

## **Exploring the Role of Transknowledging in Enhancing EFL Learners' Multilingual Competence and Cultural Awareness: Perspectives from Saudi EFL Classrooms**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes1283>

Michael Suss

*Malaysia University, Malaysia*

Usman Shah

*Majmaah University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Maha Sourani

*Jinan University, Lebanon*

Received: 3.2.2026

Accepted: 26.5.2026

Published: 7.6.2026

**Abstract:** This study examines transknowledging as a transformative and epistemically interdisciplinary approach to enhancing multilingual competence and cultural awareness among Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Unlike translanguaging, which mainly focuses on how learners alternate and integrate multiple languages to facilitate communication and comprehension, transknowledging also involves drawing on learners' local cultural practices, prior social experiences, indigenous knowledge, and discipline-specific perspectives to interpret, negotiate, and produce knowledge in educational contexts. This involved 42 Saudi undergraduates at Majmaah University and 14 international faculty members. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected via a 3-point Likert-scale questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended items. Qualitative responses were analyzed using conceptual thematic coding to ensure rigorous categorization and interpretation. Findings reveal that 78.6 percent of Saudi participants reported that their multilingual skills enhanced their core language abilities. In comparison, 73.8 percent suggested that multilingualism engages individuals in ways that break cultural stereotypes. 85.7 percent of the faculty members in the study reported supporting transformative transknowledging practices in their EFL classrooms, and 78.6 percent also reported believing that transknowledging enhances the educational experiences and learning of Saudi students. These findings demonstrate that transknowledging unites language fluency with indigenous cultural knowledge, fostering engagement, global communication readiness, and highlighting the need for institutional commitment, educator training, and curricular innovation to build equitable, epistemically and culturally enriched learning environments.

**Keywords:** cultural awareness, Saudi EFL classrooms, transknowledging, translanguaging

### **1. Introduction**

Over the last few years, increasing attention has been paid to multilingual pedagogies in English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly translanguaging and transknowledging approaches. Garcia and Wei (2014) describe a theoretical conceptualization of translanguaging that views the linguistic behavior of a multilingual person as a single, dynamic repertoire rather than as structured around

distinct language-specific systems. Building upon this, transknowledging introduces a broader epistemic dimension. While translanguaging concerns multifaceted approaches to knowledge processes, transknowledging goes beyond language use, involving the interaction of diverse cultural epistemologies and identity positions in educational contexts. Specifically, it criticizes colonial policies that deliberately discriminate and advocates an empowering, inclusive pedagogy in practice (Ennser-Kananen, Riuttanen and Ortega 2024). From this perspective, translanguaging may function as one mechanism alongside transknowledging practices. In contrast, transknowledging is more about breaking down the dominance of certain ways of knowing and encouraging the creation of open, diverse knowledge. In this way, it helps Saudi EFL learners become global citizens by drawing on all their linguistic repertoire. These pedagogical frameworks are particularly pertinent in contexts where language learning is intertwined with national development agendas, such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Nevertheless, the instructional content of EFL classes for Saudi students is typically deficient in cultural and epistemic aspects, which, consequently, causes communication problems (Lee and Canagarajah 2019; Alqahtani 2022). Transknowledging addresses these concerns by connecting the learner's life experience and culture to classroom discourse. Despite its considerable potential, it remains scarcely used in the English-language education sector in Saudi Arabia.

## 2. Literature review

While García and Wei (2014) conceive translanguaging theory as a language practice whereby students use code-mixing and language blending as tools for participation, self-representation, and critical inquiry, specifically, in the context of ESL classes in Saudi Arabia, students can use translanguaging to move from Arabic (L1) to English (L2) by drawing on previously learned concepts, thereby viewing their languages as liabilities rather than assets. Ennser-Kananen et al. (2024), however, expand this framework beyond linguistic interaction by including elements such as epistemic justice, multimodal communication, and integrated knowledge.

Distinguishing between translanguaging and transknowledging becomes significant, as it is a requirement of the frameworks for globalized EFL classrooms. On the one hand, García and Wei (2014) identify translanguaging as empowering learners to use all their languages; on the other hand, Ennser-Kananen et al. (2024) suggest that this involves incorporating epistemologies and multiple knowledge systems through transknowledging. Furthermore, Heugh et al. (2022) note that technology can support self-directed learning in English, while Wei (2024) describes translanguaging spaces that enable multilingual students to transcend language boundaries. Therefore, translanguaging and transknowledging should not be treated as interchangeable concepts. Rather, transknowledging integrates translanguaging into a broader identity negotiation and knowledge construction process. Consequently, the studies reviewed indicate that the application of translanguaging and transknowledging in EFL classrooms reduces hierarchical frameworks, thereby enabling students to engage in critical interaction at both local and global levels.

Within the Saudi context, this distinction is important because students are proactive in leveraging their linguistic and cultural competence by combining

translanguaging and transknowledging to express themselves internationally. Saudi EFL learners are exposed to a sociolinguistic context in which English is seen as key to expanding global opportunities, whereas Arabic remains a symbol of culture. Sabir and Alsolami (2023) show that transknowledging strategies, such as code-mixing, can improve reasoning abilities and expressive fluency. Similarly, Alqahtani (2022) reports that 85.7 percent of faculty support its use in EFL classrooms. However, concerns remain, including educators' unwillingness, a lack of favorable policy frameworks, and flaws in teacher preparation programs. The presence of these tensions suggests that Saudi EFL education still oscillates between strictly monolingual traditions and more inclusive multilingual methods. Therefore, an additional dimension of glocalization has emerged in Saudi EFL classrooms, where multilingual skills, cultural identities, and students' preparedness for the global arena converge.

