found that L1 (Chinese) was used for two main reasons: effectiveness and because it was less time-consuming.

Macaro (2000) mentioned a number of studies that reported the following findings regarding EFL teachers' perceptions:

- Teachers find L1 is helpful for many teaching functions including explaining grammar rubrics, building a relationship with learners, clarifying instructions and for classroom management.
- Many teachers supported the idea of using L1 in teaching and learning L2
- The majority of teachers considered L2 to be the dominant language in EFL classrooms
- Learners' age and L2 proficiency were found as the key reasons of teachers' L1 utilisation in EFL classrooms.

2.4.2 Students' perspectives towards the L1 use

A number of researchers investigated learners' perceptions towards using L1 in their EFL classrooms (Ahmad, 2009; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Levine, 2003; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Pablo & et al., 2011). This section aims to identify learners' perceptions about using L1 from different EFL background contexts. According to Vanichakorn (2009), learners' attitudes towards L1 use play an important role in their EFL learning. Consequently, investigating learners' perceptions and comparing the similarity between learners' and teachers' perceptions regarding the practice of L1 in the L2 classrooms should be taken into account (Nazary, 2008).

Most studies showed that students generally supported L1 use in EFL classrooms for different purposes. For example, Levine (2003) conducted a study on the attitudes of university learners and teachers concerning the practice of L1 and L2 languages. His participants were learners of German, Spanish, and French. The participants were either native speakers of

English or bilingual speakers. The findings showed that both teachers and learners frequently used the L1 to argue about class homework, and for class management.

Sharma (2006) conducted a similar study involving the L1 usage in English classrooms settings for secondary school students in Nepal. He applied classroom observation of four teachers and questionnaire answers of one hundred learners and twenty secondary school EFL teachers. Participants responded that they agree to occasional utilization of learners' L1 in the English classrooms for several aims: to clarify grammar rubrics, to create a close rapport between learners and their teachers and to simplify the meaning of ambiguous vocabulary words.

Huang (2006) explored learners' opinions towards using L1 in the Taiwanese EFL context. He found that learners believed that their teachers should make use of the L1 to explain grammar for a better understanding. Students also believed that the L1 usage should be 25% of class time and consequently, the L2 (English) should be used for the rest of class time. Participant learners also liked their teachers to apply L1 for class brainstorming ideas and clarifying problematic conceptions.

Another study conducted by Saito and Ebsworth (2004) explored learners' perceptions towards L1 usage in English classrooms among Japanese learners. The findings indicated that learners believed that using their L1 (Japanese) was beneficial to them. Most of them preferred to have Japanese teachers who could understand and speak to them and would be able to clarify concepts and terms in L1 (Japanese).

Carson and Kashihara (2012) and Ahmad (2009) conducted their studies on the role of L1 in teaching the English language in Malaysia. They tried to identify students' preferences regarding the use of their L1 in English as FFL classrooms. In both studies, a questionnaire completed by the students attending a communication course in English permitted the investigators to determine the main positions where students considered the use of their L1 to be required. These are checking for comprehension, clarifying challenging ideas, and defining new vocabulary words. Learners also reported that teachers' translating between L1 and L2 languages makes them feel less lost, tense, and more comfortable during class time. In addition, Carson and Kashihara's (2012) study emphasised the relationship between students' ability and the need of L1 as a supportive learning tool. Also, L1 was found to be valuable in building a relationship, particularly with low proficiency learners. According to Macaro (2005), using L1 helps with "avoidance of input modification" (p. 72). He stressed that L1 could be adopted to

build personal relationships with learners and in teaching grammar. Ahmad's (2009) findings showed that using L1 by EFL teachers could help learners to carry out exercises effectively and understand new vocabularies, as well as any problematic concepts related to grammar. His study also stressed the fact that translation between the two languages should be seen as a strategy but not as a teaching method.

On the other hand, findings from relevent studies mainly focused on learners' perceptions have revealed different views. For example, Nazary (2008) conducted a study in an Iranian setting. The findings showed that learners in different proficiency levels were reluctant to use their L1 in the EFL context and preferred to be exposed to the L2 only. Similarly, the results of a similar study undertaken by Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011) in Iran, revealed that both low proficient and highly proficient learners did not want their L1 (Persian) to be used in their L2 classrooms as they both supported L2 to be the dominant language used.

2.5. Studies on the Arabic language use in EFL contexts

English is exclusively used as an instruction language in classroom setups where English is taught as a foreign language (Ahmad & et al., 2018). Various current researches have been conducted to determine effects of using Arabic in the EFL classroom. One of the core debates that have been apparent around the acquisition of second language is the use of first language in learning and teaching the target language. This controversial concern has resulted in the development of various supporting and opposing arguments. Recent studies have asserted that virtual position redirects a lot of attention at exclusive use of the target language and can only be learned through the use of L1. For research about maximal position, it has been argued that foreign languages can only be learned through the utilization of the foreign language itself despite a few instances of structured references that are permitted. The optimal position, on the contrary, supports judicious utilization of the native language.

There have been multiple arguments against the use of English in the EFL classroom (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). One of the basis arguments is that the use of L1 to enhance EFL learning is that it prevents the learners from learning the new language (Ahmad & et al., 2018). Advocates of this position argue that the EFL classroom setup is the only place where the learners can get exposed to the second language (Alrabah & et al.,2016). Consequently, proponents of monolingual approach tend to argue that the process is very similar to the learning process of the second language (Alshehri, 2017). They are, therefore, attributed to success in the

enhancement of proficiency in the second language. They also assert that teachers who utilize L1 tend to deprive the learners on their chance of receiving input in the foreign language.

However, results from further studies have been conducted to evaluate this notion have proved that the use of L1 has facilitative effects in the L2 teaching (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). If applied judiciously and systematically, these studies have suggested that the use of L1 in the EFL classroom setup has more advantages and disadvantages. In retrospect to that, supporters of bilingual approach have shared psychological and cognitive reasons behind the use of L1 in the EFL classroom environment (Ahmad & et al., 2018). Their perceptions lies on the basic assumption that the use of native language removes the underlying psychological barriers between the learners' brains and the foreign language being provided to them thereby helping them getting rid of the anxiety that is associated with the acquisition of the foreign language.

The review of current research shows strong arguments in favor of native language and suggests its usefulness as a mediating and cognitive tool in learning and teaching a foreign language (Ahmad & et al., 2018). The use of L1 is further acknowledged as a significant cognitive tool for conveying tasks that are considered to be linguistically and cognitively complex. In addition, researchers supporting the use of L1 in the EFL classroom context argue that there is no substantial evidence suggesting that restricting the use of L1 could necessarily improve the L2 learning efficiency of the students (Alshehri, 2017). Hence, code-switching in teaching L2 is highly proposes in relation to the pedagogical objectives.

Using L1 in the EFL teaching and learning is gaining a lot of significances as presented by recent studies. Learners and teachers consider the use of mother tongue as a productive, mediating tool that negotiates and necessitates the learning and teaching process. Researchers have gone a step further and enlist a wide range of purposeful uses of native language in the EFL classroom set up (Al-Ta'ani, 2019). These uses include and are not limited to presenting grammatical rules, explaining errors, giving feedback and maintaining discipline within the classroom. Moreover, current studies have investigated the reasons why students switch to L1 in the EFL classroom contexts. For instance, some researches have indicated that a majority of Arab students would switch to L1 when they are not able to express their ideas or views in English (Alrabah & et al., 2016). Likewise, the overall purpose of the learners to use L1 is for interpersonal interaction and ensuring that there is focused attention on vocabulary and grammar. Other learners would choose to apply L1 because they are not motivated to communicate in the second language or generally not proficient in it.

In summary, these studies relate to the Omani context that is being investigated in this study because they provide detailed explanation about the use of Arabic language to aid the teaching of English language. The studies offer a summary of both opposing and supporting views by researchers thereby providing the concerned stakeholders with a chance of either choosing to support or oppose the use of L1 in EFL classroom context. Moreover, these studies relate to the Omani context because it provides an overview of the role of mother tongue in either aiding or limiting the proficiency of the students in the acquisition of L2. The fact that a majority of these researches sheds light on the role of L1 in as far as the learning and teaching of a foreign language also implies that they relate to the Omani context that this thesis trues to investigate.

Using the Arabic language in EFL classrooms has captured some researchers' attention. Most of these conducted studies focused mainly on researching the attitudes either of the teachers or students, or on the quantity and frequency of L1 use in L2 classrooms in primary schools or college levels. Only little research was done on why teachers and learners tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms. In what follows, earlier studies conducted within the Arabic context are first discussed and then the studies carried out within the Omani context are reviewed.

According to Al Sharaeai (2012), students were more likely to use Arabic in English classrooms if their classmates talk to them in Arabic. Other learners use their L1 to find out the meaning of new words and concepts. Moreover, students' use of Arabic in English lessons is also associated with the need to feel connected to one's mother tongue. Other reasons included: learners' use of Arabic in English classrooms to comprehend instructions, to understand complicated grammar points, to ask for clarification, to understand difficult concepts, for remembering new words, and for communicating with other students in group work. Moreover, students used Arabic until such time that they have learned enough English for short communications with their teachers and classmates. Sometimes, learners faced difficulties and made use of Arabic to seek the help of their classmates. The use of Arabic in this situation helped in increasing students' knowledge, and it was also an example of using what was known to progress and acquire what was challenging and new. He added that the Arabic language was applied in the EFL classes to explain new points. Additionally, students used their mother tongue to chat with fellow students about overall and individual issues that were not related to academics. Similarly, the use of Arabic to talk about personal matters during English lessons

was common. When students could not find an English alternative to an Arabic word, they resorted to their first language.

Teachers' make use of Arabic language in EFL lessons has been linked to the need to aid comprehension and the need to make students feel comfortable and confident (Shuchi & Islam, 2016). Further, teachers' use of their L1 (Arabic) is associated with the need to establish rapport with the learners. Using Arabic is aimed at managing behavioural problems in classrooms. Also, teachers use Arabic because it is less time-consuming. Moreover, teachers use Arabic when they want to give instructions, to explain difficult concepts, to make fun, to establish whether students have understood concepts taught, to explain difficult grammatical points, to define new grammar words, and to conduct small group discussions.

Salah and Farrah (2012) explored the attitudes held by teachers and learners towards the use of Arabic in the primary EFL classrooms. Findings from their study showed that teachers preferred using Arabic to interpret nonconcrete words. Additionally, the mother tongue usage in EFL lessons was influenced by the age of the teachers. More specifically, highly experienced teachers did not use their first language while the newly employed ones frequently did. Gender-wise, male teachers and learners were more expected to use Arabic in English lessons than their female counterparts. Lastly, students with low ability in English were more inclined to use Arabic in classrooms.

It is worth noting that teachers' and learners' perspectives towards the use of Arabic language in L2 classrooms have been reported to be positive (Al-Nofaie, 2010). Teachers agreed that the use of Arabic in English lessons was useful in teaching grammar, because students had difficulty understanding English language terminologies. They also believed that some words were better explained to students using Arabic rather than the English language. Both students and teachers further believed that Arabic was valuable for giving exam advices and guidelines. This might have been because the use of Arabic reduced exam anxiety. In addition, students found Arabic useful in the translation of new words. They also found it easier to learn English by contrasting it with their first language.

The study conducted by Sipra (2013) in a Saudi university using questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation as data collection tools, found that Arabic (L1) occasionally appeared to perform the following purposes: explaining new terminology, giving instructions, and clarifying grammar rules. Making fun in the classroom was also reported to be the another important reason to use L1 in Sipra's study. Alshammari (2011) did a

quantitative questionnaire study concerning the Arabic language usage in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia. The outcomes shown that 61% of the learners and 69% of the teachers who joined in the study thought that the use of learners' L1 (Arabic) in the EFL classroom was required. Another study done by Khassawaneh (2011) investigated university learners' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in Jordan. Its findings indicated that participants' perspectives on applying Arabic were positive. Similarly, Bhooth and et al (2014) conducted a study to explore learners' attitudes about Arabic language use in Yemeni EFL classrooms. The findings show that learners believed that the Arabic language used served the EFL pedagogy in many ways, including enhancing learning, to discuss complex ideas and difficult aspects about L2 (English). Similar functions were also found in a study done by Alrabah and et al (2016) in Kuwait. They used a questionnaire to find out how teachers used L1 (Arabic) in EFL classrooms. The reported findings claimed that L1 was utilised for classroom management, managing class discipline and recording learners' attendance. Additionally, teachers claimed that they used Arabic to explain the meaning of unfamiliar L2 terms and to compare the grammatical rules of the two languages.

Within the Egyptian context, a study undertaken by Waer (2012) examined the relationship between using L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English) in different L2 classroom contexts. She adopted both conversational analysis and a corpus linguistics approach, which helped to provide a deeper understanding of discourse in EFL classrooms. The study showed that the use of the L1 (Arabic) can simplify L2 classroom interaction and could offer a more comprehensive understanding of L2 classroom practice. The results suggested that L1 use had a facilitative role in EFL classroom communications.

2.6. Studies on the Arabic language use in Oman and research gap

Teaching of English Language in Oman has been growing rapidly over the recent years. The language has been introduced in the country's education system to furnish the learners with one of the international languages that is used widely in various parts of the world. The rationale is in addition to the learners' first language and under which knowledge can be acquired and humanity served. Ever since, English language has been growing rapidly at relatively faster pace in the educational institutions and has subsequently become one of the compulsory subjects at the school level. Teachers of EFL can be classified basing on their teaching limitations and approaches. Studies have proved that even though some teachers from English speaking countries are being deployed in Oman to teach English, very few of them can

use bilingual strategies in their teaching practices. Hence, the non-native EFL teachers have become the special focus of the contemporary present studies. These teachers have been working in Oman since the introduction of English into the educational system.

There are glaring research gaps on the students' and teachers' perceptions about the use of Arabic language (L1) in EFL classrooms. Despite the significance of the subject, very few researchers have gone to engage in such research. Even though some studies have tried to investigate the beliefs that students and teachers have about the use of Arabic, no comprehensive is yet to be made available regarding the use of Arabic language in the Oman EFL context, involving both students and teachers. Therefore, part of the main purposes of this study is to address and fill that gap by investigating the phenomenon holistically. It tries to investigate the various perceptions regarding the use of Arabic language (L1) in the Oman EFL classroom context.

Although there is a wealth of research on the use of the first language (L1) in EFL classrooms, only very few studies have been conducted that explore the role of Arabic language in an Omani EFL context (Alawi, 2008; Al-Buraiki, 2008; Al-Hadhrami, 2008; AI-Hinai, 2006; Al-Jadidi, 2009; AI-Shidhani, 2009). Moreover, these studies have either adopted quantitative or qualitative research methods data collection tools. Additionally, they have focused on either teachers or students as participants in elementary schools or tertiary education. To the researcher's best knowledge, there is no study that explores teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of Arabic in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. Moreover, these studies focused on either teachers or students as research participants. For instance, AI-Hinai (2006) investigated EFL elementary schools teachers' perceptions on Arabic language practice in their classrooms through a quantitative study. He concluded that the Arabic language was frequently used in all EFL classrooms. He also reported that teachers attribute this widespread use to the learners' low proficiency in English.

Alawi (2008) conducted another quantitative study and used a questionnaire to explore five EFL teachers' use of Arabic during their L2 elementary classrooms in Oman. He found that while some teachers used Arabic extensively, others avoided it completely. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers in this study agreed that the use of Arabic had some benefits in the EFL classrooms. In another study, Al-Hadhrami (2008) surveyed grade 5 elementary schools EFL teachers in Oman aiming to examine how Arabic might affected English learning. He collected his data through interviews and found that teachers primarily utilised Arabic language

to translate new terms, concepts, and ideas. The EFL teachers also used Arabic to give commands and for classroom management.

Al-Buraiki (2008) conducted a similar study on six elementary EFL teachers' perspectives towards Arabic language usage in EFL classrooms. The data was collected through observation, interviews, and a questionnaire. The outcomes showed that teachers often used the Arabic language to give advices and clarify new ideas and vocabulary. Similarly, AI-Shidhani (2009) carried out another quantitative study to establish the EFL teachers' views concerning Arabic usage in EFL classrooms. He reported that while the teachers felt that the use of Arabic in communicative classes went in contradiction of the principles of the communicative approach, their students still expected them to make use of some Arabic language, which created a central misunderstanding for the students.

Al-Jadidi (2009) conducted another study on teaching English as an EFL in tertiary level in Oman. The study mainly aimed to find out what the benefits and disadvantages were of using Arabic in English classrooms and about the 'only English' approach practices in Omani tertiary levels. The findings showed that using Arabic language in the EFL classroom has many benefits in relation to competence, clarifying difficult meanings, supporting classroom management and producing a sense of community. Both teachers and learners believed that Arabic was essential at the foundation stages and that the capability to speak both Arabic and English was helpful for teachers.

This gap in the literature in the context of Oman has motivated the researcher to explore the reasons behind using Arabic (L1) in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms from the perspectives of both teachers and their learners in both male and female schools in four different governorates in Oman. This study attempts to fill a gap in the existing literature by exploring EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of using Arabic in grades 11-12 EFL classooms. This includes why and for what purposes EFL teachers in particular and their students in Oman tend to use the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms. Moreover, in what pedagogical contexts do they tend to use the Arabic language, how do learners understand the underlying relationship between the motivation to learn the English language and their practices in the classrooms, and also, are there any contradictions between teachers' and students' perceptions and practices in the classrooms? This research aims to explore this phenomenon in depth and fill this gap adopting a mixed methods research approach composed of questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Findings from the exploration of students' and teachers' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman will be interpreted using four frameworks. This section details the conceptual framework underpinning the theories and concepts of the pedagogical knowledge and practices of EFL teaching and implementation. This framework helps as a guide to understand the different aspects of this study. As Figure 2.2 below indicates, there are four elements to be discussed as part of the theoretical framework for this study. These include:

2.7.1 Sociocultural Theory (SCT)

Sociocultural theory provides specific effective framework for conducting a critical evaluation of the role that L1 plays in the acquisition of L2. The theory's core inquiry is on the question of how language tends to mediate human activity on both the interpsychological and intrapsychological planes (Wu, 2018). According to socioculturalists, mother tongue is essential and generally indispensable semiotic device that assists in mediating the learning process (Wu, 2018). Consequently, this justification is based on the general tenet that language which is a cultural artefact is the fundamental cognitive tool that provides a platform for organizing and regulating human thinking. A qualitative leap is usually encountered when the regulation language that specific languages serve shifts from intermental to intramental functioning. At that point, the language can assist in meditating the higher mental function of an individual like organization and focusing attention (Wu, 2018). Thus, it could be claimed that in the event of learning a foreign language, an individual would never return to the immediate world of objects or even repeat his or her past linguistic developments, but rather capitalizes on L1 as the core mediator between the world of objects and the L2. Nonetheless, this theoretical complementary utilization of native language in enhancing EFL teaching and learning conflicts with the underlying belief that language teaching should be fully based on the second language in some approaches. The distinction depends on the aspect of whether the rational is inductive or deductive in nature (Wu, 2018). Generally speaking, sociocultural theory acts as a lens that enables us to go back to the drawing board and redress the use of native language not just an easy route, but to importantly serve as a way in which teachers and learners can mediate thought and language, abstract concepts, understand complex academic languages, conduct challenging tasks, and vent emotions.

2.7.2 Individual differences

Researches on individual differences have considerable history in the context of applied linguistics. Difference in L2 learners has changed significantly over the recent years (Skehan, 2014). There is a marked change in the labels that are being utilised to refer to individual differences. These changes are generally evolutionary rather than revolutionary (Skehan, 2014). They reflect on the on the radical shift in the manner in which students are perceived. Change in perspective in recent decades offer a basis for reflecting on the development of the role of individual difference in research about applied linguistics. Initially, the core focus was on give a platform for choosing which learners should receive instructions through foreign language. However, up to this point, the main objective of individual difference research is to predict students who can succeed. Interest regarding individual differences has grown significantly since the 1970s to the extent where it has become an important aspect of enquiry about second language (Skehan, 2014). Studies about individual differences has been taking place separate and alongside the mainstream of research about the acquisition of L2 (Skehan, 2014). One of the reasons that explain this is that differential and universal approaches have distinct approaches. Therefore, tasks that researchers are facing must offer the basis for identifying what motivates the learners selectively and at the same time the involved psycholinguistic processes.

2.7.3 Motivation

Motivation is inherently a multifaceted construct with a wide range of components such as behavior, attitude, interest, desire and need (Buendía & Martin, 2018). Also, there is an underlying meaning behind the term motivation that has been defined and studies by many researchers. There are many ways of defining motivation both in psychology and in education. Some researchers think that motivation is a combination of the students' willingness, desires and attitude in a bid to learn a second language (Buendía & Martin, 2018). Generally speaking, it is considered as one of the core success and failure reasons in learning second language. There is no doubt that motivation is a vital element in learning a second language. It is widely known that a majority of learners take L2 teachings because of external factors like passing their exams. However, motivation remains an important aspect that makes learning institutions a place that is inclusive and a place where students are trained to live in the current century. That means that in the context of teaching a second language, teachers should be motivated to teach their students for the purpose of tomorrow (Buendía & Martin, 2018). They should use

all means possible including the use of L1 to facilitate EFL teaching where necessary. There are various interrelated elements of motivation including effort, persistence and action. In an ideal society, innate curiosity is sufficient to make the students willing to learn. In such a case, the learning experience that they get serves as a constant source of intrinsic pleasure. Teachers play significant roles in motivating their students towards learning a foreign language. For instance, they create realistic beliefs amongst the students, they make the curriculum to be generally relevant to the students, they increase goal-orientedness of the students, and enhance the language-related attitudes and values amongst the learners. Studies in relation to extrinsic motivation tend to review decisions by teachers to use incentives and rewards (Buendía & Martin, 2018). That is despite the fact that the use of rewards has been very controversial with past researches showing that extrinsic rewards are generally avoided because they undermine the associated intrinsic interests.

2.7.4 Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)

Classroom interaction competence has been identified by some researchers as the ability of the learners and teachers to interact and capitalize on that as the foundation for aiding and meditating teaching (Walsh, 2014). The idea of CIC has been developed basing on the ideas that relate to the interaction in learning another language. It is important for teachers to develop their understanding of CIC for their individual contexts and at the same time practice the features that they believe are common in many contexts. For instance, teachers should practice how to shape the contributions of the learners, align language use to pedagogic goals, and create learning space (Walsh, 2014). Teachers tend to demonstrate their ability to apply CIC through their underlying abilities to use language that is appropriate to the classroom mode. Language use by teachers might include going a step further to use L1 and incorporate pedagogic goals altogether. In retrospect to that, learners need space to contribute in their L2 learning processes (Walsh, 2014). This can be attained by increasing waiting time, enhancing learner turns, and reducing teacher echo. Such spaces that in most cases tend to include the use of L1 to promote the teaching of L2 will always maximize the potential of available learning opportunities within the classroom. Comprehensive research has proved that the use of L1 in EFL classroom contexts is critical in promoting the ability of teachers to shape the contributions of the students by scaffolding, seeking clarification, or repairing students' input (Walsh, 2014). This is importantly essential in providing the learners with space of forming their opinions and consequently expressing them when they feel free.

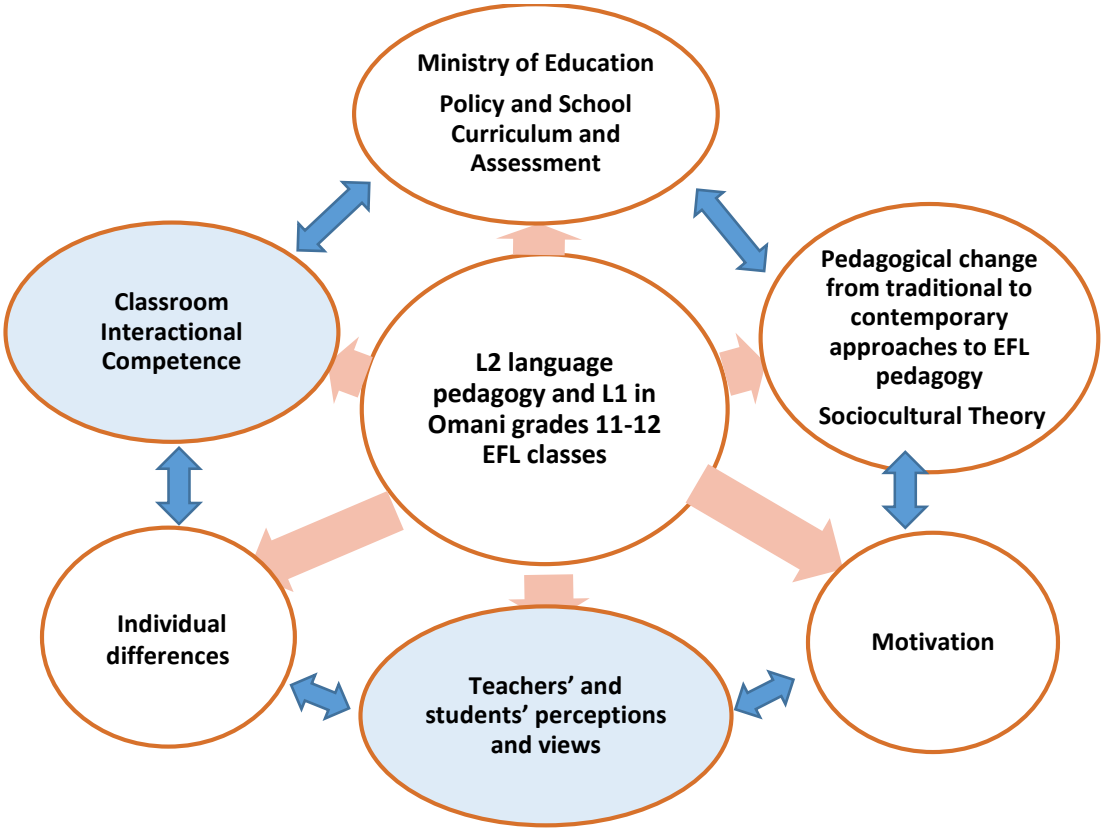

Figure 2.2: *Conceptual framework of this study (developed for this research)*

Throughout the literature review chapter, the researcher has surveyed a number of related studies that researched the L1 usage in different EFL contexts around the world. Undoubtedly, L1 has its gratitude in EFL the classroom. A number of reasons lead teachers to resort to learners' L1 and even allow their learners to use L1.

The perceptions of teachers and learners differ in relation to the use of L1 in English language teaching. Some researchers have studied the perspectives of EFL learners (Afzal, 2012; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; Huang, 2006; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Pablo & et al., 2011; Saito & Ebsworth, 2004) and others studied the perspectives of EFL teachers (Cianflone, 2009; Kovacic & Kirinic, 2011; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). Another group studied both learners and teachers (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al Sharaeai, 2012; Khassawaneh, 2011; Levine, 2003; Salah & Farrah, 2012; Sharma, 2006; Shuchi & Islam, 2016; Sipra, 2013). However, only a few studies have been done on Arab EFL learners and teachers' perceptions of using Arabic (L1) in EFL classrooms (Afzal, 2012; Al Sharaeai, 2012; Aqel, 2006; Mohamed 2007; Sipra, 2013). Table 2.4 below summarises the key studies on L1 use in EFL classrooms in different EFL contexts, including Oman.

Table 2.4: Summary of previous studies of purposes of L1 use in L2 classrooms

Study	Contexts	Purposes of L1 use
Tang (2002)	China	Explaining meanings of words, giving instructions
Sharma (2006)	Nepal	Clarifying the meaning of ambiguous vocabulary words, to create a close relationship between learners and their teachers and to explain grammar rubrics.
AI-Hinai (2006)	Oman	The Arabic language was widely used in all EFL classrooms with low proficiency learners.
Huang (2006)	Taiwan	To explain grammar and for brainstorming ideas and clarifying difficult concepts.
Mohamed (2007)	Egypt	For instructions, communication, and explaining difficult concepts.
Alawi (2008)	Oman	Teachers in this study agree that the use of Arabic had some benefits in EFL classrooms.
Al-Hadhrami (2008)	Oman	Arabic was used to translate new ideas, concepts, and new words.
Al-Buraiki (2008)	Oman	Arabic was used to explain new concepts and vocabulary and to give instructions
AI-Shidhani (2009)	Oman	Learners expected teachers to use some Arabic.
Al-Jadidi (2009)	Oman	Arabic has many benefits in relation to competence, assigning difficult meanings that cannot otherwise be taught, producing a sense of community, and supporting classroom management.
La Campa & Nassaji (2009)	Canada	L1 was used to link L1 and L2, for classroom management and to give advices and instructions.
McMillan and Turnbull (2009)	Canada	To check students' comprehension; and to explain new or difficult words or concepts.
McMillan and Rivers (2011)	Japan	L1 could facilitate communication and support comprehension in EFL classrooms, and help low proficient learners.
Kovacic and Kirinic (2011)	Croatia	Explaining difficult concepts and ideas, clarifying grammar points and in doing speaking activities.
Alshammari (2011)	Saudi Arabia	61% of the learners and 69% of the teachers believed that the use of learners' L1 (Arabic) in the classroom was desirable.
Afzal (2012)	Iran	Assisting learners to obtain new vocabulary.
Carson and Kashihara (2012)	Malaysia	Makes learners feel less lost, tense, and more comfortable during the class time, and L1 was found to be valuable in building a relationship, particularly with low proficiency learners.
Al Sharaeai (2012)	Saudi Arabia	To comprehend instructions, to understand complicated grammar points, to ask for clarification, to understand difficult concepts, for remembering new words, and for communicating with other students in group work.
Hidayati (2012)	Indonesian	Learners found to be less lost throughout class with a common familiar language, they were able to communicate, understand and participate in class exercises.

Sipra (2013)	Saudi Arabia	Giving instructions, and explaining new vocabulary.
Moore (2013)	Japan	Task control and for teaching and learning roles.
Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014)	Yemen	Clarification from classmates and teachers; checking for understanding; carrying out-group work; giving individual assistance.
Lo (2015)	Hong Kong	Classroom management; content transmission; social or effective purposes.
Alrabah & et al. (2016)	Kuwait	Utilised for classroom management, managing class discipline and recording learners' attendance.
Shuchi and Islam (2016)	Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia	To explain difficult concepts and complex grammar points and to explain abstract vocabulary items to help students comprehend everything clearly and lucidly, and to make students feel more comfortable and confident; it also helps to establish rapport with the students.
Enama (2016)	Cameroon	L1 is an effective scaffolding tool in the EFL classroom in Cameroon.
Shabir (2017)	Australia	The partial use of L1 is not unnecessary and has positive effects in certain activities.

2.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the literature of different studies that have explored L1 use in EFL classrooms in different contexts around the world. The first part introduced the topic and the aims of this study. The second part of this chapter presented a number of related EFL teaching and learning issues: including teaching methods, L1 use from a sociocultural theory point of view, and classroom interactional competence as an important issue in the teaching and learning context. The ongoing theoretical and practical opinions for and against L1 usage in L2 teaching was also discussed, including reasons behind the use of L1 and whether it should be excluded from EFL classrooms. This chapter has further provided explanations for the inclusion of L1 in EFL classrooms.

The findings of previous studies indicate that there has not been a complete elimination of learners' language, especially in classrooms where teachers and learners share the same L1. Most studies have suggested that L1 has an essential role in EFL classrooms (Cook, 2002; Cummins, 2009; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Machaal, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). The reviewed literature supports/emphasises the idea that EFL teachers should use the L1 in their classroom to simplify the L2 learning practice for their students. L1 serves various functions in EFL classrooms that include: dealing with grammar and new vocabulary words, classroom management, clarifying instructions related to class activities, feedback, and exams. Afzal

(2012) conducted a study in Iran to investigate learners' perceptions on the consequence of L1 use on passive and active vocabulary. The outcomes indicated that using L1 (Persian) equivalents and the English (L2) explanations assisted learners to obtain the new vocabularies and add to their active terms rather than to their passive one.

The reasons that EFL teachers may use L1 differ according to learners' L2 proficiency levels. It seems that learners with lower levels of proficiency need more L1, and gradually the L1 use is reduced when moving towards the higher levels. However, the reviewed literature has also highlighted that teachers should not overuse L1 in their EFL classes because this might distract learners from valuable L2 input.

The reviewed literature has indicated that a considerable number of teachers and learners think that using a reasonable amount of L1 simplifies L2 learning. They have also reported that L1 is needed in certain situations such as creating a stress-free learning environment, motivating learners, and dealing with personal issues during class time. Looking at the above-conducted studies, many have mainly focused on L1 use in general or on teachers' uses and perspectives of using the L1 in EFL classrooms.

Chapter Three describes this study's methodology including the mixed methods approach to collect data and its rationale and process that have led to its eligibility and the logical underpinning of this study. It also clarifies the issues close to validity, reliability, and ethical clearance concerns. Lastly, the procedures of data gathering and analysis are clearly defined, including sampling and participants' recruitment, classroom observation recording, interviewing, and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and outlines the research methodology applied in this study and its rationale for exploring teachers and students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. This chapter starts with the research paradigm. Then it describes the research participants, including sampling and recruitment procedures. Then, to gain a better understanding of the research topic, the chapter goes on to describe the three primary data collection tools consisting of questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. This chapter also outlines complete descriptions of data analysis approaches and ethical considerations. Furthermore, the procedures for validity and credibility of the obtained data information are carefully considered. Finally, the chapter completes with a momentary outline of the limitations, followed by a summary.

3.2 The pilot study

A pilot study was done just before the actual research was conducted, to decrease bias and make sure that the chosen data collection instruments were ready to be implemented. According to Bryman (2012), all of the research instruments should be pre-tested before applying them to the actual study. Cohen and et al (2011) argued that it is essential to validate the tools and questions asked in each data collection instrument before conducting the real research, which helps to check them and to increase the validity and reliability of the research.

In this research, the pilot study was carried out in February 2016 in Oman. Two grades 11-12 male and female schools were nominated to do the piloting development phase. These schools were from Al Dakhliya as one of the governorates that will be later targeted in the main study. After contacting two schools' principals who then agreed to host and do the piloting stage in their schools, the researcher met four EFL teachers and four grade 11-12 students from the two schools in Oman and briefed them about the research topic and aims. They were very kind and keen to help in the piloting stage in their schools. The participants were approached on the basis of their availability and readiness and nominated using a convenience sampling technique (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The pilot study participants received invitation letters showing that their participation in the research was totally voluntary and they could if they chose to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Students were sent another letter written in Arabic asking them to participate if they chose to.

The piloting phase particularly aimed to check the comprehensibilty and cosistency of the questions and establish the degree to which respondents ould interact with questionnares. The piloting test questionnares were written in a simple language that can be easily understood by particiapnts to avoid any sort of misinterpretation. The researcher translated the students' questionnaire into the Arabic language. The aim was to check these data collection instruments for any ambiguities, unclear instructions, understanding of the items and word meaning, suitability and ease of the instruments, questions' relevance, and any other essential and unexpected issues that might affect the running of the real research later in the contributing schools.

The final drafts of the data collection tools included two forms of questionnaire made ready to be tested. Hard copies of the questionnaires were circulated to four teachers and four students in school 1 and school 2 respectively. According to Dornyei (2003), questionnaire piloting or 'field testing' is a fundamental part of the whole research process. Cohen and et al (2007) said that there are two kinds of piloting: the first one is interested in the arrangement and coverage of the questionnaire, and the second one deals with the type of data collected from the questionnaire.

It was agreed to collect the finished questionnaires within two working days. Thus, eight questionnaires were received from the participants after completion. The pilot study came up with the following feedback. First, participants almost tried all the questions without reporting any remarkable difficulties in understanding the items, questions, or instructions.

The feedback recievd showed some errors in open-ended questions including the need to provide more space to write their response to the question 'should Arabic be used in English language classrooms? why?'. Moreover, in teachers' questionnaire there was a minor missing in part one including information about teachers' nationality. Also, question 5 in the teachers' questionnaire was reported to be a bit long and wordy. A student further mentioned that the Arabic translation of statement 13 was not clear.

The piloting questionniars and their prelminary outcomes were send to the supervisors. The feedback from the two supervisors was clear and useful. They both found that there were some kind of inconsistencies in the questionnairs items and changes should be accordingly done. They also suggested that open-ended questions should be modified and to add more space for free 'other' comments. All the findings of the questionnaire pilot study were later used to rebuild the real research questionnaires.

In piloting the observation checklist, the researcher observed one classroom to check out the usability of the observation checklist and at the same time to become familiar with classroom practices. The researcher found it challenging to observe students while doing group-work and to trace their Arabic use. Therefore, the researcher modified the checklist to include two main headings: why teachers use Arabic and when students use Arabic. Under each of these headings, the researcher recorded the frequency of Arabic use by teachers and students.

The semi-structured interviews were tested by interviewing two teachers and two students in the two piloting schools. The piloting of the interviews aimed at checking the clarity of the interview questions and to make sure they were understandable. The participants (teachers and students) were given a hard copy of the questions and asked to read the questions carefully. After looking at the questions, they were interviewed separately. These interviews aimed to check the interview questions regarding clearance, understanding, time, checking the voice recording, and getting the experience of interviewing participants. However, after transcribing the interviews, the researcher realised that some of the semi-structured interview teachers' questions should be modified to make them clearer. For example, question number 3 (*"When do you think that Arabic language use and English language use can play an important role in L2 classes? Why?"*) was found to be not specific and was consequently changed to *"Are there any particular activities in which you consider the use of Arabic essential?* Also, question 4 of the teachers' interview list (*"If you use Arabic, why do you use it? Under what conditions? Are there any particular activities in which you consider the use of Arabic essential?"*) was found to be too general and contained more than one question. After piloting, it was changed to a new question: *"Can you give examples of when you use the Arabic language yourself in the EFL classroom?"*. The student interview questions list was found to be clear, and no modification was done.

The pilot study exposed that the questionnaires distribution in class would be the only possible option. Accordingly, the questionnaires modification was done to include open-ended questions in order to ensure the maximum related data is produced. Using a purely quantitative research method would not be productive and at the same time, a qualitative methodology by itself would not include learners. The mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods would be the best suited to the purposes of this study.

3.3 A research paradigm

To gain answers to the research questions mentioned above, it was vital to adopt the most appropriate research paradigm, which could lead the different aspects of the research, such as data collection tools, data analysis procedures and sampling strategies. The pilot study results showed that teachers needed more than closed-ended questions to elaborate on their views and perceptions. Teachers reported that questionnaires alone did not give the opportunity to use their own words to clearly write what they thought was vital to them as EFL teachers. Similarly, when the researcher tried only a qualitative approach, he noticed that learners did not say much about their own perceptions towards using Arabic in their EFL classrooms and preferred multiple choices and open-ended questions.

A decision was taken to adopt a pragmatic mixed methods research approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in a sequential explanatory design, whereby both collection and analysis of quantitative data was carried out followed by gathering and analysis of qualitative data. The decision of adopting a mixed method research based on the pilot study feedback and by similar studies conducted in the field in different parts of the EFL context in the world. Additionally, the nature of the present study also influenced the adaptation of the mixed methods research. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and class observation were adopted to address the research questions in a good way. The purpose of such design is to use qualitative results to support the explanation and understanding of the findings of a quantitative phase (Creswell, 2009). Mixing these two types of data collection methods allows improvement of the credibility and the reliability of the results. If only one method is used in collecting data, the truth may not be reflected in the results (Cohen & et al., 2007). Dörnyei (2007) stated that collecting data through mixed methods, as used in the social sciences, would “boost the development of theory” (p. 43). Figure 3.1 displays the stages needed in the practice of adopting mixed methods within this study.

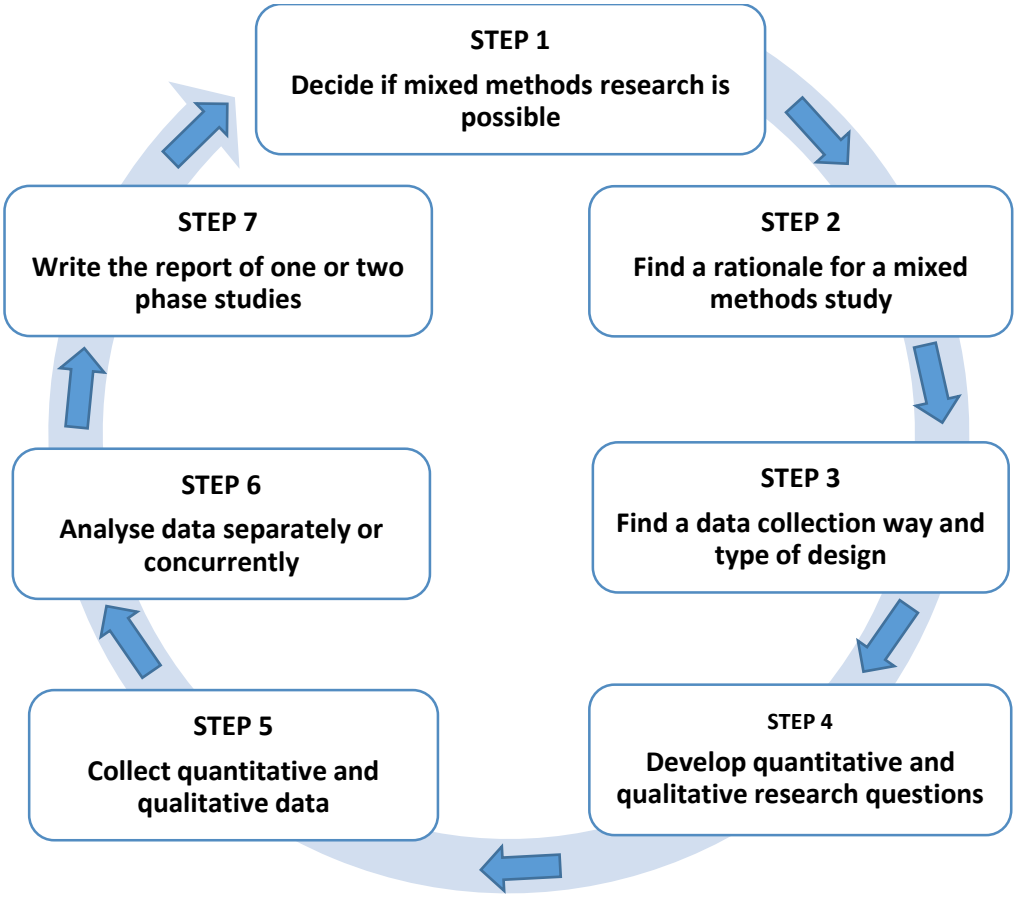

Figure 3.1. *Steps in the process of conducting mixed methods research (Amended from Creswell et.al. 2011 pp. 83-85)*

3.4 Why mixed methods research?

Mixed methods research (MMR), as a research design, has many definitions in the literature (Johnson & et al., 2007). Creswell (2009) describes mixed method research as a study that includes the collecting and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data in a particular study. The data, which might be collected concurrently or sequentially, are given priority and it includes the mixing of the data at one or more phases in the procedure of the research. Kemper and et al (2003) defined mixed methods scheme as a technique that comprises both qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis in equivalent practice (simultaneous mixed method design in which two procedures of data are composed and analyzed sequentially). Bazely (2003) described mixed methods research as the usage of mixed data (numerical and text) and different instruments (statistics and analysis), but utilising the same technique. It is the kind of research, in which the investigator practices a quantitative research model for one stage of a study and a qualitative research pattern for another stage of that study (see Figure 3.2 next).

