

Review Article

Recruitment and Salary Disparity between Monolingual and Bilingual EFL Teachers in Oman

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Literature in the field of TESOL recruitment practices suggests that the myth of monolingual speakerism has impacted the employment methods in various countries in the world. The monolingual (native) speaker has a privileged position in English language teaching, representing both the model speaker and the ideal teacher. Bilingual teachers of English are often perceived as less competent than their monolingual counterparts in Oman. The aim of the study was to critically explore and problematize the recruitment practices that discriminate the bilingual English teachers in Oman. This article reports the findings of a small-scale qualitative study conducted at an English Language Center (ELC) at one of the colleges of technology in Oman (CoTs) through obtaining data from bilingual teachers of English. The results demonstrated that the native (monolingual) speakers' fallacy is "alive and kicking" in Oman. All the recruiting agencies prefer to recruit monolingual speakers justifying this stance on the pretext that bilinguals are viewed as incompetent imitators of English. There is also a huge discrimination based on salary range between monolingual and bilingual teachers, despite doing same job. Colonial impact is another reason behind monolingual speakers' preference. The impact of discrimination is that bilingual teachers of English are left feeling inferior. Hence, it is essential to adopt policies, which install greater sense of job security to enhance motivation and innovation. The study suggests that there is an urgent need to review the recruitment practices in Oman to establish equality and to create a healthy working environment.

1. Introduction

1.1. Monolingual-Bilingual Dichotomy. Various disciplines ranging from applied linguistics to generative linguistics perceive monolingual construct in different ways. Unlike monolinguals, childhood bilingual is not the sole source and stage of acquiring more than one language because it is a life-long process characterized by host factors such as marriage, immigration, and education [1, 2]. Different results are confined in different stages in the learning curve. A bilingual is not as simplistic as the way a monolingual person may be defined. The assumption that monolinguals are the only idealized role model from whom an individual can acquire linguistic information that can be relied upon creates the notion of a perfect speaker or listener which is only appropriate for a wholly homogeneous language society [3],

cited in [2]. This in turn will cause language acquisition bias which refers to the language that has been manipulated by the monolingual model [4]. This is because it places monolinguals in a superior position compared to bilinguals and at the same time argues that bilinguals and multilinguals have an undeveloped communicative competence complication [5]. This implies that many scholars understand that bilinguals and multilinguals are deficient or rather inferior to monolinguals [6–8].

Recently, English language has become a popular language perceived by many people across the globe. Considering English as an overseas language, many teachers accept that English is a jiffy language rather than an indigenous language [9]. For many decades, as stated by Duff [10], there has been constant debate regarding second and foreign language teaching with the aid of monolingual-

bilingual dichotomy. Considering the fact that most foreign language educators under English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) are both bilingual and multilingual speakers, the ratio of bilingual and multilingual teachers is higher compared to monolinguals [11–17]. The above hypothesis has been proven by research carried out confirming that monolingual teachers get better occupations compared to bilingual and multilingual teachers who are often marginalized professionally and are hardly given equal opportunities. For instance, according to a market survey carried out by officials in Ho Chi Minh City, the capital city of Vietnam, the monolingual teachers of British nationality had a US\$ 10,000 monthly salary but the bilingual and multilingual teachers were paid US\$ 8,000 while they did the same job [18, 19].

2. Review of Related Literature

The notion of linguistic imperialism resulted from a thought-provoking formulation according to Phillipson [17]; the monolingual speaker fallacy brought about the perception that a perfect language teacher, for instance, an English teacher, should be a monolingual English speaker. This proposition was challenged by Phillipson where he challenged the validity of native speaker fallacy and asserted that there was no scientific evidence or valid reason to support the notion [11, 20–22].

The native speaker fallacy has been attributed to the monolingual speaking notion as championed by Holliday [23]. This notion was supported by the perception that monolingual English-speaking teachers are superior because they stand for the western cultures which are the sources of English language and have knowledge on the teaching methodology of the same language [24, 25]. The preference for monolingual English-speaking teachers has been referred to as unprofessional favoritism which mostly leads to instances of job discrimination in the job market [26]. The biggest challenge, as stated by Fuller [26], with English language teaching (ELT) careers is that program administrators and managers are monolingual and pro-native speakers and they firmly believe that there is a huge disparity between bilingual language teachers and monolingual English-speaking teachers. Monolingual speaking teachers are perceived to be the most competitive compared to multilingual and bilingual teachers who are underrated and viewed as less competent as well as not fully qualified [27–29]. The idea that a monolingual speaker is superior to bilingual speaker should be ravished because second language (L2) learner can easily acquire monolingual competence in language even when they are situated outside first language (L1) learning surrounding [30]. The distinction between a monolingual and a bilingual speaker is insignificant because the ability to speak a language goes to the bottom level of confidence and identity; this is just like the minority to majority relations [31, 32]. Favoring monolingual teachers of native English-speaking countries has gone to such a far extent that even those monolingual teachers whose first language is English, yet

they do not come from English-speaking land, are overlooked only because English is not their vernacular at birth. For instance, a child was moved to a foreign country as a child does all schooling levels in the foreign nation but is still overlooked.