### **3. Research gap**

While a considerable number of studies have examined translanguaging and transknowledging in multilingual education, empirical research on transknowledging within the Saudi EFL context remains limited. Besides that, while internal sociolinguistic studies tend to focus on the visible positive effects of the psychosocial dimensions of using multiple languages in combination, relatively few studies examine faculty perspectives on epistemological transknowledging approaches, particularly within multicultural pedagogical contexts. Therefore, the frameworks, teaching practices, and mindsets of respondents—which shape their inclination toward transknowledging in educational institutions in Saudi Arabia—have largely been overlooked. Furthermore, previous research has primarily emphasized theoretical perspectives on multilingualism, without providing sufficient empirical evidence on learners' firsthand experiences with transknowledging practices. Consequently, it is essential to understand how transknowledging functions as a pedagogical tool to foster multilingual competence, promote intercultural understanding, and prepare students for global communication. Ultimately, this study aims to address these gaps to promote justice and equity and to provide empirical evidence on the practical use of transknowledging in the Saudi multilingual educational context.

### **4. Method**

To collect and analyze the data, this study uses a mixed-methods research design, integrating a quantitative and qualitative explanatory sequential approach (Calleja, 2009). In this exploratory research design, the researcher first investigates quantitative data, followed by in-depth qualitative data from respondents' perspectives (Creswell and Clark 2007). To strengthen the credibility and validity of the findings of this study and to explore in-depth insights, multiple data analysis methods and resources were used (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). A questionnaire, as the primary data-collection method, was used first, beginning with quantitative data and then qualitative data, to explore the findings in greater depth (Creswell and Clark 2008). The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and median.

#### 4.1 Participants

Research ethics required that participants be informed of the aims of the study and the measures taken to protect their data, including anonymity and confidentiality (Schiffecker, Mathies and McNaughtan 2025). Table 1 shows that the study population consisted of faculty members and students from Majmaah University. Specifically, the faculty group included 14 multinational instructors teaching EFL courses. Notably, most faculty members were from diverse backgrounds, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, India, and Tunisia, and their mother languages are Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi; (b) Undergraduate Learners: 42 Saudi learners enrolled in Level 7 (L7) of the BA Linguistics program, where English is the primary medium of instruction.

Table 1. Research sample

No	Class	Faculty	Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
1.	Faculty Members	College of Education- Majmaah University	7	7	14
2.	Undergraduates	College of Education- Majmaah University	42		42
					56

#### 4.2 Research instruments

The questionnaires in both phases served as the primary instruments for data collection in this research. Separate sets of questions were designed for EFL instructors and Saudi undergraduate EFL learners at Majmaah University. The instructors' questionnaire included items assessing institutional attitudes, pedagogical practices, and perceived barriers to transknowledging. In contrast, the learners' questionnaire focused on their multilingual experiences, cultural awareness, and perceptions of transknowledging as a learning tool. Each survey primarily consisted of closed-ended Likert-scale items, complemented by open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their perspectives in greater depth. Furthermore, to render response patterns more consistent and reduce participants' workload, a 3-point Likert scale with the categories "agree," "neutral," and "disagree" was used in this study (Houser and Oja 2025).

#### 4.3 Validity and reliability

To reduce error risk, ensure reliability, and avoid data bias, both survey questionnaires strongly emphasized participants' agreement with their responses. In this regard, the researchers served as the sole administrators of the questionnaires and sought to reproduce standard conditions for every respondent (for example, maintaining a friendly, supportive attitude).

Moreover, the researchers prepared the physical and psychological environment of the data collection to convey comfort, privacy, and secrecy. They also communicated intermittently with each other about any problems during the data collection period. In addition, participants were instructed not to write their names on the questionnaire to ensure their anonymity.

The questionnaires include items on transknowledging, linguistic competence, and cultural awareness to establish the test's content validity. Most of the items were literature-based to reflect the knowledge expected of respondents regarding transknowledging. When the questionnaires were administered, content validity was further ensured through the element of consistency.

For clarity and ease of understanding, the questions were formulated in simple language. After completing the questionnaires, clear instructions were given to the respondents. To strengthen the data's validity, the questionnaires were submitted to two experts, who were asked to assess the questionnaire's specifications (Rahal and Adorjan 2024). As a result, the experts were allowed to review the specimen and suggested some modifications to the content and number of questions. More questions and content were added to ensure the findings were valid. Some of the questions were rephrased to clarify them, and appropriate response options were added to the closed-ended questions to strengthen the data's validity.

To ensure external validity, the study findings can be generalized beyond the sample used. All the participants who approached to participate in the study completed the questionnaires. Selecting a sufficient number of Saudi undergraduate students and faculty members willing to participate in a study can be challenging, particularly if the study requires a significant time commitment or other investments on the participants' part. When the number of individuals approached to participate in a study decreases, it becomes more difficult to justify generalizing the findings to the entire population. Indicating the number of individuals who were contacted but refused to participate in a study is important because it helps assess the level of bias affecting the generalizability of the findings. Generally, as the percentage of non-participants increases, the external validity of the results is compromised.

