

Perceptions & Attitudes of Sudanese Co- International Secondary Schools towards Monolingual Teaching (A case study with the Sudanese Context)

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Abstract

The salient objective of this article is to pinpoint the Sudanese Co-international School in Khartoum State towards the Monolingual Teaching of English in terms of English learnability and comprehension. Inside the domain where English is taught as a foreign language, the monolingual teachers and teaching approach have been tackled as a debatable approach for many years. So that most studies on learners' perceptions and attitudes toward the utility of the monolingual approach of teaching English posited tangible impacts on learners' comprehension of the English language. In this study, the researcher surveyed 60 Sudanese high school students' perceptions and attitudes where two monolingual teachers available and who used only the English language and as a result, the monolingual approach of teaching English is applied. Their perceptions and attitudes were investigated under a questionnaire measuring the participants learning performance, opinion, and feeling according to their learning experience of Monolingual teachers. The researcher adopted descriptive and quantitative methods to gather, analyze, and interpret the data collected via a questionnaire. The study was conducted at Khartoum Co-International Secondary School. Finally, the results indicated that most of the students have positive attitudes and perceptions and they have enjoyed learning English through Monolingual teachers using the only English language as a medium of instruction.

Keywords: Monolingual Instructor, Undergraduate of English Language, Perceptions & Attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Though, some arguments oppose the utilization of MA in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Viavara (2011) argues that

interacting in English inside the classroom continues to be a challenge for many educators or future educators. Especially, in an EFL setting where English is being taught by non-native English teachers, the use of MA in classrooms will challenge the teachers to keep encouraging themselves and their learners to communicate in English in a formal setting.

What is more, L2 students cannot co-exist with their previous languages (Canagarajah, 1999). Even though their mother tongue helps students in mastering L2, there are some cases where the teachers conduct the class in L1 the entire time. Viavara (2011) finds that student-teachers speak Spanish and translate almost every word they say to their students.

In educational contexts, students' attitudes are mostly concerned with their attitude towards schools, school subjects, teachers, other students (Ibrahim, 2001), and teaching approaches (Lee, 2012). Gardner and Lambert (1972) as cited in Abidin (2012) mentions that the students' ability to master a second language is not only influenced by a mental competence or a language skill but also by their attitude and perception towards the target language. It is still debatable whether the MA implementation in EFL classes might affect the students' attitudes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The researcher of this paper is going to dig deep and try as much as possible to achieve the main objectives set beforehand when selecting the topic under investigation. As a result, in this paper the objectives that need to be fulfilled can be stated as follows:

1. To reflect the learners' perceptions and attitudes in regards to the pros and cons of having monolingual teachers in teaching English.
2. To investigate the monolingual teaching impact on the learners' comprehension, and preferences of teaching methods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Monolingualism Approach of Teaching English as EFL

The Monolingualism approach has long been prescribed by official policies in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Phillipson, 1992) as well as in other contexts (McMillan & Turnbull, 2009, as cited in McMillan & Rivers, 2011). As the focus on developing English skills moved from written aspects to spoken communicative aspects, MA is getting more attention due to the increase of the exposure of the target language (Tsukamoto, 2011). Furthermore, MA implies that languages other than the target one should be avoided in the language teaching and learning process at all costs (Lee, 2012).

Recently as asserted by Ellis (2005) that the more L2 exposure that students can receive, the faster the students can learn. Macaro (2001) as cited in Qandri (2006) justifies that teaching entirely in L2 makes the language real and develops the learners' in-built language system. The ideas appear to prove that L1 should not be used under any circumstances in EFL classrooms to motivate both students' and teachers' English fluency. Also, Cook (2001) as cited in Mouhanna (2009) claims that successful learning of L2 involves the separation and distinction of L1 and L2. In that case, students should be shown the importance of L2 through its continual use. It is considered likely that L2 acquisition is similar to L1 acquisitions, which assumes that exposure is very decisive as the determining factor in learning the target language (Ellis, 2008). Children learned their L1 by listening and copying things around them. L2 acquisitions were modeled the same as children developing their linguistics skills for the first time.

The proponents of the Monolingualism Approach have stated that translating between L1 and L2 can be dangerous as it encourages the belief that there are 1 to 1 equivalents between the languages, which is not always the case (Pracek, 2003 as cited in Miles, 2004). Hence, learning two languages should be separated. Harbord (1992) as cited in Pardede (2013) also advocates the L1 and L2 separation and acknowledges that overusing L1 makes students believe that word for word translation is a useful technique. Consequently, they will work towards transferring meaning in learning L2. It is important to differentiate the use of L1 as the medium of

communication and the imitation of L1 as a learning process in EFL classrooms.