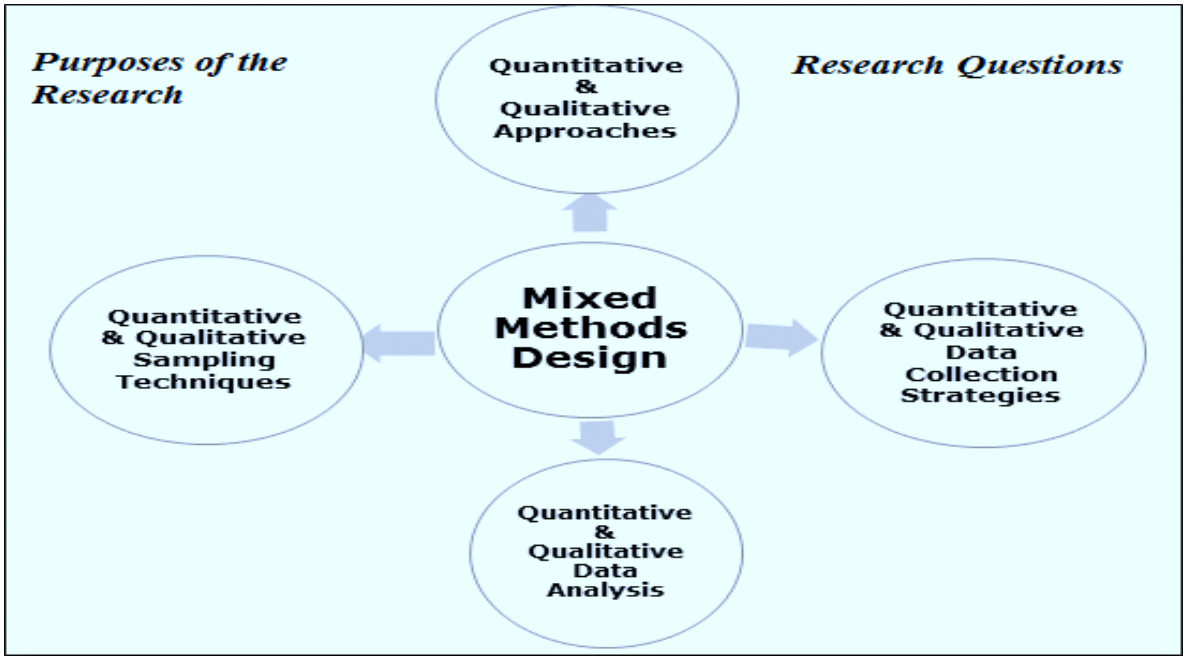

Figure 3.2 *Mixed methods research design (Developed for this research)*

The mixed method approach, according to Creswell (2009), enables the researcher to collect qualitative input to clarify and extend quantitative consequences. Additionally, the qualitative method should improve and clarify the statistical outcomes by exploring participants' beliefs in detail (Robson, 2011). Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) explained why both quantitative and qualitative research approaches should be joined together:

> "Both approaches can be combined because they share the goal of understanding the world in which we live. They share a unified logic, and the same rules of inference apply to both. A combination of both approaches provides a variety of perspectives from which a particular phenomenon can be studied, and they share a common commitment to understanding and to improve the human condition, a common goal of disseminating knowledge for practical use. Both approaches provide for cross-validation or triangulation-combing two or more theories or sources of data to study the same phenomenon in order to gain a complete understanding of that phenomenon (interdependence of the research methods) and they also provide for the achievement of complementary results by using the strengths of one method to enhance the other (independence of research methods)" (p. 46).

In this study, an explanatory sequential design is applied. The explanatory sequential design is a two-phase mixed methods design (see Figure 3.3) where the qualitative data helps to clarify the primary quantitative data outcomes (Creswell, 2009). In an explanatory sequential

design, the researcher primarily collects and analyses quantitative (QUAN) data, and then the results inform the qualitative (qual) data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009).

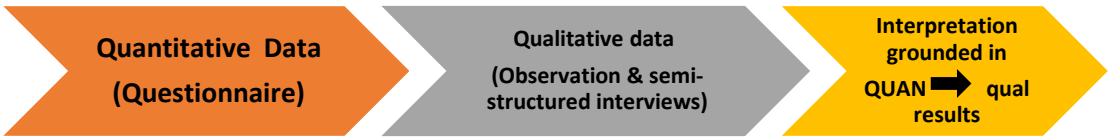

Figure 3.3 *Explanatory sequential design (Adopted from Creswell 2009 pp. 209-210)*

In the explanatory sequential research design, the priority is given to the quantitative data during both the collection and interpretation phases (Creswell, 2003). The explanatory design is described by the collection and analysis of the quantitative data (in this case the questionnaire) followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data (observations and semi-structured interviews) to get a full picture of the whole classroom practices. The integration occurs between the phases, whereby the quantitative consequences assist in explaining the qualitative data. The integration has happened during data analysis when the quantitative data from the questionnaire were used to develop the observation checklist and semi-structured interview questions (Creswell & et al., 2011). The explanatory design is seen as also being able to improve the quality and reliability of the research results. Table 3.1 offers an overview of the data collection steps linked to the research stated questions.

Table 3.1. Overview of the data collection stages (Developed for this research purposes)

Stages		Stage 1		Stage 2	Stage 3	
Data collection tools		1. Teachers Questionnaire (50 EFL teachers)	2. Students Questionnaire (240 EFL students)	3.Class observation (6 Classrooms)	4. Semi-structured interviews with 6 EFL teachers	5. Semi-structured interviews 6 EFL students
	Research Questions	**1, 2, 3, 4**		**3, 4**	**1, 2, 3, 4**	
1	To what extent do teachers and learners believe that the Arabic language should be used in the teaching of English in Omani EFL classrooms?	**X**			**X**	
2	What are the contexts in which teachers use Arabic in Omani EFL, and why?	**X**		**X**	**X**	
3	What are the contexts in which students use Arabic in Omani EFL classrooms, and why?	**X**			**X**	
4	To what extent does teachers' use of the Arabic language as L1 in practice support or hinder students' learning of English?			**X**	**X**	

3.5 Sample size and participants

As this research aims to explore the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman, it was necessary to seek out the perceptions of both EFL teachers and their learners. This research was carried out including two groups of participants: EFL teachers and their learners in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in eight different schools in Oman. The study was conducted in four different governorates: Al Dakhliya, Al Dhaharah, Al Sharqiah North, and Muscat (see Figure 3.4). The choice of these four governorates was due to many reasons such as the variety of locations, number of schools, participants and accessibility. The different locations of the selected governorates allowed the researcher to visit and meet teachers

and students of different educational backgrounds, qualifications, nationalities and EFL teaching classroom experiences.

There were 50 teacher participants: 23 male and 27 female EFL teachers from Oman, Egypt and Tunisia. The student participants were 233 Omani students of average age of 17 years: 115 male and 118 female in grades 11-12 from eight different schools in four different governorates in Oman.: All the participants speak Arabic language as a mother tongue.

Figure 3.4 *Governorates involved in the study* [Adopted from deposit Photos (2018) https://depositphotos.com/vector-images/muscat-oman.html]

3.6 Sampling

In this research, a convenience sampling was adopted for selecting schools and participants. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), researchers can adopt convenience sampling when they include in their sample participants who are available or who volunteer, who can be quickly recruited, and who are willing to participate in the research study.

Contributors are selected as respondents and should become accessible and available at the time of data gathering (Cohen & et al., 2011).

Thus, with regard to EFL teachers and students' sampling, the researcher adopted the following steps:

- Grades 11-12 EFL teachers.
- Teachers from different educational backgrounds, teaching experiences and nationalities to allow for comparisons to be made.
- Teachers who agreed to participate in the questionnaire, and also agreed to later be observed in their classrooms, were interviewed.

Regarding students' sampling, two concerns were considered:

- Students from grades 11- 12 classrooms who agreed to answer the questionnaire.
- Six students from amongst those who agreed to participate in the questionnaire to be interviewed later.

3.7 Participants' recruitment

The participants were strictly English language teachers and their grades 11-12 male and female students. All participants were given an information sheet outlining the nature of the research, aims, and assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity, which also clearly stated that participants had the right to extract at any stage from the research. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants were handed a consent form to be read and signed. The participants' recruitment went through the following procedures:

- The researcher applied for an official letter from the Technical Office for Studies and Development (TOSD), which is part of the Ministry of Education in Oman.
- An official letter was issued by the TOSD, Ministry of Education, and sent to the eight schools principals, seeking their permission providing all the necessary information about the researcher, topic, targeted participants, schools' principals' roles and researcher' roles.
- Invitation letters for both teachers' and students' parents (written in Arabic) were prepared and sent to participants (see Appendix 1).
- Consent forms were sent to all participants before data collection started, justifying the research topic and explaining their rights. I emphasised the key concepts of confidentiality, anonymity and freedom to withdraw at any time of their choice whether

that be before, during or after the study has taken place, and I assured them that the data collected in this research were used only for the stated research purposes.

3.8 Research instruments

As previously specified, the key aim of this study was to explore teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. To answer the stated research questions and to gain a deep understanding the reasons and functions of L1 usage in L2 classrooms, the researcher combined both quantitative and qualitative methods, as part of a mixed methods research paradigm using three research instruments. The researcher made use of questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews for data collection purposes to provide both concrete and meaningful data sets with the aim of analysing the teachers and students' perceptions on the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman. Each of these three instruments is discussed below.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

In the quantitative phase, the research design included data collection and statistical analysis to confirm the results from the qualitative phase. During the quantitative phase data were derived from both teachers' and learners' questionnaires and classroom observations. Using questionnaires can offer an indication of patterns amongst large populations (Kendall, 2008). According to Dornyei (2003), "the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency regarding (a) researcher time, (b) researcher effort, and (c) financial resources" (p. 9). Bryman (2012) noted that applying a questionnaire is easy, has no effect on the researcher, and is appropriate for the contributors.

For this research, there are two forms of questionnaires used: one for the EFL teachers and the other one for students in grades 11-12, with the aim of collecting primary data about teachers' and learners' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. These questionnaires had the same 16 close-ended questions, but the teachers' questionnaire had 4 open-ended questions while the students' had three different close-ended questions. In both questionnaires, the researcher adopted a five-point Likert scale measurement, which, according to Dornyei (2007), is often used in applied linguistic research studies and is considered to be trustworthy. The five-point Likert scale was utilised consisting of 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree. The five-point Likert scale was put at the top of each page to prompt all contributors about the size scale and thus to avoid misperceptions.

The two forms of questionnaires were prepared and distributed for the collection of primary data. Therefore, the researcher selected two schools/classes/teachers from each governorate to participate in both the teachers' and students' questionnaires. The researcher conducted the questionnaires from September 2016 to November 2016.

3.8.1.1 The EFL teachers' questionnaire

Aiming to explore teachers' perceptions on using Arabic in grades11-12 EFL classrooms, 50 questionnaires were circulated to 50 male (23) and female (27) EFL teachers, all of whom share the same mother tongue (Arabic) and worked for eight different schools at four different governorates in Oman (two schools from each governorate).

The teachers' questionnaire was distributed into three separate parts (see Appendix 2). The first section was designed to provide background information related to gender, governorate, nationality and length of teaching experience within the limits of privacy of the participants. The second section asked a set of questions in the form of three open-ended questions, which aimed to explore teachers' perspectives. The third section provided 16 closed-ended questions with the aim of seeking details on participants' perceptions regarding the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction tool by indicating their opinions using a five-point Likert scale. The teacher participants' questionnaire composition is illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Composition of the EFL teachers' questionnaire

Parts	Themes	Questions	Surveyed community
Part 1	1. Background information	4 questions	50 EFL teachers from 8 grades 11-12 schools in 4 different governorates
Part 2	2. Participants' perceptions about using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Oman	3 open-ended questions	
Part 3	a) Reasons for using Arabic in EFL classrooms	7 closed-ended questions	
	b) Pedagogical situations/ contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic	6 closed-ended questions	
	c) Pedagogical contexts in which students tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms	3 closed-ended questions	

3.8.1.2 The students' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was translated into Arabic by the researcher to make sure that all students could answer the questions easily. The questionnaire contained three parts (see Appendix 3): the first part aimed to elicit information about their gender, class, and the governorates where their schools were located in Oman. The second part consisted of three five-point Likert scale items aimed at finding students' perceptions, for example if they thought that Arabic should be used and whether they preferred their teacher to use it in EFL classes. The third part provided details about participants' perceptions through the use of five-point Likert scale items answering 16 closed-ended questions. The students' questionnaire composition is showed in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Composition of the students' questionnaire

Parts	Themes	Questions	Surveyed community
Part 1	Background information	3 questions	240 students from 8 grades 11-12 schools in 4 different governorates
Part 2	Students' perceptions about using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Oman	3 closed-ended questions	
Part 3	a) Functions of Arabic usage in EFL classrooms	7 closed-ended questions	
	b) Pedagogical situations/ contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic	6 closed-ended questions	
	c) Pedagogical contexts in which students tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms	3 closed-ended questions	

Regarding conducting the questionnaires process, the following procedures were adopted to administer the questionnaires effectively:

- The researcher started visiting the schools from September to November 2016.

- The researcher made sure that school principals and teachers had received the consent letters as previously mentioned in section 3.4.2.
- Permission from school principals and targeted EFL teachers was obtained.
- The researcher visited the participating schools on four different days (the researcher spent a day in each school on the first visit).
- The researcher explained the purpose of the questionnaires and made sure that teachers fully understood the aims and procedures (reminding teachers of the consent letters sent earlier).
- Questionnaires were distributed in envelopes to make sure that participants' put them back inside the envelope after filling them out and these were later given to the researcher.
- The researcher circulated the questionnaires to all participating teachers (50) and asked them kindly to distribute the students' questionnaires in their classrooms.
- The teachers and students were given five working days to answer the questionnaires before giving them back to the researcher by hand during the next visit.
- All 50 teachers' questionnaires were given back on time, but only 233 out of 240 students' questionnaires were received.
- SPSS software was utilised for the questionnaires' quantitative data analysis purposes.

3.8.3 Classroom observation

The second data collection tool in the quantitative phase was the classroom observation. This tool aimed to explore teachers' and students' practices and to check which language they were using by addressing instances and practices that might be part of EFL classrooms and under what pedagogical circumstances. The instrument allowed for the monitoring of teaching practices that occurred in the EFL classrooms. Also, observation allowed the researcher to analyse across classrooms to gain some clarification of the situations where Arabic was used, while the focused interviews allowed for clarification of the reasons why. Cowie (2009) described observation as a procedure of testing in detail and noticing the behaviours of participants in a regular context intentionally. Observation allows the researcher to access real situation evidence rather than relying on 'second-hand accounts' (Cohen & et al., 2007). Observation provides the researcher with a rich understanding of the research phenomenon under investigation. It helps with collecting detailed data about the sample being studied in its natural context.

According to Flick (2009), there are two different styles of class observation, non-participant observation and participant observation. Non-participant observation involves the researcher observing without being an active member in the field, and he/she should not interfere with regular practices. By contrast, participant observation permits the researcher to join in the area with the participants and take part in their activities and actions. As the researcher is not a member in the observation, there is no impact on the contributors and no directing of their thoughts, which is according to Robson (2011), believed to be one of the key strengths of this form of observation.

In this research, the researcher has adopted non-participant observation, where there was no interference during the lesson by the researcher, who aimed to explore the purposes and contextual functions of both EFL teachers and students using the Arabic language. This class observation type was applied in the present research to recognise the frequency of Arabic language used by EFL teachers and their students, and the purposes for that use, by using class checklists and field notes. The class observation sessions were conducted during the period from February to March 2017. The researcher observed six EFL classrooms/teachers (three male and three female) from two different governorates: Al Dhaharah and Al Dakhliya (three schools/teachers from each governorate) (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Summary of observed classes and teachers in six schools (Anonymised names)

Governorates	Schools	Teachers	Gender
Al Dhaharah	School 1	(T1)	Male
	School 2	(T2)	Male
	School 3	(T3)	Male
Al Dakhliya	School 4	(T4)	Female
	School 6	(T6)	Female
	School 5	(T5)	Female

For this research, the researcher carried out, in as natural a setting as possible, six sequenced classroom observation sessions. The duration of the class observations was almost the same in length (i.e. each class was observed for about 40 minutes) to improve the consistency of gathered data. In total, the researcher observed six EFL classrooms (three males

and three females) lasting 240 minutes in total, and focusing on the primary classrooms practices, for as Creswell (2012) suggested, when conducting observation only essential things need to be noted. The observation data were collected through a combination of a structured checklist, hand-writing field notes and audio recording.

The classroom observation checklist was designed based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and based on both teachers' and students' questionnaire results (quantitative phase), by concentrating on the contextual situations where both teachers and their learners tend to use Arabic in the EFL classrooms. The checklist was designed and created to make it more suitable to the EFL context in Oman regarding items included, and with a layout on one page. The design helped the researcher to quickly tick and point out the events where teachers and students tended to use Arabic throughout the lesson. Also, the layout of the checklist paper permitted the researcher to look at the items concerned easily. The checklist had three main sections (see Appendix 6): the first one focused on general information and included school name, teacher name, date of observation, classroom observed and time. The second part aimed to capture any possible usage of Arabic by teachers consisting of different items (8 events), grounded on the outcomes of the questionnaire. This part included the following items: give instructions, check comprehension, explain new words, explain grammar, joke and parsing, give feedback, discuss assignments, and error correction. The last part was about how often students used Arabic in certain pedagogical situations (5 items). It included these statements: ask teacher for clarification when participating in the class activities with classmates to discuss the instructions and feedback, speaking with classmates about personal issues, and speaking with classmates in group-work activities. As mentioned, the role of the researcher was passive as the researcher adopted a non-participant observer technique. The researcher's primary role was to tick the events whenever teachers and students shifted to Arabic language, and to put ticks beside the right categories in the observation checklist. In the students' part, for example, the researcher mark any Arabic use by learners regrdless the length and counted as one time, and then the total of frequencies of students' Arabic usage throughout the classroom time is counted. The researcher had to tick the appropriate frequencies from the given categories accordingly whenever students shifted to the Arabic language. Also, the category *other* was included under both teacher and student parts to provide room for any relevant aspects that were not mentioned in the checklist items. After the class observation, the researcher rewrote the notes in more clear and readable copies to make the whole checklist paper ready to be used later for analysis stage (see Appendix 6).

3.8.3.1Class observation procedures

Regarding the process of observation administration, as previously mentioned, the researcher conducted the classroom observation after the questionnaire stage to find out why and where both teachers and their students tended to use the Arabic language. The observation was administered following these steps:

- The researcher started visiting schools in February and March 2017.
- The researcher explained the purposes of the classroom observation and ensured that teachers fully understood the observation aims and procedures (reminding teachers of the consent letters that had been sent before).
- Permission from school principals and targeted EFL teachers was given.
- The researcher conducted the class observation located at the back of the classroom.

3.8.4 Semi-structured interviews

The third data collection instrument in this research involved semi-structured interviews. As previously mentioned, this tool aims to use qualitative results to support the explanation and understanding of the findings of a quantitative (questionnaires and classroom observations).

Thus, teachers and learners' perceptions were examined qualitatively through face-to-face semi-structured interviews to reveal their opinions about using Arabic in their grades 11-12 EFL classrooms. According to Dawson (2002), semi-structured interviews have been identified as the most suitable interview type for educational research. Using face-to-face interviews supports to form a link between the researcher and the participants, which contributes to getting a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts and answers and it permits the researcher to ask questions and make connections (Creswell, 2009).

Based on the issues found in the questionnaires and classroom observations, the semi-structured interviews aimed to give the participants a chance to elaborate their opinions about, and their experiences in, using Arabic in EFL classrooms. The interview questions were formulated to understand what are the educational reasons teachers have to shift to Arabic while teaching L2, why it is necessary/not necessary and in what situations. The semi-structured interviews were carried out in the period between May and June 2017. With regards to participants' gender, an effort was made to have a balanced gender representation of participants. Therefore, three male and three female EFL teachers and three male and three female students were selected from the observed classrooms to participate in the semi-

structured interviews (see Table 3.5). The reason behind interviewing the same participants from the six observed classrooms was to find out whether or not their perceptions were reliable with their practice. To this end, there were two forms of interview questions: teachers' interview questions and students' interview questions.

Table 3.5: Teacher and student participants in the semi-structured interviews

Governorates	Schools	Teachers	Students	Gender
Al Dhaharah	School 1	(T1)	(S1)	Male
	School 2	(T2)	(S2)	Male
	School 3	(T3)	(S3)	Male
Al Dakhliya	School 4	(T4)	(S4)	Female
	School 5	(T5)	(S5)	Female
	School 6	(T6)	(S6)	Female

The semi-structured interviews with the ELF teachers contained the following questions:

- Why (or why not) do you use Arabic in your EFL classrooms? Would you explain, please?
- The use of learners' first language (Arabic) should be excluded from English language classrooms. Do you agree? Why?
- Are there any particular tasks in which you consider the use of Arabic essential?
- Do you think using the Arabic language can facilitate English language learning? How?
- Do you allow/encourage the use of Arabic in your EFL classes? Why?
- What do you usually do when your learners do not comprehend what you are saying in English?

The semi-structured interviews with students cover the following questions:

- Do you use Arabic in your English classrooms?
- What do you think of using Arabic in your English classroom?

- For which skills do you make use of Arabic most? Why?
- Should teachers whenever necessary use Arabic language? Why?
- What do you think of teachers using Arabic in your English classrooms?
- Does Arabic help you to learn English? How?

According to Harvey (2011), there is no explicit agreement about the suitable length of interviews. In the researcher's case, the conversations lasted between 20-40 minutes. A digital recorder was used to keep an accurate record of the data collected from these interviews and to avoid any loss of data. Having audio-recorded the interviews allows the researcher to go back to them from time to time and to get a deeper understanding of the content of the interview. All the six teachers (male and females) agreed to be audio-recorded and accepted that the interviews were conducted in English. With regards to students' interviews questions, they were conducted in Arabic to make sure students understood the questions and consequently could answer appropriately. The researcher also used a small notebook to write down any notes and important issues during the interviews. The researcher transcribed the data immediately after each interview to maintain accurate data for the later analysis. All the recordings were moved to Microsoft Word documents without any language, syntax or grammar modification.

Regarding conducting the semi-structured interviews, the following procedures were adopted:

- The researcher started visiting the schools in May and June 2017.
- He contacted school principals and EFL teachers in the targeted schools (chosen based on classroom observation done before) seeking permission.
- The arrangement included date, time and place of interviews in the schools preferred by interviewees, in an attempt to create friendly visits.
- The researcher reassured the participants about confidentiality and reminded them of the consent letters they had signed.
- The researcher explained the topic and aims of the interviews and how they would be conducted in each school.
- The interviews were all conducted separately in a room of the participants' choice.
- Before the interviews started, the researcher gave each participant a copy of the semi-structured interview questions.
- All the interviews were audio-recorded.
- Complete transcriptions of the interviews were done for analysis purposes.

3.9 Data analysis methods

According to Best (2012), the purpose of data analysis is to gather the data collected in a significant way to produce a clarification, permit explanation and allow suitable interpretations to be drawn. After collecting all needed data from the field, it was time to commence the data analysis. As previously mentioned, the data in this research were gathered from three sources: questionnaires, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, all of which were aimed at exploring teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. Thus, the data set that the researcher collected for this research contained the following:

- 50 EFL teacher questionnaires
- 233 grades 11-12 EFL student questionnaires
- 6 EFL class observation data, along with the researcher's handwritten field notes
- Six semi-structured interviews with 6 EFL teachers (from the six observed classrooms)
- Six semi-structured interviews with six students (from the six observed classrooms)

Mixed methods research involves mixing both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in one study. According to Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2010), 'mixed analysis' is a right word used for analysing data collected from a mixed methods research. They add that mixed analysis includes the analysis of one or both data forms (quantitative data or/and qualitative data) either in no order (concurrently), or sequentially in the two phases.

The qualitative analysis involved thematic analysis of data from the classroom observations and the interviews. According to Creswell (2012), thematic analysis involves researchers coding the data to be able to develop themes later. In this research, the researcher applied a thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data gained from semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and from the open-ended questions part in the questionnaire. Thematic analysis involves making use of the following steps: preparing and organising data, reading through the data, transcribing and coding data, and using the findings in discussions and interpretation. Table 3.6 shows and outlines the primary procedures that the researcher implemented in this research to gain an accurate understanding of the research topic for data analysis.

Table 3.6: Procedures in quantitative and qualitative data analysis process

Data Analysis Procedures	Quantitative phase	Qualitative phase
Preparing Data	Assigning numeric values; recording data to prepare computer analysis	Organizing data; transcribing texts
Reviewing and Exploring data	Descriptive analysis; looking for trends and distributions	Reading data and notes; developing qualitative code
Analysing data	Using appropriate statistical test; using statistical software	Coding data and assigning labels; grouping of data looking for related themes; using statistical software
Presenting data	Presenting results in tables, graphs and figures	Presenting findings in discussion or text forms

3.9.1 Quantitative data analysis

3.9.1.1 Questionnaire data analysis

In the case of this research, quantitative data analysis is employed in relation to the questionnaires and class observations. Therefore, quantitative data analysis here refers to the procedures and steps the researcher adopted to understand data gained from teachers' and students' questionnaires and the class observation sessions.

The researcher applied the following procedures for data analysis of the questionnaires. First, the researcher checked all questionnaires for completion, and both were assiged a number for gender as 1=Male and 2=Female. Both questionnaire forms were also assiged a number for Governorates (Regions) as 1=Muscat, 2=Al Dhaharah, 3=Al Sharqiah North and 4= AlDakhliya. Also, the Likert scale categories and statement choices were coded as 1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly agree. Teachers' questionnaires were assiged numbers from 1-50 (1-23 Male, 24-50 Female). The nationality also assiged a number as 1=Omani, 2=Egyptian, 3=Tunisian 4=other, alongside for teaching experience as 1=1-5 years teaching experience, 2=6-10 years teaching experience, 3=11-15 years teaching experience, 4=16-20 years teaching experience and 5=more than 20 years of teaching experience. For the student questionnaires, all questionnaires were assiged numbers from 1-233 (1- 115 Male, 116-233 Female) and coded for classes as 1=Class 11, 2=Class 12.

Teachers and learners' replies to the closed-ended questions of the questionnaires (16 questions in both questionnaires, Part 3) were carefully re-checked one by one for any missing items. The collected data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program version 21.0 where various statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were performed. Each statement was given a letter, which showed the section and statement number, for example, the first statement in section A was marked as 1A. In the case where there was no one attempted statement, it was considered as a missing value and was assiged a number by 88. Before getting into the analysis process, the researcher implemented an error-checking step on the SPSS data file to make sure that all entered data were correct, as Pallant (2007) warned that "what do you do if you find some 'out-of-range'(e.g. a 3 for sex)" (p. 44). After that, the first part of the teacher questionnaires (which contained information about gender, nationality, teaching experience years and governorates) and the third part data were statistically analysed using SPSS. Next, the first section of the students' questionnaires (which included information about gender, classes, and governorates) and the second and third part data were statistically analysed using SPSS. Then frequency tables, which provided informative details about the participants, including the number of the response of participants across statements, were produced. After that, descriptive data statistics, including the average of means and the standard deviation of each statement, were done. Figures, tables, and charts present the data results to help understand the outlines of the gained data. Also, to compare method for each theme between two groups and aspects, such as gender, background teaching experience, and nationality, a Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was applied. The questionnaire data were also analysed using a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to test the internal consistency of the rating, which defines the reliability of the questionnaires and classroom observation.

Part two of the teachers' questionnaire contained three open-ended questions aiming to give the participants a chance to elaborate their thoughts and practices about using the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman. In contrast to the interview questions, in the open-ended questionnaire, participants were given full freedom to express their ideas using their own words and time (Denscombe, 2010), which is believed to produce valued responses and can offer a quick return of data. In this research, teachers' responses were indeed found to be productive and informative. The open-ended questions were almost all answered except for minor papers, which might have been due to misunderstanding of the questions.

The three open-ended questions in the teacher questionnaires were qualitatively analysed by applying the following data analysis steps. First, the researcher read through the responses from teachers to check if the three questions were answered or not, and to check the content. Starting up the coding process using a sheet of paper, three answer categories/folders were created: using Arabic, encouraging Arabic, and activities in which Arabic was used (depending on the three open-ended questions in part 2), and each reply was labelled to the right category/folder. Next, any comments were checked to see if there were any common answers to be appropriately categorised. Once the themes were identified, a qualitative descriptive analysis of the findings was written.

It is imperative to note that, in this research, the gained quantitative data from the questionnaires represented the main part of the data analysis of this research. As mentioned previously, the researcher used the initial analysis of the questionnaire data, and descriptive data gathered through closed-ended and open-ended questions, to produce the class observation questions (checklist) and later to prepare the semi-structured interview questions (qualitative phase).

3.9.2 Qualitative data analysis

Creswell (2012) claimed that qualitative research is defined as 'interpretive' research in which the researcher produces appropriate assessment and clarifications of the fresh data. As previously mentioned, a thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the qualitative data that emerged from the teachers and students' semi-structured interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), this form of analysis helps researchers to recognise, analyse and present patterns of themes. They add that "a theme captures something important about the idea, about the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 82).

3.9.2.1 Classroom observation data analysis

The purpose of classroom observation as a data collection instrument in this research was to find out the contextual and situations where both EFL teachers and their learners tend to use the Arabic language in the EFL classrooms. In this research, a combination of checklists and hand-written field notes was adopted to collect class observation data. The qualitative field records assisted me to get a better understanding of how teachers teach different language skills in Omani EFL curricula. Observing different teachers was believed to provide the researcher with real and genuine data as these teachers had already participated in filling out the

questionnaire. Regarding the present research, the researcher carried out a word count quantitative method to determine the frequency of the Arabic language used by teachers and students throughout the class time. As the purpose of the class observation was to identify the Arabic language use frequency, the proportions of both English and Arabic were calculated to illustrate the amount of Arabic used by teachers and their learners from the six observed classrooms. This was a challenging task since the participants refused to be video-recorded for cultural and background reasons.

The field notes were qualitatively analysed, for as Cohen and et al (2011) recommended, for less observational data such as data from field notes, qualitative analysis procedures can be applied, including coding and categorising. Therefore, the software, NVivo version 11 computer program was used for observation and semi-structured interview qualitative data analysis. According to Robson (2011), NVivo is believed to be the best software that is adopted in qualitative data analysis. In addition, this software helped me to identify similarities and relationships, highlight the differences, and manage and organise the data into themes. The researcher adopted this software and the following techniques for class observation checklists and field notes data analysis. First, the researcher checked all the checklists for completion (six in total) and coded them from 1-6 (1-3 males and 4-6 females). After that, the field notes were written down again in clear and neat English and coded using numbers 1-6 (1-3 males and 4-6 females). By using NVivo, the gathered data were grouped into small categories (nodes). The researcher created different nodes for different statements. In this research, the researcher created nodes such as ‘using Arabic to give instructions’, ‘use Arabic to give feedback’, ‘ask for clarification’, ‘with classmates in group work activities’, and put any other comments or results under these nodes for the data analysis stage. Then, the researcher read through the whole data set again and wrote some notes and a memo (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) to highlight any key ideas and significant outcomes during the class time. After that, the researcher commenced the coding procedure, as Creswell (2012) has argued that “the technique of coding contains linking the text or visual data into minor kinds of data, observing for signs of code from different databases applied in the research, and then assigning a label to the code” (p. 184). Finally, the researcher reported the data results.

3.9.2.2 Semi-Structured interview data analysis

In this research, the qualitative data analysis included grouping and coding the responses from open-ended teachers' questionnaire questions and semi-structured interviews with teachers and learners. Walter (2013) said that in qualitative research, the analysis process is about meaning-making and researchers must make sense out of their great data set to get answers to their study questions. Regarding the semi-structured interviews data analysis, the researcher applied the following procedures. After the interviews were completed and checked for completeness, the first step was transcribing all the interviews using a Word 2013 processor. As Creswell (2012) explained, transcription is "the process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data" (p. 239). The twelve recorded interviews were transcribed including every utterance, words, fillers such as 'um', aah', 'yeah', Arabic daily life expressions and words, like 'yanni' (it means), and grammar and sentence structure mistakes. All these issues were considered to maintain the reliability of the data.

Transcribing twelve interviews was not an easy job. According to Walter (2013), transcription is a time-consuming process. Therefore, reading carefully through the transcripts as a whole to get an idea about the first impressions of the gained data is a significant step. After reading through data, the second step was using NVivo.11 software to code the data, including all details such as opinions, sentences, phrases, ideas, relevant and irrelevant concepts. Coding is the core of this qualitative data analysis step as it aids the researcher to recognise similar data as well as label ideas and evidence into clusters so that broader perceptions can arise from the data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The decision was made to choose the most important codes by gathering these codes into folders. Using NVivo nodes, such as 'Arabic should be excluded', 'Arabic role in EFL classrooms', 'Arabic in classroom activities', 'Can Arabic facilitate learning English', and 'Encouraging Arabic use' were created to have smaller themes. The decision was then made to choose the most important codes by gathering these codes into folders. In other words, the researcher created twelve nodes and numbered them as (N1-N6) for teachers and (S7-S12) for students. For example, teachers' node number one (TN1) has all teachers' answers to the first question and (N2) has all teachers' answers to the second question. Similarly, students' node number seven (SN7) has all students' answers to the first question, and node number eight (SN8) has all the students' answers to the second question and so on. Next, the researcher selected the most important codes, created categories, and described the connection between them in order to get qualitative results from these

interviews. Finally, after themes were identified, the researcher started reporting and writing up the results of the qualitative data based on the participants' semi-structured interviews.

3.10 Ethical clearance

This research obtained final ethics approval No. H16REA160 from the Human Research Ethics Committee in my university (University of Southern Queensland, USQ) on 29 July 2016. According to Johnson & Christensen (2012), ethics are the "values and procedures that support us maintain the things we value" (p. 99). Research ethics commands and focuses the behaviour and attention of the investigator on the researchers' privileges and any other staff affected by the study (Saunders & et al., 2009).

Since this research involves human perceptions, the researcher followed the ethical agreement procedures that are part of the University of Southern Queensland Human Ethics Research Committee (HREC) requirements. This research involved human participants, but the nature of the data was not classes as sensitive. The researcher confirmed that there was no psychological or physical harm done to the contributors throughout the data collection process. Also, the researcher carefully considered the participants' informed consent with details of the research topic and researcher contact information, ensuring freedom to withdraw at any research stage without any consequences, as well as confidentiality, anonymity and personal privacy. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study in clear and straightforward language, which ensured that their participation was entirely voluntary. The researcher told participants that the data would only be used for this research. All study participants were asked to sign an HREC- approved consent form before data collection. As Bouma (2000) stressed, to involve participants in any social research, they "must be able to make a voluntary, informed decision to participate" (p. 197). The researcher made sure that both teachers and students received agreement forms via emails and were asked to sign them using a digital signature and send them back before data collection started. Students' parents were briefed concerning the research aims and their children's participation. The researcher prepared a letter to every student's parent (in Arabic) requesting their permission to tape record their English language lessons throughout the research data collection stages and assuring them they were free to meet or call the researcher at any reasonable time if they should want to do so. Schools principals were asked for their permission to research their schools via official letters from the Ministry of Education in Oman with detailed information about the purpose and the likely findings and contributions of the research, along with the data collection procedures and the position of the researcher throughout the data collection development in their schools.

All the digital data, including the signed agreement forms, were confidentially and securely stored, and nobody can have any access to them except this researcher. Only the researcher has exclusive access to data produced in the classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews, as required by the HREC data storage police (NHMRC, 2007).

3.11 Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability and validity are two significant concerns in considering the trustworthiness of research findings. As this research applied a mixed methods approach, reliability and validity were expected to be achieved. According to Bryman (2012), applying mixed methods research increases the validity and reliability for any research. He adds that implementing questionnaires, observations, and interviews provide more reliable data about the events, and greater accuracy concerning their timing, length and regularity.

3.11.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to consistency and stability. In other words, reliability means how correct the outcomes would be if the tools were utilised at a different time by another researcher (Denscombe, 2010). According to Dornyei (2007), reliability consists of the "consistencies of the data, scores or observations obtained using elicitation instruments, which can include a range of tools from standardised tests administrated in educational settings to tasks completed by participants in a research study" (p. 50). In this research, the researcher adopted the following strategies to reduce the threats to reliability, as suggested by some researchers such as Cohen and et al (2007). First, a mixed methods sequential explanatory paradigm was adopted in both data collection and analysis stages, using more than one data collection instrument, namely questionnaires, class observation, and semi-structured interviews, to enhance reliability. As Bryman (2012) argued, implementing questionnaires, observations, and interviews provides more reliable data about the events, and greater accuracy concerning their timing, length and regularity. Second, more than one group of participants was involved (both EFL teachers and their grades 11-12 students) throughout the research data collection and analysis stages. The questionnaire design was carefully maintained including the use of closed-ended and open-ended statements, using clear, understandable words and instructions to avoid misunderstandings. A five-point Likert scale form was adpoted in both teachers' and students' questionnaires, which as Lyberg (1997) stated increases the dependability and validity of the perspectives measurement. Students' questionnaires were translated into the Arabic language to make sure that all learners understood the questions and instructions. Also, students' semi-

structured interviews questions were translated into the Arabic language to help students expressing themselves easily. Finally, the questionnaire data were analysed using a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to test the interior consistency of the score, which thus describes the reliability of the data tools. The findings of the closed-ended question analysis showed the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to be 0.85. According to McNeish (2017), Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered a satisfactory sign of reliability.

3.11.2 Validity

Validity, as defined by Bryman (2012), is "simply assuring that the research instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure" (p. 280). In this research, the aim was to explore teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. Therefore, to assure the validity of the instruments, all questions about using Arabic language were asked in the questionnaires, in the semi-structured interviews and in class observation checklist. In addition, the data collection tools were tested more than once using pilot studies, as previously mentioned. For instance, the first drafts of the questionnaires were discussed with the supervisory team and after many drafts, the final questionnaires were agreed to be implemented. In addition, a number of steps were adopted to enhance the validity of the interview questions, including piloting, supervisors' revisions, and researcher's familiarity with the research context, which helped to contact and deal with participants to clarify any ambiguity in the questions. Finally, this research brought both teachers' and students' perceptions together, using three different data collection instruments to achieve a better understanding of the main research topic. By applying these procedures, validity of the research could be obtained (Dornyei, 2007).

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented and described the methodological framework of the study. Mixed method research was selected for this study in order to explore the use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL classes in depth and clearly understand the participants' perspectives. Data was collected through questionnaires, classroom observation, and semi-structured interview methods used to collect data. In addition, this chapter has shown the techniques of data collection by demonstrating the participants' schools, samples, ethical issues, and steps of collecting data from these schools. The piloting stages of the data collection instruments were also described thoughtfully Throughout this study, the researcher followed the research

procedures as approved and carefully considered ethical matters. The validity and reliability issues were also highly considered and clearly explained.

Chapter Four presents the outcomes gained through questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' and learners' perceptions on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In chapter Three, the research methodology was presented, including research design, data collection instruments and data analysis procedures used in this research. The purpose of chapter four is to present the mixed methods data analysis and discuss the outcomes from conducting two forms of questionnaires, class observations and semi-structured interviews in order to explore and compare teachers' and learners' perceptions on the use of Arabic in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. According to Creswell (2014), as specified in chapter Three, using these multiple data collection instruments confirms and increases the trustworthiness of the research outcomes. The obtained data are analysed in relative to the research questions addressed in this study. Therefore, this chapter highlights the key findings with evidence from the gained data, which includes some extracts to support the points under consideration. Summary tables, charts, and figures are regularly used to support and show the different forms of data gathered from the three data collection instruments.

This chapter is divided into four parts: the first part is about the quantitative phase of the research, and includes the results of the EFL teachers' and learners' parallel questionnaires, respectively, aiming to uncover participants' perspectives on the following questions at the centre of the research. First, to what extent do teachers, and learners believe Arabic should be used in the 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman? Second, what are the specific pedagogical situations and contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic while teaching English in Oman? Third, what are the contexts in which learners tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman?.

The second quantitative phase of data analysis is driven by classroom observations in six EFL classrooms that focused on two main points: why do EFL teachers use the Arabic language in their classroom, and secondly when do students use Arabic during their EFL classroom time? The third part presents the qualitative phase of the data collected through 6 classroom observations and 12 semi-structured interviews with both teachers and their students. The aim was to provide both concrete and meaningful data sets in order to analyse the teachers' and learners' perceptions of the use of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman. The focus was on teachers' and learners' practices of Arabic language implementations in EFL classrooms. The last part of this chapter presents a summary of these data results.

4.2 Quantitative phase

4.2.1 Questionnaires composition

In this research, the questionnaires were composed of two parallel forms of questionnaires: one for teachers and one for students (see Appendices 2 and 3). Both questionnaires included the same 16 Likert scale items to allow comparisons between the teachers' and students' responses. The teachers' questionnaire included an additional 4 open-ended questions. The students' questionnaire also had 16 closed-ended questions besides an additional three closed questions (Yes/No answers) to explore students' perceptions about using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Oman. The results of the closed-ended questions analysis showed the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to be 0.85. According to McNeish (2017), a Cronbach Alpha of 0.70 or above is considered an acceptable sign of reliability.

The 16 Likert scale type items had five response categories with the range of scoring for each item being 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree). These questionnaires were conducted from September to November 2016. The two parallel forms of questionnaires were applied in the same governorates and same schools across Oman. They were distributed to 50 EFL teachers and 240 of their students in grades 11-12. They were distributed across eight different schools in four different governorates. Data arising from these questionnaires were entered into SPSS version 21.0 to calculate descriptive statistics, including percentages applicable to sample demographics from which detailed figures and tables for further illustrations were produced. Table 4.1 outlines the composition of the two questionnaires more explicitly.

Table 4.1: Composition of the questionnaires and surveyed community

Target group	Number of divisions in questionnaires	Type of questions		Surveyed community
		Open-ended	Likert scale items and closed questions	- 4 different governorates (8 schools)
Teachers	3	3	16 1	- 50 EFL teachers of grades 11-12
Students	3	0	16 3	- 240 Grade 11-12 EFL students

4.2.1.1 Teachers' questionnaire

4.2.1.1.1 Part 1: Background information

Fifty EFL teachers participated in the study to help to understand the usefulness (if any) of the Arabic language in English learning classrooms from a teacher's perspective. Of the total number of 50 teachers, all of the participants responded and returned the questionnaires to the researcher. EFL teachers' nationalities related to three main groups. Out of the 50 participants, 66% (33) were Omani nationals, 24% (12) Egyptian and 10% (5) Tunisian (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2: Numbers of participating teachers by nationality (N=50)

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Omani	33	66%
Egyptian	12	24%
Tunisian	5	10%
Total	50	100%

With regards to gender, the majority of teacher participants were female 54% (27) and 46% (23) was male, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. These teacher participants were selected from the governorates of Muscat (22%), Al Sharqiah North (26%), Al Dakhliya (28%), and Al Dhaharah (24%) as shown in Table 4.3.