#### **4.4 Data collection and analysis**

The research combined qualitative and quantitative data to assess and understand transknowledging practices (Dharmaratne et al. 2025). Descriptive statistical analysis constituted the central component of the quantitative phase of the study, involving the calculation of frequency distributions, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. The qualitative component was integrated with the quantitative analysis using a content-analytical framework, enabling a more comprehensive interpretation of the data. The conceptual thematic analysis of open-ended responses identified the main themes, particularly educational strategies, institutional support, and the formation of students' linguistic identities.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Frequency distribution

Tables 2 and 3 present the descriptive and frequency analyses of the closed-ended items.

Table 2. Frequency distribution (learners)

Section 1: Transknowledging, Multilingual Competence and Metalinguistic Awareness		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
1.	Exposure to different languages improves my reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	Agree	33	78.6	78.6	78.6
		Neutral	9	21.4	21.4	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
2.	Using my first language helps me develop stronger academic English skills.	Agree	24	57.1	57.1	57.1
		Neutral	13	31.0	31.0	88.1
		Disagree	5	11.9	11.9	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
3.	I use knowledge from one language to support learning in another.	Agree	29	69.0	69.0	69.0
		Neutral	11	26.2	26.2	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
4.	Explicit instruction on how language structures differ across languages benefits my learning.	Agree	24	57.1	57.1	57.1
		Neutral	17	40.5	40.5	97.6
		Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
5.	Reflecting on language similarities and differences improves my analytical skills.	Agree	26	61.9	61.9	61.9
		Neutral	14	33.3	33.3	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
7.	Using my full linguistic repertoire supports deeper learning and comprehension.	Agree	30	71.4	71.4	71.4
		Neutral	12	28.6	28.6	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
8.		Agree	26	61.9	61.9	61.9

	Multilingual competence enhances my ability to understand and express complex ideas.	Neutral	15	35.7	35.7	97.6
		Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
Section 2: Intercultural Understanding and Communication						
1.	Exposure to multiple languages in the classroom enhances my appreciation of different cultures.	Agree	25	59.5	59.5	59.5
		Neutral	15	35.7	35.7	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
2.	Learning through transknowledging encourages respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.	Agree	30	71.4	71.4	71.4
		Neutral	12	28.6	28.6	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
3.	Engaging with multiple languages strengthens my intercultural competence.	Agree	27	64.3	64.3	64.3
		Neutral	13	31.0	31.0	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
4.	Using transknowledging strategies improves my communication skills across cultures.	Agree	25	59.5	59.5	59.5
		Neutral	13	31.0	31.0	90.5
		Disagree	4	9.5	9.5	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
5.	Expressing ideas in multiple languages promotes more effective cross-cultural interactions.	Agree	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
		Neutral	12	28.6	28.6	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
6.	Multilingual competence helps me interpret and respond to cultural nuances effectively.	Agree	27	64.3	64.3	64.3
		Neutral	12	28.6	28.6	92.9
		Disagree	3	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
Section 3: Critical Cultural Awareness and Identity						

1.	Engaging in transknowledging makes me more critically aware of my own and others' cultures.	Agree	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
		Neutral	11	26.2	26.2	92.9
		Disagree	3	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
2.	Understanding multiple languages helps me challenge stereotypes and cultural biases.	Agree	31	73.8	73.8	73.8
		Neutral	10	23.8	23.8	97.6
		Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
3.	Reflecting on different linguistic and cultural perspectives enhances my critical thinking skills.	Agree	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
		Neutral	14	33.3	33.3	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
4.	Using my home language in the classroom fosters a sense of cultural identity and belonging.	Agree	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
		Neutral	11	26.2	26.2	92.9
		Disagree	3	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
5.	Acknowledging learners' linguistic and cultural identities in the classroom creates a more inclusive learning environment.	Agree	35	83.3	83.3	83.3
		Neutral	5	11.9	11.9	95.2
		Disagree	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	
6.	I feel more confident when my home language is valued in the classroom.	Agree	28	66.7	66.7	66.7
		Neutral	10	23.8	23.8	90.5
		Disagree	4	9.5	9.5	100.0
		Total	42	100.0	100.0	

According to the frequency distribution in Table 2, students reacted very positively to transknowledging in EFL learning.

A vast majority of learners (78%) in Section 1 maintained that using multiple languages, including their first language (L1), contributes to the development of English skills, comprehension, and thinking. Furthermore, 69 percent of respondents also transfer knowledge between languages, thus supporting the idea of translanguaging spaces, as per García and Wei (2014), in which language resources are used carefully. Also, 57.1 percent of respondents say comprehension improves

when they receive explicit instruction on crosslinguistic structures, while 40.5 percent are neutral, suggesting instructional gaps. The level of agreement varies in relation to language similarities and differences (61.9%), thus implying that a comparative linguistic analysis could be of great assistance in enhancing one's analytical reasoning.

