

## **TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: THE CASE OF SAUDI ARABIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper aims to describe English language teaching as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. It highlights the nature of the curriculum, teaching procedures and materials. The paper critically reviews the teaching methods, qualifications in addition to concepts related to culture and society.*

**KEYWORDS:** English, Method, Learning, Teaching, Saudi Arabia

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### **INTRODUCTION**

It is understood that the teaching of English as a foreign language was actually integrated into the Saudi Arabian academic system in 1928 (Rahman, 2011). This took place a few years after the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1923 (Liddicoat, 1997). This perceived emergent position of English is in response to the growth of Saudi Arabia in a variety of ways, including economic progress, advanced technology and the swift changes which social structure has encountered in recent years (Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013). The fundamental issue to be examined in this paper pertains to the existing major and continual obstacles encountered in the process of teaching English in Saudi Arabia. These obstacles are observed in several fields, including students' attitudes, elements of curriculum, teachers' qualification, teaching methods, and administrative activities. Addressing these issues will enable relevant authorities and teachers to continue to progress in the right direction (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014).

### **Nature of the Curriculum**

The Department of Curriculum Design in the Ministry of Education is solely responsible for examining and providing a national English Curriculum; on publishing English syllabi, its guidelines are followed after measuring the beliefs, customs, traditions and values of the Saudi Arabian society. What also needs to be noted is also that English academic books are generally referred to as English for Saudi Arabia, and grade-level books are the same or comply with the required standards throughout the country (Rahman, 2011). Teachers of English typically use three materials: a course book and a workbook for the students, along with a teaching instruction manual, which is referred to as the teacher's handbook. Students receive both the course books and a description of their objectives for free, and tutors execute and teach them in the allocated time (Ellis, 2008). The nature of the curriculum centres on integrating all language competencies (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking), with efficient grammar and vocabulary practices. However, the majority of academic institutions in Saudi Arabia lack English learning amenities, such as language labs, learning films and tape recorders; where such assets are available, they are mostly functional because of effective maintenance and thanks to trained teachers. In the public sector, from the elementary to the secondary level, the majority of English teachers are locals rather than native speakers of the English language. The

minimum prerequisite for tutors to teach English in Saudi schools is a Bachelor's degree in English, but no prior training or experience is mandatory. Most tutors graduated from the school of education or art at local Saudi colleges and universities which provide a four-year Bachelor's degree in teaching English as a second language (Ur Rahman and Alhaisoni, 2013). More recently, the Ministry of Education has ordered competent authorities, including the Department of Curriculum Design, to integrate the following core objectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the syllabus of Saudi Arabia. The initial objective is to enable students to attain basic language competencies (i.e. writing, reading, listening and speaking). The second goal is to enable students to accomplish the important communicative competence sought in different real-life situations. The third objective is to allow students to reach the important linguistic proficiency needed in various occupations (Rahman, 2011). Furthermore, the curriculum aims to support learners in developing positive attitudes towards the acquisition/learning of the second language. Additionally, it aims to boost students' insight into the value of English as a medium of universal communication. Another purpose is to raise students' understanding of religious, financial, cultural and societal issues of their society, and to thus make them prepared to participate in finding solutions to potential problems which they might encounter. The curriculum thus focuses on enhancing students' linguistic skills that will permit them, in the future, to enlighten and present social, educational and economical-related information and to participate in bringing economic prosperity (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015), priorities which constitute another goal. This is followed by the aim to expand students' linguistic competence that allows them to interact with citizens of English-speaking countries, which further strengthens the idea of collaboration, respect and insight into cultural differences between countries. Finally, the nature of the curriculum aims not only to enhance learners' linguistic knowledge and competence, but also to allow them to take part in international scientific and technological platforms. At the higher level, most Saudi colleges utilise English as the language for tutoring in a range of technical courses, such as business, medicine and engineering (as English is the vital language within these spheres), while Arabic is also exploited in non-scientific subjects (e.g. fields of humanities). However, in the case of other subjects, in which English is not the language for tutoring, officials require students to complete EFL assignments as an additional obligatory unit. For instance, a student acquiring a Bachelor's degree in history must pass an English program (generally English for academic purposes) as part of his/her curriculum plan (Rahman, 2011). The additional English program is anticipated to enhance learners' proficiency in English and permit them to consider the language as an instrument of knowledge in addition to the native language. It has been reported that two well-known scientific universities, King Fahad Petroleum and Mineral University (KFPMU) and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), have managed to teach all the courses offered in English (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015). Due to the lack of experienced Saudi tutors who have extensive credentials (M.A. and Ph.D.), the bulk of English teachers in higher education are expatriates, mainly from English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States) and from neighbouring MENA countries (e.g. Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon).