Learners’ Perceptions and Attitude towards Language Learning

Attitude views something by involving mental positions about such things as a way of behaving, thinking, and acting toward something (Miles, 2004). Long and Russell (1999) as cited in Kurihara (2006) defines attitudes as a mean of adjusting and changing one’s social environment. Wu (2008) says that changing one’s belief and opinion about one object can change desirability towards a particular object. In other words, attitude is changeable. It is used to evaluate favorable and unfavorable feelings towards specific attitude objects, such as personal action decisions, abstract concepts, and policy decisions.

Wu (2008) mentions three-component models: cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. First, the cognitive component refers to beliefs about an attitude object or topic, for instance, a teacher might believe that teaching English was beneficial for students using English-only in classrooms. Second, the affective component refers to feelings or emotions associated with an attitude object. For example, some students enjoy studying in a class where MA is applied in classes. Third, the behavioral component refers to past behaviors associated with the attitude object. In this case, a person might possess a positive attitude towards MA in EFL classes due to his/her active involvement in-class activities.

Attitude is considered an essential factor influencing language performance (Visser, 2008, as cited in Abidin, 2011). Horwitz (1999) as cited in Lee (2012) also states that learners’ attitudes or beliefs about language learning are influential factors in the success of the target language learning. In other words, an achievement of the target language relies on not only an intellectual capacity but also on learners’ attitude towards language learning”.

Students’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards Monolingual Lessons

A study by Schweers (1999) as cited in Hoang, Jang, and Yang (2010) found that 88,7% of Spanish students studying English wanted their class to include L1 in their class. Lee’s study (2012) does not explore

the issue of teacher code-switching to learners' L1, but the findings showed that only less than 20% of the learners embraced MA wholeheartedly that the L1 cannot be completely left out in their learning process. The use of L1 is still needed by L1 learners. MA has likely brought out the negative attitudes for EFL students.

On the contrary, the while low-level students often show their preference for a bilingual approach. Hopkins (1989) and Howell (1991) as cited in Auerbach (1993) state that more advanced students may feel that the use of L1 deters their acquisition of the target language. The slow learners feel that the use of their mother tongue backs their learning English ability. However, the advanced students feel that the use of their mother tongue will impede the process of acquiring English. Another study conducted by Kalanzadeh, Hemati, Shahivand, and Bakhtiarvand, (2013) involving the third-grade high school students in the Persian context found that the domination of English in EFL classes were supportive, and the excessive use of Persian in Iranian English classes could have a demoting effect on students. The use of L1 discourages learners to develop their language ability in L2. Some Japanese students showed neutral views for either monolingual or bilingual approaches (Dwyer & Heller-Murphy, 2001, as cited in Miles, 2004). The students considered any approach that has been applied by their English teacher would not hinder their learning process to master the L2.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The researcher adopted descriptive and quantitative methods to gather, analyze, and interpret the data collected via a questionnaire. The study was conducted at Khartoum Co-International Secondary School. The school has applied a monolingual approach in all classes from grade one to grade three. That is, the language of instruction is purely English with approximately slight little use of Arabic for necessity. The participants were students in the 3rd English classroom who have been experiencing studying English with the practice of monolingual approach since the 1st grade at the primary stage. Thus, a purposive sample of (60) students was selected among the total number of the whole students comprised of (200) students.

Table one: Demographic Information about Participants

Category	Description	Number
Gender	Male	21
	Female	39
Age	15 – 16	18
	16 - 17	42
Duration of Learning English	11 – 12 Years	32
	10 – 11 Years	28

As stated above, the study made use of a purposive sampling method was employed to select the participants who share these characteristics. They have been exposed to the monolingual teachers in their different classes. Therefore, their perceptions on practicing such teaching methods were based on their learning progress and experience. Furthermore, they have learned English in a formal instructional setting.

DATA GATHERING TOOLS & PROCEDURES

In scouting out all claims and arguments of this study, the researcher has chosen a questionnaire as a data gathering instrument. All statements in the questionnaire were written in English to ensure that all respondents clearly understood the meanings of the questions. More specifically, the questionnaire consists of (10) statements to investigate the attitudes, perceptions, and preferences of the learners towards monolingual teachers. Practically, the researcher followed some steps to collect the data. Firstly, the researcher contacted the principal of the school and English teachers of Khartoum Co-international Secondary School asking permission to conduct the study in the school. After obtaining the permission, then distributed 60 copies of the questionnaire to the participants. On the questionnaire, the participants were asked to respond to all statements in the questionnaire in not more than two hours.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₁: Learners at International Secondary schools can feel more comfortable with learning from monolingual teachers.