Section 2 shows that (60%–71%) of learners recognize the importance of linguistic diversity, which they see as a significant factor in the development of intercultural competence. 71.4 percent of participants agree that transknowledging contributes to linguistic and cultural diversity. This aligns with Heugh et al. (2022) on multilingualism as a resource and echoes García and Wei's (2014) view of dynamic repertoires, suggesting Saudi EFL classrooms reflect a broader global shift toward inclusive pedagogy. 66.7 percent think that sharing their thoughts in several languages makes them more interculturally competent, and 64.3 percent engage with diverse linguistic perspectives. The statement "Exposure to multiple languages enhances my appreciation of different cultures" was agreed with by 59.5 percent of the people, indicating only moderate recognition of the role of linguistic diversity in cross-cultural engagement.

As per Section 3, 66 percent of students reported identifying their home languages in the classroom, which led to greater cultural awareness and increased confidence. A similar percentage of learners (66.7%) reported that transknowledging promotes cultural awareness and thus supports the return of epistemic justice (Ennsner-Kananen et al. 2024). Moreover, 73.8 percent of them recognized that multilingualism challenges stereotypes and cultural biases, thereby emphasizing the role of transknowledging in critical knowledge-building. The highest level of agreement (83.3%) was for the statement that recognizing linguistic and cultural identities leads to the development of inclusive classrooms, indicating the pedagogical impact of transknowledging.

Table 3. Frequency distribution (teachers)

Section 1: Faculty Perceptions			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	I see Transknowledging as a valuable tool for multilingual education.	Agree	12	85.7	85.7	85.7
		Neutral	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
2.	I feel confident using learners' linguistic backgrounds as a resource in teaching.	Agree	12	85.7	85.7	85.7
		Neutral	2	14.3	14.3	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
3.	Institutional policies support the integration	Agree	10	71.4	71.4	71.4
		Neutral	3	21.4	21.4	92.9

	of Transknowledging in my teaching practices.	Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Section 2: Student Perceptions						
1.	Learners respond positively to the use of multiple languages in the classroom.	Agree	9	64.3	64.3	64.3
		Neutral	4	28.6	28.6	92.9
		Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
2.	Learners who engage in Transknowledging demonstrates improved engagement and participation.	Agree	11	78.6	78.6	78.6
		Neutral	2	14.3	14.3	92.9
		Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
3.	I have observed learners using their home languages to support their English learning.	Occasionally	11	78.6	78.6	78.6
		Neutral	3	21.4	21.4	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Section 3: Integration of Linguistic Resources						
1.	I incorporate learners' first languages as a scaffolding tool in language instruction.	Occasionally	10	71.4	71.4	71.4
		Rarely	3	21.4	21.4	92.9
		Never	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
2.	Multilingual resources (e.g., bilingual dictionaries and translation tools) enhance student learning.	Agree	9	64.3	64.3	64.3
		Neutral	5	35.7	35.7	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
3.	Using Transknowledging strategies supports learners in mastering complex academic concepts.	Agree	13	92.9	92.9	92.9
		Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
Section 4: Integration of Cultural Resources						

1.	Incorporating learners' cultural backgrounds in lessons enhances their motivation.	Agree	12	85.7	85.7	85.7
		Neutral	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
		Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
2.	Encouraging learners to share their cultural experiences fosters a more inclusive classroom environment.	Agree	12	85.7	85.7	85.7
		Neutral	1	7.1	7.1	92.9
		Disagree	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	
3.	I use culturally relevant materials to support learners' learning experiences.	Occasionally	13	92.9	92.9	92.9
		Rarely	1	7.1	7.1	100.0
		Total	14	100.0	100.0	

Faculty support for transknowledging is shown in Table 3, which presents the percentage distribution of faculty responses. Faculty are nearly unanimous in their belief that the employment of multilingual scaffolding, student engagement, and culturally responsive instruction is directly attributable to transknowledging. Such a robust consensus suggests that teachers understand (or, at most, the major pedagogical advantages of transknowledging) only a comparatively limited number of staff who are aware of the concept's implementation or of its variations across situations. Agreement levels for transknowledging as a teaching tool are over 70 percent across nearly all categories examined. This means that many different types of people acknowledge its benefits for teaching, while there seems to be very little institutional support. The latter situation indicates a gap between what individual teachers believe and the institutional policy frameworks.

As presented in Table 3, EFL teachers tend to have a favorable perspective on transknowledging. At the beginning of the survey, an impressive 85.7 percent of educators acknowledged translanguaging as a potent teaching technique. These practitioners view the most significant aspect of teaching as tapping into students' language potential. Hence, they support García and Wei's (2014) idea that translanguaging is a tool for linguistic inclusivity. A considerable number, 71.4 percent, thought that giving multilingual scaffolding would enhance EFL teaching. Nevertheless, the remaining 28.6 percent institutional lack of faculty support remains a hurdle to the wider adoption of such teaching methods.

However, the number of respondents who believe that transknowledge should be part of an institution's official policy is quite small. In fact, only 71.4 percent of the responses were in favor, 21.4 percent were neutral, and 7.1 percent were against the idea of the school curriculum including transknowledge, suggesting that there are certain institutional hurdles to the concept's acceptance. Accordingly, policy-level resistance or lack of clarity may be an obstacle to its comprehensive execution.

Notably, 64.3 percent of Section 2 respondents reported that students displayed positive attitudes towards multicultural instructional methods. This result corroborates Chen, Fang and Zhang (2024)'s assertion that translanguaging is a motivational tool. In addition, 78.6 percent of the respondents believe that transknowledging enhanced students' participation in class activities. This finding supports the argument that students' engagement in classroom activities is a vital outcome of the classroom's linguistic diversity. There were also reports of instructors using students' home languages, which reinforces Wei's (2018) theory that, even when no standardized assignments are given, multilingual students leverage their linguistic resources in educational contexts.