To be a powerful English language teacher does not necessarily mean one has to be a monolingual speaker. This has resulted in extensive research on bilingual and multilingual speaking teachers during the past two decades and results show that powerful educators are determined by personality [2, 11, 33–36]. Expert capabilities should be used to offer teachers respective jobs to curb bilingual and multilingual oppression. TESOL has also addressed that fact that some bilingual teachers are put under pressure to work much harder in ELT occupation [37]. Despite TESOL's attempt in helping curb oppression of bilingual teachers, little has changed and linguistic imperialism still exists because imperative paradigm still exists in hiring choices. Evidence shows that there is unfortunate division of English teachers [38]. Studies show that bilingual teachers in recent years have experienced professional self-esteem problems and various forms of discriminatory practices due to cultural identities [2, 26, 33, 38, 39]. The ideology of monolingual speakers' fallacy has negatively impacted the social equity where there is discrimination in recruiting advertisements. All factors that complicate recruitment practices should be adequately assessed especially in the Middle East nations such as Oman.

This myth of monolingual speakerism also has impacted the employment methods in Oman. Hence, concentrating on bilingualism and multilingualism in recruitment discrimination is totally important when looking for social equity at this time and in this globalized world as more EFL/ESL teachers are enrolled in numerous higher institutions [37, 40, 41] in Oman. Furthermore, while there are numerous studies dealing with the discrimination in the recruiting advertisements, few studies were conducted to research and explore what bilingual and multilingual teachers say about these discriminatory practices. This study attempted to fill this gap and aimed to explore, critique, and problematize the recruitment practices that discriminate against bilingual and multilingual English teachers in Oman. It also sought to provide a critical voice to those oppressed teachers whom the researchers believe should be treated equally with their colleagues as they are all considered the cornerstone of the educational process. This voice should be heard and acknowledged in order to create a democratic workplace for all teachers because research has the potential to convince people and, most importantly, to empower teachers who are the most marginalized individuals in the education field [42–44]. This study also aimed to empower the bilingual and multilingual teachers by raising their awareness of their rights so that they do not accept that their status is inherent, necessary, or natural [45, 46]. Thus, based on the description of the gap and the purpose of the study, the following research question can be formulated.

RQ: what do bilingual and multilingual teachers of English believe about the recruitment practices in the colleges of technologies in Oman?

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework. Because of the above stated agenda, this study is generally informed by the tenets of critical theory and, specifically, based on Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx) principles. CALx emerged as an approach that seeks to critique and problematize mainstream applied linguistics by linking the classroom with socio-political and ideological issues. CALx always questions the assumptions and practices of applied linguistics rejecting the view that social relations are equitable and focuses on questions of power and people rights [47, 48]. CALx as a new domain was formed by critical theory which was developed in Frankfurt per se (the Frankfurt School) by Adorno, Marcus, and others [49]. It is a post-Marxist theory, which offers a critique of modern society and the technical, industrial, and bureaucratic interests that drive it [50]. The main agenda of critical theory was to help establish an equitable society. This is done through a research approach that is “emancipatory, seeking action and change in order to alleviate pain in society and redress forms of alienation, discrimination, injustice, exploitation, and marginalisation” [51, p.92]. Modern critical theorists include Habermas [52] who distinguished three interest types that drive research: the desire to predict and control (technical, scientific), understand (practical, interpretation), and change society for the better (critical interest) [53]. This is the basis of the three main educational research paradigms: positivist, interpretive, and critical research. Critical research has developed out of critical theory which resembles interpretive research but is not only with understanding. It includes social critique and social and institutional change and possibly encompasses social justice, with participants’ engagement and validation [54, 55]. From this position, the researcher’s agenda is to critique, challenge, and change a specific situation and highlight shortcomings and limitations of an educational policy [56, 57]. According to Troudi [51], critical research in TESOL is “still in its infancy and is considered as a newcomer in comparison to the positivistic and interpretivist research” (p.1). This is related to the mainstream of employing English language teachers during the last few decades.