### **The Teaching Procedures**

The Ministry of Education's (MoE) policy on the utilisation of textbooks in general is that it expects tutors to pursue the material units in the prescribed course books precisely as agreed, even in situations in which such practices may have negative influences on students. This means that in a standard public academic institution in KSA, textbooks remain the only teaching resource for tutors (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015). As for the utilisation of EFL course

books and different methodologies for EFL in general, the MoE has only endorsed limited numbers of EFL course books for tutors and provided a set of school books for English lessons called English for Saudi Arabia (EFSA). The MoE has further insisted that the teacher's manual book is the best guidance course for tutors to enhance their teaching skills, an assumption that has been rejected by several other experts. However, the current procedures employed by EFL tutors permit both sides to boost their competencies and to exploit these textbooks as reference materials. The English language has been significantly growing within the Saudi community, as teachers are encouraged to use communicative methods or stimulate students to communicate in English. The lack of contemporary techniques other than traditional approaches, which mainly stress teaching grammar, is an ongoing problem (Liton, 2012). After the widespread criticism of the Audio-Lingual Approach 'ALM' and the Grammar Translation Approach 'GTM', EFL teachers are required to pursue both traditional and modern techniques, such as communicative and collaborative approaches. The MoE recommended that textbooks contain (a) the teacher's manual which presents and recommends steps, procedures, and suggestions which tutors should pursue to facilitate them with the applications of teaching methods, (b) the student's manual that comprises the actual instructions, lessons, and materials which students are to complete, and (c) the student's assignment book, which students need to complete as part of their homework. In private schools, English-led instruction commences from the elementary level. It is important to provide practical examples from the EFSA secondary-year textbooks, as its description is separated into eight lessons in each programme, as indicated in the following. Lesson I focuses on listening and speaking practices. The tutor needs to use a poster to launch the programme and a CD player to perform listening and speaking activities (Rahman, 2011). By contrast, there were no posters or cassettes offered with the MoE textbook; instead, tutors use their expertise to convert the listening lesson into a reading lesson. By pursuing an interview-based method, Lesson II focuses on grammar. Students are expected to complete this type of activity by repeating certain grammar rules. The main grammatical traits are either outlined in tables or diagrams. In Lesson III, the focus is on dealing with the competency of reading (Liton, 2012). It is intended to teach students how to read independently without any assistance. During Lesson IV, new words are identified and defined by teachers. Lesson V aims to strengthen the level of writing. Students are therefore asked to write short memorandums and paragraphs, based on comments, tables, diagrams and pictures. Lesson VI and VII include two different activities during which learners practise speaking in different circumstances, using the expressions, terms and structures which they are able to recognise. Lesson VIII coincides with a revision of grammar rules, in an attempt to ensure that learners become proficient in both speaking and writing.

### **The Idealisation of Teaching Materials**

The Internet has extensive potential to be effectively employed in the language teaching process and to be utilised as a valuable resource for EFL teachers. It can also play an important role in terms of a successful means of interaction between EFL communities, since it offers practical, valid native-speaker frameworks of the language (text) and on-line radio platforms (audio). The Internet also provides language-learning materials. Teachers can discover information and curriculum on all types of subjects, lesson strategies, additional programmes, and various types of curriculum assistance (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015). Students can find relevant information in English for specific purposes lessons (ESP). For instance, learners from the scientific field can use English-language websites dedicated specifically to science, which provide access to activities and tasks, among other relevant materials. In addition, since language is a developing entity, the Internet, with its massive advancement rate, permits easy

updating of lessons, materials and directions. Consequently, it provides EFL tutors and learners with modern language and insight (Liton, 2012). Unlike other resources of material (e.g. textbooks, articles, video tapes), the Internet, coupled with the facilitation of other sources such as Word processors, allows not only the recovery, but also effective management of information. These factors considerably support tutors in preparing classroom materials. For example, tutors can utilise and modify information from an online encyclopaedia to develop a new quiz or a reading lesson. The Internet has become a powerful tool for interaction between tutors and learners. In the Saudi Arabian context, it provides an effective and convenient way of interaction. As a result, individuals can make English-speaking 'keypal' friends with whom their speaking and reading skills will be practised in a quicker and expedient way (Rahman, 2011). It also encourages communicative-based teaching at the highest level. The ability to create virtual learning environments, such as classrooms and language labs, is apparent. The Internet thus enhances real collaboration between teachers and students within different spaces, just as in a physical classroom.