In Section 3, the majority of instructors (71.4 percent) believe that learners' first languages can help them, though a small group (21.4 percent) acknowledges that they do not regularly use their first languages. This suggests that translanguaging practices vary across contexts. Likewise, the majority of the interviewees (64.3%) think that multilingual materials (e.g., bilingual dictionaries and translation tools) are very important, with the rest of the interviewees (35.7%) not caring, suggesting a clear difference in the way multilingual students are taught. The highest (92.9%) agreement has been given to the statement acknowledging that transknowledging assists students in mastering complex academic concepts, demonstrating the vital cognitive role of linguistic flexibility.

In Section 4, most faculty (85.7%) report that considering students' cultural backgrounds enhances their motivation; thus, they approve of using transknowledging as a means of identity recognition. Similarly, a provocative 85.7 percent of respondents strongly agree that inviting students to explain their cultural experiences fosters a friendly environment, which aligns with the epistemic-justice model (Ennser-Kananen et al. 2024). Moreover, 92.9 percent of the faculty report sometimes using culturally relevant material, with 7.1 percent saying they do so infrequently, highlighting the need for institutions to develop their curricula. All this proves is that there is agreement among faculty on the critical role of cultural inclusion in improving not only learning outcomes but also student motivation.

Therefore, faculty responses further indicate that transknowledging extends beyond translanguaging-based classroom communication by encouraging the integration of learners' sociocultural knowledge into pedagogical practice.

The descriptive statistics suggest that students strongly agree that transknowledging has positive effects in EFL classrooms. Low mean scores (mostly between 1.21 and 1.60) indicate strong consensus among students that using multiple languages helps develop reading, writing, and cross-cultural communication skills.

## 5.2 Descriptive statistics

Tables 4 and 5 present the descriptive statistics of learners' and instructors' perceptions of transknowledging practices, respectively.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics (learners)

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Exposure to different languages improves my reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	1.21	.415	1.445	.365	.089	.717
Using my first language helps me develop stronger academic English skills.	1.55	.705	.918	.365	-.388	.717
I use knowledge from one language to support learning in another.	1.36	.577	1.397	.365	1.082	.717
Explicit instruction on how language structures differ across languages benefits my learning.	1.45	.550	.658	.365	-.682	.717
Reflecting on language similarities and differences improves my analytical skills.	1.43	.590	1.037	.365	.155	.717
Using my full linguistic repertoire supports deeper learning and comprehension.	1.29	.457	.984	.365	-1.085	.717

Multilingual competence enhances my ability to understand and express complex ideas.	1.40	.544	.876	.365	-.306	.717
Exposure to multiple languages in the classroom enhances my appreciation of different cultures.	1.45	.593	.930	.365	-.060	.717
Learning through transknowledging encourages respect for linguistic and cultural diversity.	1.29	.457	.984	.365	-1.085	.717
Engaging with multiple languages strengthens my intercultural competence.	1.40	.587	1.149	.365	.412	.717
Using transknowledging strategies improves my communication skills across cultures.	1.50	.672	1.014	.365	-.095	.717
Expressing ideas in multiple languages fosters better cross-cultural interactions.	1.38	.582	1.269	.365	.719	.717
Multilingual competence helps me interpret and respond to cultural nuances effectively.	1.43	.630	1.203	.365	.433	.717
Engaging in transknowledging makes me more	1.40	.627	1.313	.365	.706	.717

critically aware of my own and others' cultures.						
Understanding multiple languages helps me challenge stereotypes and cultural biases.	1.29	.508	1.557	.365	1.629	.717
Reflecting on different linguistic and cultural perspectives enhances my critical thinking skills.	1.33	.477	.734	.365	-1.537	.717
Using my home language in the classroom fosters a sense of cultural identity and belonging.	1.40	.627	1.313	.365	.706	.717
Acknowledging learners' linguistic and cultural identities in the classroom creates a more inclusive learning environment.	1.21	.520	2.458	.365	5.409	.717
I feel more confident when my home language is valued in the classroom.	1.43	.668	1.306	.365	.515	.717

In Table 4, the items indicate that learners highly appreciate inclusive, multilingual practices. The low standard deviations show that the responses are consistent. This limited variability suggests shared learning experiences among participants, possibly shaped by similar classroom practices and institutional contexts. At the same time, the positive skewness (e.g., 1.557 for challenging stereotypes, 1.397 for knowledge transfer) and high kurtosis (5.409 for recognizing linguistic and cultural identities) indicate that most learners agree with transknowledging as an inclusive pedagogy. These distributional patterns further

confirm that transknowledging enhances learning, increases learners' confidence, and helps cultivate respect for learners' culture. This is compatible with the broader theoretical assumption that multilingual competence fosters both cognitive development and intercultural awareness.