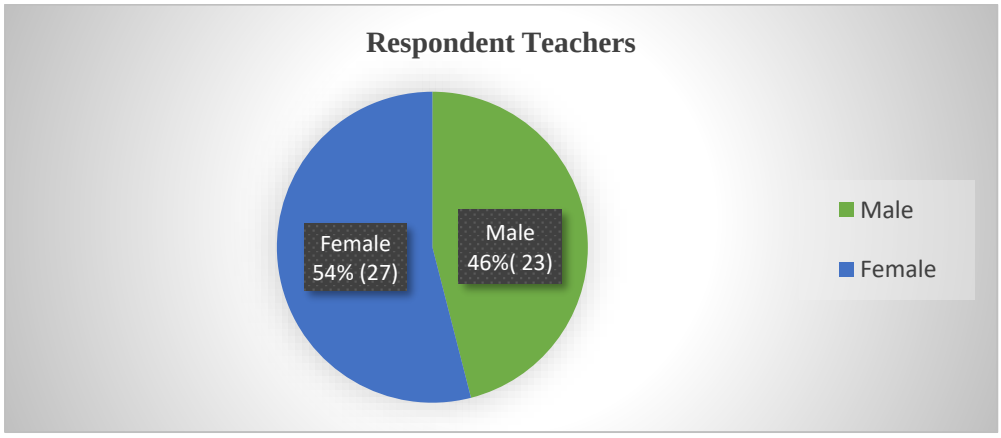

Figure 4.1*: Gender of respondent teachers (N=50)*

Table 4.3: Numbers of participating teachers by gender and across governorates

Teachers	Governorate				Total
	Muscat	AlDhaharah	AlSharqiah North	AlDakhliya	
Male	11	12			23
Female			13	14	27
Total	11	12	13	14	50

The teachers' questionnaire also included a question about the length of participants' teaching experiences. The EFL teachers who responded to this questionnaire had varied experience in teaching English as a foreign language, ranging from one year to more than twenty years. Out of the 50 participating teachers, 32% (16) had six to 10 years of teaching experience, 22% (11) had been teaching for 11 to 15 years, and 16% (8) had experience in teaching EFL for 16 to 20 years. Almost one fifth of the teachers 18% (9) had the longest teaching practice (at more than 20 years). Interestingly, 12% (6) teachers had only 1 to 5 years teaching experience. These results are displayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: The length of teachers' EFL teaching experience (N=50)

Length of teaching experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	6	12%
6-10 years	16	32%
11-15 years	11	22%
16-20 years	8	16%
More than 20 years	9	18%
Total	50	100%

4.2.1.1.2 Questionnaire part 2: Teachers' perceptions

The second part of the teachers' questionnaire was designed to allow them to express what they thought about teachers and learners using Arabic in their EFL classrooms and their own opinion about whether it was beneficial or not. Therefore, the second part of the teacher participants' questionnaire was designed to have one closed Yes/No response question and

three open-ended questions to give participants adequate chances to freely elaborate on their opinions.

The first question asked was about whether the teachers thought that Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms. They responded by selecting either 'Yes' or 'No'. The results are reported in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: EFL teachers' perception about using the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms (N=50)

EFL Teachers	For	Against
Male	28% (14)	18% (9)
Female	32% (16)	22% (11)
Total	60% (30)	40% (20)

Based on the teacher participants' answers to the first question ('Should Arabic be used in English language classrooms?' Yes, or No), the findings indicate that almost two-thirds 60% (30) selected yes. Approximately half of these 28% (14) were male and half 32% (16) were female. Thus, the majority believed that the Arabic language should be used in EFL classrooms. Of the remaining 40% (20) who selected "No", again approximately half were male and half female 18% (9) and 22% (11)) respectively. Thus, a substantial proportion of the teachers believed that the Arabic language should not be applied in EFL classrooms in Oman (see Figure 4.2) below.

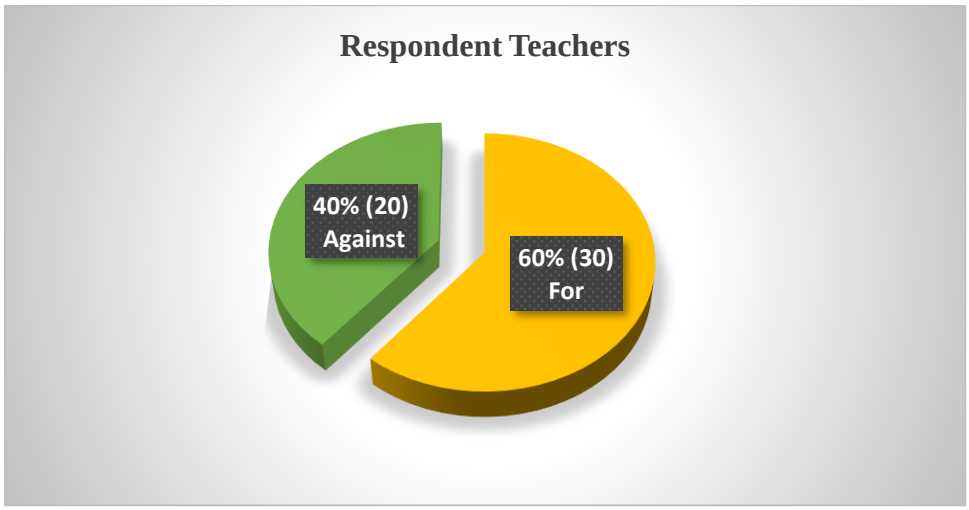

Figure 4.2: *Teachers' perspectives on whether Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms or not (N=50)*

The teachers were next asked to elaborate on their reasons and beliefs about the use of the Arabic language in their EFL teaching. Therefore, the teachers' questionnaire contained three open-ended questions aimed at uncovering teachers' perspectives in this regard.

In the first of the three open-ended questions, the teachers were asked to provide reasons for their stance on whether they believed in using the Arabic language in their EFL classes or whether they supported the "English only" philosophy. Those EFL teachers who reported that they used the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms provided the following reasons:

- To explain some new abstract vocabularies.
- To avoid wasting time.
- To help low English proficiency learners understand tasks and activities (especially with more than one-step tasks).
- In situations where students want to express their opinions, thoughts and feelings but they cannot do so in English.
- To check comprehension.
- To explain new grammatical rules.

In contrast, those teachers who believed Arabic should not be utilised in the EFL classrooms provided the following reasons:

- Supporting the 'only English' method.
- Using the context to understand the task without translation.
- Encouraging students to think only in English.
- Students are lazy and would not try to learn the task in English if Arabic was used.
- To expose students to more English speaking practices.
- Some students may find it easier to use Arabic and never try to improve their English.

In the second question (a Yes/No closed question), the teachers were asked if they had ever used Arabic while they were teaching the English language. Almost all, 94% (47) of the sample of teachers completed this question. Of these, approximately half were male and half were female 46.5% (22) and 45% (25) respectively). Their responses showed that 26% (12) of the teachers answered that they sometimes use Arabic while they are teaching English.

The third question was aimed at identifying teachers' possible uses of Arabic in EFL classrooms. The participating teachers were asked if they encouraged the use of Arabic in their EFL classrooms practices and why. Of the total sample of 50 teachers, 96% (48) responded to

this question. These comprised 46.66% (21) males and 56.25% (27) females. To get a better understanding of the EFL teachers' responses, the data gained from the responses to this question were classified into two groups: teachers who encouraged the use of Arabic in their EFL classrooms and those who did not. Overall, 60% (30) teachers supported and encouraged the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms, while 40% (20) of teacher participants believed that Arabic had no place in the EFL classrooms.

The last question in section two of the teachers' questionnaire was an open-ended question aimed at allowing the EFL teachers an opportunity to list the activities and situations where they believed that using Arabic could be helpful in teaching English. Of the total sample of 50 teachers, 86% (43) responded, comprised of 37% (16) males and 63% (27) females. Those who did not complete this question were 7 male teachers (14%) of the total sample of EFL teachers. The outcomes obtained from this question showed that the EFL teachers used Arabic in the following situations:

- Praising students for their good achievements
- Clarifying ambiguity of some activities/tasks, especially for weak achievers
- Introducing some abstract nouns
- Commenting on some students' answers and contributions to create an engaging classroom atmosphere
- Comparing English language and Arabic grammar rules (whenever needed)
- To raise important reminders or dates (for example, examination timetables)
- To maintain classroom discipline
- To speak to troublemaker students

4.2.1.1.3 Part 3: Pedagogical situations of Arabic use by EFL teachers

The third part of the teachers' questionnaire provided data about EFL teachers' perceptions on using Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman. The teacher participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various items on the questionnaire and to signify their opinions using five-point Likert scale items to answer 16 closed-ended questions. Like in the students' questionnaires, the five-point Likert scale had five categories: strongly agree, strongly disagree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. However, some teachers did not attempt some of the questionnaire statements. Therefore, the missing values were excluded from the final analysis, thus allowing only valid values to be used.

Table 4.6 shows a summary of descriptive statistics of teachers' questionnaire responses about the use of Arabic language in English language classrooms in Oman. The results show that teachers agreed with five aspects of using the Arabic language in an EFL class. The strongest agreement was where they believed that *their use of the Arabic language helps them to clarify some problematic English language and linguistic or grammatical rubrics* (*M*=3.78, *S. D*=1.026). The next positive agreement was with teachers agreeing that *the Arabic language can help students learn the English language much better* (*M*=3.65, *S.D*=1.284). Following that was the teachers' agreement that *the Arabic language also helps learners to express their ideas easily* (*M*=3.50, *S.D*=0.968). While these EFL teachers agreed that *using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice* (*M*=3.04, *S.D*=1.177), they recognised the importance of their EFL learners being able to have learning environments where the English language was spoken. In doing so, the statement they responded to therefore implies some support for the strategy of "English only" e.g. *effective English language learning is grounded in using merely English language in the EFL classrooms* (*M* =3.18, *S.D*=1.257). Thus, this reflects some contradiction in relation to their other views reported earlier on the subject matter in their responses to the questionnaire's open-ended questions.

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics of teachers' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman

No	Statements	N	Mean	S.D	Percent		
					25th	50th	75th
1	Effective English language learning is grounded in using merely English language in the EFL classrooms	49	3.78	1.026	3.00	4.00	4.50
2	Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better	49	3.65	1.284	3.00	4.00	5.00
3	Using Arabic language helps learner to express his/her own ideas easily	48	3.50	.968	3.00	4.00	4.00
4	It is very useful when a teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some English language problematic linguistic or grammatical rubrics	50	3.18	1.257	2.00	4.00	4.00
5	Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice	50	3.04	1.177	2.00	3.00	4.00
6	Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time	49	2.78	1.195	2.00	3.00	4.00
7	English language learners got motivated when the Arabic language was used in the classroom	50	2.72	1.196	2.00	3.00	4.00
8	The Arabic language is essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies	50	2.70	1.199	2.00	2.50	4.00
9	Students benefit from the teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used	50	2.68	1.236	1.75	3.00	4.00
10	Students usually participate more effectively in the English language classrooms when a	50	2.66	1.118	2.00	3.00	4.00

	teacher uses the Arabic language during the EFL class activities						
11	Teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities	50	2.54	1.110	2.00	2.00	3.25
12	It is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding	50	2.52	1.233	2.00	2.00	4.00
13	Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classrooms in Oman	50	2.48	1.359	1.00	2.00	4.00
14	The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman	49	2.41	1.257	1.00	2.00	4.00
15	The Arabic language is a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests	50	2.40	1.050	2.00	2.00	3.00
16	Using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is very effective	50	2.26	1.139	1.00	2.00	3.00

First, the teachers were explicitly asked to state whether the Arabic language should be used in EFL classes in Oman. Forty-nine teacher participants responded to this question. Table 4.7 shows that out of the 49 respondents, 57% (28) of participating teachers agreed and strongly agreed that the Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms (*M=2.41, S. D=1.257).* On the other hand, 29% (14) of teachers disagreed and responded that the Arabic language should not be used in English language classrooms in Oman. Seven (14%) teachers had a neutral opinion with this statement, as seen in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman

		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	0.4	2.0	32.7
	Disagree	13	5.6	26.5	57.1
	Not sure	7	3.0	14.3	71.4
	Agree	12	5.2	24.5	98.0
	Strongly agree	16	6.9	32.7	100.0
	Total	49	21.0	100.0	

The second item of the questionnaire required the participants to indicate their level of agreement on whether the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning. Fifty participants responded to this question. Of them, 46% (23) teachers answered that they agreed and strongly agreed while 36% (18) teachers responded that they disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement *(M=3.04, S. D=1.177).* Only 18% (9) teachers responded that they were not sure if using Arabic could simplify learning English (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	2.6	12.0	12.0
	Disagree	12	5.2	24.0	36.0
	Not sure	9	3.9	18.0	54.0
	Agree	20	8.6	40.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	1.3	6.0	100
	Total	50	21.5	100	

A cross-tabulation of the results in Table 4.8 with the teachers' levels of teaching experience revealed varied responses among teachers of different teaching experience. Table 4.9 shows that experience plays a statistically insignificant (*p*=.788) role in terms of the teachers' views that using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice.

Table 4.9: Correlation between teaching experience and the opinion that using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice

		Teaching experience					Total
Statement		1-5 years teaching experience	6-10 years teaching experience	11-15 years teaching experience	16-20 years teaching experience	more than 20 years	
Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice	Strongly disagree	16.7%	12.5%	18.2%		11.1%	12.0%
	Disagree	50.0%	18.8%	9.1%	25.0%	33.3%	24.0%
	Not sure		25.0%	27.3%	12.5%	11.1%	18.0%
	Agree	16.7%	37.5%	36.4%	62.5%	44.4%	40.0%
	Strongly agree	16.7%	6.2%	9.1%			6.0%
Total		**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Table 4.10: Chi-Square tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.333	16	.788
Likelihood Ratio	13.845	16	.610
Linear-by-Linear Association	.143	1	.705
N of Valid Cases	50		
a. 24 cells (96.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .36.			

The third question required teacher participants to indicate their level of agreement on whether using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better.

Forty-nine participants responded to this question. The majority of the teachers believed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better. According to the data results in Table 4.11, 60% (30) of the teacher participants agreed or strongly agreed that using the Arabic language in an English learning class could help students to learn it much better (*M* =3.65, *S.D* =1.284). On the other hand, 20% (10) of the teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, while only 18% (9) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Table 4.11: Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better

	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Strongly disagree	4	1.7	8.2	8.2
Disagree	6	2.6	12.2	20.4
Not sure	9	3.9	18.4	38.8
Agree	14	6.0	28.6	67.3
Strongly agree	16	6.9	32.7	100.0
Total	49	21.0	100.0	

It was necessary to perform a cross-tabulation to determine whether teaching experience was an influencing factor in the teachers' views that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better. Figure 4.3 illustrates the distribution of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed, according to their teaching experience. The diagram suggests that the majority of the teachers who mentioned they agreed or strongly agreed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better had relatively long teaching experience (more than six years of teaching experience). However, this experience was not statistically significant (p= .734) as Table 4.12 shows.

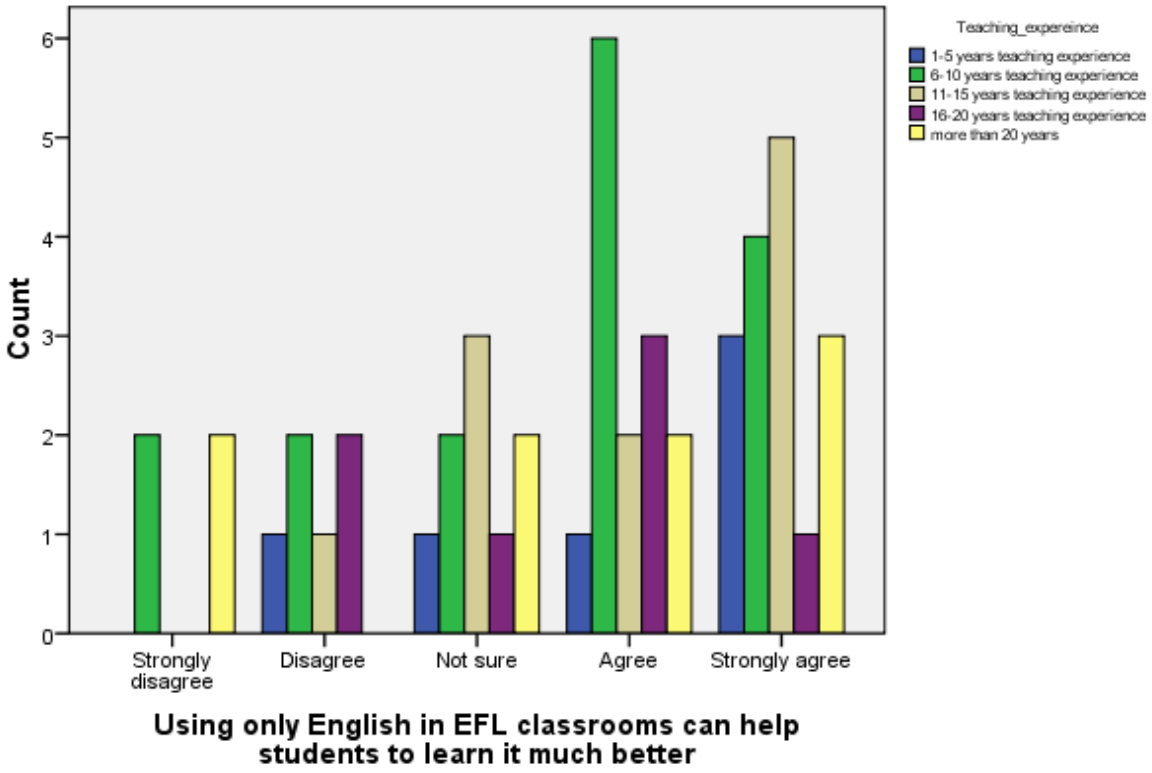

Figure 4.3: *The responses to whether using only English in EFL classes can help students to learn it better.*

Table 4.12: Arabic should be used in English language classrooms

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.143a	16	.734
Likelihood Ratio	14.103	16	.591
Linear-by-Linear Association	.363	1	.547
N of Valid Cases	49		
a. 24 cells (96.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .49.			

In the fourth question, teacher participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement on whether using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time. Forty-nine participants responded to this question. Data analysis of the participants' responses to this statement revealed that less than half of the respondents, or 45% (22) of teachers disagreed or

strongly disagreed with this statement *(M=2.78, S. D=1.195).* On the other hand, 33% (16) of the participating teachers believed that using the Arabic language could save time while 22% (11) had a neutral opinion, as can be seen in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time

		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	3.4	16.3	16.3
	Disagree	14	6.0	28.6	44.9
	Not sure	11	4.7	22.4	67.3
	Agree	13	5.6	26.5	93.9
	Strongly agree	3	1.3	6.1	100.0
	Total	49	21.0	100.0	

Similarly, fifty participants responded to question five, which asked teacher participants to indicate whether Arabic language was significant in English language classrooms. Data findings of the participants' responses showed that the majority 56% (28) of teachers thought that using the Arabic language was not significant in English language classrooms in Oman *(M=2.48, S. D=1.359).* By contrast, 32% (16) of teachers answered that they agreed and strongly agreed that using Arabic language was significant in English language classrooms in Oman while only 12% (6) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classrooms in Oman

		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Valid	Strongly disagree	17	7.3	34.0	34.0
	Disagree	11	4.7	22.0	56.0
	Not sure	6	2.6	12.0	68.0
	Agree	13	5.6	26.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	1.3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

Furthermore, the questionnaire posed a question asking EFL teachers to indicate their perceptions on whether they thought that the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language was very effective. In response to this statement, the majority of participants 64% (32) of teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed, and they thought that using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language was not very effective *(M=2.26, S. D=1.139)*. Only 22% (11) of teachers agreed, and 14% (7) of teachers had a neutral opinion in relation to this statement (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15: Using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is effective

		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Valid	Strongly disagree	16	6.9	32.0	32.0
	Disagree	16	6.9	32.0	64.0
	Not sure	7	3.0	14.0	78.0
	Agree	11	4.7	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

In the seventh question, teacher participants were asked to indicate whether the Arabic language helped the learners to express ideas easily. In total, 96% (48) of participants responded to this question. Data analysis of the participants' responses indicated that most of the teacher participants 64%, (31) agreed and strongly agreed that using the Arabic language helped learners to express their ideas easily *(M=3.50, S. D=.968)*. Only 20% (10) of teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed while 14% (7) of the participants responded that they were not sure, as can be seen in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Using the Arabic language helps the learner to express his/her ideas easily

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.4	2.1	2.1
	Disagree	9	3.9	18.8	20.8
	Not sure	7	3.0	14.6	35.4
	Agree	27	11.6	56.2	91.7
	Strongly agree	4	1.7	8.3	100.0
	Total	48	20.6	100.0	

Figure 4.4 is a graphical representation of the distribution of teachers' views on whether the Arabic language helps learners to express ideas easily, according to their teaching experience.

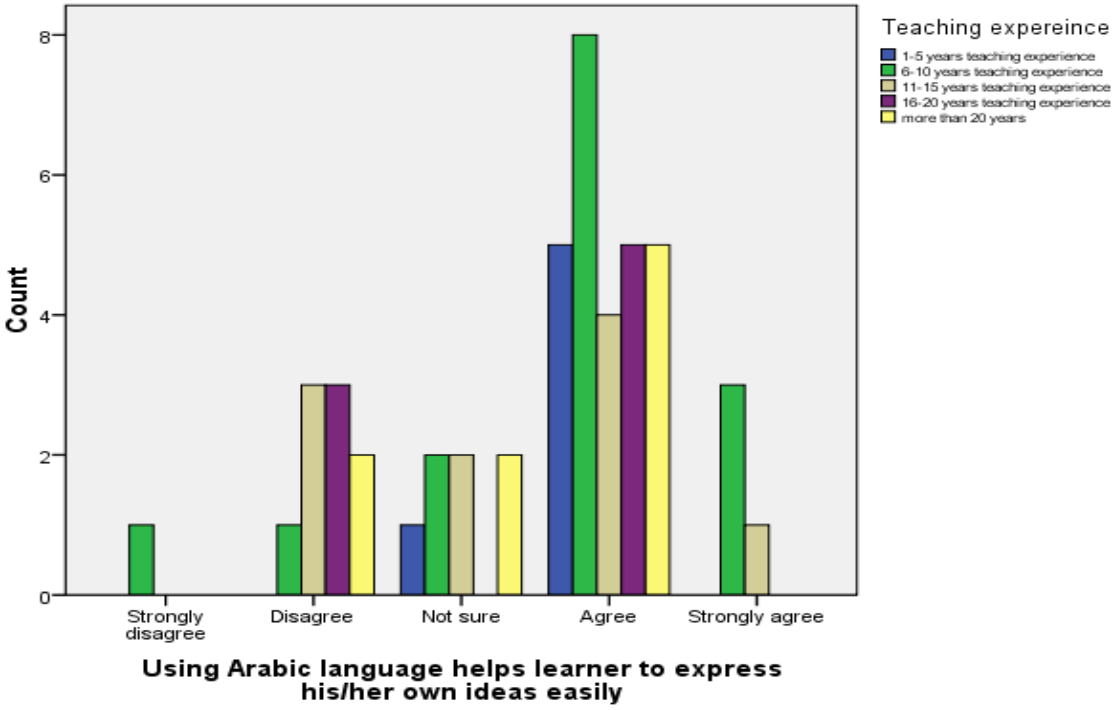

Figure 4.4: *The responses to whether using Arab language helps learners to express their ideas easily*

Concerning the pedagogical situations where EFL teachers believe that Arabic might be used, teacher participants had varied perspectives. However, the first question in this section aimed to find out whether the EFL teachers thought that the Arabic language was essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies or not. According to the data findings, as illustrated in Table 4.17, half of the teachers 50%, (25) disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement *(M=2.70, S. D=1.199)*. Conversely, 34% (17) of teachers replied

that they agreed that using the Arabic language was essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies, while only 16% (8) of teachers had a neutral point of view.

Table 4.17: The Arabic language is essential in English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	3.9	18.0	18.0
	Disagree	16	6.9	32.0	50.0
	Not sure	8	3.4	16.0	66.0
	Agree	15	6.4	30.0	96.0
	Strongly agree	2	.9	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

The second question was aimed at establishing the participants' levels of agreement on whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in EFL classrooms. In response to this question (see Table 4.18), out of 49 respondents, 69% (34) of teachers responded that they agreed and strongly agreed *(M=3.78, S. D=1.026).* On the other hand, 14% (7) of teachers answered that they disagreed and strongly disagreed, and the rest 16% (8) were not sure if effective English learning was based on using merely English in EFL classrooms or not.

Table 4.18: Effective English language learning is grounded on using merely English language in the EFL classrooms

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.4	2.0	2.0
	Disagree	6	2.6	12.2	14.3
	Not sure	8	3.4	16.3	30.6
	Agree	22	9.4	44.9	75.5
	Strongly agree	12	5.2	24.5	100.0
	Total	49	21.0	100.0	

A cross-tabulation was done to determine the number of responses that agreed according to their teaching experience. Figure 4.5 presents the graphical impression of the

influence of teaching experience on the teachers' views on whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in EFL classrooms.

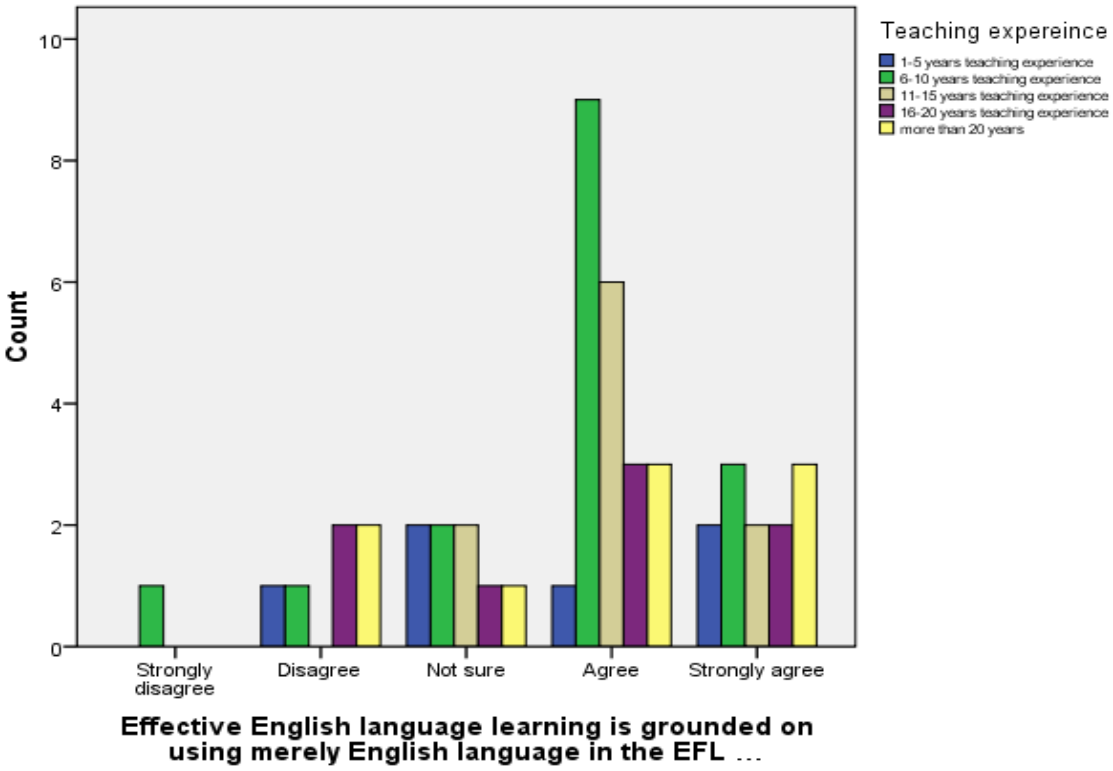

Figure 4.5**:** *Responses as to whether effective English language learning is grounded in using merely the English language in the EFL classrooms.*

The questionnaire also had a question about whether teachers who used the Arabic language could better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities. Data analysis of the participants' responses to this statement shows that the majority of respondents 52% (26) disagreed and strongly disagreed and believed that using Arabic was not necessary to involve learners during classroom activities *(M=2.54, S. D=1.110).* However, 24% (12) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed with this statement, and another 24% (12) had a neutral opinion, as can be seen in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.3	20.0	20.0
	Disagree	16	6.9	32.0	52.0
	Not sure	12	5.2	24.0	76.0
	Agree	11	4.7	22.0	98.0
	Strongly agree	1	.4	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

The next question, which sought to find out if EFL teachers thought that the Arabic language was a helpful tool in finding out about students' background and interests or not. Fifty participants responded to the item. Data findings obtained from the response to this statement showed that more than half 60% (30) of the teachers believed that Arabic was not a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests *(M=2.40, S. D=1.050).* By contrast, 18% (9) of teachers answered that they agreed and strongly agreed with this item and 22% (11) had a neutral opinion, as can be seen in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: The Arabic language is a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	4.3	20.0	20.0
	Disagree	20	8.6	40.0	60.0
	Not sure	11	4.7	22.0	82.0
	Agree	8	3.4	16.0	98.0
	Strongly agree	1	.4	2.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

With regard to checking learners' understanding by using the Arabic language, the outcomes of the teachers' questionnaire show that the majority 60% (30) of teachers held a negative perception towards the use of Arabic for checking learners' understanding *(M=2.52, S.D=1.233).* However, 28% (14) of teachers agreed with this statement and 12% (6) replied that they were not sure if it was better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding or not, as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: It is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding

		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	4.7	22.0	22.0
	Disagree	19	8.2	38.0	60.0
	Not sure	6	2.6	12.0	72.0
	Agree	11	4.7	22.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	1.3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

Moreover, the teachers' questionnaire had a question about whether it was very useful when a teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics from the EFL teachers' point of view. The outcomes of this question are presented in Table 4.22. The data findings show that most of the participants, 54% (27) of teachers stated that the Arabic language was beneficial when EFL teachers used it for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics *(M=3.18, S. D=1.257).* On the other hand, 32% (16) of teachers did not agree with this assessment while 14% (7) of teachers had a neutral point of view regarding this statement.

Table 4.22: **It is very useful when a teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	3.0	14.0	14.0
	Disagree	9	3.9	18.0	32.0
	Not sure	7	3.0	14.0	46.0
	Agree	22	9.4	44.0	90.0
	Strongly agree	5	2.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

To determine how individual teaching experience influenced the responses, a cross-tabulation, as represented in Figure 4.6, was conducted.

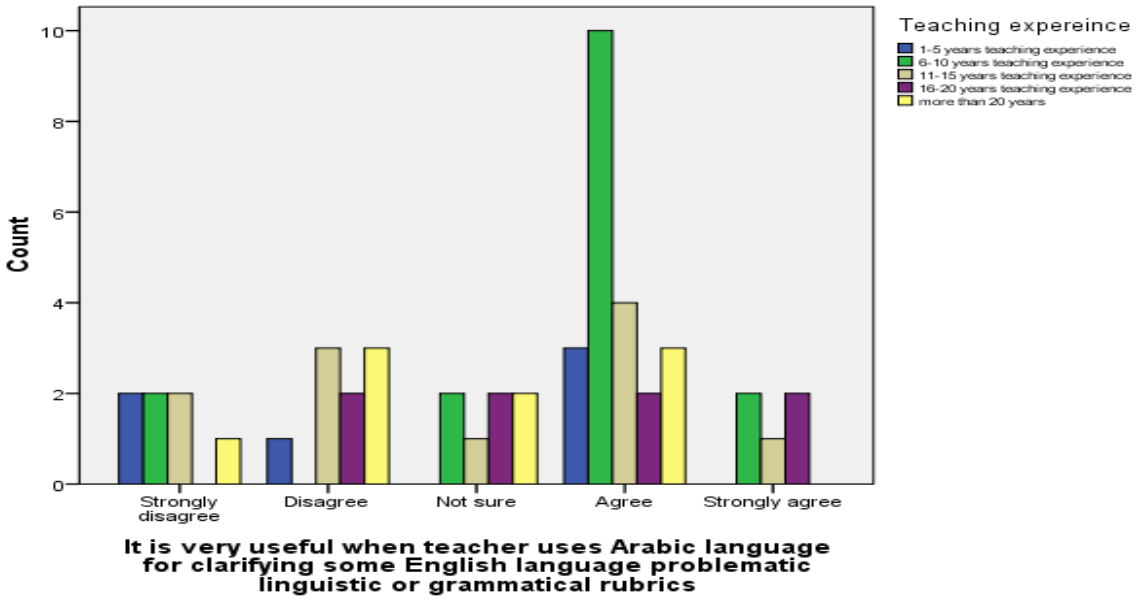

Figure 4.6**.** *The effects of teaching experience on the view that it is very useful when the teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics.*

Concerning the pedagogical situations and contexts in which the EFL teachers tended to use Arabic in their classrooms, the last part of the teacher participants' questionnaire had three questions. The first aimed to find out whether students benefit from teachers' feedback if the Arabic language is used. Out of the total number of 50 participants, 44% (22) of teachers answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement *(M=2.68, S. D=1.236).* On the other hand, 32% (16) teachers answered that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement and believed that using the Arabic language to give feedback to learners about their performance and achievement was a beneficial teaching method. In addition, 24% (12) teachers had a neutral opinion as can be seen in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Students benefit from teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	5.2	24.0	24.0
	Disagree	10	4.3	20.0	44.0
	Not sure	12	5.2	24.0	68.0
	Agree	14	6.0	28.0	96.0
	Strongly agree	2	.9	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

In their replies to the next question, which aimed to find out if EFL teachers thought that using Arabic encouraged learners to participate more effectively in English language classrooms, teachers were split in their points of view. Data analysis of the participants' responses, as seen in Table 4.24, shows that 48% (24) of teachers did not support the use of Arabic to encourage learners to take part in classrooms activities *(M=2.66, S. D=1.118).* By contrast, 26% (13) teachers answered that they agreed or strongly agreed that students usually participated more effectively in the English language classrooms when teacher used the Arabic language during EFL class activities. A further 26% (13) of teachers had a neutral opinion.

Table 4.24: Students usually participate more effective in the English language classrooms when a teacher uses the Arabic language

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	3.4	16.0	16.0
	Disagree	16	6.9	32.0	48.0
	Not sure	13	5.6	26.0	74.0
	Agree	11	4.7	22.0	96.0
	Strongly agree	2	.9	4.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100.0	

Regarding using the Arabic language in English language classrooms to motivate learners, teachers had different points of view. Fifty participants responded to the question. Data analysis of the participants' responses found that less than half of the EFL teachers 46%, (23) disagreed or strongly disagreed and believed that English language learners did not get motivated when the Arabic language was used in the classroom *(M=2.72, S. D=1.196).* By contrast, 30% (15) of teachers believed that Arabic could be used to motivate learners in English language classroom while another 24% (12) had a neutral opinion. These findings are shown in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: **English language learners got motivated when the Arabic language was used in the classroom**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	3.9	18.0	18.0
	Disagree	14	6.0	28.0	46.0
	Not sure	12	5.2	24.0	70.0
	Agree	12	5.2	24.0	94.0
	Strongly agree	3	1.3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	21.5	100	

4.2.1.1.4 Summary of the teachers' questionnaire findings

Teacher participants generally thought that the Arabic language could be applied in EFL classrooms for different functions. However, the teachers' questionnaire findings indicate that 30 (or 60%) of teachers selected 'Yes', in asnwer to the question: 'Should Arabic be used in EFL classroom'? However, the majority of the teachers believed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better, and they claimed that using the Arabic language could simplify students' English learning practice and help students learn the English language much better. Similarly, teachers stated that the Arabic language assisted learners to talk about their ideas easily. Moreover, EFL teachers claimed that the Arabic language was useful in teaching and in clarifying difficult English language linguistic and grammatical rules. In addition, EFL teachers reported that they used the Arabic language in many pedagogical practices such as explaining some new abstract vocabulary words, checking learners' comprehension, ensuring class discipline and management, teaching the two languages' tenses, and praising students for their outstanding achievements.

Data obtained from the teachers' questionnaires also indicated that some teachers believed that the Arabic language was not necessary to involve learners during classroom activities. Also, the findings showed that more than 50% of the participating teachers believed that Arabic language was not very helpful to find out about students' backgrounds and interests, and they held a negative prespective towards the use of Arabic language for checking learners' understanding. Furthermore, some other EFL teachers thought that the Arabic language should not be utilised in EFF classrooms for many reasons, including:

- Supporting the use of an only English teaching and learning environment
- Exposing learners to English language as much as possible

- Encouraging learners to practice English in their classrooms

4.2.1.2 Students' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was mainly carried out to obtain data from EFL students about their perceptions of the Arabic language usage in their classrooms in Oman. This questionnaire was distributed to a total number of 240 EFL students who were in grades 11-12 from 8 males and females schools in 4 different governorates in Oman. A total number of 233 students (115 male and 118 female) agreed to complete and return the questionnaire to the researcher. All learners had had a ten year experience in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Additionally, Arabic language is the learners' mother tongue. The students' questionnaire was translated into Arabic by the researcher to make sure that all learners could answer the questions easily. The questionnaire included three sections: the first part was intended to elicit general background information including their gender, class, and the governorates where their schools were located in Oman. The second part consisted of three four–point Likert scale items aimed at finding out about students' perceptions about whether they thought that Arabic should be used and whether they wanted their teacher to adopt it in L2 classrooms. The third part provided details on participants' perceptions using five-point Likert scale items to answer 16 closed-ended questions.

4.2.1.2.1 Part 1: Background information

The students' questionnaire was mainly run to obtain data from EFL students about their perceptions of using the Arabic language in their classrooms in Oman. A sample of 240 students were asked to participate in this study and 97% (233) student participants handed their questionnaires back to the researcher. These students were between 17 and 18 years of age. The student participants' gender was almost equally distributed; 51% female and 49% male as illustrated in Figure 4.7 below. Table 4.26 further shows the numbers of participating students by gender and governorates.

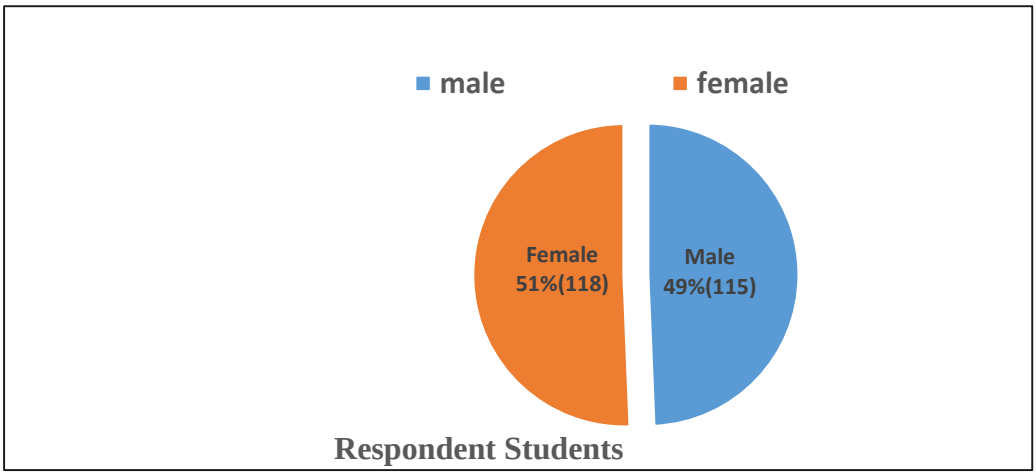

Figure 4.7: *Gender of respondent students (N=233)*

Table 4.26 Numbers of participated students by gender and governorates

Students	Governorate				Total
	Muscat	AlDhaharah	AlSharqiah North	AlDakhliya	
Male	59	56	0	0	115
Female	0	0	61	57	118
Total	59	56	61	57	233

Like the teacher participants, the student participants were drawn from the same governorates of Muscat (25%), Al Sharqiah North (26%), Al Dakhliya (25%), and Al Dhaharah (24%), as shown in Figure 4.8. Two schools/teachers were selected from each governorate.

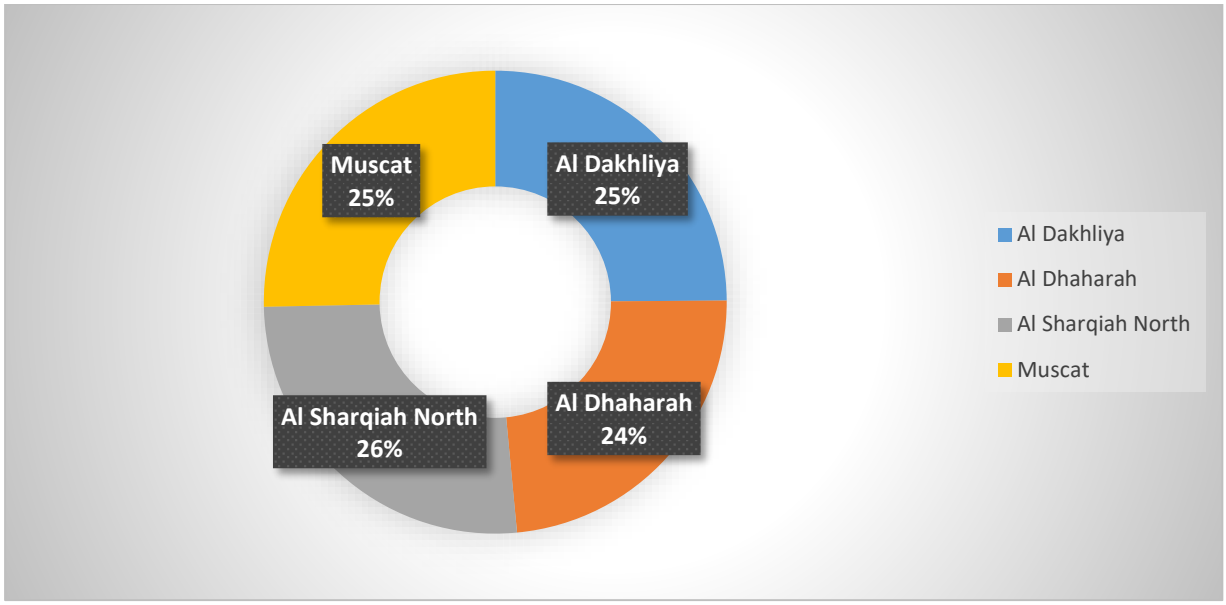

Figure 4.8: *Student participants by governorates*

Table 4.27 below shows the numbers of participating students by classes and governorates.

Table 4.27: Numbers of participated students by classes and governorates

Classes	Governorate				Total
	Muscat	AlDhaharah	AlSharqiah	AlDakhliya	
11	31	26	31	23	111
12	28	30	30	34	122
Total	59	56	61	57	233

4.2.1.2.2 Part 2: Student perceptions

Part two of the student participants' questionnaire was composed of three four-point Likert scale items aimed at discovering learners' perceptions about whether they thought that Arabic should be used and whether they preferred their teacher to use it in EFL classrooms in Oman. Students' responses to the three questions were analysed as follows.

The first student questionnaire item aimed to find out if they believe that the Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman. According to the data, more than half of the respondents, 57% (133), consisting of 30% (70) male students, and 27% (63) female students, selected 'Yes' to indicate that they believed that Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms. On the other hand, 43% (100), consisting of 19% (45) male and 24% (55) female

students selected 'No', indicating that they thought that Arabic should not be used in EFL classrooms. Figure 4.9 below illustrates the student participants' responses.