## **English Teachers in Saudi Arabia: Critical Perspective**

### **Level of English**

A close examination of the Saudi EFL syllabus demonstrates several limitations which obstruct the practice of acquiring and learning EFL, including a limited time allocated for providing clear instructions, a shortage of learning material resources, a lack of communication to boost knowledge, and the insufficiency of the teaching methods (Liton, 2012). Issues with restricted time for instruction: Throughout each class level, middle and secondary students typically undertake 45-minute English language classes for at least four times per week. However, sixth-grade elementary students receive only two classes of English for 90 minutes per week (Al-Hazmi, 2003). It has become important for school principals in Saudi Arabia to allocate more time for English classes in the curriculum, simply because learners are exposed to EFL only during the class periods in which the English teaching sessions are held. At the same time, it should be considered that Saudi students might be exposed to English communication through various channels, such as TV, newspapers, magazines and social media platforms. In addition, due to the outsized average class attendance of 40 to 50 students and to the fact that classes are organised only two times per week for Grade 6 and four times per week for both the middle and secondary grade levels, students are not given sufficient and equal prospects to practise the language that they learned in school (Liton, 2012). Presently, English students gain little experience of informal communicative situations which, in turn, leads to poor grades for the overall insight-learning activities. Encountered with such outsized student enrolment and with the existing class time limitations, tutors find it complicated to cover all of the learning materials and have difficulties in efficiently teaching all English-language skills. It is essential to note the different levels within the Saudi educational system in order to ensure a better understanding of how it functions. For instance, at the middle level, the schoolbook for all three grades is separated into 7 units, along with a review, and each part is segregated into 4 lessons. With only 4 classes of 45 minutes each accessible to them per week, tutors must thus utilise one tutorial per class to teach the entire textbook in one semester. The amount of time is inadequate, since some of the teaching materials and linked class activities cannot be completed or concluded in a single lecture. This limitation leads to a lack of quality of English teaching and learning experiences (Liton, 2012). Consequently, teachers' objectives are aimed around discovering ways to include all of the schoolbook's units at the cost of providing effective language teaching with individualised instruction, along with the terms of frequent, extensive

feedback for students' assignments and efforts. Also, students will not be provided with sufficient time to understand the lesson, and do not benefit from adequate opportunities to learn the newly taught material (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). Thus, students might demonstrate less or unsatisfactory contribution to the EFL learning. What worsens the condition is the fact that students often have strict academic schedules, as they need to attend various subjects throughout a typical school day. As a result, outside of class, they have minimal time to comprehend the lesson taught on that day or to revise and prepare for their next English lecture. Therefore, to make EFL teaching more competent and successful, and to build a more meaningful learning setting with more probabilities for contribution, greater individual insight, and enhanced instruction, the class dimension and contact hours need to be re-examined, so that the expansion of students' informal communicative skills in particular and English knowledge in general is accomplished. This can be attained via increasing either the intensity of the teaching time or the number of class sessions available to students and by decreasing the enrolment of English classes to 20 to 25 students per class (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). Issues with teaching material resources: Another obstructed compounding element which negatively influences the level of English, processes of teaching and learning of EFL in Saudi Arabia is the inaccessibility and unsatisfactory diverse, selective, and suitable learning resources. An internal or external visitor to an English classroom will typically observe the nonexistence of any learning aids on the classroom walls (Liton, 2012). Moreover, schools are merely not offered appropriate learning resources, language programme, e-teaching resources, a well-equipped IT laboratory, and other services; instead, a lack of or limited use of wall charts, flash cards, posters, audio materials and visual instruments can be noticed. The additional materials that are utilised, such as posters and multimedia materials, are either in an unsatisfactory condition, of low quality, or are non-operational and equivalent to those in the current schoolbook (Mishan, 2005). In addition, such materials are usually used based on the hypothesis that, within the English classroom, students will all benefit from them to the same degree, regardless of students' individual traits, diverse learning styles or language competency levels. The inaccessibility of such adequate learning resources results in Saudi EFL tutors failing to consider the utilisation of learning aids in their classroom; instead, they tend to heavily rely on schoolbooks and blackboards during the taught sessions. Teachers frequently choose to interpret or translate to their students when a listening part in the lecture is to be conveyed to them, particularly the first tutorial in all of the English schoolbooks for all discipline stages. Some tutors would have to design their own learning aid materials which, due to the lack of professional capacity, are less helpful or useful than they could be (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). In addition, pursuing the expansion of one's own learning materials diverts the teachers' energies from the fundamental task of teaching. There are various negative repercussions of not making appropriate learning resources accessible to teachers. In summary, it means that Saudi English students are not adequately exposed to reliable writing, reading and listening materials, and their interest in attaining English is not encouraged. The knowledge vs. practices factor: English schoolbooks currently present the risk of imparting knowledge at the cost of learning skills. Particularly, the content appears to be focused on presenting the information to students, rather than providing students with satisfactory opportunities to practise the taught lesson and given materials. In other words, because of the type of English schoolbooks used, Saudi students are exposed only to grammar and terminology, and are asked to focus on reading passages, but they have little experience of dealing with fluent situations or interactive functions in real-life situations which would permit them to participate in an extended range of functions for diverse settings (Mishan, 2005). It has been argued that, because of such actions, students are not required to enthusiastically speak English in the classroom or better yet, for fluent interaction. This results in the fact that students