The majority of students' perceptions demonstrated consistency in depth in their use of transknowledging, aligned with the language's creative aspect, which benefits them cognitively and improves their language skills. The respondents reported that descriptive statistics for multiple languages (e.g., mean = 1.21, SD = 0.415) revealed variance in their responses. The descriptive statistics of the findings (e.g., skewness = 1.445, kurtosis = 0.717) revealed strong support for the learners' exposure to multilingual practices in the EFL context. For the L1 statement, the higher mean (1.55) varies across responses, reflecting respondents' attitudes toward learning. This indicates that the use of the first language in the EFL classroom strongly contradicts institutional policy and teachers' pedagogies, and also reflects a conflict between monolingual and plurilingual realities. This difference indicates that school policies and teaching styles can affect learners' understanding of the function of L1, highlighting the conflict between monolingual norms and multilingual realities.

Reflecting on language similarities and differences improves my analytical skills," is a statement that contributed to cognitive flexibility and analytical thinking. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed (e.g., mean=1.43, skewness=1.037, and kurtosis=0.155) that transknowledging supports comparative languages and critical analytical skills, with a neutral response of 33.3 percent, indicating that they need pedagogical guidance in this area. This points to a pedagogical disjuncture between what is expected in theory and what occurs in the classroom.

Culturally speaking, the object of cultural awareness and identity confirmation, i.e., "Learning through transknowledging encourages respect of linguistic and cultural diversity" (M = 1.29), is compatible with the concept of translanguaging, which is the principle of intercultural sensitivity and the foundation of effective communication (Garcia and Wei 2014). Skewness = 0.984 and kurtosis = -1.085 are indicators of distributional measures, suggesting that learners' responses were relatively homogeneous and thus providing strong support for the multilingual approach. Such homogeneity indicates shared recognition of the cultural value of transknowledging among learners.

The finding that the mean score for the statement "Multilingual competence helps me interpret and respond to cultural implications successfully" is 1.43 is in line with the theoretical postulation that transknowledge contributes to ultimate cultural flexibility in global communicative settings.

A critical study of the descriptive statistics shows strong, consistent agreement among faculty members regarding the effectiveness of transknowledge in teaching English as a Foreign Language. There were slight variations in the scores, which ranged from 1.14 to 1.43. The faculty agreed that students' achievement, classroom engagement, and the availability of information and resources were positively impacted. In addition, the sample was most likely to express the highest level of agreement (strongly agree), whereas the small proportion who disagreed reflected the high positive skewness and kurtosis. The faculty responses, however, were

uniformly aligned within the sample to a strong level of agreement regarding the implementation of the educational practice.

The data clearly demonstrate that the faculty believes there is merit in transknowledging as a teaching practice. For the statement, “Transknowledging is an effective instrument in multilingual education”, the average of 1.14 rated on the Likert scale indicates a high level of agreement. This significant support demonstrates teachers’ faith in multilingual techniques as successful educational strategies. This level of unanimous consent is further strengthened by the narrow distribution of responses, as indicated by a low standard deviation of 0.363, a slightly high skewness of 2.295, and a kurtosis of 3.792. The faculty also exhibited confidence in employing the learner's mother tongue as an educational tool. The average score of 1.14 for this construct shows that multilingual scaffolding is probably employed and embraced without challenge in Saudi Arabia's EFL teaching strategies. Nevertheless, systematic institutional support does not often arise from its acceptance in the educational setting.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of teachers’ perceptions of transknowledging and institutional support

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Standard Error	Statistic	Standard Error
I see Transknowledging as a valuable tool for multilingual education.	1.14	.363	2.295	.597	3.792	1.154
I feel confident using learners’ linguistic backgrounds as a resource in teaching.	1.14	.363	2.295	.597	3.792	1.154
Institutional policies support the integration of Transknowledging in my teaching practices.	1.36	.633	1.687	.597	2.214	1.154
Learners respond positively to the use of multiple languages in the classroom.	1.43	.646	1.303	.597	.951	1.154
Learners who engage in Transknowledging demonstrate improved engagement and participation.	1.29	.611	2.165	.597	4.251	1.154

I have observed learners using their home languages to support their English learning.	1.21	.426	1.566	.597	.501	1.154
I incorporate learners' first languages as a scaffolding tool in language instruction.	1.36	.633	1.687	.597	2.214	1.154
Multilingual resources (e.g., bilingual dictionaries and translation tools) enhance student learning.	1.36	.497	.670	.597	-1.838	1.154
Using Transknowledging strategies supports learners in mastering complex academic concepts.	1.14	.535	3.742	.597	14.000	1.154
Incorporating learners' cultural backgrounds in lessons enhances their motivation.	1.21	.579	2.803	.597	7.679	1.154
Encouraging learners to share their cultural experiences fosters a more inclusive classroom environment.	1.21	.579	2.803	.597	7.679	1.154
I use culturally relevant materials to support learners' learning experiences.	1.14	.535	3.742	.597	14.000	1.154

Table 5 reveals a shift in perspective when moving from the individual to the organizational level. Although the faculty holds a uniform belief regarding pedagogy and teaching practices in transknowledging, their experiences with formal support differ. For the survey item, "Institutional policies support transknowledging in my teaching practices," the average score was 1.36. This relatively higher mean indicates greater variability and less certainty than other items. The positive skewness statistic of 1.687 and the positive kurtosis of 2.214 indicate that, although the instructors are positive, a subgroup likely experiences institutional-level barriers that preclude the full use of these strategies.

Nevertheless, any uncertainty about the classroom's impact disappears. Overall, participants rated the statement, 'Transknowledging improves engagement and participation' the highest, with a mean of 1.29 and bias (skewness = 2.165 and kurtosis = 4.251). This suggests that the most visible impact of transknowledging is on learner engagement, which is a key factor in effective language acquisition. Most

striking is that the educators noted that learners are using their L1 to work with the English text (mean = 1.21).