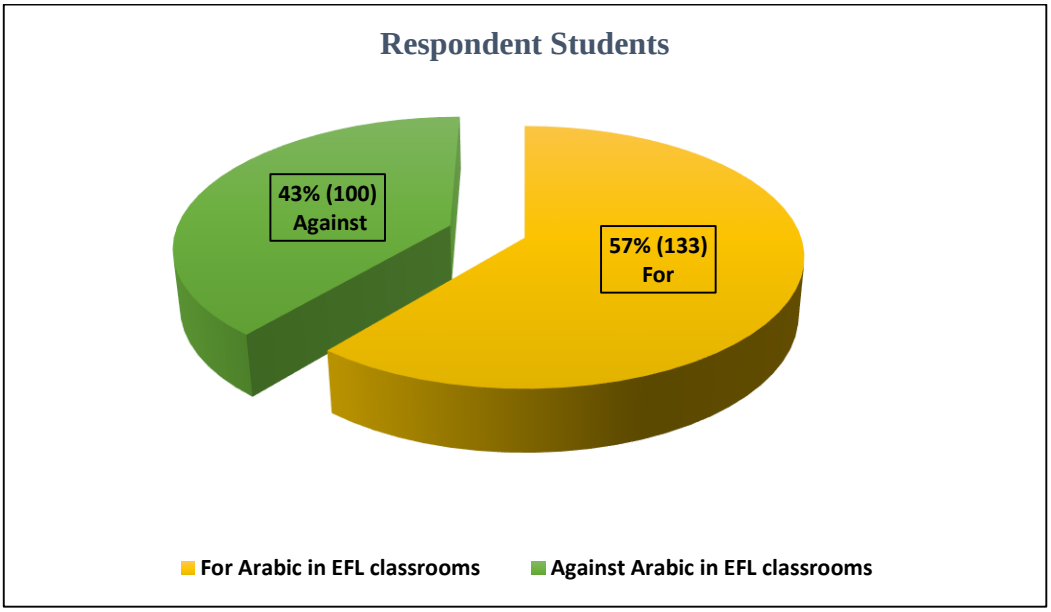

Figure 4.9: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought Arabic should be used in English language classrooms? (N=233).*

The second question in part two of students' questionnaire was about whether students liked their teacher to use Arabic language in EFL classrooms. In their responses to this question, students' answers were varied. For instance, out of 233 student participants, 45% (105), consisting of 23% (54) female and 22% (51) male students, answered 'a little' whereas 36% (85), consisting of 19% (44) female students and 17% (41) male students, said 'sometimes'. Only 6% (14), consisting of 4% (9) female and 2% (5) male students, said they liked their teacher to use 'a lot' of Arabic in their English classrooms. However, 12% (29), consisting of 7% (17) female and 5% (12) male students, responded that they did not like their teacher to use Arabic at all while teaching the English language. These responses suggest that students mostly had negative opinions about the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms. Figure 4.10 below shows students' responses to this question.

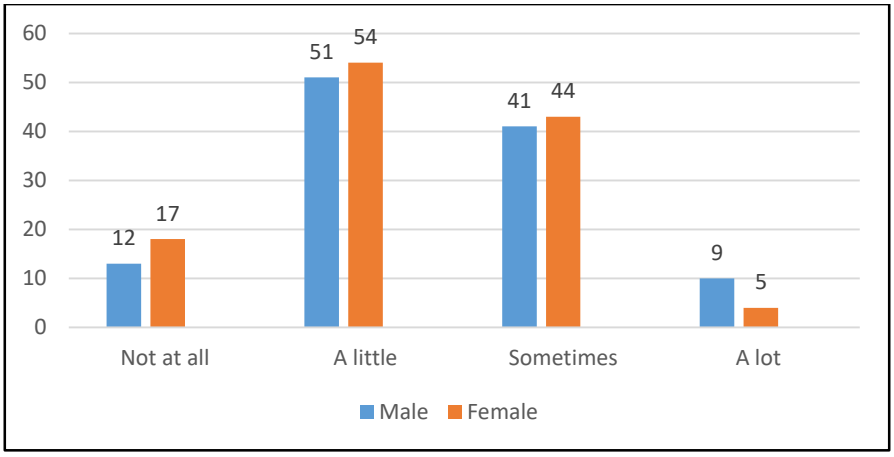

Figure 4.10: *Students' perceptions of whether they liked their teacher to use Arabic in English language classroom (N=233)*

With regards to the third question of students' questionnaire in part two, which aimed to find out if learners desired to use Arabic language when they asked questions in EFL classrooms, data findings show that 37% (87), consisting of 13% (31) male and 24% (56) female students, answered that they preferred to 'never' ask questions using Arabic in EFL classrooms. However, out of the total number of 233 participants of 30% (70), 15% (36) male and 15% (34) female students replied that they 'sometimes' preferred to use Arabic to ask questions. Moreover, 28% (66), consisting of 19% (44) male and 9% (22) female students said they 'rarely' asked questions in Arabic. On the other hand, 4% (10), consisting of 2% (4) male and 2% (6) female students, said that they 'always' preferred to ask questions using the Arabic language in their English classrooms. These results indicate that students mostly preferred the use of English while asking questions in EFL classrooms. Figure 4.11 below represents students' responses to this question.

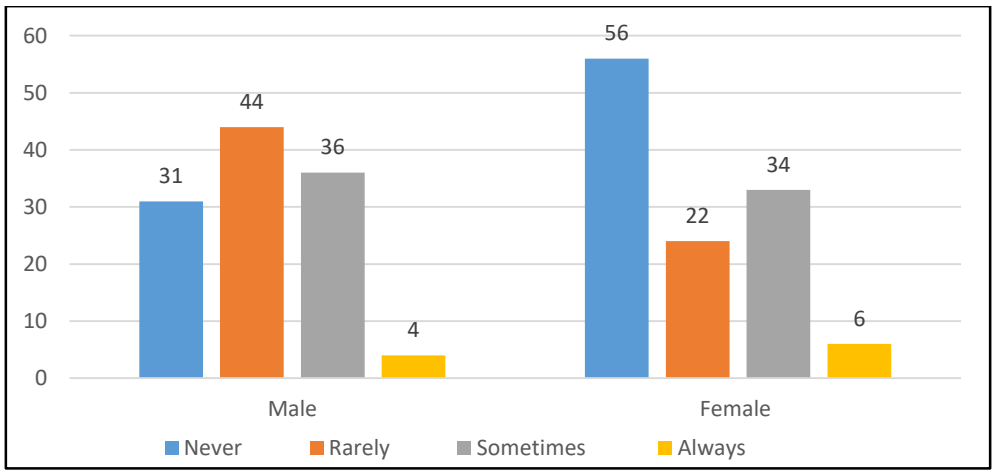

Figure 4.11: *Students' perceptions of whether they preferred to ask questions in Arabic in English language classroom (N=233)*

4.2.1.2.3 Part 3: Pedagogical situations of Arabic use by EFL students

The third part of the students' questionnaire provided data about what EFL students thought about using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Oman. A sample of (*N*) 233 students participated in the study. The five-point Likert scale had five categories: strongly agree, strongly disagree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. The mean of >3 signifies agreement, three implies not sure, and <3 signifies disagreement. Table 4.28 shows the summary of students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in an English language-learning environment. The gathered data show that all students agreed in general (mean score >3) about all the parameters, except for one item, that the Arabic language should be used in EFL classrooms in Oman (*M* =2.94, *S.D*=1.292).

Table 4.28: Descriptive statistics of students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman

No.	Statements	N	Mean	S.D	Percentiles		
					25th	50th (Median)	75th
1	It is very useful when a teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics	233	3.97	1.144	3.00	4.00	5.00
2	It is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding	233	3.64	1.253	3.00	4.00	5.00
3	Students usually participate more effectively in the English language classrooms when a teacher uses the Arabic language during the EFL class activities	233	3.52	1.243	3.00	4.00	5.00
4	Using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is very effective	233	3.50	1.384	2.00	4.00	5.00
5	Teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities	233	3.47	1.303	2.00	4.00	5.00
6	The Arabic language is a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests	233	3.46	1.171	3.00	4.00	4.00
7	The Arabic language is essential in English classrooms to present and clarify new word vocabularies	233	3.45	1.351	2.00	4.00	4.50
8	Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice	233	3.45	1.266	3.00	4.00	5.00
9	Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students learn it much better	233	3.34	1.349	2.00	3.00	5.00
10	Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time	233	3.32	1.353	2.00	4.00	4.00

11	Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classes in Oman	233	3.31	1.351	2.00	3.00	5.00
12	Students benefit from teacher's feedback if the the Arabic language is used	233	3.28	1.213	2.00	3.00	4.00
13	Effective English language learning is grounded in using merely English language in EFL classrooms	233	3.17	1.387	2.00	3.00	4.00
14	English language learners get motivated when the Arabic language is used in the classroom	233	3.08	1.328	2.00	3.00	4.00
15	Using the Arabic language helps the learner to express his/her ideas easily	233	3.06	.924	3.00	3.00	3.00
16	The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman	233	2.94	1.292	2.00	3.00	4.00

The first questionnaire statement in part three of the students' questionnaire sought to find out if the Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman. As can be seen from Figure 4.12, students' perspectives on the use of Arabic in English language classroom were varied. However, out of the total number of 233 student participants, 39% (90) strongly agreed 13% (30) or agreed 26% (60), with the statement that the Arabic language should be used in EFL classrooms *(M=2.94, S.D=1.292)*. On the other hand, 41% (95) overall either strongly disagreed 16% (38) or disagreed 24% (57) with this statement. Lastly, 20% (48) of students had a neutral opinion or were not sure if Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms or not.

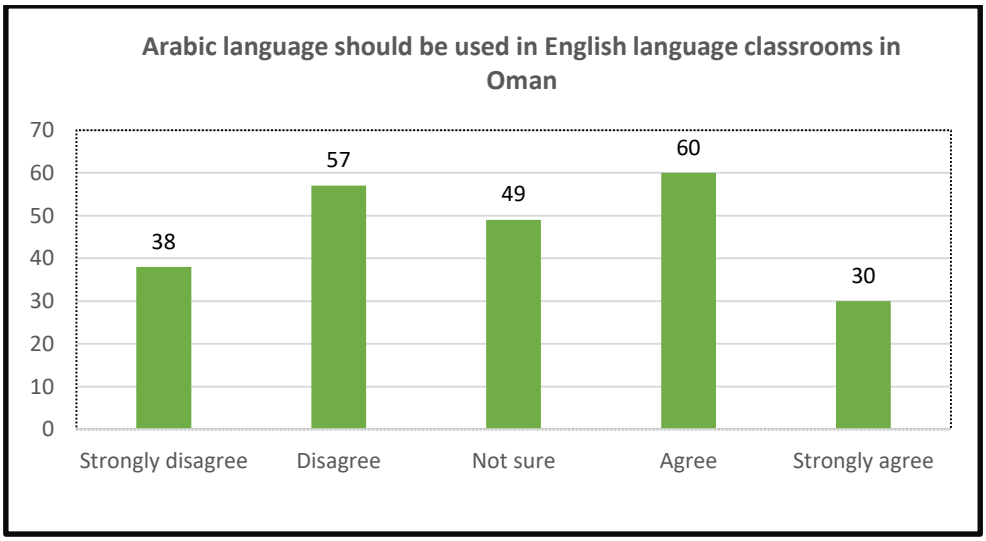

Figure 4.12: *The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman (N=233)*

The second questionnaire item examined if using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice. As Figure 4.13 shows, out of the total number of 233, 50% (117) of students either strongly agreed 27% (62) or agreed 23% (55) that Arabic simplifies their English learning practice *(M=3.45, S. D=1.266).* However, many student respondents were either not sure 26% (60), strongly disagreed 8% (19) or disagreed 16% (37) with this statement.

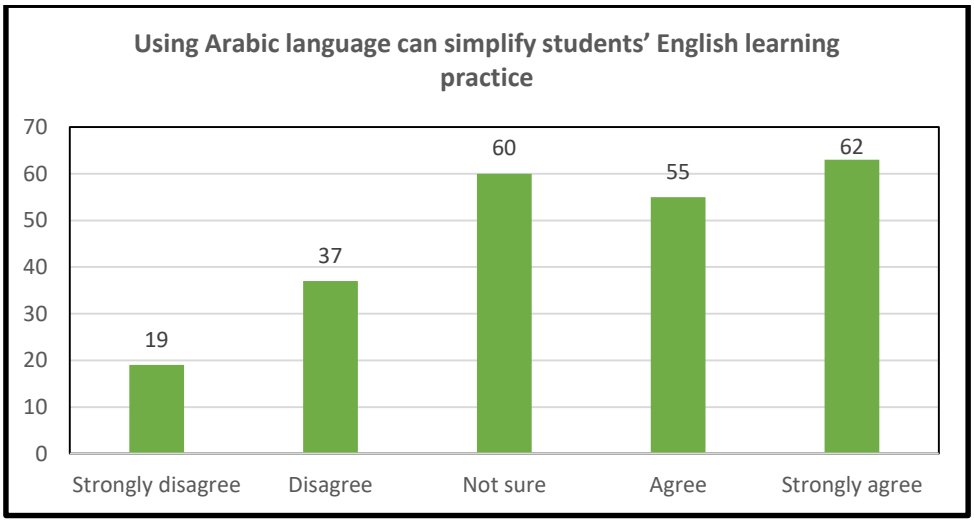

Figure 4.13: *Using the Arabic language can simplify student's English learning practice (N=233)*

A cross-tabulation test was applied to establish the relationship between the students' perception of the use of Arabic in English learning classroom and the opinion that using Arabic would simplify learning the English language. Table 4.29 below points out that, out of the 233 students 9% (21) of students who agreed that the Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman also agreed that using it can simplify students' English learning practice (see the blue circle). The same can be said of the additional 4, 21, and 28 students within the blue cycle who all together make up 32% (74) participants (about a third of all the respondents) who both agreed that Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms in Oman and that it can simplify their English learning experience.

Table 4.29: The relationship between the perception of the use of Arabic language and the view that it can simplify students' English learning practice

		Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice					Total
Statement		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree	
The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman	Strongly disagree	12	9	14	1	2	38
	Disagree	5	13	22	12	5	57
	Not sure	1	10	15	16	7	49
	Agree	0	3	7	21	28	59
	Strongly agree	1	2	2	4	21	30
Total		19	37	60	54	63	233

Compared with students who said that the Arabic language would simplify English language learning in class, the majority of learners were of the opinion that using English only in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better. As can be seen in Figure 4.14, out of the total number of 233, 49% (115) of learners strongly agreed or agreed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better *(M=3.34, S. D=1.349)*. Conversely, only a few students either strongly disagreed 13% (31) or disagreed 14% (34). At the same time, a significantly large number of respondents 23% (54) were not sure whether English only classes would enable them to learn the English language much better.

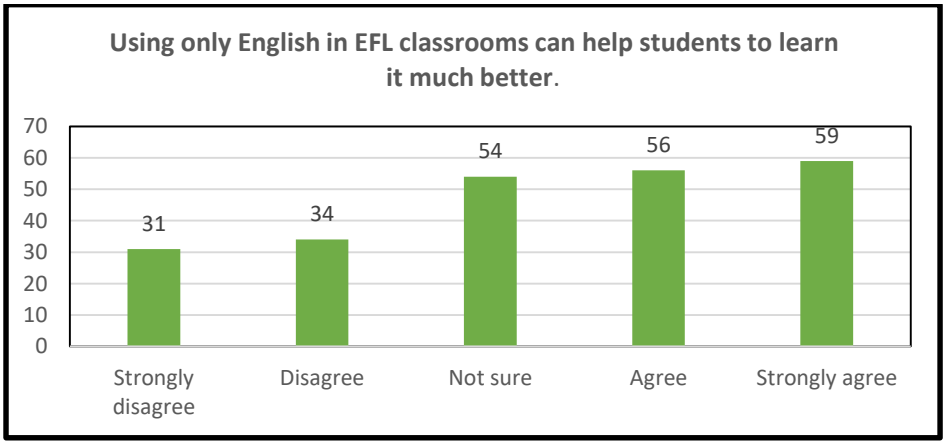

Figure 4.14: *Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better (N=233)*

The fourth students' questionnaire statement indented to find out if adopting the Arabic language in EFL classrooms could save time. Figure 4.15 shows that more than half of the learners 52% (122) agreed or strongly agreed that using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time *(M=3.32, S. D=1.349).* By contrast, 18 % (42) of students neither agreed nor disagreed, while 29% (69) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

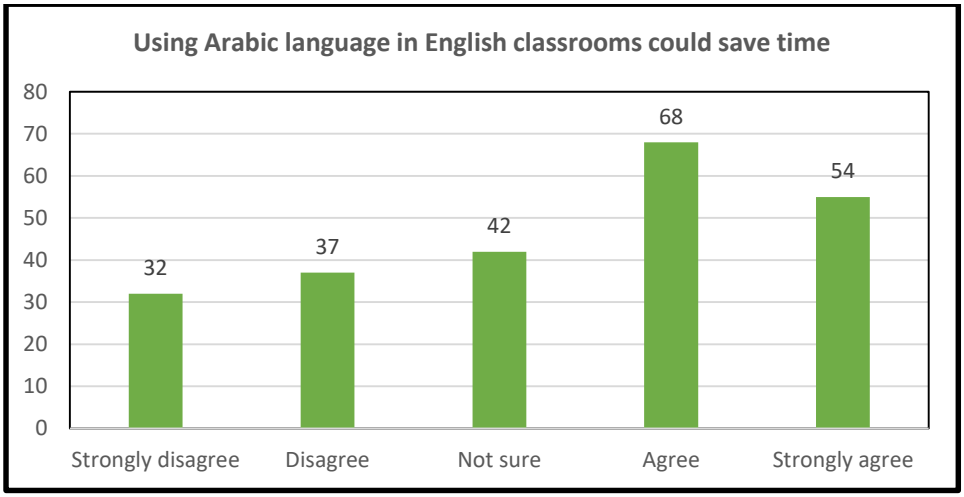

Figure 4.15: *Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time (N=233)*

In the fifth question, students were asked whether using students' Arabic language is significant in English language classes in Oman. Figure 4.16 below presents the views of the participating students. The data shows that out of the 233 students, 49% (114) agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Arabic by students was necessary for EFL classes in Oman *(M=3.31, S. D=1.351).* At the same time, 19% (45) of students neither agreed nor disagreed, and 32% (74) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

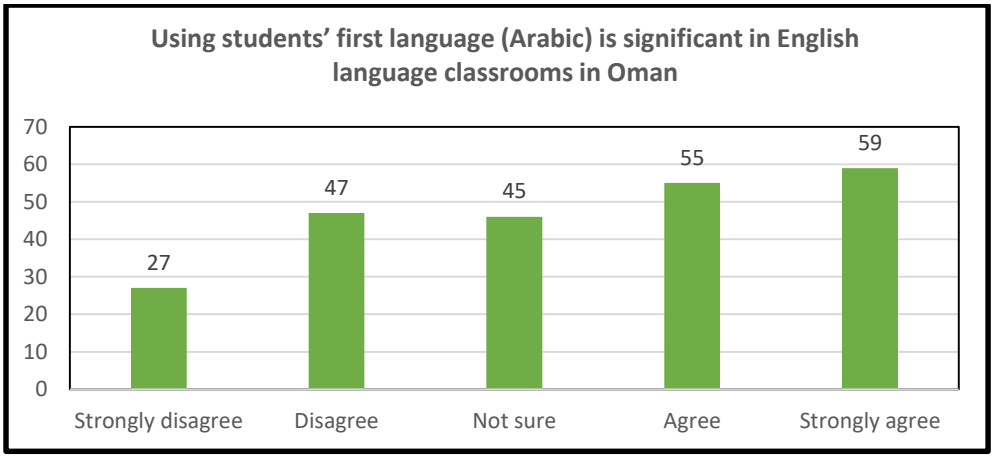

Figure 4.16: *Response to knowing the significance of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman (N=233)*

The sixth questionnaire item sought to establish whether using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language was very effective. Figure 4.17 shows that of the total number of 233 students, 58% (136) agreed or strongly agreed that using the Arabic language was very effective in the nascent stages of learning the English language *(M=3.50, S. D=1.384).* Only 15% (34) of students neither agreed nor disagreed, while 27% (63) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

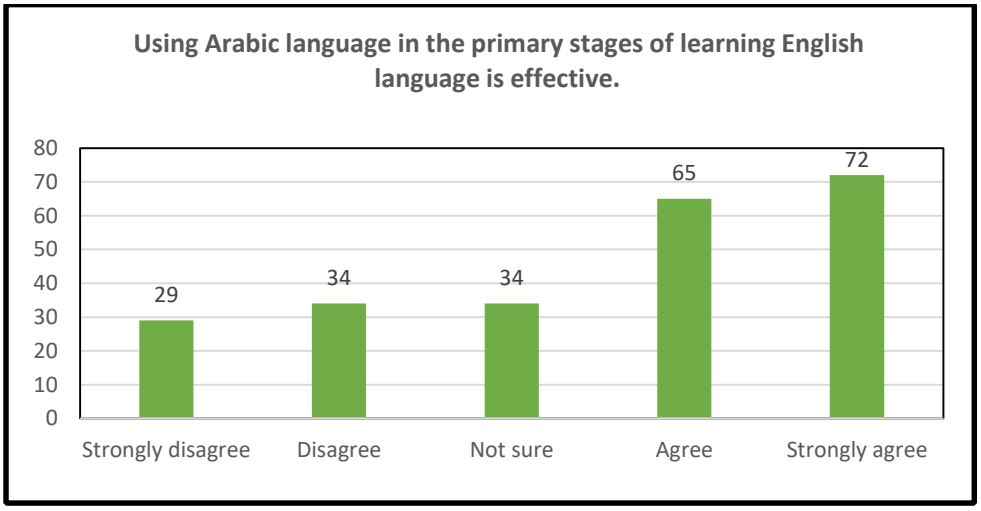

Figure 4.17: *Response to the effectiveness of using the Arabic language in the early stages of learning the English language (N=233)*

In their responses to the last question of part 3.A, which explored whether using the Arabic language helped learners to express their ideas easily, the majority of the participants 59% (130) neither agreed nor disagreed *(M=3.06, S. D=.924).* However, 24% (56) students said they agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 20% (47) of students said they disagreed or strongly disagreed, as they believed that using Arabic language might not help learners to express their ideas easily in EFL classrooms. The findings are illustrated in Figure 4.18.

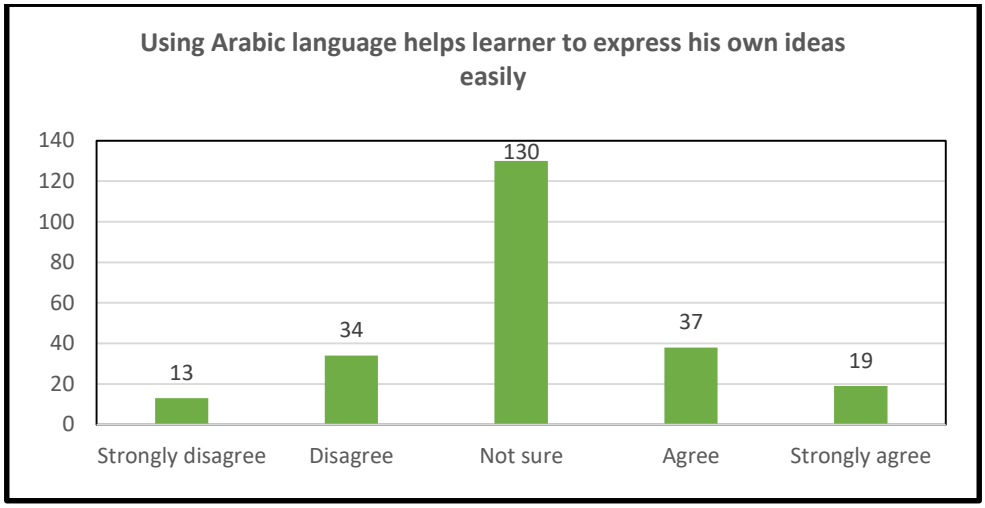

Figure 4.18: *Responses to how the Arabic language can help students to express their ideas in an EFL classroom (N=233)*

The following findings are concerned with the pedagogical situations/contexts in which EFL students choose to use Arabic. However, the students' questionnaire included a question on whether the Arabic language was essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies. Figure 4.19 illustrates students' perceptions. The data show that the majority of the students 60% (139) agreed or strongly agreed that language was important in the English classroom to clarify new vocabularies *(M=3.45, S. D=1.351)*. Only 15% (35) of students had neutral opinions, while 25% (59) said that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

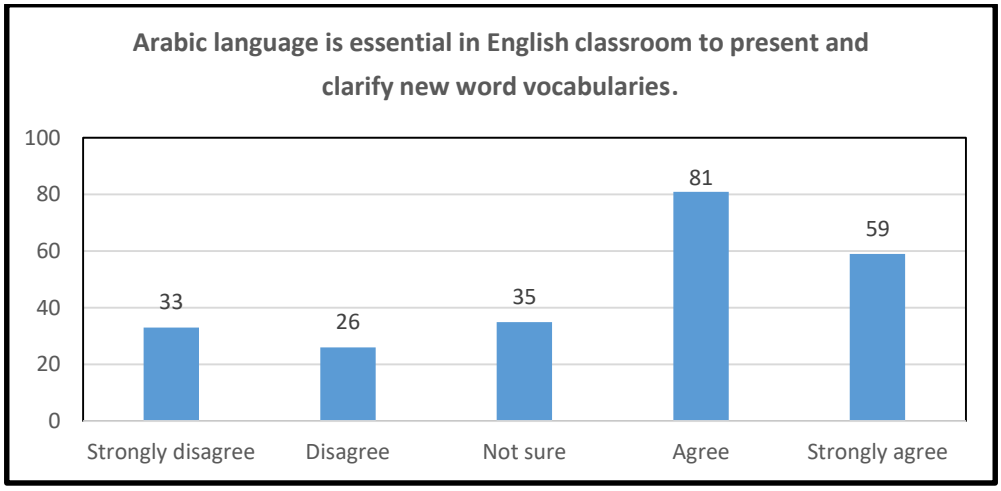

Figure 4.19: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that the Arabic language was essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies (N=233)*

The second question in part 3.B of the students' questionnaire asked participants whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely English language in the EFL classrooms. As can be seen from Figure 4.20, out of the total number of 233 students, 45% (105) agreed or strongly agreed that effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in EFL classrooms *(M=3.17, S. D=1.387).* However, 20% (47) of students neither agreed nor disagreed. Yet, a significantly high number of respondents 35% (81) disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement.

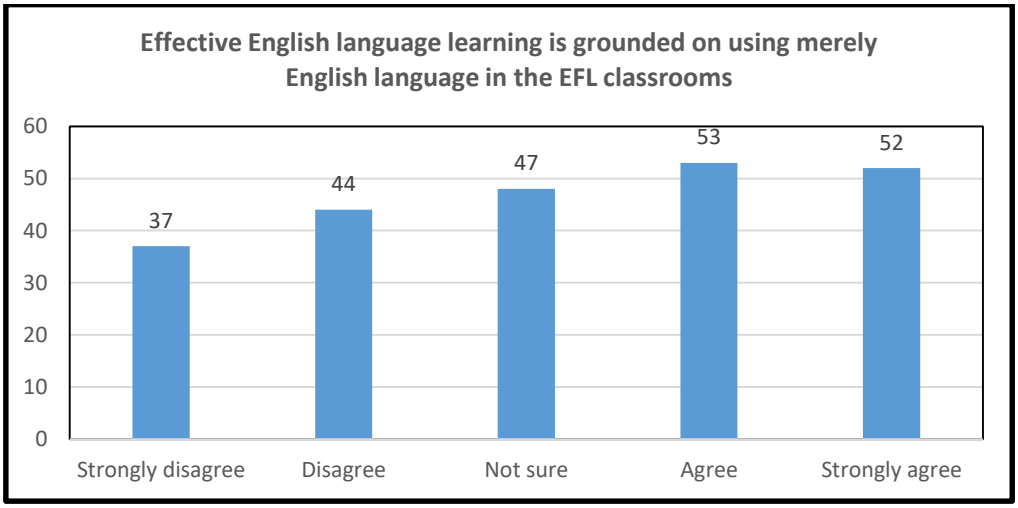

Figure 4.20: *Students' responses to whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in EFL classrooms (N=233)*

The students' questionnaire also posted a question on whether teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities. As can be seen from Figure 4.21, the majority of students; 55% (128) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement *(M=3.47, S. D=1.303).* However, 25% (60) of students answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed while 19% (45) learners neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

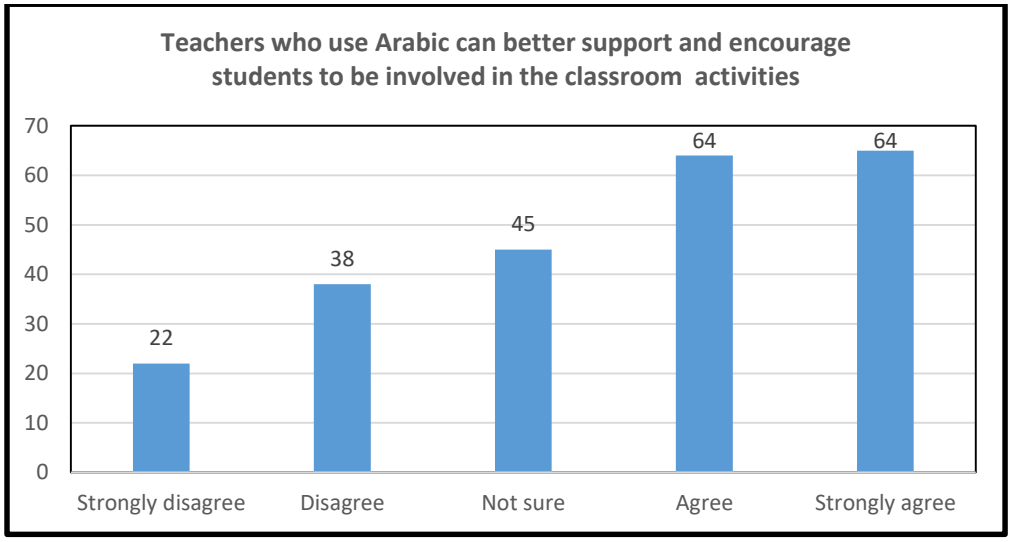

Figure 4.21: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that teachers who used Arabic could better support and encourage students to be involved in the EFL classroom (N=233)*

The students' questionnaire also included a question which was designed to find out whether they thought that the Arabic language was a helpful tool to find out about students' backgrounds and interests in EFL classrooms or not. As can be seen in Figure 4.22, 54% (126) of students agreed and strongly agreed with this item *(M=3.46, S. D=1.171)*, while 22% (52) students neither agreed nor disagreed, and 23% (55) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

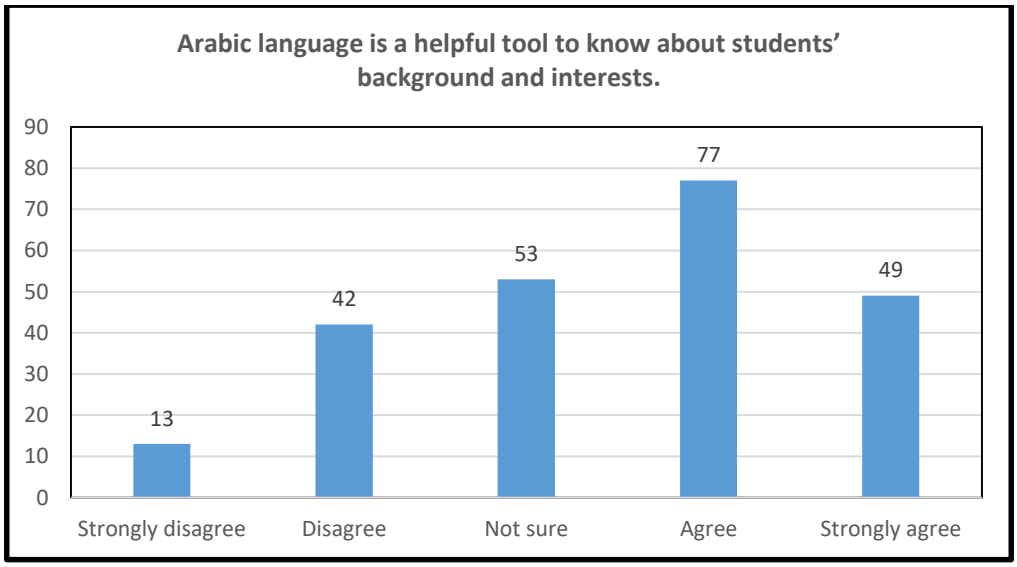

Figure 4.22: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that the Arabic language was a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests (N=233)*

Furthermore, the fifth item in this part sought to examine if it is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding. As can be seen in Figure 4.23, the overwhelming

majority of the students 67% (157) agreed or strongly agreed that it was better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding *(M=3.64,S.D=1.253).* However, 11% (27) of students had a neutral opinion and 21% (49) of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

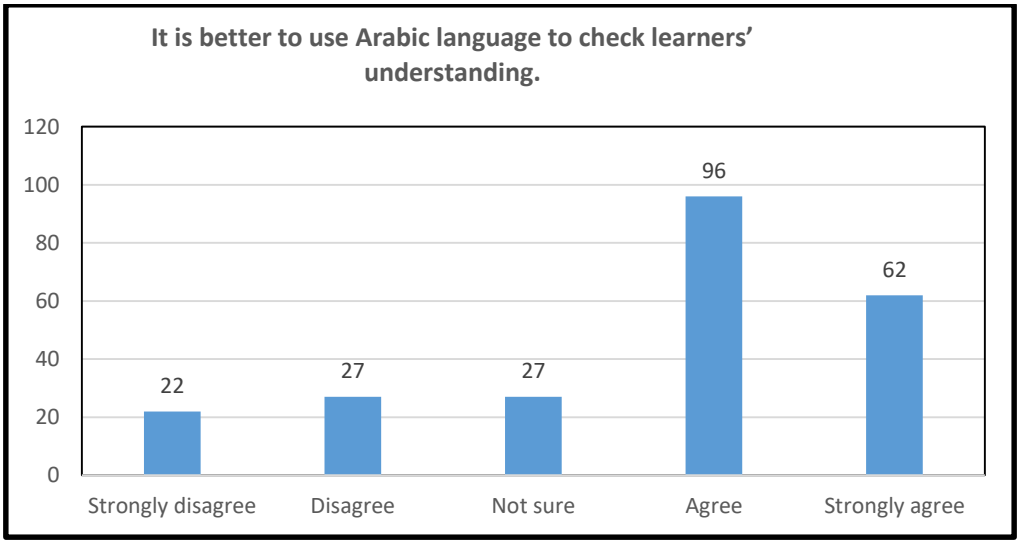

Figure 4.23: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that it was better to use Arabic to check students' understanding (N=233)*

The students' questionnaire also presented a question about students' perceptions of whether they thought it was very useful when a teacher used the Arabic language to clarify some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics. Of the total number of 233 students, 73% (171) agreed or strongly agreed that it was beneficial when a teacher used the Arabic language to clarify some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics *(M=3.97, S. D=1.144).* Only 14% (33) were not sure whether it could help explain some linguistic and grammatical problems, while 12% (29) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The findings are shown in Figure 4.24.

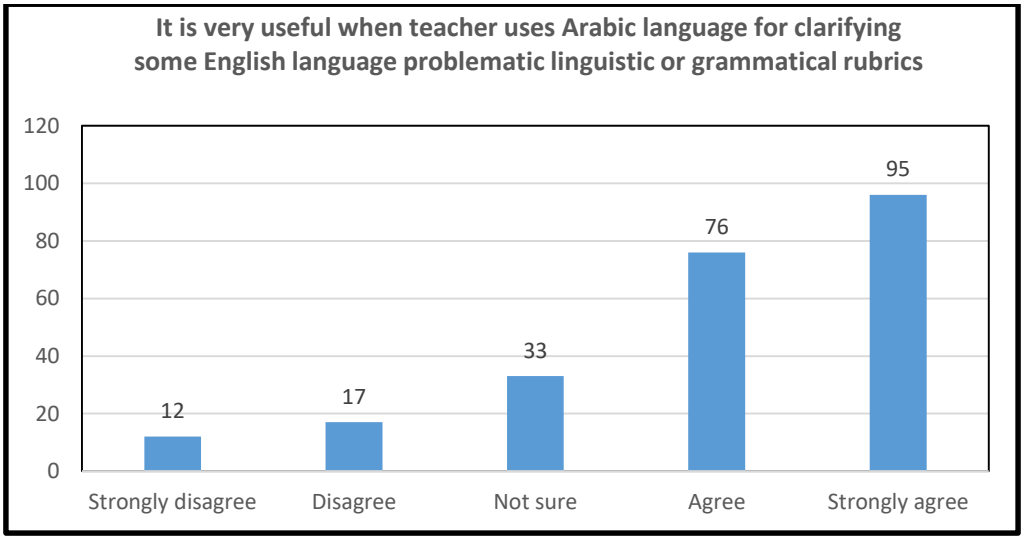

Figure 4.24: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought it was very useful when a teacher used the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics (N=233)*

The following section describes the data gathered from the students' questionnaire concerning the pedagogical contexts in which they tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms. Accordingly, the first item in students' questionnaire, part 3.C., sought to establish if students benefit from the teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used. According to the findings, the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms is likely to help students benefit from the teacher's feedback. Figure 4.25 shows that the majority of the students 49%, (115) agreed and strongly agreed with this statement *(M=3.28, S. D=1.213).* At the same time, 24% (56) of students had neutral opinions, while 26% (62) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item.

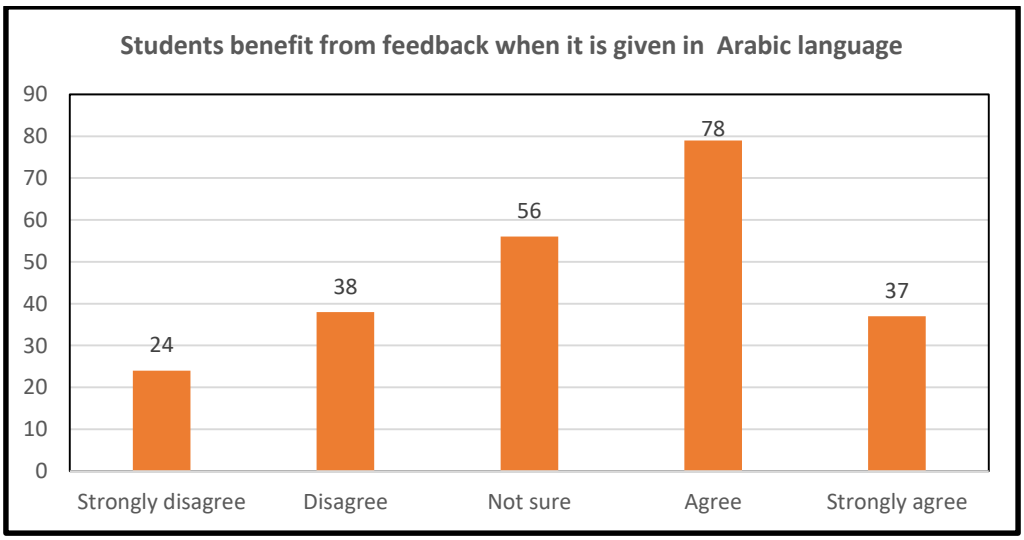

Figure 4.25: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that learners benefit from the teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used (N=233)*

Next, students were asked if students usually participate more effectively in the English language classrooms when a teacher uses the Arabic language during EFL class activities. The data, as seen in Figure 4.26 below, show that 55% (130) of the student participants agreed and strongly agreed that they usually contribute more effectively in the EFL classrooms when a teacher adopts the Arabic language *(M=3.52, S.D=1.243).* On the other hand, 21% (50) of students had a neutral opinion and 22% (53) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item.

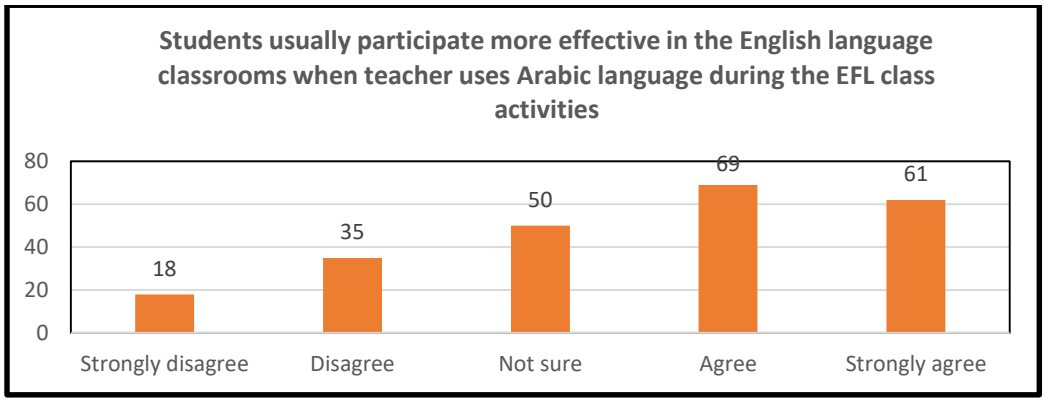

Figure 4.26: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that students participated more effectively when the teacher used Arabic during the EFL class activities or not (N=233)*

Finally, the student participants' questionnaire explored the perspectives of the respondents regarding the use of the Arabic language for motivational reasons in EFL classrooms. Figure 4.27 shows that out of the 233 students, 37% (91) agreed and strongly agreed that learners got motivated when the Arabic language was used in EFL classrooms *(M=3.08, S. D=1.328).* By contrast, 27% (65) of the students were not sure, and 33% (77) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

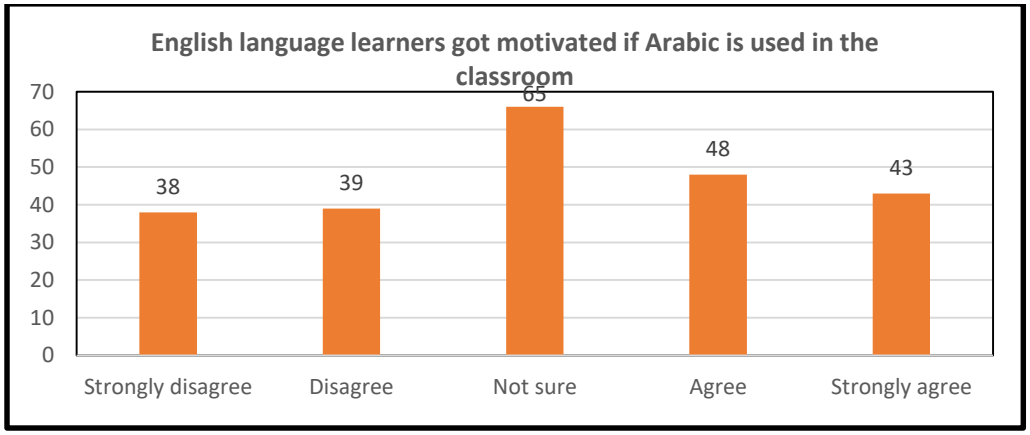

Figure 4.27: *Students' perceptions of whether they thought that students got motivated when Arabic was used in EFL classrooms or not (N=233)*

However, non-parametric tests (e.g. the *Mann-Whitney* test) were performed to illuminate the differences in perceptions between male and female teachers. As indicated in Table 4.30, there is a statistically important difference in the opinion that the Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman (U= 5337, p=.004). Also, the study has established a statistical significance in the variation of opinion regarding the idea that using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is very effective (U =5341, p=.004). Although positive relationships exist among the other variables, they are all statistically insignificant.