who are incompetent of exhibiting themselves effectively or talking about circumstances that happen outside the classrooms, nevertheless often participate in language exercises, such as drills, discussions or role-play exercises, since schoolbooks focus on language that is primarily utilised in academic situations. Teaching and learning EFL in Saudi English classrooms is generally categorised by a focus on knowledge of the curriculum, as classroom interaction is largely controlled by the tutors themselves. Hence, EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia is established on a teacher-centred communication model. During the design of English tutorials, teachers focus on giving presentations and explanations of new language materials, and offer few opportunities for students' contribution (Berado, 2006). As a result, a Saudi EFL tutor is considered as a material provider and content presenter, not as an administrator of language insight situations. Obedience to such models discourages any attempt to transform the EFL teaching theory to execute a student-centred model in which a teacher, who serves as a supporter instead of applying complete authority in the classroom, takes an interactive approach and also utilises other less constrictive alternative learning techniques (Blaz, 2002). Issues with teaching and learning principles: A further level of English constraints appears in not conforming with quality strategies, including those for attaining, teaching and learning, upon which to develop academic policies and applications and which need instructive accountability. Moreover, there is a failure to exploit a global criterion for measures and in checking and scrutinising the qualifications of English tutors, which should be integrated in the recruitment process (Blaz, 2002). As mentioned previously, the only criterion for being recruited as an English tutor is holding a Bachelor's degree in English, without any competence to educate, instruct and teach the subject being required.

### **Qualifications: Issues Associated with English Teaching Training Programs**

Since the early 1980s, EFL tutors in Saudi Arabia participated in special programmes provided by the English departments at various universities, colleges of teaching and colleges of arts, or in four-year English degree programmes at various academic institutions (Moskovsky and Arabai, 2009). These programmes have allowed Saudi teachers to teach EFL at the elementary, middle and secondary levels in public institutions. Newly graduate teachers of these programmes are honoured with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. In these four years, potential teachers are instructed in different fields of specialisation, including linguistics, teaching methodologies, English literature, and education. At the beginning, in a number of universities, they must first register for a demanding and intensive one- or two-semester programme. Upon the successful conclusion of the chosen programme, students register for the definite academic conventional English programme, where they undertake a set of courses in linguistics, phonology, morphology, syntax, literature, teaching methodologies, and additional academic courses (Crystal, 2003). Consequently, aspiring tutors who register for English language programmes are required to commence: (a) a basic qualification to complete university or college degree; (b) courses recommended by the Department of English, including skills building prospectus, general linguistics curriculum, courses in applied linguistics, and English 32 literature syllabus; and (c) non-compulsory courses. However, in each of these categories, the total number of programmes and the number of modules may differ from one university to another. Furthermore, the methodology subjects that come under the classification of applied linguistics or, to be more specific, teaching approaches, are included in no more than three modules, due to the condensed nature of the modules discussed in the above (Mishan, 2005). Those modules are comprised of the preliminary and initial teaching technique courses, and a teaching practice course which is included in the last year of the English academic curriculum consisting of roughly eight credit hours (i.e. depending on the guidelines of each