3.2. Context of the Study. The study was conducted in the English Language Center (ELC) at one of the colleges of technology in Oman. This college is one of seven colleges that are run by the Ministry of Manpower (MoM). The college also has three other academic departments besides ELC, namely, Engineering, Information Technology, and Business. English is the medium of instruction in the colleges of technology in Oman (CoTs). ELC consists of two major programs, Foundation and Post Foundation. The Foundation Program involves four levels of English, Maths, and Information Technology (IT). Post Foundation involves

English courses meant to address the needs of students in the above specialization departments. These courses involve Public Speaking, Technical Writing, and Technical Communication. According to staff data attached in Appendix 1, eighty-four English teachers from seventeen countries constitute the teaching staff in ELC (see Appendix 1 for the different nationalities). The majority (72) of these teachers are bilingual and multilingual while the minority (12) are monolingual teachers. Most of the bilingual and multilingual teachers hold Master degrees and some have Doctorates, whereas monolingual speakers are Bachelor/Diploma holders. Teachers are employed via two recruiting systems: the government and the private agencies. From Appendix 1, it appears that 16 teachers are recruited through the government, whereas 68 are from private agencies. All monolingual teachers are recruited only through private agencies. The difference in pay and perks among monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual are varied and such variation creates discrimination and dissatisfaction among the staff in the center. In addition to their good salaries and contract position, the monolingual teachers enjoy job security and higher allowances when it comes to housing allowance, tickets, indemnity, and health insurance. Additionally, in the past, the employment opportunities were opened for both bilingual and monolingual teachers of English but the priority was given to the monolinguals. However, in the academic year 2015-2016, the ministry has informed the colleges and agencies to recruit monolingual teachers only and rejected all applications from bilinguals and multilinguals. Bilingual and multilingual teachers claim that they are not treated equally with the monolingual even though they have better qualification, more work experience, and the same workload. Therefore, this study attempted to explore and critique the recruitment practices in Oman.

3.3. Participants. The study was conducted at one of the colleges of technology in Oman. The reason for selecting this location for conducting the study was because the researchers worked in the same institution which provided them with easy access to gatekeepers in making arrangements for data collection. As stated earlier on the background section, the ELC involves teachers for three core subjects. These include English, Information Technology, and Math. The study was purposeful as it only targeted the English teachers employed by the recruiting agencies [50]. Six teachers participated in the study and their teaching experience ranged from ten to more than 24 years. The participants included three Indians, a Pakistani, a Filipino, and a Bangladeshi. These participants were all the staff of the colleges of technology in Oman and have been recruited as English language lecturers. They were all Master and Ph.D. holders in various majors. None were a native speaker of English, yet they were all proficient and had proficient command of English language.

3.4. Instruments. The only instrument which was used in this study is the “the Lecturer Interview Inventory” (see Appendix 3) which was developed by the researchers to elicit

information from the teachers regarding their ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives about any possible discrimination they might feel between them and monolingual native English-speaking teachers. The interview consisted of five open-ended items requiring the teachers to provide free responses to each question.

3.5. Procedure. The researchers used semi-structured interviews (the Lecturer Interview Inventory) where the structure of the interview was not fixed in advance (see Appendix 3). The interview inventory provides a degree of control but at the same time gave the interviewees more flexibility. Despite all of these advantages, transcribing those interviews was time consuming. In addition, analyzing those interviews and categorizing the data into appropriate themes was not an easy process. This was because not all the interviews followed the same structure. Moreover, according to Nunan [58], the interviewer usually has more power than the interviewee and this could affect their responses. In the case of this study in particular, although the participants were told to deal with the researcher unbiasedly, still it is felt that there was an element of power as the one of the researchers had already been the head of the center before embarking on his doctoral scholarships as required by the Government of Oman. Such halo effect [59] might impact the validity of the data collection and the findings of the study accordingly.

The length of each interview was between 25 and 30 minutes, and all the interviews were audio-recorded in order to better let the researchers concentrate on the process of the interview and to engage in appropriate eye contact with the interviewees [60, 61]. The recording was useful during the transcription process because it allowed the researchers to go backward and forward as necessary to confirm the spoken word. Because the recording does not record non-verbal communication, the interviewees' non-verbal behaviors, gestures, and facial expressions were also taken note which could hypothetically be helpful in interpreting the data. Having finished the interview transcription, they were given to the participants and were asked to read them meticulously. Here the emphasis was on whether the participants considered that their words matched what they actually intended or not. Such decision aimed to enhance the research credibility [62].