Table 4.30: Significance tests of the gender differences of students' perspectives on the use of the Arabic language in English language learning classrooms in Oman

Statements	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1. The Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman	5337	-2.883	.004
2. Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice	6251.5	-1.066	.286
3. Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better	6384	-0.799	.424
4. Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time	6584	-0.401	.689
5. Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classes in Oman	6189	-1.186	.235
6. Using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is very effective	5341	-2.893	.004
7. Using the Arabic language helps the learner to express his/her ideas easily	6439	-0.743	.457
8. The Arabic language is essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies	4976.5	-3.636	.000
9. Effective English language learning is grounded in using merely English language in the EFL classrooms	6513	-0.54	.589
10. Teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities	5795	-1.979	.048
11. The Arabic language is a helpful tool to find out about students' backgrounds and interests	5604.5	-2.37	.018
12. It is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding	6008.5	-1.583	.113

13. It is very useful when the teacher uses the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics	6108.5	-1.391	.164
14. Students benefit from the teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used	5857.5	-1.861	.063
15. Students usually participate more effectively in the English language classrooms when the teacher uses the Arabic language during the EFL class activities	6439	-0.693	.488
16. English language learners get motivated when the Arabic language is used in the classroom	6578	-0.412	0.68

The first questionnaire item sought to find out if the Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 5337. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was significant at .004 level. This shows that the probability of the two medians being equal is very small. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the median scores of students between the two genders. This means that male and the female students had different opinions on whether Arabic language should be used in English language classes in Oman.

In addition, the sixth questionnaire item sought to establish whether using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language was very effective. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 5341. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was significant at .004 level. This means that there was a statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. Moreover, in the eighth questionnaire item, participants were asked if the Arabic language was essential in the English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 4976.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was significant at .000 level. This implies that there was a statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. The tenth questionnaire item asked the respondents whether teachers who used the Arabic language could better support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 5795. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was significant at .048 level. This means that there was a statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. Finally, in the

eleventh questionnaire item, students were asked if the Arabic language was a helpful tool to find out about students' backgrounds and interests. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 5604.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was significant at .018 level. This shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

By contrast, the following items show that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female learners. For example, the second questionnaire item examined if using the Arabic language could simplify students' English learning practice. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6251.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .286 level. This indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. This implies that both the male and the female students agreed that using the Arabic language could simplify students' English learning practice. Additionally, the third questionnaire item sought to establish if using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6384. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .424 level. In conclusion, there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. Therefore, both the male and the female students believed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better.

The fourth questionnaire item aimed to find out if the usage of Arabic language in EFL classrooms could save time. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6584. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .689 level. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. Because of this, both the male and the female students had the same level of agreement on the notion that using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time. In the fifth question, students were asked whether using students' first language (Arabic) was significant in English language classes in Oman. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6189. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .235 level. This implies there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

In the seventh questionnaire item, students were asked whether using the Arabic language helped the learner to express his/her ideas easily. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6439. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it

was not significant at .457 level. This indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. Also, in the ninth questionnaire item, participants were asked whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in EFL classrooms. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6513. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .589 level. This shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

The twelfth questionnaire item sought to examine if it was better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6008.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .113 level. This implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

The thirteenth questionnaire item was designed to determine whether it was beneficial when a teacher used the Arabic language for clarifying some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6108.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .164 level. This indicates that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students. The other questionnaire item sought to establish if students benefitted from the teacher's feedback if the Arabic language was used. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic is 5857.5. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .063 level. This implies that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

Further, students were asked if students usually participated more effectively in the English language classrooms when a teacher used the Arabic language during the EFL class activities. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6439. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant at .488 level. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

Lastly, students were asked whether English language learners got motivated when the Arabic language was used in the classroom. The obtained Mann-Whitney Statistic was 6578. After correcting this value for tied rankings and converting to a z-score, it was not significant

at 0.68 level. This shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the median scores of the male and the female students.

Regarding the effect of learners' grade levels on their perception about using L1 (Arabic language) in the EFL classrooms, as can be seen in Table 4.31, there were no significant differences between learners' perceptions in grade 11 and grade 12.

Table 4.31: The effects of student grade level on perception about the use of Arabic language in EFL classes

Statements		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman	Between groups	3.215	1	3.215	1.934	.166
	Within groups	383.944	231	1.662		
	Total	387.159	232			
2. Using the Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice	Between groups	1.387	1	1.387	.865	.353
	Within groups	370.295	231	1.603		
	Total	371.682	232			
3. Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better	Between groups	.002	1	.002	.001	.972
	Within groups	422.212	231	1.828		
	Total	422.215	232			
4. Using the Arabic language in English classrooms could save time	Between groups	2.591	1	2.591	1.417	.235
	Within groups	422.268	231	1.828		
	Total	424.858	232			
5. Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classrooms in Oman	Between groups	2.775	1	2.775	1.523	.218
	Within groups	420.976	231	1.822		
	Total	423.751	232			
6. Using the Arabic language in the primary stages of learning the English language is very effective	Between groups	6.703	1	6.703	3.539	.061
	Within groups	437.546	231	1.894		
	Total	444.249	232			
7. Using the Arabic language helps learner to express his/her ideas easily	Between groups	.013	1	.013	.015	.904
	Within groups	198.022	231	.857		
	Total	198.034	232			
8. The Arabic language is essential in English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies	Between groups	4.960	1	4.960	2.736	.099
	Within groups	418.722	231	1.813		
	Total	423.682	232			
9. Effective English language learning is grounded in using	Between groups	3.099	1	3.099	1.615	.205

merely the English language in EFL classrooms	Within groups	443.373	231	1.919		
	Total	446.472	232			
10. Teachers who use the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities	Between groups	3.666	1	3.666	2.169	.142
	Within groups	390.403	231	1.690		
	Total	394.069	232			
11. The Arabic language is a helpful tool to find out about students' backgrounds and interests	Between groups	3.885	1	3.885	2.858	.092
	Within groups	313.978	231	1.359		
	Total	317.863	232			
12. It is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding	Between groups	1.895	1	1.895	1.209	.273
	Within groups	362.097	231	1.568		
	Total	363.991	232			
13. It is very useful when a teacher uses the Arabic language to clarify some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics	Between groups	.136	1	.136	.103	.748
	Within groups	303.589	231	1.314		
	Total	303.725	232			
14. Students benefit from teacher's feedback if the Arabic language is used	Between groups	.113	1	.113	.076	.783
	Within groups	341.192	231	1.477		
	Total	341.305	232			
15. Students usually participate more efficient in the English language classrooms when a teacher uses the Arabic language during EFL class activities	Between groups	.402	1	.402	.259	.611
	Within groups	357.796	231	1.549		
	Total	358.197	232			
16. English language learners get motivated when the Arabic language is used in the classroom	Between groups	2.062	1	2.062	1.169	.281
	Within groups	407.388	231	1.764		
	Total	409.451	232			

4.2.1.2.4 Summary of the students' questionnaire findings

The data obtained from student participants' questionnaires confirmed that Arabic language has a role to play in teaching and learning English language in Oman EFL contexts. Learners are generally in agreement with the use of Arabic in their EFL classes for many purposes. For example, more than half of the respondents 57% of students selected 'Yes' as an answer to the question 'Should Arabic be used in English classrooms?', which indicated that learners believed that Arabic should be used in EFL classrooms as it can simplify their English learning. Furthermore, more than 60% of student participants stated that the Arabic language

was useful in explaining and introducing new word vocabularies. Moreover, the majority of students 73% thought that Arabic is important in clarifying grammatical points. In addition, more than half of the student participants agreed that they tended to participate more effective when their EFL teachers used the Arabic language. They also agreed that using the Arabic language could save their English language class time.

However, student participants also hold some contradictory perspectives about using the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms. The following examples show that learners had varied opinions about the research statements:

- 57% of students agreed with the statement that 'The Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman', while 49% students thought that 'the use of Arabic by the students is significant for EFL classes in Oman'. Moreover, 49% of students agreed that 'using only English in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better'.
- 45% of students agreed that 'effective English language learning is grounded in using merely the English language in the EFL classrooms', while 55% of students agreed that 'using the Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities', and 67% of students agreed that 'it is better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding'.

Considering the analysis of the two questionnaires, it seems that the majority of participants advocated some Arabic language usage in EFL classrooms. On the whole, and based on answering the question 'Should Arabic language be used in EFL classrooms?', 60% of the questionnaire participants supported the idea of using Arabic in EFL classrooms and only 40% were against it, as can be seen in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32: Breakdown of the participants' perspectives towards the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman

Participants	Perspectives	
	For	Against
Teachers	60%	40%
Students	57%	43%

From a teacher's perspective, using the Arabic language in an EFL class simplifies the students' English learning practice, helps learners to express their ideas easily, and helps in clarifying some problematic English language, linguistic or grammatical issues. However, teachers claimed that effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in the EFL classrooms and that using only English in EFL classes could help students to learn it much better. In addition, both teachers and students believed that using Arabic was useful in some pedagogical situations; for example, students benefit from teacher's feedback when Arabic is used.

4.3 Qualitative data

4.3.1 Classroom observations

The classroom observations basically aimed to obtain, through the two research questions, the functions for which teachers and students tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms, were answered. The classroom observations allowed the researcher to witness live realistic interactions in real EFL classrooms. Moreover, the gathered data helped to verify the participants' perspectives in their questionnaire answers.

In order to extract as much related data as possible, the researcher decided to conduct a non-participant class observation. According to Hennink and et al (2013), "observation is a research technique that allows researchers to perceive and record people's performance analytically, actions, and communications. The method also permits researchers to get a detailed explanation of social situations to put people's behaviour within their socio-cultural setting" (p. 170). Additionally, classroom observation aims to check out the truthfulness of the participants' perceptions presented to rise the validity of the research (Mackey & Gass, 2012).

In this research, to collect data about the Omani context, where the teachers and the learners might use the Arabic language, the researcher observed six EFL classrooms (three male and three female) from two different governorates: Al Dhaharah and Al Dakhliya (three schools/teachers from each governorate). Thus, the researcher visited six different schools and conducted six separate 40-minute classroom observations in the two governorates. Each teacher (classroom) was observed once, so the total observation was approximately 240 minutes. However, the observation results provided in this section are drawn from a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis of classroom observations' tape-recording, checklists and field-note transcriptions.

Each class was audio-recorded from the beginning to the end, which was essential to capture any teaching incidents that might occur at any time during the lesson. The advantage of theses recordings was that they allowed me to confirm the accuracy of the data collected and offered protection against misrepresentation of what was said. Moreover, this recording was also necessary to ensure that the teacher-student dialogue could be analysed to check if the Arabic language was used, and if so, for what reasons, and whether the teachers were teaching CLT and were scaffolding students' language learning. During the observation stages, the researcher sat at the back of the visited classrooms at a desk where my presence could be reduced as much as possible for both teachers and students.

4.3.1.1 Participants

In this study, the classroom observations of teacher participants/classes were selected from six grade 11-12 schools, named School 1 to School 6 (not real names) from two governorates named AlDhaharah and AlDakhliya, as shown in Table 4.33.

Table 4.33: Summary of schools, governorates, teachers, and classrooms observed (Anonymised names)

Governorate	Schools	Teachers	Gender	Nationality	Teaching experience	Classes	Observation	Time (minutes)
AlDhaharah	School 1	(T1)	Male	Egyptian	+20	12	1	40
	School 2	(T2)	Male	Tunisian	4	11	1	40
	School 3	(T3)	Male	Omani	3	11	1	40
AlDakhliya	School 4	(T4)	Female	Omani	+20	12	1	40
	School 5	(T5)	Female	Omani	5	12	1	40
	School 6	(T6)	Female	Omani	5	11	1	40

One teacher participant from each school was sampled for the study. Thus, six EFL teachers participated in the study; T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 (not real names). Out of the six teacher participants, 50% were males (derived from School 1, School 2, and School 3) while the other 50% were females picked from School 4, School 5, and School 6. The teacher participants were from different nationalities. Specifically, T1 was Egyptian while T2 was Tunisian. Teacher participants T3, T4, T5, and T6, which translates to 67% teacher participants, were from Omani background.

It is also significant to note that teacher participants had different lengths of teaching experience. Their teaching experience ranged from 3 years to more than 20 years. Teachers T1 and T4 had the most extensive teaching experience (more than 20 years), while teacher T3 had the shortest working experience (only three years). Teacher T2 had four years of teaching experience, while teachers T5 and T6 had five years of experience each. Teacher participants were also taught different grades. More specifically, teachers T1, T4, and T5 taught grade 12, while teachers T2, T3, and T6 taught grade 11 students. The researcher observed each of the participants while they conducted their actual teaching. The classroom observation lasted for 40 minutes for each of the six schools.

4.3.1.2 Organization of the schools' classrooms

The six EFL classrooms visited and observed by the researcher, were mostly big classes ranging between 30 and 33 students in single-gender schools. The organisation of all classes was similar where students' desks were arranged into four rows and students could easily see the classroom presentations. However, this arrangement could be changed during the lessons activities where students could work either in pairs or change their desks into groups for supportive tasks whenever there was a need to do so. Students in these classes had been learning English since grade 4 in elementary classes at the age of six. The course book and workbook used in Oman were the second edition of *Engage with English* (2016). Students learn writing, reading, speaking and listening tasks through a communicative approach based on the teachers' guidebook, which was regularly used by teachers throughout the teaching process.

4.3.1.3 Arabic language functions in EFL classrooms

Throughout the observation sessions, the focus was on why and when EFL teachers and their students tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms. As previously mentioned, the observation data were collected through a mixture of a structured checklist and field-notes. The checklist covered the following categories: give instructions, check comprehension, explain new words**,** explain grammar**,** joke and praising**,** give feedback to the students**,** discuss assignments and tests, and error correction (see Appendix 6). These field-notes were useful when transcribing the teachers' talk, to note down the sort of teacher-students and students-students interactions, and students' involvement in class activities. Moreover, they were useful to indicate the teaching aids applied during the classroom time, the kinds of activities learners were involved in, time used and any other things happening during the class observation. This was very helpful for transcribing the gathered data later as there was no need to transcribe the

whole lesson; only whenever teachers and students used the Arabic language during lesson time.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis was adopted to analyse the classroom observation checklist and field-notes. The functions used for the Arabic language, along with their frequencies, were classified into two main categories of teachers' and students' purposes for Arabic language use. Specifically, the researcher determined what language the EFL teachers used in their classrooms. Additionally, the researcher ascertained for what purposes students used the Arabic language during EFL classrooms by calculating the frequency of Arabic language used and functions for such use.

To explain the results in a meaningful way, the researcher used tables and figures for a detailed explanation. However, the observed teachers were also interviewed later to find out whether or not there were any contradictions between their practices and perspectives. The word count processor was used to count the total number of Arabic words spoken during the six observation sessions.

4.3.1.3.1.1 Giving instructions

First, teachers used Arabic to give instructions, which happened 27 (26%) times during the observations sessions. The observed EFL teachers differed in their frequency of use of Arabic when giving instructions. More specifically, teacher T6 used Arabic to give instructions the most (8 times) while teacher T1 and T4 used it the least number of times (3 times). On the other hand, teacher T2 and T5 used Arabic to give instructions four times, while teacher T3 used it five times. Overall, as Table 4.34 shows, the use of Arabic in giving instructions accounted for 26% of the use of Arabic by teachers.

The following extracts illustrate the Arabic language use by two observed EFL teachers to give instructions while learners were doing group work tasks. Each group had a group leader who spoke on behalf of his classmates and each group was given a name. For example, in extract 1, T1 was explaining the task rubrics and the way it should be done using English and he translated the instructions into Arabic while he was monitoring the groups.

Extract 1

a. **T1:** In this task, what should you do?
b. **T1:** ايش المطلوب هنا ؟
c. **T1:** Do you know what the exercise is about?
d. **T1:** فاهمين؟ (Do you understand?)

In another example, T5 in one of the groups noticed that one of her students was not involved in the task, so she asked her in both English and Arabic to work with her classmates as extract 2 below illustrates.

Extract 2

a. **T5:** Why do not you work with your friends (classmates)?
b. **T5:** ليش ما تشتغلي مع زميلاتك؟
c. **T5:** لو سمحتي اشتغلي مع بعض (please work together)

The consequences of this study are aligned with those of earlier studies (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al Sharaeai, 2012; Shuchi & Islam, 2016) all of which noted the use of L1 for creating an encouraging friendly environment for inductive learning.

4.3.1.3.1.2 Checking comprehension

The second important use of Arabic language in the observed classes was checking learners' comprehension 15% (16) times. In the present study, the use of Arabic to check comprehension accounted for 15.4% of the use of Arabic by teachers. Teachers had different frequencies of using Arabic in checking understanding. More specifically, teacher T6 never used Arabic to check comprehension, while teacher T4 used this approach the most number of times (5 times). On the other hand, teacher T1 and T5 used it four times while teachers T2 and T3 used it once and twice respectively. Teachers reported using Arabic as a pedagogical tool to check comprehension. For example, in extract 3 below, T1 checked his learners' comprehension using Arabic by asking the following questions:

Extract 3

a. **T1:** Who can tell what the difference between 'vacation' and 'holiday' is? (he wrote the two words on the board)
b. **T1:** احد يقولي الفرق بينهم (What is the difference?)
c. **T1:** شو االفرق بين المعنيين؟ (What is the difference in meaning?)

Similarly, Shuchi and Islam (2016) found that teachers' use of the Arabic language in L2 lessons can aid understanding and make learners feel comfortable and confident.

4.3.1.3.1.3 Translation

The third most significant use of Arabic language translation of all categories (40 times, or 38%), was to clarify the meaning of new terms. Teachers reported different frequencies of using Arabic to explain new L2 words. More specifically, teacher T2 used Arabic to explain new words the most number of times (15 times), while teacher T6 used it the least number of times (two times). On the other hand, teachers T5, T4, and T1 used Arabic to explain new words three, four, and five times respectively. Lastly, teacher T3 used Arabic to explain new words 11 times. The use of Arabic to explain new words has also been reported in earlier studies (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al Sharaeai, 2012). The following extracts illustrate examples of Arabic use to define some L2 words. For instance, T2 was teaching a reading passage and spontaneously translated many new words into Arabic as shown in extract 4 below.

Extract 4

a. **T2**: look at the title. What does 'aviation' mean? ايش معناها؟
b. **T2**: احد منكم يعرف شو المعنى
c. **T2**: معناها طيران (It means flight)

Similarly, T5 asked his learners to give the Arabic equivalents of the words and she picked those who knew the translations to answer her questions, as extract 5 shows.

Extract 5

a. **T5:** What does tour awesome mean?
b. S: رائع, ممتاز
c. **T5:** نعم معناها رائع (Yes, it means very good)
d. T5: What is the meaning of airline cabin crew?
e. S: طاقم الطيارة
f. **T5:** نعم احسنت (very good)
g. **T5:** What about tour guides?
h. **S:** مرشدين سياحيين
i. **T5:** tourists?
j. S: سواح
k. **T5:** ممتاز (excellent)

4.3.1.3.1.4 Explaining grammar

The fourth use of Arabic was to explain grammar. In the current study, the use of Arabic in explaining grammar accounted for 7% of the functions of Arabic use during the observation sessions. However, teachers had different frequencies of using Arabic to explain grammar. Teacher T5 and T6, for example, never used Arabic to explain grammar. Arabic language use to teach and clarify grammar points was noticed in T1's, T3's, and T4's classrooms as the extracts 6 and 7 show.

In extract 6, T3 was explaining the using of present perfect continuous; he asked his learners to read the first short given paragraph, and to find 2 examples of the present perfect continuous. He used both English and Arabic to explain what present perfect continuous tense was, and to check that learners had understood what to do.

Extract 6

a. **T3:** Do you have your reading text?
b. **T3:** Read the paragraph and underline the present perfect continuous (المضارع المستمر التام)
c. **T3:** شوف الفقرة وحط خط تحت مثالين فقط؟ (look at the paragraph and underline only 2 examples)
d. **T3:** اشياء حدثت في الماضي وما زالت مستمرة (actions happened in the past and is still continuing.
e. **T3:** واضح ايش المطلوب ؟ (Do you understand?)

Similarly, in extract 7 below, T4 was resorting to the Arabic language to check that her learners understood the usage of present simple and past simple by saying:

Extract 7

a. **T4:** متى نستخدم المضارع البسيط؟ (When do you use the present simple?)
b. **T4:** متى نستخدم الماضي البسيط؟ (When do you use the past simple?)
c. **T4:** نستخدم 'ed' مع اي واحد فيهم ؟ (In which one do we use 'ed'?)

4.3.1.3.1.5 Confirming and giving feedback

The fifth use of Arabic was to give feedback. This statement accounted for 9% of the functions of Arabic. Teachers differed in the frequency of their use of Arabic to give feedback. For example, T1 never used Arabic to give feedback, while teachers T2, T3, T5, and T6 used it twice. On the other hand, teacher T4 used Arabic to give feedback only once. Teachers tend

to confirm their learners' responses usually by saying in Arabic 'good', 'excellent', 'that is great', and sometimes they use Arabic to repeat learners' answers in words or phrases to show agreement with the translation. For instance, as extract 8 shows, T6 was using Arabic to confirm her learners' answers when she asked the class what the main idea was of the second paragraph (reading task).

Extract 8

a. **T6:** Who can tell me what is the main idea of paragraph two?
b. **S:** عن السياحة الداخلية في عمان (about interior tourism in Oman)
c. **T6:** صحيح عن السياحة الداخلية في عمان

4.3.2.1 Teachers' interviews

As previously stated (in chapter Three), the semi-structured interviews were designed to support and build on the findings from the questionnaires and the classroom observation data. Therefore, to explain the outcomes from the classroom observations, the teachers who participated in the classroom observations, along with six of their students from the same observed classes, were again interviewed. Although the researcher came to know the teacher participants through the school principals, an additional effort was made to get their approvals through introducing myself and making the consent letter, which shows the purpose of the research, similar to the letter given to the school leaders. With regards to the teacher participants, as shown in Table 4.36, the six EFL teachers were both males and females and were selected from six different schools, were from different nationalities, and had different teaching experience.

Table 4.36: Summary of EFL teachers interviewed (Anonymised names) (N=6)

Governorates	Schools	Teachers	Gender	Nationality	Teaching experience (yeas)
AlDhaharah	School 1	(T1)	Male	Egyptian	+20
	School 2	(T2)	Male	Tunisian	4
	School 3	(T3)	Male	Omani	3
A l	School 4	(T4)	Female	Omani	+20

	School 5	(T5)	Female	Omani	5
	School 6	(T6)	Female	Omani	5

A list of six pre-formulated, open-ended questions (see Appendix 4) was utilised to carry out the interviews. These questions were formulated to understand whether the teachers used Arabic or not, and in what teaching and learning situations. Moreover, the questions also dealt with for what particular activities teachers considered using the Arabic language was essential. Other questions dealt with whether teachers encouraged and allowed their students to apply the Arabic language and why. Teacher participants were also asked if they believed that using the Arabic language could facilitate learners' English language learning. The interviews were done in English with all the six EFL teacher participants. Greetings started each interview and developed slightly differently, depending on the nature of the teacher participants considering the questions and the types of responses. Each interview lasted between 20 to 40 minutes. For each teacher participant, the researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews one-to-one in order to ensure privacy and explore the participant's responses in depth. The audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews with the six EFL teachers, both male and female, were audio-recorded and then analysed by the NVivo software program.

The main concerns that arose from the data resulted in descriptive 'open codings', which were later combined and compared to primary categories as themes (Richards, 2005). This section presents the findings of the six interviews with EFL teachers conducted by the researcher.

4.3.2.2.1 Teachers' perspectives

In responding to the first question ['Why do (or do not) you use the Arabic language in your English language classrooms?'], teacher participants had various perceptions of the use of the Arabic language, but they agreed that the Arabic language had a role to play in their classrooms' daily teaching practices for different purposes. Still, there were two primary functions of Arabic language use: teachers used the Arabic language as a teaching tool, while the second function related to using the Arabic language for classroom management and discipline. In line with these findings, similar uses of the first language in English language classrooms were mentioned by Cameron (2001) and Tang (2002) who both stated that the first language could play a helpful role when clarifying language structure, explaining compound

grammar and challenging ideas, offering feedback, and keeping classroom discipline. The following examples reveal the use of Arabic language by teacher participants in their daily teaching:

> *"For me, using the Arabic language is essential in teaching English here in Oman. Students need to be helped in understanding some aspects, new words, instructions related to exams, homework, and Arabic can be used to do that" (T3).*

> *"For low proficiency students, I believe they need the Arabic language to understand English tasks" (T5).*

> *"A short cut to introduce some new words, abstract words such as the word 'passion' and many others" (T1).*

The data shows that there were five primary themes that appeared from the semi-structured interviews' first question, which provided insights into using the Arabic language as a teaching tool in EFL classrooms. Table 4.37 below summarises these themes related to the EFL teachers' perspectives.

Table 4.37 Arabic language usage from the teachers' perspectives

Teachers	▪ Using the Arabic language as a teaching device for explanation ▪ To explain new vocabularies' meanings ▪ Arabic helps and encourages low proficiency students to learn English ▪ To clarify some grammatical aspects ▪ Using the Arabic language in classroom management and keeping discipline

4.3.2.2.1.1 Arabic language as a teaching device

Teacher participants indicated that they applied the Arabic language as a teaching aid to explain aspects related to classroom practices. For example, T1 believed that using Arabic could help to encourage low proficiency students in doing some tasks during the lesson:

> "*I am using Arabic to simplify my instructions in the classroom, and this might help especially for low achievers to encourage and support them to participate in doing the lesson tasks*" *(T1).*

Similarly, T3 used Arabic to check learners' comprehensions:

"I am giving instructions in English, but when I see that they (students) did not get what I mean usually I have to repeat it in Arabic" *(T3).*

Nevertheless, T4 indicated that using the Arabic language was important in doing communicative tasks:

"Yes, *when giving instructions, especially in productive tasks like writing and reading tasks, I think using Arabic might help to clarify the tasks for all students, but if the tasks are direct and easy to achieve, I think no need to shift to the Arabic language. I think using Arabic can make tasks more interesting, communicative, and meaningful because all students can participate and be involved in the lesson activities*" *(T4).*

These findings are in line with the conclusions of an earlier study done by Cook (2001), who recommended that teachers could apply learners' first language in many classroom practices, including "to offer a shortcut for giving directions and explanations" (p. 418).

4.3.2.2.1.2 Explaining new vocabularies' meanings

Many researchers believe that the English language must be used as much as possible in the English language classrooms to expose learners to satisfactory English practice. The teacher participants commented on the difficulties they faced in explaining specific terms using the English language. The findings of this research suggest that most of the teacher participants agreed and supported the use of Arabic in their EFL classrooms to clarify the meanings of ambiguous and unknown vocabularies. For instance, T3 said that he applied the Arabic language to introduce and clarify the meaning of unfamiliar concepts to maintain the lesson time and check learners' comprehension:

"Arabic is used in my classrooms whenever there are any new and unfamiliar words in order to save time and keep on going with the lesson, it is important to make sure that learners got the meaning probably" *(T3).*

Yet, the teacher participants confirmed that they shifted to Arabic language only after adequate English language explanations. For example, T4 said:

"I use Arabic as the last option to make the meaning clear to all students".

Similarly, T6 said:

"I use Arabic to define and clarify the meaning of some new words but not before using other teaching techniques such as miming, drawing on the board, using body language, and giving synonyms" *(T4).*

In addition, T5 commented that it was easier and faster to use Arabic to explain any new terms by saying:

"When I use only English, my students usually take a longer time to get my explanations compared to when I use Arabic and English" *(T5).*

Similarly, T2 thought that Arabic should be applied in EFL classrooms:

"It (Arabic) can be used to explain particular complex vocabularies and any grammar points; I do not think Arabic should be banned in EFL classrooms" *(T2).*

These findings are in line with Turnbull (2001) who proposed that teachers might apply learners' first language in proper ways to assist learners with comprehending unfamiliar words. In addition, Machaal (2012) and Salah and Farrah (2012) confirmed that the first language should be used whenever it is essential, and it could be valuable in clarifying vocabularies and simplifying comprehension. Similarly, Tang (2002) and Lee and Macaro (2013) found that one of the students' first language uses was to define difficult or abstract words.

4.3.2.2.1.3 Encouraging low proficiency students

Further, teachers were asked "Why do you (or do you not) use the Arabic language in your English language classrooms"? In response to this question, the majority of interviewed EFL teachers reported that it was very important to consider students' English language proficiency levels in relation to the usefulness of EFL teachers' use of Arabic (L1). This was a key consideration in determining the frequency and amount of Arabic language in classrooms. In this regard, T4 said that Arabic language was important to help learners, especially for those who came from the arts stream as the majority of them faced difficulties in using English sufficiently. As he put it:

'*I think Arabic could be used if we think that can push them' (T4).*

T3 and T6 attributed this to the fact that some words are not clear in English and require translation into the Arabic language. Participant teachers attributed this to the poor English language practice outside schools, as T6 illustrated as follows:

"Frankly speaking, here in Oman students are weak in English. They do not speak English outside the classroom, which makes it difficult to deliver lessons in only English, and so I think using Arabic in teaching grammar, for example, is important" *(T6).*

Students' English level seems to be a key point to determine the frequency and amount of Arabic language used in classrooms. The teacher participants believed that using the Arabic language could help low proficiency students. According to the data, the frequency of Arabic language usage varied from one class to another and from one stream to another. As T4 said:

> *"In fact, I have different experiences in teaching different classes here in Oman. We have sciences stream and arts stream, where students have to choose any stream or section according to their English level. Indeed, students who choose the art stream are usually those who have difficulties or are not as good at science subjects as psychics and chemistry, and they highly depend on memorisations. It (Arabic) is necessary and can help a lot in improving their (students') English level. I believe these learners mostly should be helped and encouraged to learn English and, as English teachers, we have to follow or adopt any way or technique to help them including using Arabic if needed. I think Arabic could be used if we think that can push them (students*)" *(T4).*

In addition, T2 emphasised the importance of the Arabic language in helping weak learners to understand difficult English concepts:

> *"I think for some weak students some concepts are complicated to understand for the first time, so I believe using Arabic, in this case, is effective*" *(T2).*

Moreover, for some teachers, allowing the Arabic language in the English classrooms is a significant teaching tool to motivate low achieving learners to participate in classroom activates. As T3 noted:

> *"Using two languages (English and Arabic) is believed to motivate low achiever learners to participate in classrooms activities because they can say something in their language which at the last support their learning process*" *(T3).*

Furthermore, in responding to the question of 'why do you use Arabic in the EFL classroom', T6 answered that she was forced to do so due to learners' low levels of English:

> *"Yes, I use it (Arabic) because sometimes we (teachers) are forced to use Arabic to*
>
> *clarify some aspects for learners because of their English low level. I usually use it in teaching vocabulary to make sure that students can understand the meaning of these words*" *(T6).*

The use of the first language to motivate and encourage low proficiency students has also been specified in many previous studies. For example, Al-Nofaie's (2010) study indicated

participants' preferences to use the Arabic language with students of low proficiency levels, especially when defining unfamiliar concepts, introducing grammatical points and for exam instructions. Additionally, Miles (2004) also stressed the need for the first language with lower level students to teach grammar, to avoid any misunderstanding on the learners' part.

4.3.2.2.1.4 Clarifying some grammatical aspects

Teacher participants highlighted different teaching and learning situations where the Arabic language could also be used, including introducing abstract and complex grammatical rules. For instance, T4 clarified that she sometimes used Arabic in teaching reading and grammar:

> *"When we (teachers) try to teach the meaning of the words in English, and we notice that students did not understand or could not grasp the meaning then we shift to Arabic. Mostly, we are using Arabic in teaching reading skill and grammar especially teaching abstract words and sentence structure*" *(T4).*

Similarly, T5 highlighted the use of Arabic language in teaching grammatical rules related to the structure of English language:

> *"Using Arabic is important in teaching some grammatical rules, which are related to the structure of both English and Arabic. For example, you (teacher) give a phrase in English and the same phrase in Arabic so comparing the two different structures could help learners to understand the English grammatical rules*" *(T5).*

Additionally, T1 pointed out that the Arabic language was essential to explain some difficult grammatical concepts including tenses:

> *"I think it is essential in some cases to make use of Arabic language to clarify things because although you give many examples but still some learners could not understand certain grammatical points such as grammar tenses including tenses in active and passive voice*" *(T1).*

Previous studies by Levine (2014) and Jabbar (2012) support these findings and have suggested that first language use could be useful for explaining challenging grammar aspects, new vocabularies and complex ideas.

4.3.2.2.1.5 Using Arabic in classroom management and discipline

Concerning the use of the Arabic language as a classroom management tool, 4 out of 6 of interviewed teachers reported that Arabic helped them to clarify some complex aspects

related to maintaining class discipline, informing about homework requirements, administering exams and quizzes, and conveying important academic dates. Regarding giving instructions, the interviewed teachers supported the idea of using Arabic to clarify exams instructions and discuss homework and assignments. For instance, T6 said that she usually used Arabic to talk about exams and homework to avoid learners' misunderstandings.

Arabic language was used by teacher participants for classroom management and discipline purposes. Thus, four teachers (T1, T3, T5 and T6, or 67%) believed that the Arabic language was needed to clarify some complex aspects related to maintaining class discipline, homework, exams and quizzes, and some important academic dates. For example, T1 stated that:

> *"Using Arabic is needed to make sure that all learners have understood the instructions related to exams such as the date and what teachers expected from students to do in the exam room*" *(T1).*

T5 stressed the importance of giving clear instructions about homework tasks:

> *"I think it is important to give and do some examples of the targeted tasks using Arabic, if compulsory, to check students' understanding before asking them to do these tasks as a homework*" *(T5).*

Moreover, T3 claimed that he used the Arabic language to make sure that learning had taken place:

> *"Yes, (I use Arabic) but in certain situations. I use Arabic only with weak students and maybe when I am talking with individual students giving them some important instructions related to exams for instance so they can understand what I am saying and what I want them exactly to do*" *(T3).*

Similarly, T6 said:

> *"Yes, mostly I use Arabic in keeping class discipline and giving some instructions, especially during exams or short quizzes*" *(T6).*

These findings are in harmony with Nation's (2003) findings, which revealed that in English language classrooms teachers apply the learners' first language to maintain class discipline.

4.3.2.2.1.6 Using Arabic in EFL classrooms (insights from classroom observations)

This section mainly concerns the purpose and functions of using Arabic by both teachers and their learners. The discussion specifically covers the following: which language (English or Arabic) do teachers use in their teaching activities and why do Omani students use Arabic in their EFL classrooms. Throughout the observations, the researcher intentionally focused on why and when EFL teachers and their students used the Arabic language in the EFL classrooms in the Omani context.

The observation data highlight the necessity for EFL teachers to incorporate more student-centered methods to their teaching practices, specifically with regard to enhancing learners' abilities to use L2 properly. According to the observations in the classrooms, and as earlier mentioned, observed teachers emphasised structures and vocabularies. It looked like teachers thought that learning grammatical rules was what learners needed to master in L2 in order to get high marks in their exams. One explanation for this result is that these EFL teachers follow methods that prepare learners for the final exam, which is one of the main issues. It was observed that teachers and students act as information providers, and listeners or receivers respectively.

All of the six observed classes were teacher-centred classes. Teachers demonstrated classroom talk, while students listened and talked whenever they were asked to answer questions or discuss group-work tasks, or to replay any of the teacher's instructions. It was also found the EFL teachers relied heavily on the use of the *Engage with English* textbooks as the only teaching resources used and, accordingly, EFL teachers applied the topics and materials provided without much creativity. Teachers mainly focused on using the activities and exercises in the order in which they were written in the students' textbook and teacher's guidebook. A possible reason for this is the power of the teacher-centered method, where teachers control classroom time by talking, and learners are seen as listeners. In what follows, teachers' and learners' reported uses of the Arabic language during the classroom observations is discussed.

The main purpose of the classroom observations was to find out why teachers use the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms, so that this could be compared to their perspectives found in their answers to the questionnaires. However, as previously mentioned, teachers considered Arabic as a facilitating teaching and learning tool to help enhance learners' progress. Furthermore, teachers had positive perceptions of Arabic language use in some

specific situations. During the observations, many situations where Arabic language was used by teachers and students to enhance L2 learning were noted. For example, teachers applied the Arabic language for teaching different tasks such as introducing new vocabulary words, explaining grammatical rules, clarifying task instructions to facilitate understanding for learners, and classroom management. Teachers tended to talk to learners in Arabic about attendance, exams, and to raise some personal issues. These findings align with other findings from the literature (Cook, 2001; Nazary, 2008; Sipra, 2013).

The functions of Arabic language use by learners in grades 11-12, who took part in this research, are presented. As previously mentioned, the EFL classrooms in Oman are generally considered to be teacher-centered classrooms where the teacher is basically the only speaker and information source. Learners speak only when they are given the chance to answer their teacher's questions. As shown in Table 4.35 and Figure 4.29, the use of Arabic by students served different purposes in this context.

Table 4.35: Why students use Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman

Schools	**Classes**	**Practice and frequency of Arabic use by students**					**Frequencies**
		Ask teacher for clarifications	Participating in class activities	With classmates to discuss instructions and feedback	With classmates to speak about personal issues	With classmates in doing group-work activities	
SC1	C12 (Male)	5	3	4	4	10	26
SC2	C11 (Male)	7	7	7	4	8	33
SC3	C11 (Male)	4	6	4	3	10	27
SC4	C11 (Female)	3	2	2	1	12	20
SC5	C12 (Female)	1	2	2	3	5	13
SC6	C12 (Female)	3	0	2	0	5	10
Total		23 18%	20 15%	21 16%	15 12%	50 39%	**129**

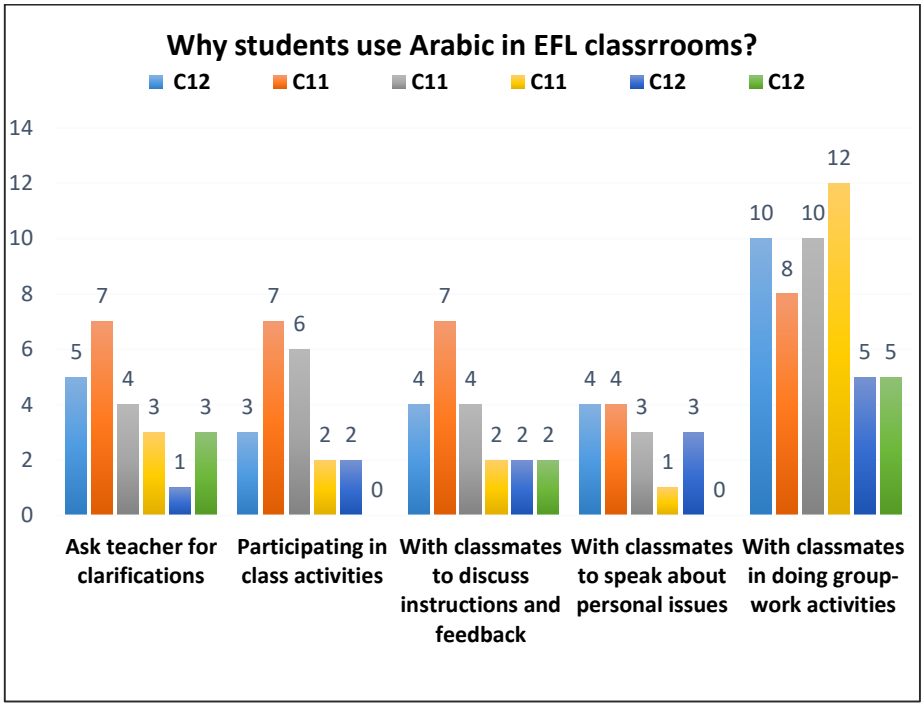

Figure 4.29: *Why students tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman*

First, students used Arabic to ask for clarifications. It is worth noting that the use of Arabic by students to ask for clarifications differed significantly across different student cohorts. Students from School 5 used Arabic to ask for clarifications the least (only once), while those of School 2 used it the most (7) times. Furthermore, students from school schools 4 and 6 used Arabic to ask for clarifications three times while their counterparts from schools 3 and 2 used Arabic to ask for clarifications three and seven times respectively. The following extract illustrates the learners' use of Arabic in asking for clarifications from classmates.

Extract 9

a. S1. Teacher, ايش نسوي هنا؟ (What should we do in this task?)
b. S1. شباب ايش نسوي؟ ايش المطلوب؟ (What to do here (task)?
c. S2. اكتب الجملة صحيحة (Write down the sentence correctly)
d. S1. صحيح؟ اذن سهلة (Are you sure? Then it is easy)

Overall, the use of Arabic for clarifications accounted for 18% of the use of Arabic by students. Past studies have also reported students' use of their mother tongue in seeking clarifications (Al Sharaeai, 2012).

The second use of Arabic by students was for participation in classroom activities. Overall, the use of Arabic for participation in classroom activities accounted for 15% of the use of Arabic by students. Regarding the frequency of usage, participants from school six did not use Arabic for participation in classroom activities. By contrast, their counterparts from schools 4 and 5 used this approach twice, while those from school 1 used it once. Lastly, students from school 3 and school 2 used Arabic for participation in classroom activities six and seven times respectively. As extract 10 shows, these learners used Arabic to get their teacher's attention to thereby give them the chance to answer his questions.

Extract 10

a. S1. أنا teacher (Me, teacher)

b. **S2.** ليش ما تسالني انا teacher ؟ (Teacher, why don't you ask me?)

The third use of Arabic by students was to discuss instructions and feedback with classmates. The use of Arabic in discussions around instructions and feedback accounted for 16% of the use of Arabic by students. The frequency of usage of Arabic in discussing instructions and feedback differed across different student cohorts. Students from schools 4, 5, and 6 used Arabic to discuss instructions and feedback less frequently (2) times when compared to their counterparts from school 2, who used this approach the most (7) times. Lastly, students from schools 1 and 3 used Arabic in their discussions about instructions and feedback four times. Extract 11 shows for example that learners used Arabic to discuss instructions and to confirm answers during a group work activity.

Extract 11

a. **S1**. ؟ teacher ايش رايك في الحل (Teacher, what do you think of our answer?)

b. **S2**. كله صح؟ (Is it right?)

Thus, the data obtained from classroom observations showed that all of the six observed EFL teachers occasionally used the Arabic language in their classrooms for different functions with varying degrees of frequency (see Figure 5.1). One possible explanation for this variation in using Arabic by teachers is the learners' English proficiency level, and students are in science stream classes are generally better than those in the arts stream. Thus, students in the science stream needed less Arabic translation than those in the arts stream. For example, during the classroom observations, the researcher noticed that teachers T5 and T6, in teaching science stream classes, used less Arabic than T3 and T2 who taught in arts stream classes. During the classroom observation, explaining new words, give instructions and checking comprehension

were the top functions in using Arabic for all teachers. Another reason for the variation in Arabic use was the lesson level and the planned objectives. In other words, teachers usually switched to Arabic when explaining new words (40 times), or during reading tasks where learners had to do multiple tasks that tested different abilities and functions. Learners were observed reading from different written text lengths more than trying to perform a communicative task in L2. Additionally, not many opportunities were provided to learners to use L2 communicatively during the observed classroom times. This daily teaching routine might force learners to switch to Arabic in order to understand and complete different tasks, even if they are not able to produce any creative L2 outputs or use the L2 in a communicative way. Another possible explanation of the varied use of Arabic is that both teachers and learners shared Arabic language as a mother tongue language. Thus, it was observed that some teachers from the arts stream classes (T2, T3 and T4) did not try hard enough to use English to communicate with their learners, as they believed that these learners would not easily understand their instructions, feedback and explanations if only the English method was applied. In addition, the researcher noticed that some of the observed teachers used Arabic to remind students to complete their target tasks, as they believed Arabic could save time.