individual university where these programmes are offered). The existing English teaching courses symbolise no more than 10 per cent of the total programmes offered by Linguistics departments in Saudi colleges and universities. Most tutors who join Linguistics departments or TEFL programmes are not competent in English, and a considerable percentage of them graduate from programmes at colleges of arts and translation or colleges of English that prepare them to become professional in English literature. This lack of aptitude is particularly observed in graduates from colleges of arts, who neither enrol in English teaching methodologies nor go through a practical teaching course for a short-term period in public institutions (Al Hajailan, 2003). As a result, it has been argued that due to their insufficient teaching practice they should not be certified as qualified for the occupation of teaching EFL. Moreover, in-service training initiatives are presently carried out on a restricted scale via the local teaching departments that are based all over Saudi Arabia and are managed in a neglectful way. Another unsettling fact is that some English teachers have acquired almost no teaching training in the workplace, even though they may have been tutoring English in a public academic institution for over a decade. They do not hold sufficient academic insight or knowledge pertaining to the main elements that influence foreign-language teaching, such as approach, motivation, capacity and age (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). The same issue is widespread in the area of insight into existing language-teaching methodologies, principally contemporary techniques and types of language programme. The incapability is also observed in teachers' inadequate knowledge of planning to teach language traits, including the four basic skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening), grammar, and vocabulary. Additionally, testing methods and the utilisation of educational materials and technology are inadequately exploited in English classrooms (Al Hajailan, 2003). Also, EFL tutors in Saudi Arabia usually have limited practice in material development, assessment, adjustment and execution.

### **Teaching Methods in Saudi Arabia**

The techniques exploited to teach EFL in Saudi Arabia are largely based on the audiolingual approach (ALM) and, to a smaller extent, the grammar translation approach (GTM). Research has demonstrated that Saudi EFL tutors comply with ALM's core standards, which prioritises motivation processing and reaction situations (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). Therefore, tutors are likely to engage students in extended training in grammatical rules and the constant repetition of words and terminologies. The GTM technique encourages tutors to concentrate on comprehensive descriptions of grammatical frameworks. It enables students to learn vocabulary lists and grammatical frameworks, while teachers ask them to learn whole texts phrase for phrase as the central focus of their learning (Al-Hazmi, 2003). Saudi EFL teachers employ a number of methods to execute such conventional teaching techniques, including structural testing, chorus assignment, responding to questions, making amendments, and interpreting texts (Berardo, 2006). Moreover, reading sentences and repetition, providing comprehensive language insight, and the prescribed utilisation of translated chunks of English, take much of a tutor's time and efforts. Students are enthusiastically attentive to the lectures or grammar tutorials, a practice which is considered to be a central element of instruction or vocabulary attainment. Then, students are required to memorise phrases and grammatical rules (Al-Hazmi, 2003). They are instructed to learn sentences aloud, interpret phrases and words, and to copy the vocabulary and other newly-discussed language traits from the blackboard onto their note pads. Further, they must participate in an extended drill of the reflective form of exercises, mainly with the aim of learning language prototypes. The structure of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia is such that tutors are uncertain to recommend their own teaching activities for fear that they might divert students' attention from the traditionally prescribed lessons and

cause them to fail the final assessment (Al-Nofaile, 2010). In other words, tutors focus on the improvement of grammatical proficiency with only minimal attention given to verbal or communicative proficiency, conversation, socio-linguistic, and strategic capabilities. Students are unable to learn any methods that permit them to understand verbal and written forms of language. They are not taught when to say, what to say, or how to utilise the language in diverse ways according to the social situation in which they perceive themselves (Al-Hazmi, 2003). In case of a communication failure, nor are they prepared to use different methods. As previously discussed, most Saudi EFL tutors do not exploit teaching materials or reliable additional materials in the classroom. Instead, they are likely to rely only on the prescribed course schoolbook and the blackboard. Designing English curriculum without carrying out students' expectations and analysis resulted in a breakdown to appropriately choose and arrange the teaching materials (Al-Nofaile, 2010). Furthermore, the syllabus of each discipline level does not organise and support learners to progress to the next level. It can be noted that the existing syllabus was established with little consideration of the category of traits and abilities which learners should enrich by the end of each academic level and by overlooking whether the developed syllabus is formulated in a way that integrates all preceding levels and advances into superior ones. This inadequacy resulted in a lack of consensus or stability between the core objectives of the Saudi EFL syllabus and the needs, comfort, and accurate levels for students.