As noted earlier, according to Elyas and Alghofaili [63], both of the researchers were lecturers in the same department and their dual role undoubtedly had repercussion on this study. The researchers were considered as insiders, and they had easier access to the teachers and could better conceptualize their accounts and interpretation of their reactions. Firstly, since approaching educational reality often reflects the researchers' background, to avoid personal bias, the researchers had to detach themselves from imposing their own perception on teachers by acknowledging their own assumptions. The expectation is that the companies' recruitment practices are oppressive as they marginalize and discriminate bilingual and multilingual teachers against monolingual teachers [38]. Those teachers should

have their rights to be treated equally with their monolingual colleagues which will ultimately result in the flourishing of the educational system in the CoTs. Secondly, during the interview process with the teachers, careful attention was paid by the researchers not to express their own viewpoints in order to fairly collect alternative voices presenting authentic realities. Finally, as noted earlier, in order to avoid "inappropriate" data analysis and to ensure coding reliability, a third colleague was requested to maintain an intercoder agreement [64] and also employ critical subjectivity, confirming the validity of collected data [65].

3.6. Data Analysis. First, it was decided to work out the categories from the literature but then it was discovered that the data did not fit within the definition mentioned in the literature. Therefore, the research question and the data collection questions were used as a guide and it was decided to work out the categories from the data themselves in order to avoid imposing the researchers' own interest in the data and restricting what the participants said [66].

To identify those categories, first, the transcripts were photocopied and worked through responses of three participants as a sample. Here the relevant data to the questions from the three transcripts were copied together on a separate sheet of paper. Then, the data were labeled based on the number of the transcripts to know which respondent they came from. After that, the data were reviewed several times carefully and the common themes in them were identified. Here, various colored pens were used to highlight the data for different themes. For example, the data related to "aspects of discrimination" were highlighted in red. Then, three blank sheets of papers according to the number of the categories were taken and all the data related to each of these categories together were copied. When the categories were defined, short descriptions were written of what each category referred to and they were used to check the coding against the specified definition. When that was done, the anonymised transcripts and the descriptions were given to one of the college research colleagues to find out if he would get similar results. Fortunately, the colleague came up with nearly same categories; hence, decision was made to continue and use the identified categories. Finally, the researcher went through the rest of the transcripts and coded them against those categories.

3.7. Ethics. Cohen et al. [50] defined ethics as "a matter of principled sensitivity to the right of others." Thus, the researcher has to ensure that what his subjects say will be kept confidential and that they will appear in the research anonymously and in disguise so as not to embarrass them or cause them any harm [60]. Therefore, prior to conducting this study, an ethical consideration form was completed. Next, the researchers sought the permission of the college administration and their approval emails were sent to six English teachers inviting them to participate. Interview questions as well as the consent form of research participation which clarified that participation is voluntary and participants' identities would be protected were sent to the

teachers. All the six teachers agreed and all the sessions were conducted in a quiet room. Before each interview session, the teachers were justified about the purpose of the interview and the research as a whole to the participants and assured them that what they would say would be confidential and anonymous. The participants were also informed that the interviews would be recorded and were asked to sign the consent form. To safeguard their anonymity, pseudonyms were used when referring to the participants during the analysis and presentations of results, rather than the name of the participants.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Teachers' Discrimination. When asked whether they felt discriminated, all participants unequivocally stated that they felt so. Kumar said "Yes, to a large extent I feel bilinguals and multilinguals are singled out. The authorities keep a notion that monolingual teachers of English are linguistically more competent than bilingual and multilingual teachers and for that reason they merit to be treated as superior." Rose felt "I always stand at a disadvantage as an English language instructor as compared to monolingual speakers." Yasmeen added "unfortunately authorities in some countries such as Oman give undue weightage to "nationality" in recruiting teachers to their higher educational institutions. As a result, many dynamic and highly qualified bilingual and multilingual teachers of English are deprived of chances to work in Oman." Ali stated that "...we are not treated equally, the monolingual teachers have more privileges than bilingual and multilingual teachers." From the above statements, we can deduce that bilingual and multilingual teachers are victims of the recruiting practices as they feel that they are discriminated on the basis of ethnicity and nationality. These comments also indicate that teachers are aware of their discriminatory status, which is a very important step towards problematizing power relations and the process of change [48].