H₂: The learners' academic performance and attainment are by far enhanced via Monolingualism Approach.

H₃: Monolingual teachers can have an impact on the learners' comprehension more than Bilingual teachers.

QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

To achieve the objectives set beforehand, the researchers will exert more efforts to find answers to the following questions:

Q₁: Why learners do feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers?

Q₂: To what extent can monolingual teachers affect more in learners' comprehension than bilingual ones do?

Q₃: In what way, Monolingual Approach enhances learners' academic attainment and performance?

DATA ANALYSIS TO THE HYPOTHESES

Having assembled and numbered the questionnaire, the researcher then, coded, analyzed, and calculated the data using the *SPSS* program. The percentage of each statement was categorized into themes that were interpreted and implicated with relevant literature. The categorization was used to determine the perceptions and attitudes of the participants in learning through monolingual teachers. Finally, the researcher tabulated the percentage and used the figures for extra details and explanations within the analysis of the gathered data.

Table Two: *“I do not like when my teachers use Arabic and I enjoy the lesson by teachers speak English”.*

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	46	76.7
Neutral	4	6.7
Disagree	10	16.7
Total	60	100%

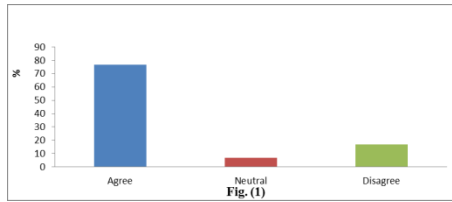


Table (2) and figure (1) above provide detailed information to answer the first question of the study “*Why learners do feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers?*” and also does confirm the first hypothesis “*Learners at International Secondary schools can feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers*”. As disclosed in the table (2) (76.7)% of the respondents agreed that a monolingual teacher is preferred by the learners. Whereas (6.7) % were neutral, while (16.7) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents supported the researcher’s first hypothesis. Furthermore, these responses conform to Hopkins (1989) and Howell (1991) as cited in Auerbach (1993) as they confirmed that more advanced students may feel that the use of L1 deters their acquisition of the target language. The slow learners feel that the use of their mother tongue backs their learning English ability. However, the advanced students feel that the use of their mother tongue will impede the process of acquiring English.

Table Three: “*I like the lesson when my English teacher uses English-only to communicate during classroom activities*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	52	86.7
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	6	10.0
Total	60	100%

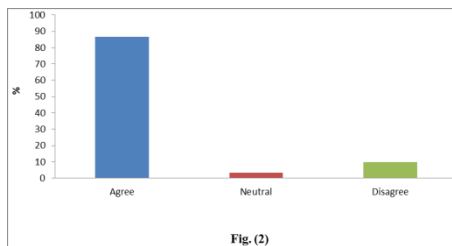


Table (3) and figure (2) above show also a description to answer the first question of the study “*Why learners do feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers?*” and also does confirm the first hypothesis “*Learners at International Secondary schools can feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers*”. As described in table (3) (86.7)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does positively affect the learners’ comprehension more than bilingual teachers. Whereas (3.3) % were neutral, while (10) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis. The above positive responses are in line with the study conducted by Kalanzadeh, Hemati, Shahivand, and Bakhtiarvand, (2013) involving the third-grade high school students in the Persian context found that the domination of English in EFL classes were supportive, and the excessive use of Persian in Iranian English classes could have a demoting effect on students. The use of L1 discourages learners to develop their language ability in L2.

Table Four: “*I can understand everything said by my teacher in English*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	56	93.3
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%

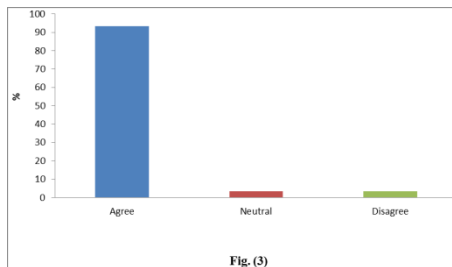


Table (4) and figure (3) above manifest a reflection to answer the second question of the study “*To what extent can monolingual teachers affect more in the learners’ comprehension and learnability than bilingual ones do?*” and also does stressed the verification of the third hypothesis “*Monolingual teachers can have an impact on the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers*”. As

reflected in table (4) (86.7)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does positively affect the learners’ comprehension more than bilingual teachers. Whereas (3.3) % were neutral, while (10) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis.