### **Culture and Society**

In addition to the issues that teachers and students experience in academic institutions, they also lack the cultural and social setting in which they can exercise the English language. English is measured to be a foreign language in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and it is not actively used in daily life (Al Hajailan, 2003). In order for students to converse in the language effectively, they should exercise and practise it in their daily settings. In Saudi Arabia, most inhabitants converse with their family, relatives, colleagues, friends and classmates in the local language, Arabic, while English is utilised only as an educational subject, a practice which results in limited prospects for students to converse in English through daily interactions. As a result, the lack of coverage of English in every-day interactions can diminish students' competency to accomplish a good level of English facility and proficiency (Al-Nofaile, 2010). The unbalanced function of English in their daily lives has led some students to believe that English is inadequate or a waste of knowledge in their educational and public lives, particularly if they are not enrolling to study programmes in which English is the language of instruction. As reported earlier, Arabic is the formal language of Saudi Arabia and has therefore remained the main means of communication among local inhabitants. Non-Arabic overseas workers are the only citizens who speak in English, but even some of them try to gain knowledge of Arabic in order to interact with the native population (Al-Hazmi, 2003). The preference for the official language expands to other circumstances; for instance, English is the formal language in the workplace in healthcare institutions, but many doctors prefer to speak in Arabic instead of English in order to communicate with patients who do not understand English. These social traits have resulted in students' supposition that English is not an important feature in their daily, educational and public life, which has negatively influenced their performance in the classroom (Crystal, 2003). The neighbouring society can either encourage or discourage the efficient learning of English. From the point of view of the practised religion, individuals are encouraged to become proficient in foreign languages (e.g. English) in any setting, to support ethical, social, and moral values. However, some factions of Saudi Arabian society might reinforce the misinterpretation that learning the foreign language may affect the native language (Arabic) — and thus may lead to unfavourable adjustments to Saudi attitudes,



customs and traditions. Such factions also support the belief that Arabic is fundamental in guaranteeing that Saudi Arabian identity, background, ethnicity and society are maintained. In addition to the misinterpretation of the effects of English on the Arabic language, some factions in the Saudi Arabian society also fear that the growth of English in the country might weaken the local culture, traditions and characteristics (Al-Hazmi, 2003). Conversely, other factions of the population would advocate for an educational system based on the example of Dubai, the populous business capital in the adjoining United Arab Emirates, where Arabic is the formal language, but is hardly ever used in daily communication, due to the dominant use of English. What such approaches and beliefs disregard is the fact that language is not only a set of terminologies and words; rather, it comes with customs, ethnicity, traditions, and distinctiveness, among other things. Hence, the uncertainty that English will affect the Arabic language and may diminish Saudi traditions, traditions and identity, contributes to discouraging some Saudi students from attaining and learning the English language.

## CONCLUSION

Research on second language acquisition in the context of Saudi Arabia has highlighted that local educational institutions tend to be extensively focused on the process of learning English. The implementation of various strategies and techniques utilised in mastering the target language has become an essential activity pertinent to motivational drivers to learn a particular language. Saudi Arabia has demonstrated that it is a country with an innovative outlook on education, and evidenced feasible prospects of learning English as a foreign language. Thus, the exploration of different models and frameworks of learning a language is a lengthy process associated with the introduction of various paradigms related to learning and assessing a specific target language.

The extensive discussion in this paper has showed that since its establishment into the Saudi academic system more than 80 years ago, the English language has been persistently considered a fundamental vehicle for social and economic growth. It is also evident that, regardless of the tremendous achievements, the attainment level of students tends to be below the required standards, inadequate and excessively low. In addition, although the syllabus has been frequently transformed over the past years, this development has not been sufficiently rapid (Moskovsky and Alrabai, 2009). Ever-shifting expansions in the field of foreign-language attainment require prompt alterations to the EFL syllabus. The English competency level in Saudi Arabia is generally anticipated to remain at its existing level unless all appropriate factors are taken into account. It is suggested that a comprehensive examination should be carried out, while the school classroom setting must be enhanced. Greater attention should be given to teaching approaches in teacher-training programmes. There must be an appropriate modification of the EFL syllabus, as motivation and positive attitude towards EFL learning must be enhanced. In addition, a practical arrangement of syllabus objectives and tutor quality enhancement must be taken into consideration (Al-Hazmi, 2003). With the implementation of these initiatives, positive outcomes are expected in student competency levels and the proficiency of EFL tutors in Saudi Arabia.

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