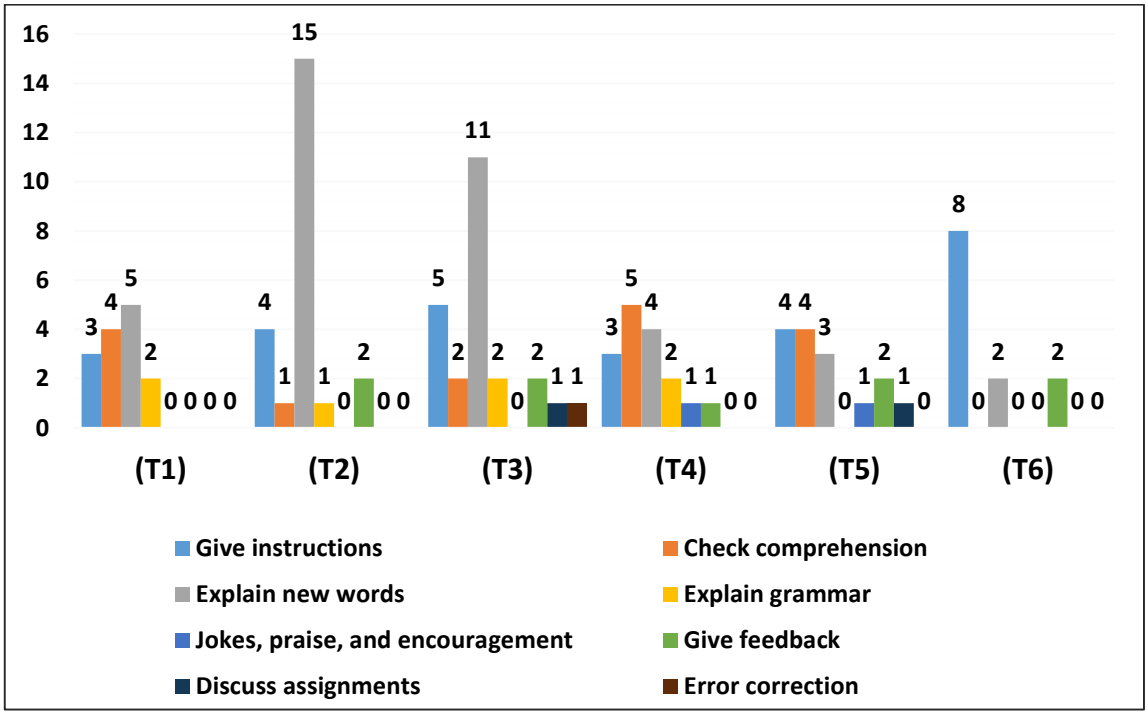

Figure 5.1: *Functions of teachers' use of the Arabic language*

As previously mentioned, the classrooms in Oman are considered to be teacher-centered, where the teacher normally leads the class talk and learners might be given some chances to practice English while doing group-work or answering the teachers' questions. The

findings showed that the majority of learners used Arabic in their EFL classrooms for different purposes. Further to this, students used the Arabic language mainly in the following functions (see Figure 5.2). First, students tended to use Arabic to ask for clarifications and to get their teacher's attention to participate in classroom activities and answer questions. Also, students used Arabic with classmates to speak about personal issues, including asking classmates for a pencil or to pass a notebook and sometimes to call for help from classmates concerning, for example, a word's meaning. Lastly, the most obvious Arabic utilization was in doing group work activities as the researcher could hear Arabic being spoken in all groups.

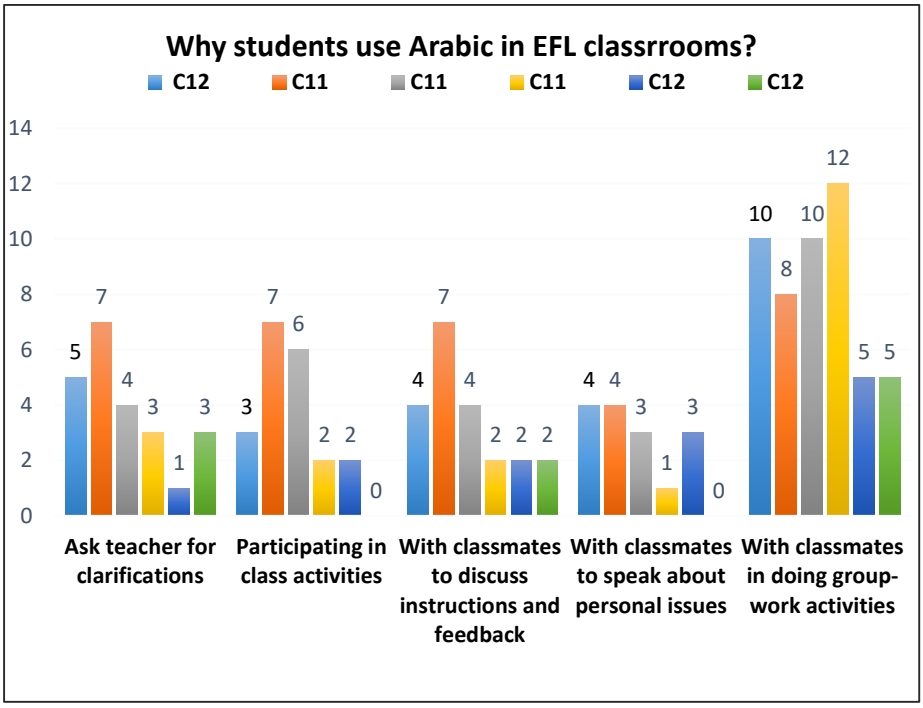

Figure 5.2: *Why students tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman*

Thus, as Figure 5.2 also illustrates, leaners used Arabic mostly in group and pair work activities. The researcher was able to hear learners speaking Arabic the moment they were gathered in groups. Cook (2001) reported that it is normal for learners to use their L1 in working together doing an exercise as a group. Although teachers encouraged learners to use English in their discussion, most of the time learners continued using the Arabic language. This usage of Arabic either concerned an activity that learners were involved in, or sometimes it was related to other personal and social matters. Al Sharaeai (2012) reported that students use their mother tongue to chat with fellow students about common and particular matters that are not related to

academic work. For example, as extract 13 below shows, two learners resorted to Arabic and started to talk about a family issue.

Extract 13:

Student 1 to his friend:

a. **S1: "ليش ناصر ما حضر العرس مال عمك"**(Why Nasir did not attend your uncle's wedding?)
b. **S2: "كان مشغول عنده ضيف من مسقط"** (He was busy with a guest coming from Muscat).

The other purpose of using Arabic was to answer questions. For example, in extract 14 below, T4 asked students to tell her what they should do to complete the task. Although she used simple English instructions, some learners answered in Arabic.

Extract 14:

a. **T4:** Next, we are going to look at our activity book page 38, and do task one. Who can tell me what should we do in task 1? What Task 1 is about?
b. **S1:** Visiting countries, other countries outside Oman
c. **S2**: Discuss about other countries visit
d. **S3**: In Arabic **"زيارة الدول"** (Visiting other countries)
e. **S4:** In Arabic **"أحب الدول اليك"**(Which countries do you like most?)

Providing translations for vocabularies was another common function of Arabic in EFL observed classrooms. The EFL teachers adopted this method, as they were all native speakers, to make sure that learners understood the equivalent words in Arabic. For instance, in extract 15 below, T2 asked his class 'What does passion mean?', as it has a slightly different in meaning from the word 'love' and to make sure that this was clear to all learners.

Extract 15:

a. **T2.** What does passion mean? Does it have the same meaning of the word love?
b. **S1:** Yes teacher, same meaning " حب معناها "(It means love)
c. **S2:** I think not the same "لكن ما اعرف معناها بالضبط" (But I do not know its exact meaning)
d. **S3:** " حب كبير" (Big love)
e. **S4:** "شغف " (Strong and intense feeling**)**

f. **T2:** Yes, (asking the rest of class) did you get it?

g. **Ss:** Yes.

It was evident that the teachers' pedagogical approach in the present study could be improved with regard to structuring learning experiences to ensure opportunities to make meaning in English. For example, in order to minimize the problem of overusing Arabic (L1), particularly in group work activities, one may suggest that teachers need to think about their lessons and how it should be planned to meet learners' interests. Teachers should think about the group work objectives and identify the purposes of getting learners into group work tasks, and accordingly they should form groups with mixed abilities whereby low level learners with high-level work together in a group, especially in large classes. For example, if a small group is preparing to perform a dialogue, they should be using English, as they need English to do the dialogue in front of the class without using their L1. The dialogues they act out are regularly short and easy to remember. The group work gives learners a chance to practice before performing in front of the class. Learners simply see that they need to practice their lines, as they will not be able to read them off a sheet. This type of practice gives learners opportunities to perform a communicative task where they use only English.

Another idea in avoiding L1 in EFL classroom, is challenging learners to use only English for a specific period of time. For instance, a teacher might say 'Let's see if we all could use only English for the next 5 minutes'. Learners often accept it as a challenge and they try their best to avoid L1 for those 5 minutes, and at the same time, they bear in mind that, if L1 is needed, they can use it after the 5 minutes. Usually, leaners continue using L2 beyond the 5 minutes and they find that they really did not need to use L1 to complete certain exercises. Therefore, this idea of time for English builds learners' confidence and they become aware of when they could do things in English and when they really need to use L1 to support their learning.

To sum up, the classroom observation results show that teachers tended to use English in their classroom, except in specific settings where they found there was no other choice but to use Arabic to assist some learners, especially those who had difficulties in understanding some grammatical rubrics, word meanings and in doing classroom activities using only English. While using L2 most of the time, teachers clearly thought that Arabic, as L1, should not be totally banned in L2 classrooms as it sometimes aided building sociocultural learning settings for different level learners.

4.3.2.3 Students' interviews

It was vital to explore and understand the EFL students' perspectives for two main reasons: first, they are an important part of the classrooms composition and second, most of the interviewed EFL teachers reported, when they were interviewed, that they used the Arabic language because of learners' low English proficiency. The semi-structured interviews with students were aimed at providing a deep understanding of these learners' perspectives on using the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms. Thus, the student participants in the semi-structured interviews came from the same observed schools and EFL classes.

A total number of six grades 11-12 students were involved in the semi-structured interviews sessions [S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6 (not their real names)]. The student participants were derived from six schools (School 1–School 6), as in one student from each of the six classrooms. Out of the six student participants, 50% (3) were males from School 1, School 2 and School 3, while one student was from grade 12 and two students were from grade 11. The other 50% (3) were females from School 4, School 5 and School 6, and two of them were from grade 12 while one student was from grade 11. The student participants' information is illustrated in Table 4.38.

Table 4.38 Summary of governorates, schools, students, and classrooms (Anonymised names) (N=6)

Governorates	Schools	Students	Gender	Class
Al Dhaharah	School 1	(S1)	Male	12
	School 2	(S2)	Male	11
	School 3	(S3)	Male	11
Al Dakhliya	School 4	(S4)	Female	12
	School 5	(S5)	Female	11
	School 6	(S6)	Female	12

A list of six pre-formulated open-ended questions, as illustrated in Appendix 5, was used to explore the learners' perspectives. These questions focused on whether learners used the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms and what they thought about using it. Students were also asked to name which language skills they preferred to use Arabic for. Another

question was whether learners thought that EFL teachers should use Arabic whenever needed. Learners were also asked about those EFL teachers who used the Arabic language in their teaching and finally, they were asked if they thought Arabic could help them to better learn the English language. For each student participant, the researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews, to guarantee confidentiality, and explored the learners' responses in depth. Learners' interviews lasted between 10 and 15 minutes. The interviews were completed using both English and Arabic, as it was left up to the participants to choose. The Arabic utterances were later translated into English by the researcher. The audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews with learners were transcribed and then analysed using NVivo software.

4.3.2.3.1 Student perspectives

In this section, findings are presented of the six learners' semi-structured interviews. The data provided insights into what the student participants thought of using the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms in Oman. Almost all of the student interviewees agreed upon the idea of using the Arabic language in their English classrooms for various purposes. Specifically, the data revealed that the Arabic language served students in terms of five different main functions and themes. For example, student participants stressed the importance of Arabic language in learning some grammatical aspects and new vocabularies. Other students also pointed out that the Arabic language was important in teaching English language structure and clarifying instructions related to tests. Student participants further highlighted that Arabic was helpful in translation, doing group work activities, and sometimes to discuss personal issues with teachers and classmates.

Regarding the student participants' perspectives of using Arabic in EFL classrooms, they declared that they used the Arabic language in EFL classroom practices to explain new words, explain grammatical points, check for understanding, and for translation. Thus, the findings show that the majority of learners agreed on the idea of Arabic language inclusion in EFL classrooms, as it assisted with four main functions:

- learning grammar and vocabularies;
- clarifying instructions;
- discussion in group work activities; and
- speaking about personal issues.

Interestingly, S1 and S6 claimed that they used the Arabic language in the EFL classroom because their teachers used it. This aligns with the teacher participants, who stated that they used Arabic as a teaching tool, including for teaching grammar and vocabularies. As S1 said:

> *"I think I can use Arabic because my teacher uses it too especially in grammar teaching, why I should not" (S1).*

These results are in line with some previous studies in which participants preferred to use their mother tongue in EFL classrooms. For example, in Kovacic and Kirinic (2011), more than half of the participants agreed that they sometimes preferred to make use of their first language in English classrooms. Other researchers have also reported that students could benefit from their language and believed it could assist their English learning (Tang, 2002; Hall & Cook, 2012). Interestingly, some of these data seemed to be similar to those of the interviewed EFL teachers (see Chapter 4.4.2.1). The learners' perceptions themes are shown in Table 4.39 below.

Table 4.39 Arabic language usage from students' perspectives

Students	▪ Learn grammar and vocabularies ▪ Clarify instructions ▪ Discuss group work activities ▪ Speak about personal issues

4.3.2.3.1.1 Learning grammar and vocabularies

All the interviewed learners indicated that they needed the Arabic language to learn English aspects and grammar. However, students' lack of proper English vocabulary knowledge may push them to shift to the Arabic language in some cases to elaborate their ideas. For example, S1 said:

> *"Sometimes I have many good ideas in my mind, but I do not have suitable vocabularies to say them in English, in this case, I think I can use my language (Arabic) to express my ideas" (S1).*

Additionally, according to S6,

> *"The Arabic language could be used whenever there is a new word or concept" (S6).*

Similarly, S3 said:

"It is vital to shift to Arabic particularly when teaching grammar points" *(S3).*

These findings are in agreement with Al-Nofaie's (2010) study who reported that using the learners' first language was useful when describing new vocabularies and clarifying some grammatical points.

4.3.2.3.1.2 Clarifying instructions

Regarding clarifying instructions, student participants described the Arabic language as a learning tool that could help them to understand different language components and specifically to comprehend aspects related to classroom instructions. However, S1 and S2 elaborated more reasons for Arabic including in EFL classrooms. For instance, S1 said:

"English teachers should use Arabic because not all students could understand their instructions if only English is used" *(S1).*

Similarly, S2 affirmed:

"Sometimes I could not understand some instructions if English only used, I feel frustrated and passive because I do not know what I should do or what my teacher asks for" (S2). Furthermore, S6 added:

"I need Arabic to make sure that I know what teacher asks me to do the homework"*(S6),* while S5 said: *"I need to use Arabic to understand the topics in writing tasks, without understanding the topic or title how can I write about it*" *(S5).*

4.3.2.3.1.3 Discussing group work activities

The student participants also described the Arabic language as a valued tool that helps them to understand group work activities. All the interviewed students claimed that they used the Arabic language when they were doing group or pair-work tasks. For example, S2 said:

"For me, it is a habit to speak in Arabic while doing any pair works, Arabic is very useful to understand the tasks" *(S2).*

Similarly, S1 added:

"My friends and I prefer to chat in Arabic whenever there is a chance, especially if we are doing group work" (S1).

Similarly, S6 said:

"Although our teacher keeps asking us to speak English, most of the time we use Arabic in group works tasks" *(S6).*

However, these findings match other research, such as Levine's (2014), which has found that learners applied their first language when speaking with each other during classroom activities and when talking with each other.

4.3.2.3.1.4 Speaking about personal issues

Student participants reported that they sometimes used the Arabic language to talk to a classmate or a friend about personal issues during the lesson. For example, S2, S3, and S6 responded that they tended to use Arabic to speak to classmates about weekend events or occasions. As S2 said:

"I use Arabic with my classmates mostly to talk about our football game this afternoon" *(S2).*

S3 added:

"If I finished my task, I think it is fine to use Arabic to talk to next classmate about anything" *(S3).*

Similarly, S6 said:

"Sometimes my friends use Arabic and ask me any questions related to our weekends, events or occasions, and I replied in Arabic to" *(S6).*

4.3.2.3.1.5 Translation

According to Nation (2003), translation is an effective teaching method and necessary where learners translate L2 words into their first language equivalents, especially at a low level. However, as reported by the interviewed teachers, many students, instead of trying to look for suitable English alternatives, tend to switch to the Arabic language as the easiest way to understand the text. S3 articulated that as follows: "*Actually, I prefer the teacher who tries to translate some words in Arabic for us especially, for example, in writing when we do not understand the topic so how can we write. Therefore, it is essential for me first to understand the topic in Arabic, and then I can write in English" (S3).*

Similarly, S5 said that Arabic translation helps her to understand some difficult English words:

"Some English words are so difficult to be understood and used, I think the teacher should translate them first into Arabic" *(S5).*

These findings are in an agreement with a previous study done by Hsieh (2000), who stated that translation was valuable for student participants in relation to reading tasks, and for learning new vocabulary items and cultural aspects.

4.4 Chapter summary

Chapter four has reported on the results of this study gathered through the research data tools. It has presented the participants' questionnaire, classroom observation and semi-structured interview results, which provided the perceptions of EFL teachers and learners towards Arabic language usage in (L2) classrooms. Furthermore, this chapter examined and deliberated particular excerpts from the classroom of teachers' and learners' translations under their particular themes, to be able to identify a range of functions of using Arabic (L1) by both teachers and learners. Next, the perspectives of EFL teachers and learners, as exposed in the classroom observations and interviews, have been presented to uncover their perspectives towards L1 use in EFL classrooms.

The analysis revealed that both teachers and learners involved in this study shared positive perspectives towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms. The Arabic language was found to play a significant part as a mediating instrument that facilitates the English language teaching and learning process, and as a scaffolding instrument that enhances learners to expand their L2 learning. Teacher participants agreed that Arabic was very important to consider students' English language proficiency levels in relation to the usefulness of EFL teachers' use of Arabic (L1). For instance, teachers used the Arabic language to teach various activities such as explaining grammatical rules, introducing new vocabulary words, clarifying task instructions to facilitate understanding for learners, and classroom management. Teachers tended to talk to learners in Arabic about attendance, exams, and to raise some personal issues.

The analysis also showed that teachers used learners' L1 for socialising functions, repetitive functions, and classroom management. It might be debated that when looking at the teachers' L1 purposes, these purposes may directly or indirectly help achieving the pedagogical aims; from those that seems to directly serve pedagogical functions (e.g. repetitive), to most of what could be seen as social functions (e.g. greetings), as well as classroom management purposes. EFL Teachers, for example, may use Arabic for social functions to create a friendly atmosphere to gradually engage his/her learners into classroom activities.

Moreover, data revealed that the Arabic language served students in terms of different functions and themes. For example, student participants stressed the importance of Arabic language in learning some grammatical aspects and new vocabularies. Some other students also pointed out that the Arabic language was significant in teaching English language structure and clarifying instructions related to tests. Student participants further highlighted that Arabic was helpful in translation, doing group work activities, and sometimes to discuss personal issues with teachers and classmates.

However, the purposes of teachers' and learners' L1 use is not necessary to be similar. Learners used Arabic for linguistic diffidence, collaborative functions, asking for confirmation or help, and socialising tasks. Learners in Oman context should preferably have studied English for more than 12 years before university level, many of them still could not use the L2 properly, and this may play a role in their greater use of Arabic in L2 classes. This supports what has been recommended in the literature review, as there seems to be a correlation between learners' proficiency in L2 and the type and amount of L1 being used. Therefore, it can be said that learners in a context where they and their teachers share the same L1, might be an expected setting where the translation is common among learners.

The next chapter contains a summary of the results, restrictions, suggestions, recommendations and contributions of this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study has examined the use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL classrooms in Oman based on the perceptions of teachers and their students. This chapter aims to present an interpretation and discussion of the study's quantitative and qualitative key findings drawn from teachers' and learners' questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews that were presented in the previous chapter and in relation to relevant studies reported in the literature review chapter. This includes the teacher and student participants' perspectives on Arabic language use, including their reasons, functions and implications in Oman EFL classroom contexts. The aim of this discussion chapter is to interpret and clarify the significance of the research results in light of what was already known from earlier studies in order to draw attention to new insights. Therefore, the results obtained from each instrument are further interpreted in terms of their contributions and significance.

Overall, Chapter Four and Chapter Five present the findings of the study in relation to the following research questions:

RQ1. To what extent do teachers and learners believe that the Arabic language should be used in the teaching of English in Omani EFL classrooms?

RQ2. What are the contexts in which teachers use Arabic in Omani EFL, and why?

RQ3. What are the contexts in which students use Arabic in Omani EFL classrooms, and why?

RQ4. To what extent does teachers' use of the Arabic language as L1 in practice support or hinder students' learning of English?

The discussion chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with EFL teachers and students' perceptions towards using the Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms. This includes the overall participants' perceptions about the different functions and reasons for resorting to Arabic in EFL classrooms, based on the analysis of the questionnaire findings.

The second section explains the results of the analysis that emerged from classroom observations visits. This section presents the actual utilization of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms, and explores the purposes and contextual functions for both teachers and students to use the Arabic language. It also presents the pedagogical approaches adopted by EFL

teachers in dealing with their daily teaching practice and discusses the amount of Arabic used and the kind of dialogue the EFL teachers create during lessons with their learners.

The last section deals with the analysis of the findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted with both EFL teachers and their learners. This section specifically aims to uncover specific aspects of using Arabic in EFL classrooms such as the learners' English proficiency levels, saving time, or for classroom management and discipline. Lastly, a summary of the key results closes the chapter.

With respect to the role of L1 in EFL classrooms, there have been many researches that have examined teachers and learners about this subject (see Chapter Two for a literature review). In this section, the main concern is to discuss EFL teacher and student participants' perceptions towards using the Arabic language in their classrooms, using an analysis of questionnaire results. This includes general perceptions and ideas about the use of Arabic in specific positions in EFL classrooms. The questionnaires were distributed to 50 EFL teachers and their grade 11-12 students (N=233) from eight different schools in four different governorates. Teacher participants had varied levels of experience in teaching English as a foreign language, ranging from one year to more than twenty years. They came from different countries and educational backgrounds but shared the same first language (Arabic). In other words, all the teacher and student participants had Arabic as their first language.

5.2.1 Teachers' perspectives

The examination of the questionnaire outcomes suggest that the teacher participants were mostly in favour of Arabic language use in EFL classrooms. They believed it facilitated EFL learning and made the teaching and learning environment more effective. This can be found throughout their responses in the questionnaires and interviews. For instance, in their response to the question of 'whether Arabic should be used in the English language classrooms', the vast majority of the 50 participant teachers, 60% (30) responded 'Yes' (see Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2). Furthermore, teacher participants suggested that using Arabic in some specific pedagogical situations was necessary, for example, in explaining new words and introducing grammatical points. Moreover, as Table 4.6 illustrates, the questionnaire results show that 46% (23) of participant teachers agreed that using the Arabic language could simplify students' English learning.

In their response to whether using only English in EFL classrooms could help learners to learn it much better, the majority of the 50 EFL teachers, 60% (30) agreed or strongly agreed

that using the Arabic language in an English learning class can help students to learn it much better. Moreover, out of 50 teachers, 64% (31) agreed or strongly agreed that using the Arabic language helps learners to express their ideas easily. The findings also show that most of the teacher participants 54% (27) believed that the Arabic language was beneficial when EFL teachers used it to clarify some problematic English language linguistic or grammatical rubrics. In their response to a question on whether effective English language learning was grounded in using merely the English language in the EFL classrooms, out of 50 teachers, 69% (34) responded that they agreed or strongly agreed that using only English was an effective way to learn the English language (L2). These results are in line with Macaro's (2000) study who found that teachers agreed with using learners' L1 in some explicit teaching situations, such as clarifying challenging concepts.

This study's findings show that teachers believed that Arabic language utilisation in their classrooms had many pedagogical benefits. The reasons for why EFL teachers use Arabic can be outlined as follows:

- to explain some new abstract vocabularies and new grammatical rules;
- to save time;
- to help low English proficiency learners understand tasks and activities (especially with more than one-step tasks);
- in situations where students want to express their opinions, thoughts and feelings when they cannot do so in English;
- to check learners' comprehension;
- to praise students for their excellent achievements;
- to compare English language and Arabic language tense forms; and
- to raise important reminders or dates related to examinations and holidays.

In their replies to a statement, which aimed to find out if EFL teachers believed that using Arabic encourages learners to contribute more effective in English language classrooms, teachers were split in their points of view. Data analysis of the participants' responses, as seen in Table 4.24, show that out of 50, 48% (24) of teachers did not support the use of Arabic to encourage learners to take part in classrooms activities. On the other hand, 26% (13) of teachers answered that they agreed that students usually participated more effectively in the EFL classrooms when the teacher used the Arabic language in class practices. Additionally, regarding learners being motivated if L1 was used, the findings show that 46% (23) of teachers

believed that English language learners did not get motivated when the Arabic language is used in their classrooms.

On the other hand, in their responses to the question of 'whether Arabic language is significant in English language classrooms', data findings of the teacher participants' responses showed that 40% (20) of EFL teacher participants held negative perceptions towards using the Arabic language. According to these teachers, using Arabic could restrain learners from learning English in their classrooms, and they reported the following reasons for this:

- 'Only English' method should be used in EFL classrooms to expose students to more English language practices;
- learners might be lazy and would not try to learn English if Arabic was utilised; and
- learners may find it easier to use Arabic and never try to improve their English.

Moreover, data analysis of the teacher participants' response shows that the majority of the 50 teacher respondents (52%, or 26) believed that using Arabic was not necessary to involve learners during classroom activities. Additionally, it seems that teachers believed that Arabic was not needed to find out about learners' backgrounds and interests. The data obtained from the response to this statement showed that 60% (30) of teacher participants believed that Arabic was not a particularly helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests.

5.2.2 Students' perspectives

The findings of the study, as shown in Figure 4.9 and Table 4.29, suggest that students had positive opinions about applying the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms. The findings show that out of 233 student participants, 57% (133) believed that the Arabic language was significant and should be used in their EFL classrooms (see Figure 4.9).

The data also show that out of the total number of 233, 50% (117) of students agreed that Arabic simplified their English learning practice and, 49% (114) of students agreed that the use of Arabic was necessary in EFL classrooms in Oman. Similarly, out of 233 student participants, 54% (126) of students agreed that the Arabic language was a helpful tool to find out about students' background and interests. Moreover, 55% (129) of students agreed that using the Arabic language could better support and encourage learners to be involved in classroom activities and 67% (158) of students agreed that it was better to use the Arabic language to check learners' understanding.

Going through the students' perspectives in detail, it was found that not all of the learners held optimistic attitudes towards using the Arabic language. For instance, out of 233, 43% (102) of student participants had a negative perspective on the use of Arabic in their EFL classrooms (see Figure 4.9). For example, in their responses to a question of whether they liked their teacher to use Arabic in the EFL classroom, students' answers were varied. For instance, out of 233 student participants, 43% (102) of students answered a 'little', while 36% (85) of students said 'sometimes'. Only 6% (14) of students responded that they liked their teacher to use 'a lot' of Arabic in their English classrooms. In this regard, out of 233, 12% (29) of students reported that they did not prefer to use Arabic at all in their English language classes (see Figure 4.10). As compared with students who said that the Arabic language would simplify English language learning in class, the majority of learner participants were of the opinion that using English only in EFL classrooms could help students to learn it much better. As it can be seen from Figure 4.14, out of the total number of 233, 49% (115) of students agreed that using only English in EFL classrooms could help them learn it much better. Students specifically claimed that the Arabic language was helpful in the following ways:

- to express their ideas easily;
- to present and clarify new word vocabularies or grammatical rubrics;
- to support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities;
- to find out about students' background and interests;
- to check learners' comprehension;
- to give feedback on learners' performance;
- to ensure understanding and to facilitate student engagement, since students usually participate more effectively in the English language classrooms when a teacher uses the Arabic language during the EFL class activities; and
- to foster motivation.

With regard to a question that aimed to find out if learners favored to use Arabic when they asked questions in EFL classrooms, data findings show that out of the total number of 233, 37% (87) of participating learners 'never' preferred to ask questions using Arabic. However, 30% (70) of learners replied that they 'sometimes' preferred to use Arabic to ask questions in EFL classrooms. More than half of the participants suggested that using the Arabic language in specific classroom situations, such as explaining some problematic words' meanings or any problematic linguistic or grammatical rules, helped to assure that there was continuous interaction and communications between teachers and students and between

students and their classmates as well. In this regard, the results show that the majority of the 233 learners 60% (139) stated that the Arabic language was important in English classrooms to clarify new vocabularies. Also, out of 233 student participants, 73% (171) believed that Arabic was beneficial when the teacher used it to clarify some problematic English language linguistic and grammatical rubrics.

As the findings show, more than 52% (122) of the learners agreed that using the Arabic language in English classrooms may assist comprehension and save class time. The findings of this study also indicate that the Arabic language was used as a pedagogical tool to give feedback on learners' accomplishments. Thus, the data show that 49% (115) of learners believed that the use of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms was likely to help students benefit from the teacher's feedback if used. Regarding the issue of using the Arabic language for motivational reasons in EFL classrooms, findings show that out of the 233 learners, 37% (91) stated that they got motivated when the Arabic language was used in the EFL classrooms. Moreover, the data show that the Arabic language was found to be an essential tool for both teacher and student participants, which makes the EFL teaching and learning practices more effective. In this regard, 55% of learner participants believed that using the Arabic language could support and encourage them to participate effectively in classroom activities.

5.3 Results of the analysis of the interviews

This section mainly presents the analysis of the qualitative information achieved from the semi-structured interviews conducted with six EFL teachers and six students from the observed classrooms. As stated in chapter 4, the semi-structured interviews were designed to triangulate the data generated from the questionnaires and the classroom observations.

Although, teachers had different perspectives on the use of Arabic in L2 classrooms, they claimed that it was impossible to totally exclude it from their classrooms for different reasons. For instance, T1, T4, and T6 said that they believed Arabic could play a role in EFL classrooms and did not hinder learning L2 if used wisely. The majority of the interviewed teachers believed that the amount and frequency of Arabic usage was associated with varied factors such as learners' English proficiency and lessons and aims. The findings show that EFL teachers shifted to the Arabic language owing to the low English proficiency amongst students, which in turn were because of the poor English language practices outside schools. In other words, learners had minor or even no chances to speak English outside their classrooms.

In response to the next question aiming to find out whether teachers thought that the use of Arabic should be excluded from English language classrooms, the majority of interviewed teachers claimed that Arabic should not be excluded from EFL classrooms to make sure that learners got what they should. In addition, interviewed teachers claimed that they used Arabic for two main reasons: first as a teaching tool and second for classroom management and discipline. Four primary themes emerged from the semi-structured interviews with the EFL teachers that provided insights into the use of Arabic language as a teaching and class management tool in EFL classrooms:

- as a teaching device to clarify some grammatical aspects;
- as a teaching device to explain new vocabularies' meanings;
- to help and encourage low proficiency students to learn English; and
- for the purposes of classroom management and keeping discipline.

Teachers responded that Arabic was helpful in clarifying language structure, explaining compound grammar and challenging ideas, offering feedback, and keeping classroom discipline. For instance, T2 said that he used Arabic language to explain some difficult and unknown word vocabularies and grammatical rubrics. Interviewed teachers claimed that grammar should be taught through explanation and through providing many examples and clarifications using practice sessions where learners can produce their own examples. This explanation, for some EFL teachers, should be attached to Arabic translation, especially for low English proficiency level learners. In this regard, T4 said that he sometimes used Arabic to teach present perfect tense as he thought it was hard for weak learners to understand it without a 'bit' of Arabic.

Further, teachers were asked "Why do you (or do you not) use the Arabic language in your English language classrooms"? The interviewed EFL teachers agreed that Arabic had a role in their daily teaching practice and for different purposes.

5.3.1 Functions of Arabic used by EFL teachers

Based on the six-classroom observation data analysis, it was noted that all six EFL teachers occasionally applied the Arabic language in their classrooms for different purposes with varying degrees of frequency. In addition, most of the observed classes were teacher-centred, as teachers demonstrated the class talk and students listened and talked whenever they were asked to answer questions or discuss group-work tasks. Moreover, teachers applied the Arabic language as a teaching aid in teaching different tasks such as introducing new

vocabulary words, explaining grammatical rules, and clarifying the task instructions to facilitate understanding for learners. In addition, the observed EFL teachers utilised the Arabic language as a tool for classroom management, for example to preserve classroom discipline, talk to learners about attendance and exams, and to raise some personal issues. However, it was noticed that some of the observed EFL teachers allowed, and even sometimes asked, learners to use the Arabic language to answer or/and discuss the tasks with their classmates. Additionally, in the six classroom observations, it was common to hear teachers using Arabic to remind learners about the instructions, questions, and tasks clarifications, or sometimes when raising important issues in the textbooks.

It was also noted that when EFL teachers were not applying Arabic, they mainly relied on using explanations, charts, pictures, gestures, role-plays and many others techniques in teaching English. For this reason, in most of the classes observed, it was noticed that students used Arabic- English and English-English dictionaries, and they use them to find out the meanings of new words they came across during class time. It was also noted that some learners wrote the meaning of the new words in their textbooks and sometimes in their small notebooks.

Table 4.34 and Figure 4.28 below show that all of the six observed EFL teachers used the Arabic language in their classrooms 104 times for different purposes.

Table 4.34: Functions of Arabic as used by teachers

Occasions / Teachers	Give instructions	Check comprehension	Explain new words	Explain grammar	Jokes, praise, and encouragement	Give feedback	Discuss assignments	Error correction	**Frequencies**
(T1)	3	4	5	2	0	0	0	0	**14**
(T2)	4	1	15	1	0	2	0	0	**23**
(T3)	5	2	11	2	0	2	1	1	**24**
(T4)	3	5	4	2	1	1	0	0	**16**
(T5)	4	4	3	0	1	2	1	0	**15**
(T6)	8	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	**12**
Total	**27 (26%**	**16 (15.4%)**	**40 (38.5%)**	**7 (6.7%)**	**2 (1.9%)**	**9 (8.7 %)**	**2 (1.9%)**	**1 (1 %)**	**10 4**

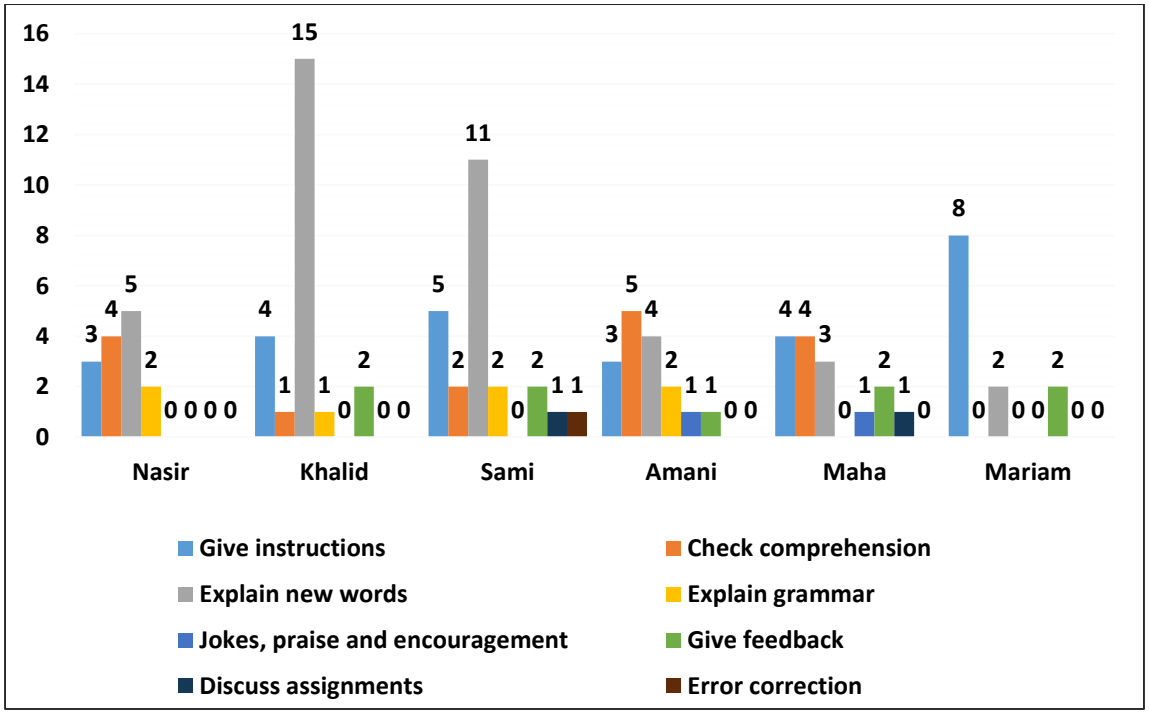

Figure 4.28: *Functions of teachers' use of Arabic language*

In the six classroom observations, it was common to hear teachers use Arabic to remind learners about the instructions, questions, task clarifications, or sometimes when raising important issues in the textbooks. Thus, Arabic played a scaffolding role. According to Lantolf (2000a), EFL teachers should pay attention not only to the L2 input but also to the learners' prior knowledge. Class observation data showed that teachers, as well as students, used Arabic to simplify learning progress and development in their EFL classes. This is in line with earlier studies that have also shown that the use of learners' L1 in certain situations by both learners and teachers rises both understanding and learning of L2 (Afzal, 2013; Al Sharaeai, 2014; Azman & Ismail, 2014; Machaal 2012; Blooth; Morahan, 2010).

From a sociocultural viewpoint, studies have shown that L1 permits learners to work efficiently and it plays a role in the creation of L2 mostly in group-work. This view is supported by Morahan (2010), who claimed that adopting L1 infrequently with L2 in group-work could aid learners to generate a task at an advanced level than they would if only the L2 was used. Similarly, Blooth, Azman, and Ismail (2014) concluded that L1 could be used as a scaffolding approach by learners in simplifying their learning and that the teacher to increase the learning experience as well as maximize engagement in the classroom could use it as a pedagogical device. The findings in this study further reveal that EFL teachers took a favourable view towards the L1 integration into their teaching classes and they reported that using Arabic in

EFL classroom helped learners to feel comfortable and relaxed. In other words, during the classroom observations, the researcher noticed that when learners said something using Arabic and then asked their teacher to translate it to English, they became excited and smiled as they were given the chance to use their L1 and produce something during class time. Thus, Arabic was used, here, judiciously to specifically encourage the low English proficiency level learners to practice L2. It was also noticed that through the Arabic language the observed teachers were able to create a connection with the learners through simple greetings, questioning and showing interest in the learners' L2 production. Indeed, this relaxation in the class might help to achieve the lesson objectives and develop learning. These results match Shuchi and Islam's (2016) research, which found that teachers' use of L1 in English lessons aided comprehension and made students feel comfortable and confident.

Moreover, it was noticed that Arabic was used as a tool that assisted learners in acquiring additional knowledge through daily simple L2 practices. In this regard, as another important point to be stated here, the Arabic language was used for social purposes such as greetings, telling jokes and talking about personal issues and occasions. For example, it was noticed that teachers greeted learners using Arabic phrase (السلام عليكم) (Alsalam alaikuom) (peace be upon you) in every classroom observed, as a way to show respect to the students' L1 and to make sure that all learners were greeted in a way they understood. Yet, greeting learners in very simple L2 utterances in the early stages might gradually pave the way for more communicative practices and might serve as an indication that L2 could be used in their daily life routines. Such practice would aim to allow learners to progress throughout their learning by interacting and positively reacting to the assigned class activities. Teachers and learners used Arabic in these situations as a scaffold to help the learners' progress.

In addition, a number of observed teachers used Arabic for disciplinary reasons. This included handling learners' behaviour, classroom management, and dealing with noisy and passive learners. For example, a late student interrupted T1 and the teacher asked him to be on time and avoid being late next time. Similarly, T6 asked one of her students to speak louder and to raise her voice while she was reading a short text related to the topic of tourism. Another example of using Arabic language for disciplinary reasons was seen in the T3 classroom. The learners were making a lot of noise and T3 started to talk to them first in English but after a while, he raised his voice and said 'توقفوا عن الكلام وافتحوا كتبكم على الدرس' ('stop talking and open you books to the lesson'). These findings are similar to other findings from the literature (

Cook, 2001; Edstrom, 2006; Nazary, 2008; Sipra, 2013). For instance, Sipra (2013), reported that he learned some Arabic words for classroom discipline purposes.

Translation is another noticeable purpose for adopting the Arabic language in EFL classrooms. Through simplifying the comprehension of, for example, vocabulary, Arabic can play a scaffolding role as it requires learners to use their previous learning to help their English learning as a learning development tool. For instance, translation of key words can open the door for learning where learners may use these words to understand more sentences that are challenging. Table 1.5 illustrates the teachers' talk frequency, tally, and examples of the language used by observed teachers. For instance, T5 came across the phrase 'popular destination' and she gave the Arabic equivalent 'وجهات سفر معروفة' immediately, as she thought explaining such phrase might take time. On the other hand, other teachers asked their students to provide the translation of some new and unknown word vocabularies. For example, T2 asked his class to give him the meaning of the word 'apprehensive' and leaners answered 'قلق'. These findings are similar to Nazary's (2008) study, which emphasised that translation is one of the most common functions of L1 in EFL classrooms. Additionally, Nation (2003) claimed that interpretation was one of the greatest teaching method to improve students' L2 vocabularies.

Based on the observation data, the researcher noticed that much of what occurred in the language classroom was concerned with separate and individual practice rather than cooperative performances. Grounded in the SETT (Self-Assessment of Teacher Talk) as outlined by Walsh (2006), the following features were found in the teacher talk of the interviewed EFL teachers during the six classroom observation sessions. The researcher found 9 features of teacher talk, as Table 5.1 shows.

Table 5.1 Features of teacher talk and language use (based on SETT, Walsh, 2006, p. 167)

Feature of teacher talk	Tally		Examples
	English	Arabic	
1. Scaffolding	X		L1: I am in my classroom T: You were in classroom, did you write your homework? L1: Yes, teacher, I did. T: Good, you did your homework.. that makes you a good student.
2. Direct repair	X		L2: Yesterday, I visit my aunt in Abri T: So, you **visited** your aunt, correct? L2: Yes, I visited my aunt yesterday.