4.2. Aspects of Discrimination

4.2.1. Recruitment Criteria. All participants stated that they have faced different kinds of discrimination. One of the aspects of this discrimination is related to recruitment criteria of the agencies specified by the Ministry of Manpower. For instance, Ahmed states that "most companies prefer to recruit monolingual speakers compromising the criteria of qualifications and experience." In this regard, Mary also states that "whenever I went through the advertisements of recruiting agencies, the one thing I have noticed is that the monolingual speakers are the center of attention."

Moreover, the criteria discriminate teachers not only in terms of the notion monolingual but also on the qualification as Rose states that "bilingual and multilingual English teachers require at least an M.A. or Ph.D. to secure a job in TESL/TESOL in Oman, whereas for monolingual they only ask for a BA." Two other teachers, Yasmin and Peter, added that "some qualifications and qualities are set as prerequisite

for bilinguals and multilinguals such as language teaching backgrounds, level of education and training, teaching methods, aspirations, and career prospects." It seems that this is a very serious issue encountered by bilingual and multilingual teachers and they feel that they are excluded as Ali added "this is evident from the fact that any monolingual speaker of English, irrespective of the teaching qualification, stands at a better position than I am in finding English language teaching job in Oman." Such criteria in recruitment unduly favors monolingual speakers. This study supports Selvi [2] who found that "native speakerism" was more important than relevant education background and sufficient teaching experience. It seems that the policy-makers in the MoM are influenced by the fallacy of native speakerism. This is maybe because they believe that monolingual speakers are believed to be born with the capacity to teach the language, whereas bilingual and multilingual speakers are perceived as incompetent imitators of the target language. This finding is in line with other studies mentioned in the literature review (e.g., [33, 35, 36]) who found that monolingual English speakers' criterion is an important factor in hiring and program administrators in ELT often accept the monolingual speaker fallacy and believe in it. Holliday and Aboshiha [67] argue that there is a growing understanding that this discrimination can be racist—where the image of a "monolingual speaker" and "standard English" are associated with Whiteness. Therefore, the number of bilingual and multilingual English language teachers is far more than monolingual ones in Oman. The criteria used by ELT employers in Oman to assess applications from bilingual and multilingual teachers of English matter because they affect teachers' employment prospects. If employers take a negative view of a teacher's bilingual and multilingual status, English teachers who are fluent, well qualified, and experienced and who have the desire to work in Oman may struggle to find employment because of their status [33]. They are unlikely even to be invited for interview. Therefore, MoM should consider qualifications and experience as the only criteria and reconsider having any other bias in recruitment as there is no empirical study suggesting that monolingual speakers are more proficient than bilingual and multilingual teachers [68].

4.2.2. Workload vs. Payment. Teachers who took part in the study felt that they are not treated equally when it comes to salary and benefits. According to the data in Appendix 2, all teaching staff have 35 working hours per week. However, when it comes to salaries, there is a huge disparity between monolingual and bilingual or multilingual teachers as stated by Mary, "There is a huge discrimination in the range of salary between monolingual and bilingual or multilingual teachers although they are doing the same job with equal amount of effort." The participants claim that the salary of bilingual and multilingual teachers is not raised even after they show better performance. Yasmeen says that "...despite similarities in the nature of work, monolingual speakers receive much higher remuneration than their bilingual and multilingual counterparts." Kumar added that "the level of

dissatisfaction increases exponentially seeing that this is absolutely unfair when everybody is doing the same job. Even in some cases bilingual and multilingual teachers are contributing a lot in other academic issues beyond their regular teaching work.” However, one of the surprising aspects is that not all the recruiting agencies have uniformity in payment scale offered to teachers. For Kumar, “. . .this is a great injustice, considering the fact that the bilingual and multilingual teachers of English are more often far more qualified and experienced than many of the monolingual speakers. In some cases, the so-called monolingual speakers are so only in their passports. They were born, brought up, and educated in countries where English is not the first language.” This finding of pay scale differences between monolingual and bilingual or multilingual is consistent with Liu and Kager [69] reported in the literature review section. These results also validate the impression of undemocratic and unethical employment landscape [2] in the colleges of technology. Therefore, MoM and the recruiting agencies should revamp their views on payment scale for English teachers based on qualification and experience in order to have positive working atmosphere in the colleges of technology because in our experience, the ministry pays the companies around US\$ 5,000 per teacher regardless of ethnicity or nationality.