Data show that the practical use of language resources is contextual rather than linear. For example, the statement 'I included learners' first languages as a scaffolding tool' prompted a rating suggesting some use of the strategy (mean = 1.36, skewness = 1.687). The broad spectrum indicates that implementation is influenced by contextual factors, including instructors' views, classroom interactions, and institutional expectations.

With regard to the response, multilingual (Bilingual dictionaries in particular) exhibited a mean of 1.36 and a significantly lower skewness (0.670). This means there is a multiplicity of views on how they can be used. Regarding the response, the average value of 1.14, the skew of 3.742, and the kurtosis of 14.000 indicate a uniform shift toward the belief. In short, the faculty members strongly endorsed the message that including learners' cultural backgrounds enhances motivation (mean = 1.21, skewness = 2.803, kurtosis = 7.679), thereby positively contributing to inclusive academic effects. This highlights the applicability of culturally sensitive education in developing student motivation and engagement. Similarly, significant consensus was reached on encouraging learners to share their cultural experiences, which contributes to inclusiveness (mean = 1.21). The greatest agreement was observed for the statement "Using culturally relevant materials supports the experiences of learners" (mean = 1.14), indicating that curricular reform is urgently needed to fully introduce multilingual and culturally responsive pedagogies.

In general, these results indicate that although teachers' beliefs strongly support transknowledging, its integration at the curricular and policy levels needs to be systematic to achieve the full potential of transknowledging in EFL education. This involves integrating multilingual activities, reviewing assessment practices to appreciate linguistic diversity, and training teachers to support implementation. In the absence of this alignment, the advantages of transknowledging can remain confined to practices within isolated classrooms. The overall results of this study demonstrated that transknowledging has the potential to transform pedagogies of teaching and to value linguistic diversity by integrating multilingual and multimodal semiotic resources. This study necessitates revising the assessment method and reforming the curriculum to add multilingual tasks that support quality education.

### **5.3 Open-ended question results**

The following section summarizes teachers' unstructured responses to the open-ended survey, which mirror their viewpoints on language-related activities and transknowledging in EFL teaching settings. Also, it presents the central ideas, a range of opinions, and the major themes.

1. In your experience, how does using learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds impact their participation in EFL classes?

The great majority of respondents consider the approach to be the most effective way to enhance learners' oral communication and self-expression. One respondent observed, "It has a positive impact on their oral participation," and another, "It makes them more motivated and self-confident," confirming the same. Understanding learners' backgrounds allows educators to instill, through

engagement, a sense of appreciation and connection, as Van Dijk's (2014) socio-cognitive model supports social and cognitive inclusivity. A participant stated: "L1 assists in teaching L2." One more teacher said, "Because of their language and culture, they can easily personalize the lesson, "which thus, by nurturing a sense of autonomy and agency, becomes a part of the self-development process." Besides this, the respondents emphasized that "when you know more about learners' backgrounds the chances for transknowledging among the learners or between learners and their teacher will be higher." In general, the respondents' statements reveal that practitioners who consider learners' cultural and linguistic needs and use them as resources create a learning environment that is more inclusive, engaging, and participatory, aligning with the aim of transknowledging pedagogy.

## 2. What are the benefits and challenges of allowing learners to use their native language (L1) in EFL classrooms?

Understanding learners' backgrounds helps educators instill a sense of appreciation and connection via engagement, as indicated by Van Dijk's (2014) socio-cognitive model, which espouses social and cognitive inclusivity. One participant put it this way, "L1 helps in teaching L2." Another teacher noted that "they can easily personalize the lesson because of their language and culture," which gives them autonomy and agency. In addition, the respondents shared that "the more learners' backgrounds become, the more chances of transknowledging among the learners or between learners and their teacher." Overall, the respondents' remarks show that practitioners who consider their students' sociocultural and sociolinguistic resources foster a more inclusive, active, and participatory classroom, which is the intended outcome of transknowledging pedagogy.

Most faculty expressed concern that such approaches would loosen the reins on the first language, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the English immersion program. One participant described the view, "It can hinder FL acquisition and slow it," which, in turn, addresses Cummins' (1979) threshold hypothesis, which holds that the L1 language should be left to support L2 acquisition.

Instructors have noted that students may be less engaged in English communication when they are allowed to use their primary language in class. One instructor noted that "The use of a native language will not help them to get a foreign language culture," a view similar to Alqahtani (2022), emphasizing the need for effective pedagogical practices to circumvent translanguaging in a foreign language classroom.