3. Contact feedback	X	X	T: Where did you go in your weekend? Name a place LL: Playing teacher T: Okay, (وين رحت في اجازة الاسبوع) Where have you been? (using Arabic) L1: “Ohh , Yes, teacher ... to Salalah
4. Extended wait-time	X	X	T: Okay students….. as I said before…..in writing a paragraph …or short essay……you need to….think about….about the structure. You must first…. think about the …topic sentence…as we said …the topic sentence is the …most important sentence in your paragraph (نعطي مثال) (Let’s give an example) Example…. Muscat is a beautiful place to visit for many reasons…. clear? LL: Yes, teacher
5. Referential questions	X		T: Okay, what are your reasons to visit Muscat? L1: Nice markets T: It is big markets and stores….Okay …what else? L2: Beautiful beaches T: Fine … what about Nasir? Nasir: Gardens T: Can you name any garden? Nasir: Yes. Teacher…Sahwa garden T: Is it in Muscat? Nasir: Yes teacher….big garden
6. Seeking clarifications	X	X	T: What do you call a popular place, which many people like to visit? give me the term or the word L1: Visiting place L2: Famous L3: مكان مشهور L4: Tourist place (مكان سياحي)(tourist place) T: Okay, yes a tourist place Who can give me an example? L4: Nizwa Fort, teacher T: Thanks
7. Confirmation checks	X		L1: Teacher, Muscat has many big supermarkets and gardens T: You mean, Muscat has many big supermarkets and gardens as a reason to visit it? L1: Yes teacher

			T: Okay, so students do you understand what we should do in writing a topic sentence? LL: Yes, teacher
8. Teacher echo	X		T: Who can give a full sentence Oman? L1: Oman has many beautiful beaches T: Oman has many beautiful beaches ….. this is a good sentence.
9. Display questions	X		T: Look at task 4 on the next page…. and look at this (pointing to a picture) what is it? Do you know the place? L1: Beach….long beach teacher. L2: People walking on beach T: Yes, right,… it is a beautiful beach

5.3.2 Functions of Arabic used by students

In this section, the functions of Arabic language use by learners in grades 11-12, who took part in this research, are presented. As previously mentioned, the EFL classrooms in Oman are generally considered to be teacher-centered classrooms where the teacher is basically the only speaker and information source. Learners speak only when they are given the chance to answer their teacher's questions. As shown in Table 4.35 and Figure 4.29, the use of Arabic by students served different purposes in this context.

Table 4.35: Why students use Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman

Schools	Classes	Practice and frequency of Arabic use by students					Frequencies
		Ask teacher for clarifications	Participating in class activities	With classmates to discuss instructions and feedback	With classmates to speak about personal issues	With classmates in doing group-work activities	
SC1	C12 (Male)	5	3	4	4	10	26
SC2	C11 (Male)	7	7	7	4	8	33
SC3	C11 (Male)	4	6	4	3	10	27
SC4	C11 (Female)	3	2	2	1	12	20

SC5	C12 (Female)	1	2	2	3	5	13
SC6	C12 (Female)	3	0	2	0	5	10
Total		23 18%	20 15%	21 16%	15 12%	50 39%	**129**

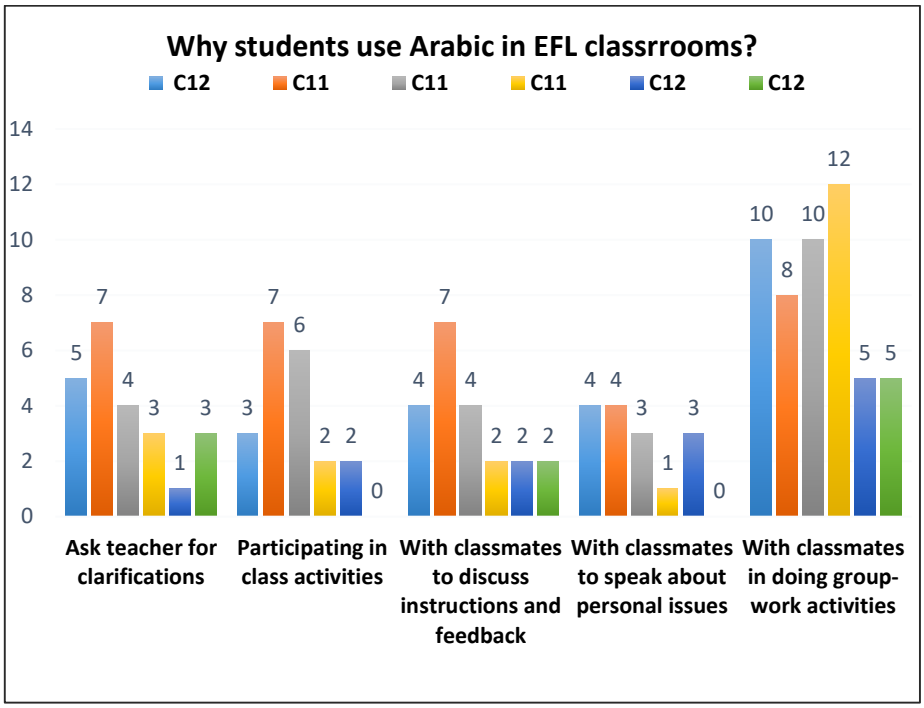

Figure 4.29: *Why students tend to use the Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman*

First, students used Arabic to ask for clarifications. It is worth noting that the use of Arabic by students to ask for clarifications differed significantly across different student cohorts. Students from School 5 used Arabic to ask for clarifications the least (only once), while those of School 2 used it the most (7 times). Furthermore, students from school schools 4 and 6 used Arabic to ask for clarifications three times while their counterparts from schools 3 and 2 used Arabic to ask for clarifications three and seven times respectively. The following extract illustrates the learners' use of Arabic in asking for clarifications from classmates.

Extract 9

e. S1. Teacher, ايش نسوي هنا؟ (What should we do in this task?)

f. S1. شباب ايش نسوي؟ ايش المطلوب؟ (What to do here (task)?

g. S2. اكتب الجملة صحيحة (Write down the sentence correctly)

h. S1. اذن سهلة صحيح؟ (Are you sure? Then it is easy)

Overall, the use of Arabic for clarifications accounted for 18% of the use of Arabic by students. Past studies have also reported students' use of their mother tongue in seeking clarifications (Al Sharaeai, 2012).

The second use of Arabic by students was for participation in classroom activities. Overall, the use of Arabic for participation in classroom activities accounted for 15% of the use of Arabic by students. Regarding the frequency of usage, participants from school six did not use Arabic for participation in classroom activities. By contrast, their counterparts from schools 4 and 5 used this approach twice, while those from school 1 used it once. Lastly, students from school 3 and school 2 used Arabic for participation in classroom activities six and seven times respectively. As extract 10 shows, these learners used Arabic to get their teacher's attention to thereby give them the chance to answer his questions.

Extract 10

c. S1. أنا teacher (Me, teacher)

d. **S2.** ليش ما تسالني انا teacher ؟ (Teacher, why don't you ask me?)

The third use of Arabic by students was to discuss instructions and feedback with classmates. The use of Arabic in discussions around instructions and feedback accounted for 16% of the use of Arabic by students. The frequency of usage of Arabic in discussing instructions and feedback differed across different student cohorts. Students from schools 4, 5, and 6 used Arabic to discuss instructions and feedback less frequently (2) times) when compared to their counterparts from school 2, who used this approach the most (7) times). Lastly, students from schools 1 and 3 used Arabic in their discussions about instructions and feedback four times. Extract 11 shows for example that learners used Arabic to discuss instructions and to confirm answers during a group work activity.

Extract 11

c. **S1**. ؟ teacher ايش رايك في الحل (Teacher, what do you think of our answer?)

d. **S2**. كله صح؟ (Is it right?)

Fourthly, students used Arabic with classmates to speak about personal issues. This is in line with Al Sharaeai (2012), who reported that students use their mother tongue to chat with fellow students about general and personal issues that are not related to academic work. The

use of Arabic to speak about personal issues accounted for 15% of the use of Arabic by students. Students from school six did not use Arabic to talk about personal issues, while their counterparts from schools 1 and 2 used Arabic to speak about their personal issues the most (4 times). On the other hand, students from schools 3 and 5 used Arabic in speaking about their matters three times each while those from school 4 used it only once.

Lastly, learners used Arabic with their classmates to do group work activities. It is worth mentioning that students preferred to use Arabic in doing group work activities, as shown by the overall percentage of its use, and this generally accounted for 50% of the use of Arabic by students. Students from school 4 used Arabic when discussing group activities the most (12 times). The purposes of using the Arabic language were varied. For example, Arabic was used to make sure that all group members understood what they should be doing to complete the stated task. Another reason for the use of Arabic in the classrooms, as noticed by the researcher, was to translate difficult words such as ‘destinations’, ‘tour’ and ‘travel agent’. It was also noted that some students in school 4 used Arabic while doing group work to ask for their teacher’s help by saying: (**لو سمحت** teacher) which means (Teacher, please), as illustrated in extract 12.

Extract 12

a. **S1.** لو سمحت استاذ ممكن شوي ؟ (Teacher, a moment please)

b. **S1.** ما اعرف كيف أحل هذا (I don’t know what to do in this task)

Learners from school 1 and school 3 used Arabic when discussing group activities (10 times). Their reasons were different. For instance, learners from school one used Arabic to translate some words into Arabic, such as ‘traveler’, or what the difference is between ‘vacation’ and ‘holiday’. Another Arabic usage was also recorded when a learner tried to ask his group classmates to raise their hands to show that they had finished doing the task and were ready to speak about their group task. Conversely, students from school 3 used Arabic to get their teacher’s attention and to encourage each other to finish their targeted task first so they could be the winner in the class. Learners in school 6 used Arabic at least (5 times) for many purposes. For example, they applied Arabic while they were sharing views and to speak about the group activity and how best to do it. It was also noted that a learner from this school used Arabic to tell his teacher about the lesson time, when the school bell rang to indicate that the lesson time was over. Students from school 2 used Arabic in doing group work activities 8 times, for reasons such as talking about the task difficulty and asking for clarification from

their teacher. These findings confirm previous studies, which support the use of Arabic in conducting small group discussions (Al Sharaeai, 2012; Shuchi & Islam, 2016).

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

This section is mainly concerned with analysing and reporting on the findings of the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews conducted with six EFL teachers and six of their students. Results are presented of the twelve semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. First, the researcher explores the teacher participants' perspectives of Arabic use within the Omani EFL classrooms. Second, the researcher reports on the student participants' perceptions. Finally, any significant results based on interviews data are highlighted.

For this research, the researcher made the decision to conduct semi-structured interviews to ensure that the interviewees would focus on the topic but at the same time would be given ample opportunity to share their views and opinions. In my opinion, semi-structured interviews would help to gather the most valuable insights into the teacher and student participants' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in EFL classrooms. These perspectives are aimed at providing in-depth data about using the Arabic language by teachers and their students in EFL classrooms in Oman. The aim of adopting this data collection tool is to ensure that the issue of using the Arabic language is explored in depth and from various perspectives. All of the interviews were face-to-face and audio-recorded for transcription and analysis purposes.

5.3.3 Other findings from teachers' semi-structured interviews

Data from teacher participants' interviews reveal that the Arabic language has many other applications in EFL classrooms. In responding to question two ["The use of learners' first language (Arabic) should be excluded from English language classrooms. Do you agree? Why?"], teacher participants had various opinions. For example, T2 declared that using Arabic should not be excluded from EFL classrooms to ensure that learners understood what they should:

> "*I do not agree with this point. I think Arabic is important in teaching English. I think, to some extent you can use it in some area, for example, to clarify things for the students if we feel that they could not understand what is going on during the classroom activities. In limited ways and positions where you can tell that students get what I am saying clearly*" *(T2).*

Teachers believed that using the Arabic language could save their class time if they used it to clarify words meanings or to explain grammar points. They thought that using L1 translation helped them to provide meanings quickly without spending too much time using L2, which might not accomplish the aim in the end. For instance, T5 gave an example of how he could save time by giving the translation immediately. He said sometimes as a teacher you needed to speed up and could not spend 3-5 minutes clarifying a meaning when you needed to move on to the next main task. In this case, it would really be easier to use the Arabic language and move on normally. Similarly, T5 said it was easier and faster for him and his learners to use Arabic to explain new terms to make sure that all learners understood the meaning properly and could use these terms effectively. This result matches observational results, which show that deductive teaching of grammar and explanation of word meaning took a considerable amount of class time. T3, for example, thought that using the Arabic language could save his class time:

> *"I think using Arabic can save my class time. Using only English approach to clarify things for around 30 students with individual differences in only 40 minutes is a big challenge and time-consuming here in Oman. I think I cannot wait to explain for all students, so using it (Arabic) as a shortcut, is a good technique to help the learners understanding the task or concepts*" *(T3).*

Similarly, T5 gave an example of how the Arabic language could save class time by giving the equivalent Arabic word immediately:

> *"Sometimes to save time, just give the equivalent word in Arabic. For instance, the word 'architecture' is a difficult word especially for low achievers and even though I try to explain and drew pictures they still could not get it if I just use Arabic and say ' Handasah Ma'amariya' all got it and I save my class time*" *(T5).*

Arabic was also seen by teachers as a hands-on tool that helped them to enhance teacher-student interaction and create a relaxed learning environment where all learners were involved. For example, T5 said that she used Arabic for social purposes, i.e. telling jokes, and often to congratulate students on happy occasions they celebrated. Furthermore, giving learners the opportunity to elaborate their ideas and make use of L2 to talk about their own matters might make them better L2 learners and accordingly, they may use it in their daily life practices as a tool for communication purposes. T6, for example, believed that using the Arabic language could enhance teacher-students interaction:

"I use Arabic in my EFL classes to have a good teacher-students interaction. If you, as a good teacher, make the complex instructions clear to all students using Arabic, if necessary, that means you will have a satisfactory class interaction where most of the students involved" *(T6).*

Furthermore, some EFL teachers used Arabic to create a relaxed learning environment. For example, T5 said that she used Arabic to tell jokes and even to congratulate students on happy occasions:

"I use Arabic to make fun. I would use Arabic also to tell a joke and share some funny experience with my classes and to congratulate students on happy occasions such as EID holidays" *(T5).*

On the other hand, T4 preferred not to use a lot of Arabic, as students should be exposed to English language as much as possible:

"Although I sometimes use Arabic in my classes, I think using a lot of Arabic language could lead to more and more use by learners, which consequently encourage them to use Arabic language more than English" *(T4).*

This opinion also matches the findings of Turnbull (2001), who stated that students who are familiar to the situation where their teachers use their L1 tend to neglect the target language, and consequently do not get the complete benefits from the target language input.

5.3.4 Other findings from student interviews

In responses to a question about whether the student participants preferred to have a native or non-native English language teacher, participants had varied opinions. For example, three (50%) students said they preferred Arabic speakers as English teachers because they believed that these teachers could easily understand them, help them to understand meanings of words, and involve them during the class activities. For example, S3 responded:

"*If I were given a chance, I would choose a teacher who can speak both Arabic and English to help me understand the new words, and I could participate easily*" *(S3).* Correspondingly, S5 said:

"We (students) prefer Arabic speaker English teacher because in case we need help or find difficulties in understanding she can help us by translating the words or simplifying the meaning in Arabic" *(S5).*

S6 claimed:

"*Arabic language speaker teacher can understand me because she shares the same background, knows what my weaknesses in English language and can push me forwards to learn English" (S6).*

By contrast, three (50%) others students believed that a native English speaker teacher would be preferable for learning English. For instance, S1 stated that he preferred an English native speaker teacher in order to maximize his practice of English language:

"*Actually, I prefer the teacher who uses only English because this will help me in improving my English language level*" *(S1).*

Moreover, S4 answered:

"For the last three years, my teacher decided to use only English with small exceptions, and I think my English improved since I had no other chance except to learn English and use it in my study" (S4).

S2 added:

"I like my teacher to use Arabic if needed, but not for all levels. For me, he (teacher) is the only English native speaker I can meet and talk to" (S2).

Regarding the point raised by the interviewed EFL teachers, who claimed that they used Arabic because of learners' low English proficiency, student participants accepted that using Arabic was necessary to help weak learners, but at the same time, they thought that teachers should use English as much as possible to enhance these learners' English level. For example, S4 said:

"*I agree that sometimes we need to use Arabic in learning English for the sake of some weak students, but most teachers should also use English in their teaching, which I believe will help these weak learners to improve their level especially when they face some new words*" *(S4).*

5.3.4 Similarities and differences in participants' data

In this study, the qualitative and quantitative data revealed that both teachers and their students were generally in support of, and generally had similar perceptions of Arabic language use in EFL classrooms. While some participants were in favour of the idea of using the English language as much as possible, some of the teacher participants supported students' use of Arabic, as they believed that it facilitated and enhanced the English learning process. The EFL teachers relied on the Arabic language when it was difficult for learners to understand new

word vocabularies, when students could not understand and follow instructions using only English, or to explain grammatical points and apply discipline in the classroom. Furthermore, they used Arabic to help low English proficiency students to make sure that learning had taken place.

Teachers and learners shared some similarities in the use of Arabic language in English classrooms. First, both the learners and the teachers used Arabic for instructional purposes. Specifically, teachers used Arabic to give instructions. The use of Arabic in giving instructions accounted for 26% of the functions of Arabic use by teachers. On the other hand, students used Arabic with classmates to get feedback and discuss instructions. The use of Arabic by students to discuss instructions and feedback accounted for 16% of the use of Arabic by students. Teachers and learners' optimistic attitudes towards Arabic usage in English classrooms to give instructions have also been reported in previous studies (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al Sharaeai, 2012; Shuchi & Islam, 2016).

The second similarity between teachers and students' use of Arabic was noticeable in participation in class activities. Specifically, findings from this study showed that students' use of Arabic for participation in classroom activities accounted for 15% of the use of Arabic by students. Similarly, teachers used Arabic to discuss assignments. The use of Arabic to discuss assignments accounted for 2% of the functions of Arabic use by teachers. The importance of Arabic in conducting small group discussions has also been reported in earlier studies (Shuchi & Islam, 2016).

Thirdly, teachers used Arabic to check comprehension or students' understanding of concepts taught. Similarly, students used Arabic to ask for clarifications, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the academic content taught in the classrooms. The use of Arabic in checking comprehension accounted for 15% of the functions of Arabic use by teachers. On the other hand, students' use of Arabic for clarifications accounted for 18% of the use of Arabic by students. In line with these findings, Shuchi and Islam (2016) linked the use of Arabic to the need to aid comprehension and the need to make students feel comfortable and confident. Similarly, Al Sharaeai (2012) emphasised the importance of Arabic in seeking clarifications.

Lastly, both the students and the teachers used Arabic to provide feedback. Students used Arabic with their classmates to discuss instructions and feedback. The use of Arabic in giving feedback accounted for 9% of Arabic use by teachers. On the other hand, the use of

Arabic in the discussion of instructions and feedback accounted for 16% of the use of Arabic by students. Al-Busaidi, Al Hashmi, Al Musawi, and Kazem (2016) have also emphasised that Arabic use is related to the need to provide immediate feedback.

At the same time, teachers and students showed differences in the use of Arabic in the EFL classrooms. This may be linked to their different roles during teaching and learning. For instance, teachers used Arabic to make jokes, to praise students, and to offer encouragement. This accounted for 2% of the use of Arabic by the EFL teachers. Conversely, students used Arabic with classmates to speak about personal issues, which accounted for 15% of their use of Arabic. Moreover, teachers also used Arabic to explain grammar rubrics. The use of Arabic in explaining grammar accounted for 7% by teachers. In addition, teachers used Arabic for error correction and giving feedback. The use of Arabic for error correction accounted for 1% by teachers. However, throughout the classroom observation sessions, learners were not seen to use Arabic to correct errors. The use of Arabic for error correction only by teachers may be associated with the role of the teachers as the only source of knowledge and the teacher-centered approaches they have adopted. In this context, students derive their knowledge from the teachers and, therefore, error correction cannot be derived from the students, but only from the teachers.

In addition, teacher participants adopted the use of Arabic to learn new word meanings. It was noticed that teachers used Arabic to explain new words, but students did not use Arabic in this way. Similar to the use of Arabic in error correction, the use of Arabic to learn the meanings of new words is linked to the teachers' role as a source of knowledge. The use of Arabic in explaining new words may be aimed at ensuring that students get a better understanding of new words. The use of Arabic in explaining new words accounted for 39% of its use by teachers.

Students did use Arabic to do group work activities. Using Arabic in doing group work activities accounted for 50% of the use of Arabic by students. The use of Arabic in group discussions may be because Arabic is the students' L1 and it is thus easier to understand concepts being discussed using their L1.

Regarding the differences across participants' gender and teaching experience, the data showed significant differences across gender and teaching experience. As seen in Table 4.34, male teachers (T1, T2, and T3) had a higher frequency in the overall Arabic usage in the English classroom (61 times) compared to their female counterparts (43 times). However, the

female teachers (T4, T5, and T6) used Arabic more in giving instructions (15 times), than their male colleagues (12 times). Similarly, the female teachers had a higher frequency of Arabic use for checking comprehension (9 times) than the male teachers (7 times). Also, female teachers used Arabic more in giving feedback (5 times) compared to 4 times for the male teachers. On the other hand, the male teachers used Arabic more in explaining new words (31 times) compared to the female teachers (9 times).

Regarding the teaching experience, it was found that teachers with a long experience in teaching (more than 20 years) were more likely to use Arabic in EFL classrooms to check comprehension than teachers with little experience (less than five years). However, there were no apparent differences in the reasons for using Arabic: giving instructions, explaining new words, explaining grammar; making jokes, giving praise, and encouragement; giving feedback; discussing assignments; and error correction.

However, as exposed in Table 4.30, male and female students' perceptions about using Arabic in their EFL classrooms significantly differed. Overall, the male students had a higher frequency of Arabic usage in their English lessons (86 times) than their female counterparts (43 times). Further examination revealed that male students used the Arabic language more for clarification (16 times), for participating in classroom activities (16 times), to discuss instructions and feedback with classmates (15 times), for speaking about personal issues (11 times), and to do group work activities (28 times).

Moreover, as shown in Table 4.31, students who were in grade 11 and grade 12 had different perceptions of using Arabic in EFL classrooms. The frequency of use of Arabic was higher for grade 11 students (80 times) than for grade 12 students (49 times). More specifically, grade 11 students had a higher (14 times) usage of Arabic for clarification, participation in classroom activities (15 times), for discussion of instructions and feedback with classmates (13 times), for speaking about personal issues (8 times), and for doing group work activities (30 times).

Furthermore, when students' responses were compared with teachers, gender appeared to play a significant role in terms of students' perceptions. Concerning students' class levels, the consequences indicated that there were no important differences between the perceptions of students in grade 11 and grade 12 (see Table 4.31). In particular, these perceptions of using L1 (Arabic) in EFL teaching and learning situations confirmed findings of other studies (Al Sharaeai, 2014; Blooth, Azman & Ismail, 2014; Machaal 2012). This suggests that L1 needs

to be utilised in EFL classrooms intentionally and that it is reasonable for teachers to use it to enhance comprehension and to stimulate class interaction and communication.

In addition, this study shows some similarities to Sharma's (2006) study in the Nabil context regarding the use of L1 (Nepalese) in the English classroom, where teachers used it to explain difficult concepts, new words, giving instructions and clarifying grammar rules. Finally, gender appeared to play a significant role in more variables in the students' perceptions than in the teachers'. Apart from that, there were no significant differences between the views of students in grade 11 and grade 12 (see Table 4.31). Figure 5.3 shows an overview of reasons for Arabic language use in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman.

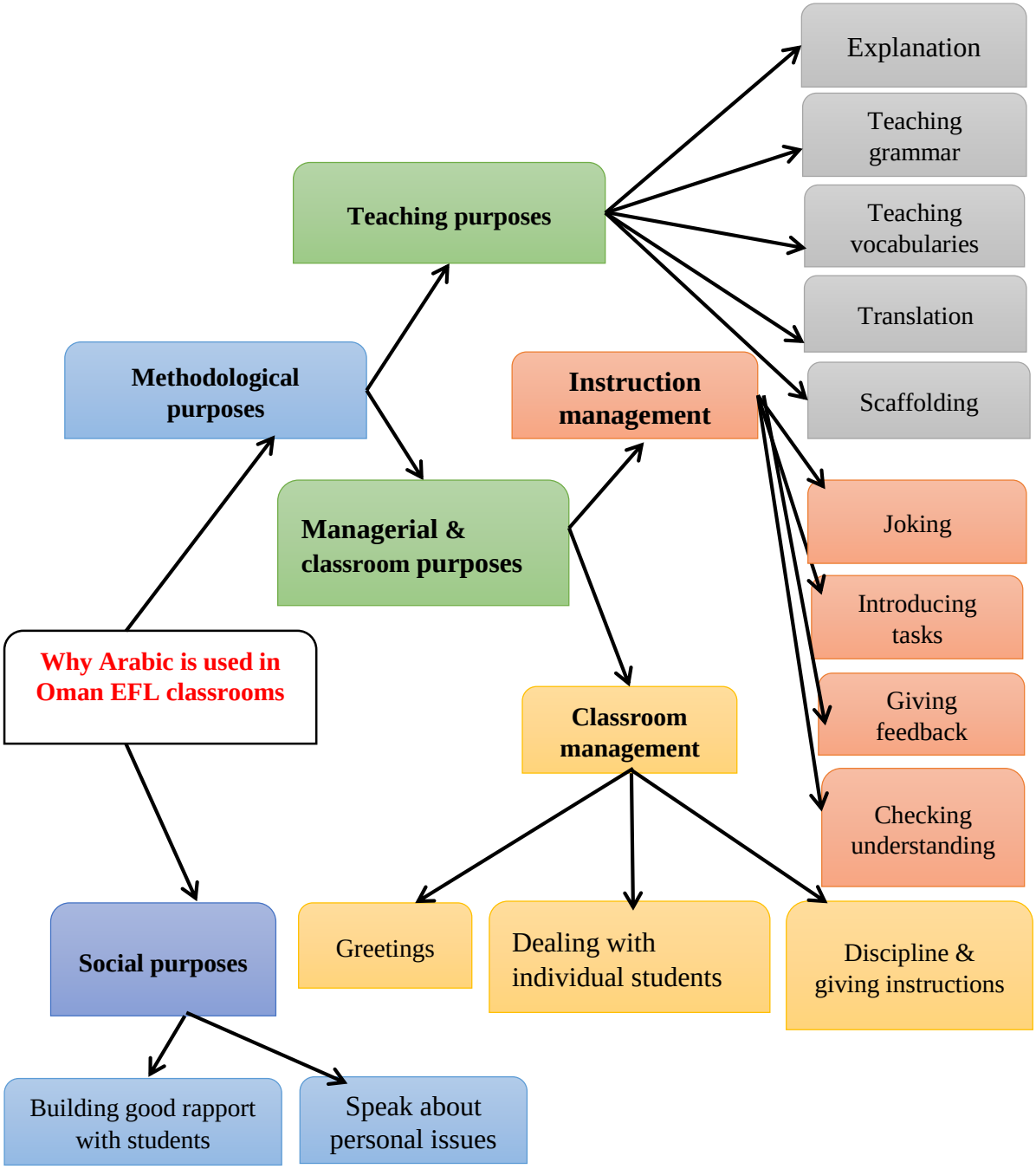

Figure 5.3: *Overview of reasons for Arabic language use in Grade 11-12 EFL classrooms*

5.4 Summary of qualitative data results

The data from EFL teachers and students' classroom observations and interviews has shed light on research questions 3 and 4: 'What are the specific pedagogical situations/contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic while they are teaching the English language?', and 'What are the contexts in which the learners tend to use Arabic in EFL classroom? Why?'

Learners reported that the Arabic language was needed and they believed that it could be useful, for example, in grammar explanations, for new vocabularies clarifications, lesson

instructions translations, and whenever there is any ambiguity in the lesson activities. Moreover, it was noted during the classroom observation, and also mentioned by some learners during the interviews sessions, that learners tend to apply the Arabic language while doing group wok activities. In addition, some learners mentioned that they utilised Arabic in their daily talk to classmates, and sometimes to their teachers, about personal issues and social concerns.

5.5 Chapter summary

This study's results show that both teachers and students had positive perspectives towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Oman. Teachers and learners tended to use Arabic (L1) regularly in their EFL classes as a simplifying instrument for diverse and instructional purposes, including methodological and social purposes (see Figure 5.3). The EFL teachers used Arabic as a teaching and a managerial classroom tool. For example, they used Arabic was found useful in clarifying teachers' instructions and describing the aims of the lessons and activities, interpreting difficult points, giving commands, increasing the learners' understanding levels, and facilitating the L2 learning process in general. EFL teachers specified that the translation of some words and complex ideas was a good way to learn L2 and recommended that without using learners' L1, learners would be likely to misunderstand some important tasks and might have difficulties with their L2 learning progress.

The findings further showed that students often resorted to the use of Arabic as a means of scaffolding to clarify and talk with each other when finishing group-work activities, though these were rather limited due to the teacher-centered methods applied in most of the observed classrooms. The findings suggest that learners could use Arabic to define meanings and carry out activities properly with their group members without making many mistakes. Other research supports these findings and has stated that the use of the L1 could make L2 learning speedier (Ellis, 2008), as well as save time and improve comprehension (Turnbull, 2001). Similarly, in Yang's (2010) study, students working together to prepare for a presentation found it necessary to use the L1 due to their limited proficiency in the L2. This study also reveals that, although the main communication in the EFL classrooms was English (L2), Arabic played a significant help and facilitating role.

Still, the majority of participants generally preferred exclusive use of English in the classroom except for some contextual learning practices for which they felt learners' L1 could be applied as a last option to make sure that learning had taken place. In their opinion, the

Arabic language should be used only when essential to aid English learning in a better way. However, there are a number of aspects that encouraged EFL teachers in Oman to resort to the Arabic language while teaching. The results show that the level of learners and trying to apply a communicative learning context were the main factors that influenced teachers and learners to occasionally use the Arabic language.

However, the findings also show that both teachers and learners used Arabic in EFL classrooms for social purposes. Thus, teachers switched to Arabic to build communication and relationships between them and their students, which was aimed at establishing a stress-free L2 learning environment. Similarly, learners tended to use Arabic to talk with classmates about personal and social issues and events, which consequently built a communicative learning L2 setting.

These reasons should neither hinder nor motivate teachers to deal with the Arabic language. Instead, they should consider the positive role of the Arabic language, whether the students are novices or better achievers. To accomplish an optimal way of using Arabic and generally any other learners' L1, teachers should judge each practice on its own merits, where L1 could be used distinctly. Macaro (2001) posed an important question in this respect: "is it a valuable tool or an easy option?" (p. 545).

The following chapter, which is also the last chapter of this thesis, presents a summary of the main results, recommendations and suggestions, highlights the contributions, and discusses some of the ethical and methodological limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The previous five chapters have presented the study's context, objectives, literature review, research methodology and data collection methods, and the analysis and discussion of the data findings. This chapter contains five main sections. The first section presents a summary of the key findings in relation to the aims and stated research questions. The second section presents the methodological and pedagogical contributions of the study to the body of knowledge, both in in theory and practice. This is followed by the pedagogical implications and recommendations for EFL teachers and curriculum designers concerning classroom language use and roles that Arabic can play. The chapter then presents a description of some methodological limitations that have challenged the researcher throughout the study's journey and it concludes with an overall summary.

6.2 To use or avoid Arabic in EFL classrooms

Using Arabic in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms seemed to be influenced by various factors that affected both teachers and their learners' decisions of whether to use or avoid Arabic in the classroom. In this regard, Copland and Neokleous (2011) argued that "choices about when to use L1 and L2 are complex and look to be grounded on both affective and cognitive influences" (p. 6). They further elaborated that teachers replied to their learners' contributions, whatever language they used, in what seemed to be an attempt at trying to form a stress-free learning setting. Using L1 together with L2 may allow teachers to create a relaxed classroom practice whereby L2 can be learned more effectively, rather than using L2 as the only language of teaching.

According to participant teachers, one of the main factors behind applying Arabic in the EFL classroom was learners' low L2 proficiency levels. For example, T1 believed that using Arabic could help and encourage low proficiency students in doing various tasks during the lesson. He further claimed that without some Arabic, it might be difficult to understand the exercise and, therefore, the prepared aims could not be easily achieved. These findings are aligned with results in earlier studies (Aboyan, 2011; De la Campa &Nassaji, 2009; Nazary, 2008; Tang, 2002). For example, Tang (2002) asserted that adopting learners' L1 rises with low achievement learners and becomes less with higher-level learners.

Another factor that might encourage EFL teachers to switch to Arabic is that it allows them to build communication and rapport between them and their learners. During the classroom observations, teachers tried to make themselves understandable and therefore, they simplified the complexity of their instructions and talk to meet the level of their learners. This simplification included using the Arabic language to simplify their teaching, and consequently learners were able to take part in the classroom practices. This finding is in line with Nation's (2003), who reported that it was easier to facilitate classroom communication between teachers and learners in the L2 setting if L1 was used.

Some EFL teachers in the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews considered time saving as one of the main factors that motivated them to switch to the Arabic language. For instance, T5 said that sometimes

'*As a teacher, you need to finish up and sometime you have to spend 3-5 minutes clarifying a meaning when you need to move on to the other important key tasks. In this case, I prefer to shift to Arabic language and carry on*' *(T5).*

Some earlier studies have also emphasised 'time-consuming' or 'saving time' as reasons for applying L1in L2 classrooms (Cook, 2005; Macaro, 2008).

On the other hand, one of the main aspects to avoid using Arabic in the EFL classroom was the belief that learners might rely on it and that it could possibly become a habit in learning L2. T2, T4, and T6 believed that if they used too much Arabic, learners would become reliant on it, which could decrease their L2 learning. However, Macaro (2000) and Tang (2002) criticised this point of view and said that there was no correlation between teachers' and learners' L1 use. They believed that if teachers applied L1 widely it did not necessary lead to L1 overuse by learners.

When considering the learners' perspectives in relative to the use of the Arabic language, learners reported that they liked it when teachers resorted to Arabic, especially with low proficiency and weak learners, to provide information and explanations about exams, classrooms rules and discipline, and recommendations of how to learn English successfully. Furthermore, some students preferred using Arabic and expressed their fear of using English language and making some embarrassing mistakes, which might cause them to be ridiculed by their classmates. Therefore, they preferred to use the Arabic language to, for example, ask about some unclear or complex aspects during the lesson. For instance, S3 responded:

'*I preferred to use Arabic rather than getting impressment of mistakes if I only use English*' (S3).

In fact, another student said she preferred being silent to being maybe embarrassed if she talked to the teacher using English. However, this was not always the case, as learners, particularly in group-work, also used Arabic because of their low English levels, as could be obviously noticed in most of the observed classrooms. Thus, the anxiety of using L2 could be minimised if the EFL teachers accept the use of the Arabic language in their classrooms.

By contrast, some other learners preferred an only-English approach to enhance their L2 learning. They claimed that the L2 classroom was the only place they could practice it and therefore, they preferred their teachers to maximize it as much as possible. In this regard, S1 and S4 reported that their English levels had improved since they had decided to use only English with minor exceptions.

6.3 Summary of the key findings

Learners' first language (L1) inclusion in L2 classrooms is an ongoing controversial subject. In the Omani context, little consideration has been paid to this issue. In order to find out answers to the research questions adopted for this study, the researcher employed a mixed method approach that included questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments. As stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.4), the current study intended to examine the teachers' and learners' perspectives as well as their practice of using the Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman. In particular, it looked into situations in which they tended to use Arabic, the purposes for their translations, and the specific reasons why they switched to Arabic in such situations. To collect the study's data, a mixed method approach was adopted that included questionnaires for 50 EFL teachers and 233 students. The researcher also observed the teacher and student participants in their daily classroom activities, focusing on their classroom teaching and learning methods, talk, and on when and why Arabic was used. In addition, the researcher interacted with participants in the form of semi-structured interviews to further gain an understanding of their perspectives. The findings have been presented and discussed in chapters 4 and 5 correspondingly.

Within many contexts, the use of L1 has been recognised as positive by teachers, which acknowledges that there are many benefits in L1 use based on particular theoretical attitudes that recognise an interconnection between the L1 and L2 (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Machaal, 2012). This perspective draws attention to L1 as a facilitating tool to simplify learning, save

time, enhance understanding and improve the practice of L2 learning. As illustrated in the literature review chapter, many researchers and teachers believe that L1 should be included rather than excluded from EFL classrooms in different contexts around the world (Macaro, 2014; McLellan, 2014). The practice is particularly common when both teachers and learners share the same L1. The reviewed literature shows that L1 is used in L2 classroom contexts to perform different functions including socialising with students, translation, checking understanding, providing explanations, and classroom management and discipline. Thus, L1 serves many purposes, both instructional and social, and is leaded by several aspects and reasons such as teachers' desire to build rapport and communication with their learners, students' L2 proficiency, and to save class time.

In the previous two chapters, the researcher drew together the main findings through an analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with the EFL teachers and their learners. The findings revealed that teachers and learners applied the Arabic language in their EFL classrooms for different purposes (see Figure 5.3). The study findings also suggest that more than 50% of the participants agreed that Arabic language should be adopted in EFL classrooms and believed that it played various pedagogical roles and functions throughout the EFL lessons practices. Additionally, learners believed that Arabic language should be integrated into EFL classrooms for teaching and managerial reasons.

Teachers' translations serve many purposes, which could be categorised under both instructional and social purposes. Teachers were found to be switching to Arabic either to provide content-related instructions and/or managing the classroom practice. Arabic was found to have a facilitating role in teaching the English language, and as a scaffolding instrument that enhanced learners to expand their L2 learning.

As a pedagogical tool that has a role in simplifying L2 learning, the findings revealed that teachers and learners used Arabic for many teaching and learning purposes. The majority of student participants (73%) reported that the Arabic language was an essential tool that simplified their English language learning. For example, Arabic was mainly used by teacher participants to make sure that concepts were understandable and comprehensible to their learners, which consequently helped teachers to achieve their lesson aims properly. In this regard, teachers responded that they thought that using 'only-English' might hinder learners' comprehension and even result in misunderstandings and insufficient teacher-students and students-students' class interaction and communication.

Some teachers (T1, T2, T5, and T6) indicated that their Arabic language applying depended on the learner's L2 level, and the desire to develop communication and rapport with learners. Teachers reported that the Arabic language might be used for many purposes, for example translation, checking comprehension, giving classroom instructions related to examinations and relevant dates, doing group work activities, and discussing personal issues with teachers and classmates. These practices were adopted due to many influences such as students' L2 low proficiency, and they were adopted to build a rapport with learners. Teachers believed that using Arabic should be adopted only as the last option and only where they could do nothing better to convey the message, thus aiming to help and encourage low proficiency students to be involved during EFL class time. Furthermore, teachers believed that Arabic assisted learners to talk about their ideas and express themselves, and to share and exchange thoughts during the L2 class.

The majority of students in the present study, who were considered low proficiency level students, tended to prefer more use of Arabic and felt motivated by this use, as well as believed that it supported their L2 learning practice. Some students (S3) specified that they may use Arabic for other reasons such as anxiety of committing mistakes, a lack of suitable terminology and shyness. Moreover, learners used Arabic to expand their L2 learning using their prior knowledge and by seeking assistance from their class peers.

For the EFL teachers, Arabic helped as a channel through which learners' prior knowledge was carried into the EFL classroom and permitted them to build new knowledge on current knowledge. Therefore, Arabic helped the EFL teachers and learners to provide meaningful and clear instructions to support and facilitate the learners' L2 progress. In this regard, due to the lack of enough and suitable L2 vocabularies, learners usually faced difficulties to participate in, for example, speaking tasks and, therefore, switching to Arabic might help them to be more involved.

The findings revealed that Arabic language was also used to compare the English language and Arabic language tenses as the two languages do not share many linguistic similarities. One of the most common mistakes that learners usually make is to translate the sentence structure between the two languages in the same order. For instance, learners might say 'likes Ahmed milk' when they mean 'Ahmed likes milk'. The first sentence is a perfect correct Arabic sentence as the structure of the Arabic language's verbal sentence is (verb +subject+object) (V.S.O). By contrast, the basic structure of the English language sentence is (subject+verb+object) (S.V.O). If these differences are not clarified from the early stages

through Arabic, learners might continue to produce similar sentences especially those with low English proficiency.

The findings also indicated that both EFL teachers and their learners applied Arabic to clarify and explain unfamiliar and difficult word vocabularies. Such explanations could go further and create a positive L2 communicative environment, which, therefore, would encourage class interaction and learning. As reported in the findings, the misunderstanding of a word meaning could influence learners' ability to follow their teacher's instructions and might cause confusion. Thus, as many participants claimed, using Arabic in this setting was considered necessary.

The results of the current study support the argument of previous researchers that for EFL learners, L1 can be a cognitive tool, as it provides scaffolding for learners in their practice to achieve learning tasks, supports students' understanding, and helps to create a positive L2 learning setting. With regard to functions of L1 for learners, this study emphasises that the learners' results appear to support the belief that L1 simplifies the L2 learning process. Learners switched to Arabic to ask for clarification from the teacher, to translate, and to interact with one another. This supports the view that L1 permits the development of different approaches, allowing learners to accomplish challenging tasks.

Thus, the findings of this study agree with other studies conducted in different EFL contexts (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al Sharaeai, 2012; Macaro, 2013; Shuchi & Islam, 2016), where participants held positive views about the significance of L1 in their EFL classrooms.

6.4 Contributions of the study

This study contributes to understandings about the theoretical and practical use of the learners' L1 in research. Primary, the consequences of this study state that using learners' L1 is unavoidable; where both EFL teachers and their learners make use of it for a diversity of educational and social purposes. Second, this study also shows the significant L1 in L2 classroom practices in general, and the roles, functions, and purposes of the Arabic language in Omani EFL classrooms in particular. The findings reveal that using the Arabic language is a significant tool that should be deliberated in EFL teaching and learning daily practices. Third, this study gives detailed insights about factors leading to teachers' and learners' Arabic use in an Omani EFL context, thereby raising vital awareness of expected effects on the L2 teaching and learning process. Furthermore, this mixed methods study contributes considerably to reducing what has been a controversial matter for a long time and understanding EFL teachers'

and learners' reasons and perspectives for Arabic as L1 use in an L2 setting. Moreover, this study shows that some purposes of teachers' and learners' switching to the Arabic language are different. In other words, learners adopted L1 for their own purposes, which were not necessarily shared by their teachers (e.g. talking about personal issues, and discussing in group work tasks). Additionally, the findings revealed that using the Arabic language is a significant tool that should be deliberated in EFL daily practices.

Both teachers and learners showed that there are significantly varied pedagogical functions that Arabic could serve in EFL classrooms, including teaching and managerial purposes. This study suggests that these findings can serve to inform EFL teachers, students, as well as curriculum designers and in-service EFL teacher training programs. This bridges the identified gap in the EFL context and the literature and contributes to knowledge by addressing the nature of Arabic language functions and reasons for using it in EFL classrooms in Oman.

6.5 Pedagogical implications and recommendations

The study's findings have sought to contribute to the continuing discussion concerning the using of learners' L1 in the L2 environment. It has shown how L1 use can be managed to achieve different pedagogical implications in EFL contexts. In what follows, the researcher suggests a number of pedagogical suggestions concerning the use of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms, which can serve as a helpful resource for teachers, students, curriculum designers and decision makers, particularly in Oman but also around the world.

For the EFL teachers and learners in the Omani context, it is valuable to be conscious of their Arabic use practice as being a common one in EFL classrooms. Thus, when EFL teachers are alert to the advantages and disadvantages of functions and purposes of their translations, they can reflect on for what pedagogical setting they should use only English and not use Arabic. EFL teachers have the chance to reflect on their teaching practices and can , therefore, modify them accordingly, based on appropriate reasons why they would use L1. In other words, instead of treating learners' L2 low proficiency as one of the main reasons for their Arabic language practice, EFL teachers should reflect both the advantages and drawbacks of Arabic translation so that their use of it can simplify their teaching and advance learners' L2 performance and learning.