In addition to the discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, there exists another sort of blatant discrimination on the basis of nationality as well. For instance, one of the participants is hired on a scale of payment which is even less than the scale of payment of other bilingual and multilingual speakers, as the lecturer is from one of the Indian subcontinents. This is because, in our opinion, the majority of the employees from the Indian subcontinents in Oman are lower-paid manual laborers. Hence, the company that recruited that particular lecturer seems to believe that the lecturer does not deserve equal status with other bilingual and multilingual speakers in terms of payment. This is a highly deplorable discrimination within the already discriminated system of employing subalterns. Further, the current practice of the recruiting companies defies the good intention of the MoM so far as payment is concerned and it is also against the Islamic notion of equality of all human beings and, needless to say, against the very culture of the country. Hence, in light of all these, the MoM should make sure that the recruiting agencies adhere to the Islamic and democratic principle of equality while signing contracts with teacher irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity.

4.3. Reasons for Discrimination

4.3.1. Monolingual Speaker Fallacy. The participants often spoke about different possible reasons behind this discrimination. The monolingual speaker fallacy (native speaker fallacy) seems to be the most common reason. This is because most of them stated that the ministry takes the monolingual speakers of English for granted. For instance, Kumar said that “the ministry thinks that what the monolingual English speakers teach and how they teach

appear to be absolute and the only right way to instruct English in EFL or ESL contexts.” Mary refers this to “the academic training the officials in the ministry have received from monolingual language speakers.” Likewise, Yasmin and Rose view that “the ministry thinks that monolingual speakers of English are better teachers than bilingual and multilingual speakers” though it is not at all an academically verified truth [68]. Another reason stated by participants is that monolingual language speakers are understood to have greater language proficiency as compared to bilingual and multilingual speakers while it has been established that near-monolingual (near-native) or monolingual-like (native-like) proficiency in any language could be attained by bilingual and multilingual speakers, perhaps, with the exception of phonological competence. For them, it is a linguistically established fact that no one can acquire native-like proficiency in the phonological competence of a language, if introduced to study of the language after the learner has attained puberty, and hence, it is pointless to expect learners to acquire native-like phonological competence. As stated by Peter and Kumar, another reason seems to be that the ministry merely equates the monolingual speakers’ linguistic proficiency with teaching skill while one’s proficiency in L1 does not mean that he or she is competent enough to teach that language. Kumar elaborated that “this has sometimes become evident in test writing in the sense that there were instances where monolingual English language teachers had produced non-standard expressions in exam writing and the administration brushed aside questions raised against such expressions while moderating the exams.” According to Yasmin, another instance which reveals the falsehood of monolingual speaker superiority is that “they are not proficient in analyzing language in its constituent chunks if they are not professionally qualified as language teachers.” It is a scientifically established fact and, hence true, that monolingual speakers of a language have the tacit knowledge of the syntactic structures of the language and of its phono tactics, but these do not guarantee that the learners would acquire similar linguistic proficiency, if taught by monolingual speakers of English [70]. The participants in this study unanimously felt that in an EFL context, bilingual and multilingual teachers of English, if properly qualified, stand at par with qualified monolingual speakers of English as language teachers. Selvi [71] argues that we should not fall to this trap of the monolingual fallacy, “an automatic extrapolation from competent learner to competent teacher based on language learning histories alone” (p.589). Moreover, some participants commented that students graduating from the CoTs would be working in companies with people mostly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Philippines. The need for a monolingual speaker’s accent does not fit into their day-to-day working environment. For example, Kumar argues that “the context is more on communication and not on the person’s ability to speak with a monolingual accent which might lead to unintelligibility.” The policymakers should understand that it is not only the monolingual speakers who can deliver the best learning outcomes in EFL contexts for the Oman students.

4.3.2. Colonial Impact. Some participants attributed colonial impact as another possible reason behind this preference for monolingual speakers. Many Asian countries were under the British rule for centuries. During this period, the locals were made to believe that “anything English is superior to their own.” Even after many decades of independent existence, many Asian countries have not shed off the slavish attitude. Because of this Yasmin feels that “monolingual English is considered to be uncorrupted and monolingual teachers are treated as more competent.” This finding is in line with Brutt-Griffler and Samimy [13].

4.4. Effects of Discrimination. The data show that all teachers are affected by the monolingual/bilingual speaking teacher (NST/NNST) discrimination in one way or other. Kumar stated that

The inequality in payment and other benefits leaves a negative impact in the workplace. While the bilingual and multilingual teachers feel inferior, the monolingual teachers think that they are superior and this leads to rivalry between them. It is a hindrance for team building, cooperation, mutual understanding, and smooth running of a professional educational institution.