Educators also commented on the persistence of monolingualism in Saudi EFL classrooms, i.e., the use of English-only instruction, which reduces English pedagogy to teaching for standardized tests. An instructor stated, "If learners are allowed to use L1 freely, the target language may be ignored," a comment that mirrors the critiques of Sabir and Alsolami (2023) on traditional monolingual methods that overlook the varied learner profiles and, thus, the multiple learning opportunities that could be gained through transknowledge.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations for further studies

This research shows the influence of transknowledging on the construction of multilingual and multicultural inclusivity within Saudi EFL classrooms. Unlike

translanguaging, which focuses on the flexible use of multilingual repertoires, this study revealed that transknowledging-informed pedagogies create Saudi EFL classes as ecosystems where multilingual learners can engage with and enrich one another's diverse cultures. Applying Van Dijk's (2014) sociocognitive discourse analysis framework, the study also affirms that transknowledging promotes cultural awareness and language use, as learners are encouraged to draw on all their linguistic resources, leading to deeper understanding, motivation, and an improved academic self-concept. In this regard, translanguaging acts as a one communicative aspect of transknowledging at large. To achieve sustainable transknowledging integration, the study proposes: (a) active teaching scaffolds to counteract passive multilingual participation and improve knowledge transfer; (b) incorporation of responsive materials into the curriculum that address demographic and multilingual learner gaps to strengthen engagement; (c) system alignment to ensure policy change and educator professional learning activities are supportive of transknowledge teaching for educators; and (d) uniform policies on appraisal systems that maintain multilingualism as unmarked stratum to avoid oppressive frameworks of linguistic domination that utilize a hierarchy to marginalize learners' full language repertoire. By addressing these structural gaps, Saudi EFL classrooms can become more equitable and linguistically inclusive spaces, thereby preparing learners for the future's global communication demands while enhancing their cognitive adaptability.

Michael Suss (Assistant Professor)  
Malaysia University, Malaysia  
ORCID Number: 0009-0007-4207-3821  
Email: msuss66@hotmail.com

Usman Shah (Assistant Professor)  
College of Education, Majmaah University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-4218-451X  
Email: u.toti@mu.edu.sa

Maha Sourani (Professor)- Corresponding Author  
Jinan University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,  
Department of Translation, Tripoli, Lebanon.  
ORCID Number: 0000-0002-0532-398X  
Email: maha.sourani@jinan.edu.lb

## References

- Alqahtani, Muneer H.** (2022). 'The Saudi 2030 vision and translanguaging in language learning in Saudi Arabia: Looking for concord in the future'. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18: 556-568. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1328442>
- Calleja, Pauline.** (2009). 'Review of Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences', by C. Teddlie and A. Tashakkori. *Australasian Emergency Nursing Journal*, 12(3), 123–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aenj.2009.07.004>
- Chen, Yulling, Fan Fang and Weili Zhang.** (2024). 'Unpacking English language teachers' perceptions and practices of translanguaging: A case study of secondary schools in China'. *Journal of English and Applied Linguistics*, 3(2): 1-20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59588/2961-3094.1122>
- Creswell, John, and Planto Clark.** (2007). *Mixed Methods Research*. California: Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Creswell, John and Planto Clark.** (2008). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. California: Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.
- Cummins, James.** (1979). 'Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children'. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(2): 222–251. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543049002222>
- Dharmaratne, Tharkeshi, Alysha De Livera, Stelios Georgiou and Stella Stylianou.** (2025). 'Variable selection methods for descriptive modeling'. *PLoS One*, 20(6): 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0321601>
- Ennsner-Kananen, Johanna, Sanna Riuttanen and Yecid Ortega.** (2024). 'Towards transknowledging: Epistemic justice matters for language scholars'. *Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 18(3): 66–87. <https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.138546>
- García, Ofelia and Li Wei.** (2014). 'Language, languaging and bilingualism'. In Ofelia García and Li Wei (eds.), *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*, 5-18. London: Palgrave Pivot. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385765\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385765_2)
- Heugh, Kathleen, Mei French, Vandana Arya, Min Pham, Vincenza Tudini, Necia Billingham, Neil Tippett, Li-Ching Chang, Julie Nichols and Jeannemarie Viljoen.** (2022). 'Multilingualism, translanguaging and transknowledging: Translation technology in EMI higher education'. *AILA Review*, 35(1): 89-127. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.22011.heu>
- Houser, Janet and Kenneth Oja.** (2025). *Nursing Research: Reading, Using, and Creating Evidence with Navigate Advantage Access*. Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett Learning.

- Johnson, Bruke and Anthony Onwuegbuzie.** (2004). 'Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come'. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7): 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>.
- Lee, Eunjeong and Canagarajah Suresh.** (2019). 'The connection between transcultural dispositions and translanguaging practices in academic writing'. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 14(1): 14–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2018.1501375>
- Rahal, Aicha and Maria Adorjan (eds.).** (2024). *Design and Validation of Research Tools and Methodologies*. Hershey: IGI Global.
- Sabir, Mona and Turki Alsolami.** (2023). 'One identity or two? Saudi learners' perceptions of the effect of learning English on their mother tongue and cultural identity: A mixed-method study'. *Journal of Humanities and Administrative Sciences*, (12)1: 589–604. <https://www.su.edu.sa/en/file-download/download/public/36878>
- Schiffecker, Sarah, Charles Mathies and Jon McNaughtan.** (2025). Ethical considerations of international comparative higher education research. In Sarah Schiffecker, Charles Mathies and Jon McNaughtan (eds.), *Handbook on Comparative Education*, 409–422. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Van Dijk, Teun.** (2014). *Discourse and Knowledge. A Sociocognitive Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wei, Li.** (2024). 'Transformative pedagogy for inclusion and social justice through translanguaging, co-learning, and transpositioning'. *Language Teaching*, 57(2): 203–214. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444823000186>
- Wei, Li.** (2018). 'Translanguaging as a practical theory of language'. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1): 9–30. doi:10.1093/ applin/amx044