Moreover, this study can serve as a helpful resource for EFL teachers and their learners where the Arabic language could be used in a 'systematic' (Cook, 2001) way in the EFL classrooms. The benefits of Arabic language use deliberated in the literature review chapter,

and the findings obtained from this study, increase the need for careful use of the Arabic language in EFL classrooms. In other words, a clear framework that provides guidance on how Arabic language use is acceptable and valuable is needed. EFL teachers should differentiate between the use of L1 as a sign of low ability in L2 and use L1 instead to achieve effective teaching aimed at helping learners to understand the L2 better. In this regard, Macaro (2001) ascertained that "L1 can be a valuable tool and it can be simply used as an easy option" (p. 545). Therefore, a careful positive practice of the L1 could be recognized and presented to both EFL teachers and their learners.

Though teachers have a constructive perception towards the careful and partial use of Arabic language in their EFL classrooms, they are uncertain about when they are allowed to employ it or not. This may be due to the ongoing debate surrounding L1 implementation in L2 classrooms, the Ministry of Education instructions regarding teaching EFL context, and more significantly, the absence of a clear method clarifying when, how, and why teachers may beneficially employ the Arabic language in EFL classroom teaching. Thus, curriculum designers have to recognise the benefits and usefulness of the Arabic language in an EFL context in order to systematically employ it. Arabic language integration will support in achieving a sensible way that will make the use of Arabic language clearer for EFL teachers and their learners. Therefore, teachers may adopt the Arabic language as a teaching tool and employ it accordingly wherever they feel that such use would better enhance learners' comprehension and consequently facilitate their English language learning practices. Understanding these functions and perspectives will help teachers to modify their teaching approaches and practices and, consequently, could aid them in helping their learners to improve their English language learning.

English-only approaches could be encouraged in EFL classrooms where teachers deal with classroom daily procedures and routines, because the teachers' commands and speech as part of classroom routines (set down, come on, open your books, etc.) are used frequently and repeatedly and are, therefore, very familiar to learners. Thus, teachers' translations here could be avoided or even kept at a minimum. For such functions, EFL teachers can probably use the L2 as the only means of instructions as learners could easily understand and practice these tasks using L2 and, as a result, L1 could be completely avoided.

Similarly, learners may also have a better explanation and knowledge of the reasons behind using their first language (Arabic) in EFL classrooms. This information may help learners to make better choices concerning whether or not to use it. More agreement between

EFL teachers' and learners' perspectives and real practices in applying Arabic in their EFL classrooms should be considered. Thus, positive and wise use of Arabic could be identified and introduced to EFL teachers and students.

Another key pedagogical implication of this study's findings is the need to raise the awareness among EFL teachers and students about the value of the Arabic language as a useful teaching tool and its implications in EFL contexts. Teacher-training programs should expose EFL teachers to different teaching approaches that take into account the crucial role of the L1. Teachers require professional development opportunities to be able to learn about communicative approaches, intercultural literacy in languages pedagogy, and social constructivist pedagogy as well as dialogic pedagogy, so they can realise that if the students do not use English for real-life communicative purposes and actually making meaning, they will not learn the language to its potential. For example, teaching methods that include both the L1 and the L2 should be given sufficient consideration in a language-teaching context, particularly where both teachers and students speak the same L1 as the case in Oman. This use should be suitable to the pedagogic aims of the L2 contexts and the learners' needs.

Regarding the EFL curriculum (*Engage with English*) in Oman, there is no written policy concerning the use of Arabic language, which makes its use a grey area. There is no mention of have to use or avoid, or even refer to, implementing a teaching means that permits, minimises or avoids the Arabic language. Therefore, guidelines should be offered by the Ministry of Education, particularly curriculum designers, to state how the Arabic language could best be used in EFL classrooms.

The results from this study can also be valuable for language teacher designers in relation to teachers' professional progress. Recorded samples of classroom situations where teachers apply L1 might be used to assist teachers' debate and recognise the purposes of translation, as well as the functions why they decided in specific positions to use learners' L1 and whether this usage was actually essential. Therefore, based on their deliberations, EFL teachers might become more conscious of what they need to do so that their translation, instead of becoming a tedious routine practice that delays their learners' learning, becomes an appreciated instrument for their teaching and learners' L2 learning progress. Curriculum designers need to rise the EFL teachers' consciousness of L1 usage, which could then be applied pedagogically and normal customary translation should be completely evaded.

Lastly, educators and decision-makers should be informed, with a clear picture of the teachers and learners' reasons and benefits of using Arabic in EFL classrooms, in order to find out about the best methods in improving and encouraging English language learning in EFL contexts.

6.6 Limitations of the study

The researcher has identified a number of restrictions of the study that would need to be clarified and addressed in further future research. With the regards to the participants, this study took into attention the perspectives of EFL teachers and learners in grades 11-12 in eight public schools from four different governorates in Oman. However, it would have been better if the researcher had included participants from private schools as well. This could have led to a similarity among the perspectives of teachers and learners in private and government schools towards the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms. In addition, it would have been useful if parents had also been involved in order to gain a wider view and further insights into Arabic language employment in and outside of schools.

Another limitation that the researcher should highlight is the absence of video-recording during the classroom observation sessions, which could have added value to the observation results. Additionally, the interviews with learners were in Arabic and needed to be translated into English, which took a lot of time.

In order to make more valid conclusions, more class observations could have taken place in more than six classrooms. It might also have been beneficial to involve more classes in the study or compare the practice of Arabic use at other primary or preparatory schools.

6.7 Recommendations for further research

This study has explored teachers' and learners' perspectives on using the Arabic language in grades 11-12 in EFL classrooms in Oman. This study has aimed to pave the way for more research to investigate this issue. Based on this study's findings, some important issues should be further considered and researched. According to the findings, one of the aims for adopting Arabic language is because both EFL teachers and learners share the same L1 which can be used for various reasons in L2 classrooms. Therefore, in order to understand the practice of using L1 in L2 classrooms, further research could shed light on the use of learners' L1 by teachers who speak a different language in both public and private schools. Exploring L1 functions and roles in these EFL contexts would be useful.

For a better understanding of why teachers resort to Arabic language, particularly in teaching L2 grammar rubrics and in classroom discipline and management, the researcher would suggest that more research of this kind would offer further perceptions into the use of L1 in other Omani governorates and in different EFL context such as educational colleges' EFL classrooms, and hence make way for potential appropriate developments.

Further research could also explore EFL teachers' and learners' use of L1 in their classes with L2 low proficiency students, reasons and implications. A study could be conducted in a different or similar EFL teaching context in another Arabic country. In addition, the researcher recommends conducting similar research on the impact of L1 (Arabic) on the L2 (English) acquisition for varying ability levels in the same and different contexts. Finally, more researches in other EFL contexts could be conducted to find out if the consequences are similar or even if there are other potential employments of L1(Arabic) in L2 classrooms.

REFERENCES

Afzal, S. (2012). Relationship between providing Persian equivalents of English adjectives and Iranian EFL learners' active vocabulary. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 2*(1), 231-238.

Ahmad, B.H. and Jusoff, K. (2009). Teachers' code-switching in classroom instructions for low English proficient learners'. *English Language Teaching, 2*(2), 49-55.

Ahmad, I., Radzuan, N. R. M., & Sabboor Hussain, M. (2018). Use of First Language in the Classroom: Non-native EFL Teachers' Beliefs in Teaching English to Adult Learners in Bilingual Context.

AI-Alawi, T. M. (2008). Teachers' beliefs and practices about the use of L1. In S. Borg (Ed.). Investigating English language teaching and learning in Oman (pp.1-9). Muscat: Ministry of Education, Oman.

AI-Hinai, M. K. (2006). The use of the L1 in the elementary classroom. In S. Borg(Ed). *Classroom research in English language teaching in Oman (pp.8-14)*. Muscat: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman.

AI-Shidhani, A. N. (2009). Teachers' beliefs about using Arabic in the English classroom. In S. Borg (Ed.). *Investigating English language teaching and learning in Oman (pp.184-191)*. Muscat: Ministry of Education, Oman.

Al-Buraiki, M. (2008). *The L1 in young learner classrooms: Teachers' views and practices*. http://www.moe.gov.om/Portal/sitebuilder/sites/EPS/English/MOE/baproject/version2/Ch2.pdf.

Al-Busaidi, F., Al Hashmi, A., Al Musawi, A., & Kazem, A. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of using Arabic language teaching software in Omani basic education. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology, 12*(2), 139-157.

Al-Hadhrami,A . H. (2008). The role of the L1 in grade 5 EFL classrooms. In S. Borg (Ed). *Investigating English language teaching and learning in Oman (pp.19 -27)*. Muscat: Ministry of Education, Oman.

Al-Harbi, A. (2010). Mother tongue maintenance and second language sustenance: A two-way language teaching method. *TESOL Journal*, 2, 144-158.

Al-Issa, A. S. (2005). An ideological discussion of the impact of the NNESTs' English language knowledge on ESL policy implementation: A special reference to the Omani context. *Asian EFL Journal*, *7*(3). http://asian-efl-journal.com.

Al-Issa, A. S. (2006a). Ideologies governing teaching the language skills in the Omani ELT system. *Journal of Language & Learning*, *4*(2), 218-231.

Al-Issa, A. S. (2007a). An ideological discussion of the implications of implementing a flexible syllabus for ESL policy in Sultanate of Oman (August 2007). *RELC Journal 38*(2): 199-215.

Al-Jadidi, H.S. (2009). *Teaching English as a foreign language in Oman: an exploration of English language pedagogy in tertiary education*. PhD Thesis. Victoria University, Victoria, Australia.

Al-Jardani, K. S. (2011). The need for developing a framework for curriculum evaluation. In Proceedings of *ICERI 2011 conference*. 14th-16th November 2011, Madrid, Spain.

Al-Mahrooqi, R. (2012). English communication skills: How are they taught at schools and universities in Oman? *English Language Teaching*, *5*(4), 124-130.

Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Asante, C. (2010). Promoting autonomy by fostering a reading culture. In R. Al-Mahrooqi & V. Tuzlukova (Eds.). *The Omani ELT symphony: Maintaining linguistic and socio-cultural equilibrium* (pp. 477-494). Muscat, Oman: Sultan Qaboos University Academic Publication Board.

Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Tuzlukova, V. (2010). Introduction: Cultural perspectives and ELT in Oman. In R. Al-Mahrooqi & V. Tuzlukova (Eds.), *The Omani ELT symphony: maintaining linguistic and socio-cultural equilibrium* (pp. 13-29). Muscat, Oman: Sultan Qaboos University Academic Publication Board.

Al-Nofaie, H. (2010). The attitudes of teachers and students towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms in Saudi public schools: A case study. *Novitas-Royal Research on Youth and Language*, *4*(1), 64-95.

Alrabah, S., W., S., Alotaibi, A., and Aldaihani, H. (2016). English teachers' use of learners' L1 (Arabic) in college classrooms in Kuwait. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(1), 1-11.

Alseweed, M. A. (2012). The effectiveness of using L1 in teaching L2 grammar. *International Journal of English and Education*, *1*(2), 109-120.

Alshammari, M. M. (2011). The use of the mother tongue in Saudi EFL classrooms. *Journal of International Education Research*, *7*(4), 95-102.

Al-Sharaeai, W. (2012). *Students' perspectives on the use of L1 in English classrooms*. MA Thesis. Iowa State University.

Alshehri, E. (2017). Using Learners' First Language in EFL Classrooms. IAFOR Journal of Language Learning, 3(1), 20-33.

Al-Ta'ani, M. H. (2019). The Use of Arabic (L1) in the EFL Classrooms: How Do Umm Al-Quwain Teachers and Students Perceive It?. International Journal of Contemporary Education, 2(2), 1-26.

Anh, K. (2010). Use of Vietnamese in English language teaching in Vietnam: Attitudes of Vietnamese university teachers. English Language Teaching, 3(2), 119-128.

Antón, M., & DiCamilla, F. (1999). Socio cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *83*(2), 233-247.

Aqel, F. (2006). Using the mother tongue (Arabic language) in EFL classes. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9*(3), 63-81.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2009). *Introduction to research in education*.: Wadsworth Publishing Company. Belmont, CA, USA.

Auerbach, E. R. (1993). Re-examining English only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(1), 9-32. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3586949.

Bazeley, P. (2003). Computerized data analysis for mixed methods research. In Tashakkori & Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research* (pp. 385-422). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Allyn and Bacon. California State University, Long Beach, USA.

Bhooth, A., Azman, H., & Ismail, K. (2014). The role of the L1 as a scaffolding tool in the EFL reading classroom. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *11*8, 76-84.

Bouangeune, S. (2009). Using L1 in teaching vocabulary to low English proficiency level students: A case study at the University of Laos. *English Language Teaching Journal*, *2*(3), 186-193.

Bouma, G. D. (2000). *The research process*. Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage Publications.

Broady, (2006). Learning and interaction: Developing through talk. *Language Learning Journal*, 34 (1), 62-66, DOI: 10.1080/09571730685200251

Brooks, F. B., & Donato, R. (1994). Vygotskyan approaches to understanding foreign language learner discourse during communicative tasks. *Hispania*, *77*(2), 262-274. DOI: 10.2307/344508

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bruton, A. (2005). Task based language learning: For the state secondary FL classroom? *Language Learning Journal*, 31, 55-68.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Buendía, J. C. & Martin, O. L. J. (2018). Motivation: A key issue in the EFL classroom. International Journal of Diversity in Organisations.

Butzkamm, W. (2003). We only learn language once. The role of the mother tongue in FL classrooms: Death of a dogma. Language Learning Journal, 28(1), 29-39.

Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Carolyn, B., & Palena, N. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input*. Pathfinder International.

Carreira, J. M. (2005). New framework of intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental motivation in second language acquisition. *The Keiai Journal of International Studies*, 16.Watertown, MA, USA.

Carson, E., & Kashihara, H. (2012). *Using the L1 in the L2 classroom: from the students' perspective*. Tokyo: JALT. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/proceedings/articles/1797-using-l1-l2-classroomstudents%E2%80%99-perspective.

Cianflone, E. (2009). L1 use in English courses at university level, a questionnaire of literature on students and teachers' perspectives. *ESP World*, *8*(22), 1-5.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th edn). London: Routledge.

Cook, V. (2001b). Using the first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, *57*(3), 402-423.

Cook, V. (2005). Basing teaching on the L2 user. Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession (pp. 47-61). New York, NY: Springer.

Cook, V. J. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *57*(3), 402-423.

Copland, F., & Neokleous, G. (2011). L1 to teach L2: Complexities and contradictions'. *ELT Journal*, *65*(3), 270-280.

Cowie, N. (2009). Observation. In J. Heigham & R. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics* (pp. 165-181). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano-Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Culhane, S. F. (2004). An intercultural interaction model: acculturation attitudes in second language acquisition. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, *1*(1), 50-61. Retrieved from http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v1n12004/culhane.htm.

Dawson, C. (2002).*Practical research methods: A user-friendly guide to mastering research techniques and projects*. Oxford, UK: Cromwell Press.

De La Campa, J. C. & Nassaji, H. (2009). The amount, purpose, and reasons for using L1 in L2 classrooms'. *Foreign Language Annals*, *42*(4), 742-759.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. (4th ed). Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Apple (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33-56).New Jersey: Ablex.

Dornyei, Z. (2001a). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dornyei, Z. (2001b). New themes and approaches in second language motivation research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *21*, 43-59.

Dornyei, Z. (2003). *Questionnaires in second language research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Du Y. (2016). The use of first and second language in Chinese University EFL Classrooms. Springer, Singapore. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-10-1911-1-1.

Edstrom, A. (2006). L1 use in the L2 Classroom: One Teacher's Self-Evaluation. *Canadian Modern Language Review*. *63*, 275-292.

Edwards-Groves, C., Anstey, M., & Bull, G. (2014). *Classroom talk: Understanding dialogue, pedagogy and practice*. Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA).

Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, *33*(2), 209-224.

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Enama, P. (2016). The Impact of English-only and bilingual approaches to EFL instruction on low-achieving bilinguals in Cameroon: An empirical study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *7*(1), 19-30. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0701.03

Ferguson, G. (2009). What next towards an agenda for classroom codeswitching research, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *12*(2), 231-241.

Ferrer, V. (2011). *The mother tongue in the classroom: Cross-linguistic comparisons, noticing and explicit knowledge*. Retrieved from http://www.teachenglishworldwide.com/Articles/Ferrer_mother tongue in the classroom.pdf.

Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. (4th ed). London: Sage Publications.

Freeman, D. & Johnson K. E. (1998). Reconceptualising the knowledge base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*(3), 397-417.

Gardner, R.C., Tremblay, P.F., & Masgoret, A-M. (1997). Towards a full model of second language learning: An empirical investigation. *The Modern Language Journal*, *81*, 344-362.

Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Hall, G. & Cook, G. (2013). *Own-language use in ELT: exploring global practices and attitudes: ELT research papers 13-01*. London: British Council.

Hammad, E. A. R. (2014). Palestinian EFL teachers' attitudes towards English textbooks used at the first three grades of elementary school. *TESL-EJ*, *18*(1), 1-18.

Harvey, W. (2011). *Strategies for conducting elite interviews*. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023%2FA%3A1014301607592 pdf.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., and Bailey, A. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Hidayati, I. N. (2012). Evaluating the role of L1 in teaching receptive skills and grammar in EFL classes. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *1*(2), 17-32.

Hisham Salah, N. M., & Hakim Farrah, M. D. (2012). Examining the use of Arabic in English classes at the primary stage in Hebron government schools, Palestine: Teachers' perspectives. *Arab World English Journal*, *3*(2), 400-436. http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?aid=1051335

Huang, H. F. (2006). Breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge: which really matters in the academic reading performance of Chinese university students? *Profile*, *13*(2), 113-129.

Ismail, M. (2011). *Language planning in Oman: evaluating linguistic and sociolinguistic fallacies*. PhD Thesis. Newcastle University.

Jadallah, M. & Hasan, F. (2011). A review of some new trends in using L1 in the EFL classroom. Retrieved from www.qou.edu/english/conferences/firstNationalConference/../drMufeed.pdf.

Jeffress, D. (2003). What is intrinsic motivation? Retrieved from http://www.wisegeek.com/what-isintrinsicmotivation.htm.

Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. (2012) *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (4th ed.) Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Kandil, A. (2002). Needs analysis and the Arab learners. *TESOL Arabia*, *10*(2). http://www.sfll.bnu.edu.cn/chengxiaotang/zhuanyexueweijingpinkecheng/zixue-3.doc.

Kemper, E., Stringfield. S., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Mixed methods sampling strategies in social science research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Khassawneh, S. F. (2011). The attitudes of students towards using Arabic in EFL classrooms at Yarmouk University in Jordan, *European Journal of Social Sciences*, *21*(4), 592-602.

Koba, N., Ogawa, N., & Wilkinson, D. (2000). Using the community language learning approach to cope with language anxiety. *The Internet TESL Journal*, *6*(11). http://iteslj.org/Articles/Koba-CLL.html

Kovacic, A., & Kirinic, U. (2011). To use or not to use the first language in tertiary instruction of English as a foreign language. *1st International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, Sarajevo.

Lantolf, J. P. (2004). Sociocultural theory and second and foreign language learning: An overview of sociocultural theory. In K. van Esch & O. St. John (Eds.), *New insights into foreign language learning and teaching* (pp. 13-34). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2007). Sociocultural theory and second language learning. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 201-224). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003). *Teaching language: From grammar to grammaring*. Boston, MA: Heinle.

Larsen–Freeman, D. (2012). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). London, England: Oxford University Press.

Lee, J. H., & Macaro, E. (2013). Investigating age in the use of L1 or English-only instruction: Vocabulary acquisition by Korean EFL learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, *97*(4), 887-801.

Levine, G. (2003). Student and instructor beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use, and anxiety: Report of a questionnaire study. *The Modern Language*, *87*(3), 343-364.

Levine, G. (2014). Principles for code choice in the foreign language classroom: A focus on grammaring. *Language Teaching*, *74*(3), 332-348.

Levine, G. S. (2014). Principles for code choice in the foreign language classroom: A focus on grammaring. *Language Teaching*, *47*(3), 332-348.

Littlewood (2004). The task-based approach: some questions and suggestions. *ELT Journal*, *58*(4): 319-326. Retrieved from http://www.lenguasvivas.org/campus/files/0_28/tbl.pdf on 24 February 2018

Littlewood, W., & Yu, B. (2011). First language and target language in the foreign language classroom. *Language Teaching*, *44*(1), 64-77.

Liu, D., Ahn, G. S., Baek, K. S., & Han, N. O. (2004). South Korean high school English teachers' code switching: Questions and challenges in the drive for maximal use of English in teaching, *TESOL Quarterly*, *38*(4), 605-638.

Lyberg, L. (1997). *Questionnaire measurement and process quality*. New York: Wiley.

Macaro, E. (2001). Analysing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision-making. *The Modern Language Journal*, *85*(4), 531-548.

Macaro, E., Nakatani, Y., Hayashi, Y., & Khabbazbashi, N. (2012). Exploring the value of bilingual language assistants with Japanese English as foreign language learners. *The Language Learning Journal*, *42(1)* 1-14.

Machaal, B. (2012).The use of Arabic in English classes: A teaching support or a learning hindrance? *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, *3*(2), 194–232.

Mackey, A. & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mahadeo, S. K. (2006). English language teaching in Mauritius. *The International Journal of Language, Society and Culture*, *18*. Retrieved from http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/Journal articles /2006/18-2.htm.

Mahmoudi, L., & Amirkhiz, S. (2011). The use of Persian in the EFL classroom: The case of English teaching and learning at pre-university level in Iran. *English Language Teaching*, *4*(1), 135-140.

McMillan, B. & Joyce, P. (2011). Teacher perspectives on student placement in university EFL programs. *Nepal English Language Teachers' Association* (NELTA), *16*(2), 70-81.

McNeish, .D. (2017). *Thanks coefficient alpha, we'll take it from here*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313852796.

Meiring, L., & Norman, N. (2002). Back on target: Repositioning the status of target language in MFL teaching and learning. *Language Learning Journal*, *26*(1), 27-35.

Miles, R. (2004). *Evaluating the use of L1 in the English language classroom*. Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham.MA Thesis. Retrieved from www.cels.bham.ac.uk/resources/essays/Milesdiss.pdf.

Ministry of Education. (2017). The annual educational statistics book: 2017/2018. Muscat Ministry of Education.

Mirza, G., Mahmud, K., & Jabbar, J. (2012). Use of other languages in English language teaching at tertiary level: a case study on Bangladesh. *English Language Teaching*, *5*(9), 71-77.

Moore, P. (2013). An emergent perspective on the use of the first language in the English-as-a-foreign-language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, *97*(1), 239-253.

Mouhanna, M. (2009). Re-examining the role of L1 in the EFL classroom, in UGRU Journal, Vol.8, 1-18, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Nation, I.S.P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *Asian EFL Journal*, *5*, 1-8.

Nazary, M. (2008). The role of L1 in L2 acquisition: attitudes of Iranian university students. *Research on Youth and Language*, *2*(2), 138-153.

O'Neill, S., & Geoghegan, D. (2012). Pre-service teachers' comparative analyses of teacher-/parent-child talk: Making literacy teaching explicit and children's literacy learning visible. *International Journal of Studies in English*. 12(1), 97-128.

O'Neill, S. (2018), Building students' capacity to write English for academic purposes: Pedagogy and the demands of writing persuasively. In L. T. Wong & W. L. Wong (Eds.). *Teaching and learning English for academic purposes: Current research and practices* (pp. 69-96). New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

O'Leary, Z. (2009). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.

Oman (2011). *The final report on the inclusive questionnaire of indicators of information and communications technology in the education sector for grade 1-12*. Muscat: Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Combs, J. P. (2010). *Emergent data analysis techniques in mixed methods research: a synthesis* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pablo, I. M., Lengeling, M. M., Zenil, B. R., Crawford, T., & Goodwin, D. (2011). *Students and teachers' reasons for using the first language within the foreign language classroom.*13 (2), (pp.113-129). Bogotá, Colombia.

Pallant, (2007). *SPSS survival manual, a step-by-step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (6th ed). Open University Press, Berkshire, England.

Pan, Y., Pan, Y. (2010). The use of L1 in the foreign language classroom. *Colombian Applied Linguistics*, *12*(2), 87-96.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pei-shi, W. (2012). The effect of background knowledge on EFL learners' reading comprehension. *Sino-US English Teaching*, *9*(9), 1516-1523.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Prabhu, N.S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Raschka, C., Sercombe, P., & Chi-Ling, H. (2009). Conflicts and tensions in codeswitching in a Taiwanese EFL classroom. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *12*, 157–171.

Renandya, W. A. (2014). Effective Strategies for motivating L2 learners. Paper presented at *the KAPEE International Conference Chuncheon National University of Education*. Chuncheon, South Korea.

Reyes, S., and Vallone, T. (2008). *Constructivist strategies for teaching English language learners*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Corwin.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data*. London: Sage.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research: A resource for social-scientists and practitioner-researchers* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Sabbari, S. (2008). Teachers' beliefs and practices about the use of the L1. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/2473394/1Teachers.

Saito, H., &Ebsworth, M. E. (2004). Seeing English language teaching and learning through the eyes of Japanese EFL and ESL students. *Foreign Language Annals*, *37*, 111-124.

Salah, N. M. H., & Farrah, M. A. H. (2012). Examining the use of Arabic in English classes at the primary stage in Hebron government schools, Palestine: Teachers' perspective. *Arab World English Journal*, *3*(2), 400-436.

Sale, Lohfeld, LH.,& Brazil, K. (2002). Revisiting the quantitative-qualitative debate: implications for mixed-methods research. *International Journal of Methodology*, *36*, (1), 43-53.

Saleh, S. (2002). *A descriptive study of some classroom behavioural aspects of Ajelat EFL teachers at secondary schools*. MA Thesis. The Academy of Graduate Studies, Tripoli-Libya.

Sali, P. (2014). An analysis of the teachers' use of L1 in Turkish EFL classrooms. *System*, *42*, 308-318. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.12.021.

Samadi, M. R. (2011). Role of the L1 in FL classrooms: learner and teacher beliefs, attitudes and practices. Retrieved from http://krex.kstate.edu/dspace/bitstream/2097/7994/1/MohammadRahimSamadi2011.pdf

Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5th ed.). Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.

Scolaro, B. (2010). *Intrinsic or extrinsic motivation: The most effective way to motivate employees*. Retrieved from http://thenetworkingadvisor.com/p.101.

Shabir, M. (2017). Student teachers' beliefs on the use of L1 in EFL classroom: A global perspective. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(4), 45-52.

Shamsipour, A., & Allami, H. (2012). Teacher talk and learner involvement in EFL classrooms: The case of Iranian setting. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *2*(11), 2262-2268.

Sharma, K. (2006). Mother tongue use in English classroom. *Journal of NELTA*, *11*(12), 80-87.

Shimizu, M. (2006). Monolingual or bilingual policy in the classroom. *Maebashi Kyoai Gakuen College Research Bulletin*, *6*, 75-89. Retrieved from http://kyoai.ac.jp/college/ronshuu/no-06/shimizu.pdf.

Shuchi, I. J., & Islam, A. S. (2016).Teachers and students' attitudes towards L1 use in EFL classrooms in the contexts of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(12), 62.

Sipra, A. (2013). Contribution of bilingualism in language teaching. *Canadian Centre of Science and Education Journal*, *6*(1), 56-66.

Skehan, P. (2014). Individual Differences in Second Language Learning. Routledge.

Skidmore, D., & Murakami, K. (2016). Dialogic pedagogy: The importance of dialogue in teaching and learning. Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Song, Y. and Andrews, S. (2009). The L1 in L2 learning: teachers' beliefs and practices. Muenchen: LINCOM Europa.

Storch, N., & Wigglesworth, G. (2003). Is there a role for the use of the L1 in an L2 setting? *TESOL Quarterly*, *37*(4), 760-770.

Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (2000). Task-based second language learning: The uses of the first language. *Language Teaching Research*, *4*(3), 251-274.

Tang, J. (2002). Using L1 in the English classroom.' *English Teaching Forum*, *40*(1), 36-43.

Tian, L. (2009). *Teacher codeswitching in a communicative EFL context: Measuring the effects on vocabulary learning*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford, UK.

Tian, L., & Hennebry, M. (2016). Chinese learners' perceptions towards teachers' language use in lexical explanations: A comparison between Chinese-only and English-only instructions. *System*, *63*, 77-88.

Tian, L., & Macaro, E. (2012). Comparing the effect of teacher codeswitching with English-only explanations on the vocabulary acquisition of Chinese university students: A lexical focuson-form study. *Language Teaching Research*, *16*(3), 367–391.

Tochon, F. V. (2014). *Help them learn a language deeply - Francois Victor Tochon's deep approach to world languages and cultures*. Blue Mounds, WI: Deep University Press.

Trent, J. (2013). Using the L1 in L2 teaching and learning? What role does teacher identity play? *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, *15*(3), 214-244.

Tsao, F. (2001). Teaching English from elementary school in an Asian context: A language-planning perspective. *The Language Teacher online*, *25*(6). http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2001/06/tsao.

Tsukamoto, M. (2012). Students' perceptions of teachers' language use in an EFL classroom. *Osaka Jogakuin University Research Journal*, 8, 143-154.

Turnbull, M. (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but… *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(4), 531-540.

Turnbull, M., & Arnett, K. (2002). Teachers' uses of the target and first languages in second and foreign language classrooms. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *22*, 204-218.

Vaezi, Z. (2008). Language learning motivation among Iranian undergraduate students. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, *5*(1): 54-61.

Vanichakorn, N. (2009). Re-Examine the use of the student's first language in the English as a foreign language classrooms: A cross-case analysis from undergraduate engineering students in Bangkok, Thailand. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, *5*(6), 1-16. http://journals.cluteonline.com/index.php/TLC/article/viewFile/1137/1121.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*. In M. Cole, V. JohnSteiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Waer, H. (2011). Code-switching and teachers' pedagogical agendas: Arabic signs on an English highway, Theorising practice and practising theory: Developing local pedagogies in language teaching. PhD Thesis. Aston University, Birmingham.

Walsh, S. (2003). Developing interactional awareness in the second language classroom, Language Awareness, 12:124–142

Walsh, S. (2006). Investigating Classroom Discourse, London: Routledge.

Walsh, S. (2006b). Talking the talk of the TESOL classroom. English Language Teaching Journal 60/2: 133-141.

Walsh, S. (2011). Exploring Classroom Discourse: Language in Action, London: Routledge.

Walsh, S. (2014). Developing classroom interactional competence. Language Issues: The ESOL Journal, 25(1), 4-8.

Walter, M. (2013). Social research methods (3rd ed.). South Melbourne, Victoria Oxford University Press.

Wharton, C. (2007). Informed use of the mother tongue in the English language classroom. Retrieved from http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ Documents/collegeartslaw/cels/ essays/secondlanguage/ wharton-p-grammar.

Wu, W. (2018). A Vygotskyan sociocultural perspective on the role of L1 in target language learning. Cambridge Open-Review Educational Research e-Journal Vol. 5, 87-103.

Zughoul, M. (2003). Globalization and EFL/ESL pedagogy in the Arab world. Retrieved from ERIC database (ED479810).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Invitation Letter

Dear Teacher / Student

My name is Khalifa Mohammed Alkhamisi. Presently, I am doing my PhD in Applied Linguistics at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. I am conducting a study on exploring teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of Arabic language in grades 11-12 EFL classrooms in Oman: An in depth investigation of EFL pedagogy. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. The purpose of this project is to explore teachers and students' perceptions towards the use of Arabic in grade 12 English language classrooms in Oman. I would request your participation because of your informative experience in teaching and learning English language in Oman so that I can have better understanding of the topic I am investigating.

If you agree to participate in my study, your kind participation first, will involve completion of a questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Second, I will attend your one classroom period for class observation where I will attend only for the purposes of this research and I have nothing to do with your teaching or your students' performance assessment. Third, you will be involved in a semi-structured interview that will take approximately 20-40 minutes of your time. The interview will take place at a time and venue that is convenient to you. The interview will be audio-recorded.

It is expected that this project will directly benefit you through exploring teachers' and students' thoughts and likely reasons for using their first languages (Arabic) and understanding why students tend to use Arabic instead of English in EFL classrooms. It will help you and other teachers to appreciate in which contexts your students tend to prefer to use Arabic and not English. By understanding that, you will be better informed about which resources and methods may help your students use English efficiently. Additionally, it may also benefit

students themselves to get a better idea and explanation of their attitudes towards language learning and realising their own justifications, they may have a better chance to develop their language skills. More general, this study could be important in raising awareness of positions and the frequency usage of Arabic in English classrooms and in preparing the ground for a more reasoned use of it in EFL teaching. The findings hopefully, will further help policy makers, administrators, and educators in the educational field by including these factors for EFL curriculum improvement in Oman.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland or your school administrations.

There are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living associated with your participation in this project. All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. For the anonymous questionnaire, the names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. Any data collected as a part of this study will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

I would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to me via the following email: u1078371@umail.usq.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research study

With Regards,

Khalifa Mohammed AlKhamisi
USQ, Toowoomba, Australia
+61406691693
+96899459423
u1078371@umail.usq.edu.au.

Appendix 2: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Teacher:

This questionnaire aims at finding out your perceptions about the use of Arabic language in your English language classrooms. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for my PhD research in applied linguistic, Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. You do not need to write your name. Your answers will be used only for research commitments. Please reflect on your own experience and perceptions by completing this questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation

NOTE: The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts 3 Pages

Part one: Participants' background information:

Please answer the following questions

A. Gender: Male ---------- Female ----------

B. Nationality ----------

C. Teaching Experience (years): Please circle the most appropriate answer

1. 1-5 2. 6-10 3. 11-15 4. 16-20 5. more than 20

D. Governorate: Please circle the most appropriate answer

1. Muscat 2. Al Dhaharah 3. Al Sharqiah North 4. AlDakhliya

Part 2: What do you think of using Arabic language in EFL classrooms in Oman?

2.1 Should Arabic be used in English language classrooms? Why? ----------
---

2.2 Do you ever use Arabic while you are teaching English? Why? ----------
---

2.3 Do you encourage the use of Arabic in your English language teaching practices? Why?

2.4 Would you please list/describe the activities/situations in which you think using Arabic can be helpful in your English classrooms teaching?----------
---

Part 3: Participants' perceptions

Would you please indicate your perceptions by simply giving marks from 5 to 1. If you strongly agree with the statement please tick (□) 5 and, if you strongly disagree please tick (□) 1.

1= Strongly disagree 2= Disagree 3= Not sure 4= Agree 5= Strongly agree

3.1 To what extend do teachers and students preserve Arabic should be used in the EFL classrooms in Oman?

	Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	Arabic language should be used in English language classrooms in Oman					
2	Using Arabic language can simplify students' English learning practice					
3	Using only English in EFL classrooms can help students to learn it much better					
4	Using Arabic language in English classrooms could save time					
5	Using students' first language (Arabic) is significant in English language classrooms in Oman					
6	Using Arabic language in the primary stages of learning English language is very effective					
7	Using Arabic language helps learner to express his/her own ideas easily					

3.2 What are the specific pedagogical situations/contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic while teaching English in Oman?

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	Arabic language is essential in English classroom to present and clarify new word vocabularies					
9	Effective English language learning is grounded on using merely English language in the EFL classrooms					
10	Teachers who use Arabic language can better support and encourage learners to be involved in the classroom activities					
11	Arabic language is a helpful tool to know about students' background and interests					
12	It is better to use Arabic language to check learners' understanding					
13	It is very useful when teacher uses Arabic language for clarifying some English language problematic linguistic or grammatical rubrics					

3.3 What are the contexts in which students tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman?

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
14	Students benefit from teacher's feedback if Arabic language is used					
15	Students usually participate more effective in the English language classrooms when teacher uses Arabic language during the EFL class activities					
16	English language learners got motivated when Arabic language is used in the classroom					

THANK YOU

Appendix 3: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student

This questionnaire aims at finding out your perceptions about the use of Arabic language in your English language classrooms. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for my PhD research in applied linguistic, Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. You do not need to write your name. Your answers will be used only for research purposes. Please reflect on your own experience and perceptions by completing this questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

عزيزي الطالب

يهدف هذا المسح الي معرفة تصوراتك حول استخدام اللغة العربية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو جمع البيانات اللازمة لبحث الدكتوراة في التطبيقات اللغوية من جامعة جنوب كوينزلاند، أستراليا. لا تحتاج لكتابة اسمك. إجاباتك ستستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث. يرجى استكمال هذه الاستبيانة بكل وضوح

شكرا لتعاونكم

Part one: Background information

Please, tick ONE of the options below:

-Gender: Male ◯ Female ◯

-Class: 11 ◯ 12 ◯

-Governorate: ◯ Muscat ◯ Dhaharah ◯ Sharqiah ◯ Dakhliya

الجزء الأول: معلومات عامة

القسم الأول: الرجاء اختيار واحدة من الاجابات ادناه

-الجنس ذكر ◯ أنثى ◯

- الصف: 11 ◯ 12 ◯

-المحافظة التعليمية: ◯ مسقط ◯ الظاهرة ◯ الشرقية ◯ الداخلية

Part two: What do you think of using Arabic in English language classrooms in Oman? Please circle the best answer.

1. Should Arabic be used in English language classrooms? Yes ----- No------

1. هل ينبغي أن تستخدم اللغة العربية في تعليم اللغة الانجليزية؟ نعم ---------- لا ----------

2. Do you like your teacher to use Arabic in your English language classroom?

A. Not at all B. A little C. Sometimes D. A lot

2. .هل تفضل ان يستخدم المعلم اللغة العربية في صف اللغة الإنجليزية؟

أ. لا على الإطلاق ب. قليلا ج. أحيانا د. كثيرا

3. Do you prefer to ask questions in Arabic in your English language classrooms?

A. Never B. Rarely C. Sometimes D. Always

3.هل تفضل طرح الأسئلة باللغة العربية في حصص اللغة الإنجليزية؟

أ. أبدا ب. نادرا ج. أحيانا د. دائما

Part three: Participants' perceptions **الجزء الثالث أراء المشاركون**

Would you please indicate your perceptions by simply giving marks from 5 to 1. If you strongly agree with the statement please tick (□) 5 and, if you strongly disagree please tick (□) 1.

يرجى استكمال المعلومات الواردة أدناه. إذا كنت توافق بشدة مع العبارة ضع(/) تحت الرقم 5، وإذا كنت لا توافق بشدة وضع علامة (/) تحت الرقم 1

1= Strongly disagree	**2= Disagree**	**3= Not sure**	**4= Agree**	**5= Strongly agree**
لا أوافق بشدة=1	**لا أوافق =2**	**لست متأكدا =3**	**أوافق =4**	**أوافق بشدة=5**

3.1 To what extend do teachers and students preserve Arabic should be used in the EFL classrooms in Oman?

	Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	Arabic should be used in English language classrooms. ينبغي استخدام اللغة العربية في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية					
2	Using Arabic can facilitate students' English learning. ان استخدام اللغة العربية يساعد في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية					
3	Students learn the English language better if teachers use only English in the classrooms. يتعلم الطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بصورة أفضل عندما يستخدم المعلم فقط اللغة الإنجليزية في الفصول الدراسية					
4	Using Arabic saves time and makes the English language learning process easier. استخدام اللغة العربية يوفر الوقت ويجعل تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية عملية أكثر سهولة					
5	Using Arabic is important in English language classrooms. استخدام اللغة العربية مهم في تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية					
6	It is better to use more of Arabic in English language classrooms, especially during the early stages of learning the language. من الأفضل استخدام العربية في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية، وخصوصا خلال المراحل المبكرة من تعلم اللغة					
7	I am aware of the disagreement surrounding the use of L1 in the English language classrooms.					

	كمعلم انا علي علم بالخلاف المحيط باستخدام اللغة العربية في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية					

3.2 What are the specific pedagogical situations/contexts in which EFL teachers choose to use Arabic while teaching English in Oman?

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	Arabic is necessary in English classroom to introduce and explain new concepts and vocabularies. استخدام اللغة العربية ضروري في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية لتقديم شرح المفاهيم والمفردات الجديدة					
2	Successful English language learning is based on using only English in the English language classroom. أعتقد أن نجاح تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية يقوم على استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية فقط في الفصول الدراسية					
3	Teachers who use Arabic can better support and encourage students to be involved in the classroom activities. المعلمون الذين يستخدمون اللغة العربية يستطيعون تشجيع الطلاب على المشاركة في الأنشطة الصفية اكثر من غيرهم					
4	It is better to use Arabic to know about students' background and interests. من الأفضل استخدام اللغة العربية لمعرفة المعلومات الأساسية الطلاب واهتماماتهم					
5	It is better to use Arabic to check students comprehension. من الأفضل استخدام اللغة العربية للتأكد من استيعاب الطلاب					
6	It is very effective when teacher uses Arabic for clarifying difficult grammatical points. اعتقد انه فعال جدا عندما يستخدم المعلم اللغة العربية لتوضيح النقاط النحوية الصعبة في حصص اللغة الانجليزية					

3.3 What are the contexts in which students tend to use Arabic in their EFL classrooms in Oman?

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Students benefit from feedback when it is given in Arabic. يستفيد الطلاب من التغذية الراجعة عندما تتم باستخدام اللغة العربية					
2	Students tend to participate more in the English language classroom when teacher uses Arabic. يميل الطلاب إلى مزيد من المشاركة في الانشطة الصفية الخاصة باللغة الإنجليزية عندما يستخدم المعلم اللغة العربية					
3	English language learners are more motivated if Arabic is used in the classroom. طلاب اللغة الانجليزية يكونون أكثر حماسا اذا استخدمت اللغة العربية					

THANK YOU **شكرا لكم**

Appendix 4: ELF Teachers' Semi-Structured Interviews Questions

a) Why (or why not) do you use Arabic in your EFL classrooms? Would you explain, please?
b) The use of students' first language (Arabic) should be excluded from English language classrooms. Do you agree? Why?
c) Are there any particular activities in which you consider the use of Arabic essential?
d) Do you think using the Arabic language can facilitate English language learning? How?
e) Do you allow/encourage the use of Arabic in your English language teaching practices? Why?
f) What do you usually do when your students do not understand what you are saying in English?

Appendix 5: ELF Students' semi-structured interview questions

a) Do you use Arabic in your English classrooms?

b) What do you think of using Arabic in your English classroom?

c) For which skills do you make use of Arabic most? Why?

d) Should teachers whenever necessary use Arabic language? Why?

e) What do you think of teachers using Arabic in your English classrooms?

f) Does Arabic help you to learn English? How?

Appendix 6: Classroom observation checklist

Teacher: _____School: _____
Date: _____Time: _____ Observation Number_____

1. Which language do teachers use when they:

Time	Events	Tallies	
		In Arabic	In English
	A. Give instructions		
	B. Check comprehension		
	C. Explain new words		
	D. Explain grammar		
	E. Joke, praise, encouragement		
	F. Give feedback to the students		
	G. Discuss assignments, tests, quizzes deadlines, etc.)		
	H. Error correction		
	Other----------		

2. Students use Arabic:

Practice	Frequency	Total
A. Ask teacher for clarification		
B. When participating in the class activities		
C. With classmates to discuss the instructions and feedback		
D. With classmates speaking about personal issues		
E. With classmates in group-work activities		

Other----------