Some participants reported that the pro-monolingual (pro-native) speaker attitude of the ministry gives them better job security and an easy-go for monolingual English language teachers, whereas bilingual and multilingual speakers, as Peter says, “face the risk of redundancy throughout their career as English language teachers.” It is further noticed that the discrimination between monolingual and bilingual teachers of English creates a sense of low self-esteem. Bilingual and multilingual teachers of English language always struggle to maintain a satisfactory level of performance to keep their jobs secured and they remain as an educated group of “subalterns” who are voiceless. In fact, these are in tune with the Gramscian notion of subalternity wherein “political, economic, cultural, linguistic, or ideological control is exercised by one group or nation over another” (cited in [72, p.76]). This discrimination is demotivating and does not encourage innovativeness and creativity in the bilingual and multilingual speakers of English language as Yasmeen commented “the officials in the ministry always ask us to be creative and innovative in our teaching techniques and methods, but I feel that without creating an environment of equality in salaries and perks, we cannot put forth the best in us.” The participants also reported that they were not happy and secure since their contracts are one-year contracts as compared with the monolingual speakers’ contracts which are automatically renewed as reported by Rose:

In reality, we can see very little execution of such recognition when it comes to assessing the teaching performance. Bilingual and multilingual teachers always struggle to maintain a satisfactory level of performance to keep their job secured. That’s why bilingual and multilingual teachers are experiencing a lot of insecurity in job and they always look for secure and better paid job for them. This is indeed

an important cause why bilingual and multilingual teachers are unable to be emotionally attached to their job despite being so dedicated and passionate.

Furthermore, marginalization or discrimination of bilingual and multilingual English teachers leads to a situation of identity crisis. It undermines the abilities of bilingual and multilingual teachers as effective English teachers. It creates a sense of disappointment and frustration among the bilingual and multilingual teachers of English and creates a situation which favors monolingual teachers more. For instance, bilingual and multilingual teachers have no say with regard to their job contract, i.e., “negotiating salary” as Ali asserts that

A recruiter in Oman insulted a bilingual teacher when he raised certain issues of discrimination in salaries. The recruiter was of the strong belief that bilingual and multilingual teachers are hired at the mercy of monolingual teachers. He even threatened to terminate the services of the employee if he questions the policy of the recruitment agency.

This assertion reveals that there exists an unhealthy hierarchy among the teachers based on ethnicity: monolingual teachers of English vs. bilingual teachers of English, which results in dissatisfaction over low-salaries, demotivation, low self-esteem, and voice legitimacy. Therefore, such ideologies need to be challenged and problematized [72, 73]. The policymakers should realize that an academic is an academic regardless of their ethnicity or nationality [74] and attempt to achieve equality among ELT teachers in different aspects including salaries and voice that will positively affect their innovativeness and creativity. There is a necessity to review the current recruitment policies that place bilingual and multilingual teachers on one-year contract which makes them feel insecure as the above findings reveal. It is also of paramount importance to adopt policies that instill greater sense of job security since it plays a great role in teacher’s motivation and innovation [75].

4.5. Means of Empowerment. Various participants articulated their beliefs about the means of empowerment. Some of the participants were content with their present condition as Mary puts it “I just work hard, do my job well, enjoy the work, and always am thankful of what I have.” Such belief indicates that teachers are supposed to be content with what they are given and that they cannot change the situation, despite the glaring disparity with their monolingual counterparts. This attitude, in my opinion, perpetuates the discriminatory status quo forever. Some others lay the responsibility on the administration as Kumar states “it is the responsibility of the administration to make policies . . . that ensure both monolinguals and bilinguals or multilinguals are treated equally at work place,” and some others expected the MoM to intervene to redress the situation as Ali opines:

We are in a state of hopelessness. I believe the Ministry of Manpower can intervene to redress the situation. Islam is a religion of equality. The prophet Muhammad in his last sermon said that all humans are equal and a white is not

superior to a black and an Arab is not superior to non-Arab. So, I believe that Islamic principles will be followed in our case.

Such belief reveals that those teachers are powerless and they depend on the ministry to change their deplorable conditions which, in our opinion, is shoving away the teachers' own responsibility to raise their voice against discrimination and exploitation and unless they emerge as pro-active, nothing shall ever change their lot. Kumaravadivelu [72] asserts that "the solution cannot come from the dominating power; it has to come from the subaltern themselves through critical consciousness and the collective will to act" (p.76).