Table Five: *“I clearly understand the instruction given by my teacher in English”.*

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	48	80.0
Neutral	10	16.7
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%

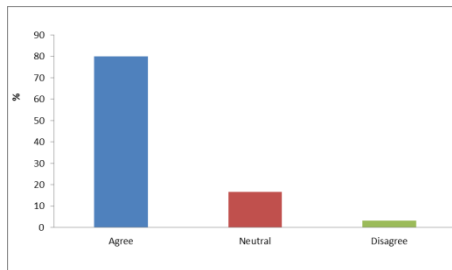


Table (5) and figure (4) above explain views to answer the second question of the study *“To what extent can monolingual teachers affect more in the learners’ comprehension and learnability than bilingual ones do?”* and It also asserted the verification of the third hypothesis *“Monolingual teachers can have an impact on the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers”*. As viewed in table (5) (80)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does positively affect the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers. Whereas (16.7) % were neutral, while (3.3) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis.

Table Six: “I can understand the main points explained by my teacher in English”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	45	75.0
Neutral	6	10.0
Disagree	9	15.0
Total	60	100%

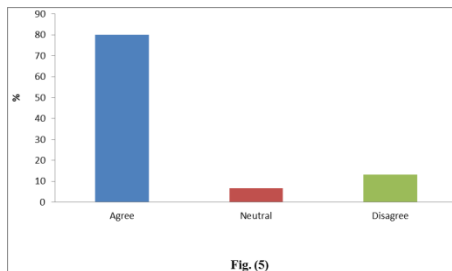


Table (6)and figure (5) above answer the second question of the study “To what extent can monolingual teachers affect more in the learners’ comprehension and learnability than bilingual ones do?” and It also asserted the verification of the third hypothesis “Monolingual teachers can have an impact on the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers”. As viewed by the table and the figure above that (75)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does positively affect the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers. While (10) % were neutral, whereas (15) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis.

Table Seven: “I comprehend all the topics discussed by my teacher in English”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	56	93.3
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%

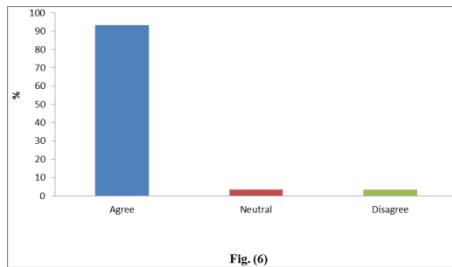


Table (7) and figure (6) above answer the second question of the study “*To what extent can monolingual teachers affect more in the learners’ comprehension and learnability than bilingual ones do?*” and also back up the verification of the third hypothesis “*Monolingual teachers can have an impact on the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers*”. As detailed in the table and the figure above that (93.3)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does positively affect the learners’ comprehension and learnability more than Bilingual teachers. On the other hand, (3.3) % were neutral, while (3.3) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis.

Table Eight: “*The more English is used in a class, the better I feel to easily communicate in English*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	52	86.7
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	6	10.0
Total	60	100%

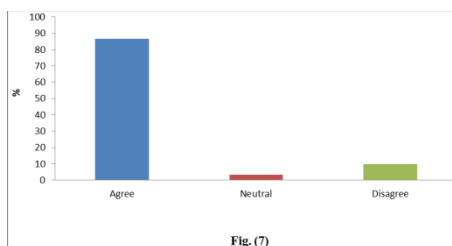


Table (8) and figure (7) above reply to the second question of the study “*On what way, Monolingual Approach enhances learners’ academic attainment and performance?*” and also back up the verification of the second hypothesis “*The learners’ academic performance and attainment is by far enhanced via Monolingualism Approach*”. As shown by the table and the figure above that (86.7)% of the respondents agreed that the learners’ academic performance and attainment are by far enhanced via Monolingualism Approach. On the other hand, (3.3) % were neutral, while (10) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s second hypothesis.

Table Nine: “*I think to master English; I must listen to English exclusively in the class*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	50	83.3
Neutral	4	6.6
Disagree	6	10.0
Total	60	100%

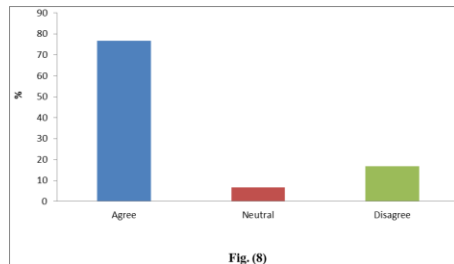


Table (9) and figure (8) above answer the third question of the study “*On what way, Monolingual Approach enhances learners’ academic attainment and performance?*” and also proved the verification of the third hypothesis “*the learners’ academic performance and attainment are by far enhanced via Monolingualism Approach*”. As stated in the table and the figure above that (83.3)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teacher does teaching by far enhances the learners’ academic performance and attainment. On the other hand, (6.6) % were neutral, while (10) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s third hypothesis.

Table Ten: “*I feel confused when my teacher blends English with Arabic in the class*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	56	93.3
Neutral	2	3.3
Disagree	2	3.3
Total	60	100%

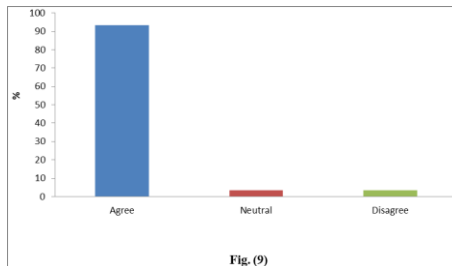


Table (10) and figure (9) above answer the second question of the study “*On what way, Monolingual Approach enhances learners’ academic attainment and performance?*” And also back up the verification of the third hypothesis “*the learners’ academic performance and attainment are by far enhanced via Monolingualism Approach*”. As shown by the table and the figure above that (93.3)% of the respondents agreed that monolingual teaching does by far enhance the learners’ academic performance and attainment. On the other hand, (3.3) % were neutral, while (3.3) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified the researcher’s third hypothesis.

Table Eleven: “*I sometimes feel my teacher takes time to explain the lesson using English and Arabic*”.

Answer	Frequency	%
Agree	48	80.0
Neutral	4	6.7
Disagree	8	13.3
Total	60	100%

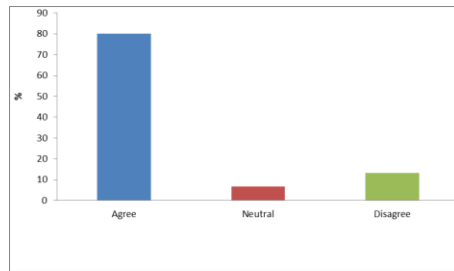


Table (11) and figure (10) above answer the questions of the study and also prove the verification of all study's hypotheses. As stated in the table and the figure above that (83.3)% of the respondents are in favor of monolingual teaching. On the other hand, (6.6) % were neutral, while (10) % disagreed with the statement. However, most respondents verified all the researcher's hypotheses. Therefore, the proponents of the Monolingualism Approach have agreed with the researcher in the view that code-switching between L1 and L2 can be dangerous as it encourages the belief that there are 1 to 1 equivalents between the languages, which is not always the case (Pracek, 2003 as cited in Miles, 2004). Hence, learning two languages should be separated. Harbord (1992) as cited in Pardede (2013) also advocates the L1 and L2 separation and acknowledges that overusing L1 makes students believe that word for word translation is a useful technique. Consequently, they will work towards transferring meaning in learning L2. It is important to differentiate the use of L1 as the medium of communication and the imitation of L1 as a learning process in EFL classrooms.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on the Sudanese learners of Co-international Secondary School perceptions and attitudes which were collected from the questionnaire, it was revealed that:

- Overall positive satisfaction has been perceived by the participants towards both monolingual teaching approach and teachers too.
- Teachers of the Monolingualism Approach surpassed and enhance learners' academic performance and attainment.

- The learners also revealed supremacy for the monolingual teacher who had an effective impact on the learners' comprehension more than the Bilingual teacher.
- And finally, the results showed that learners at Co-International Secondary schools feel more comfortable with learning by monolingual teachers.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to better understand Sudanese learners of Co-international Secondary School perceptions and attitudes towards the monolingual teacher. The findings revealed significant views in the respondents' overall perceptions which offered them confidence and progress in the learning. The respondents believe that monolingual teacher is contributing effectively to their learning of the English language by the teaching strategies adopted in the classroom. The results also showed participants' preferences for monolingual teacher increases as they go higher up in their learning based on their teacher's experiences. The learners believe that Monolingualism as a teaching method assisted them in learning the language in a better and sound way. Finally, the learners made it clear that they do focus on their learning when the lesson is communicated by monolingual teachers.

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