A fourth category of participants like Peter believes that "... any bilingual and multilingual speaker can achieve success if he shows mastery and competence in his job. A teacher must always continue to learn and must be willing to adapt himself to the modern ways of teaching. I think this is the way one can overcome marginalization and discrimination." Similarly, another group of participants believes that bilingual and multilingual teachers can empower themselves through continuous professional development programmes that develop classroom management as well as their linguistic competence as Yasmeen puts it "this can be done through continuing professional development, not only in the field of language teaching, but also in the field of education which includes classroom management and use of technology in the classroom." Those teachers who hold this view are not confident about their capabilities and, in fact, underestimate their own competencies and they sadly continue to hold the false assumption that they need to equip themselves further in order to achieve parity with the monolingual speakers. Such realization of their linguistic limitations and classroom management led to this poorer self-image which may further deteriorate their language performance and in turn may lead to a cumulatively stronger feelings of inferiority [16]. According to Kumaravadivelu [72], they are self-marginalizing themselves by doing so and it is the result of the indirect influence of the discriminatory terms on NSTs and NNSTs. Medgyes [16] suggests that those NNSTs need to be aware of their own potential advantageous as language teachers in comparison with NSTs in order to assume a more favorable self-perception.

However, interestingly, a few participants suggest that teachers should work collectively and report their concerns to the ministry as an action from their side. This belief is represented by Rose "bilingual and multilingual teachers should bring their grievances to the notice of the authorities. The authorities should study the matter objectively and take necessary steps to rectify the anomalies." This kind of approach is needed to emancipate bilingual and multilingual teachers from the clutches of the existing hegemony of the monolingual speakers, discrimination, and oppression of the recruiting companies. As Pennycook ([73]; p. 2) argues "if we are concerned about the manifold and manifest inequities of the societies and the world we live in, then I believe we must start to take up moral and political projects to change those circumstances." This also indicates that there

are teachers who believe in their inherent equality with monolingual speakers and are confident about their own competence. Furthermore, they are well aware of what critical action is required in order to put an end to the existing discriminatory and hegemonic scenario of English language teaching in the sultanate. Above all, we believe that the bilingual and multilingual teachers of English need to decolonize their mindset from the colonial hangover that has taken deep roots in the subconscious mind of the subalterns. This is in line with what Mohamed and Lobo [76] have stated in their findings investigating the comparison between native and non-native speaking teachers in their methodological approaches in language teaching.

5. Conclusion

From the study findings, all participants agreed that they felt discriminated. The reason as to why the monolinguals are treated as superiors is because the authority has a notion that they are more linguistically competent compared to bilingual and multilingual teachers. The bilingual and multilingual English language teachers are always at a disadvantage as the monolingual English-speaking teachers have more privileges than them. Countries, such as Oman, value national ethnicity in their recruitment process, and as a result, the qualified bilingual and multilingual teachers are denied a chance to work in Oman. The teachers who participated in the study stated that they were not treated equally regarding salary and benefits. There exists a huge disparity among monolingual and bilingual or multilingual teachers. The differences in pay leave a negative impact on the bilingual and multilingual teachers of English. The study suggests that there is an urgent need to review the recruitment practices in Oman to establish equality and to create a healthy working environment. Additionally, we think it is our moral responsibility as researchers and academics to speak out against the marginalization or discrimination we face during the hiring process and at the workplace. We should stand up against the undue favoritism given to monolingual English teachers by the recruiters owing to the artificial market demand. The researchers themselves as bilingual teachers of English as a foreign language are convinced that professional ability, experience, and qualification are the key elements required for an EFL/ESL profession. There should be a responsible authority that would not allow anyone bully bilingual and multilingual teachers into thinking that they are inferior to monolingual. All the professional bodies associated with EFL/ESL should work towards creating an egalitarian teaching community where there is no place for prejudice or discrimination and we all are appraised by our professional abilities and not by nationalities or ethnicities. Further research could be done investigating such disparity in teachers' salary and other job benefits between native and non-native English language speakers in other contexts. Moreover, more research could be done investigating the impact of various citizens of different non-native English-speaking countries on the acceptance rate for employment as English language instructors.

Abbreviations

- CALx: Critical Applied Linguistics
- EFL: English as a foreign language
- ELC: English Language Center
- ELT: English language teaching
- ESL: English as a second language
- ICT: Ibra College of Technology
- IT: Information technology
- L1: First language
- L2: Second language

- MoM: Ministry of Manpower
- NNST: Non-native speaking teacher
- NST: Native speaking teacher
- TESOL: Teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Appendix

A. English Language Center

A.1. ELC Staff Details

Qualification	Number
Diploma	3
Bachelor	6
Master Degree	68
Doctorate	7
Total	84

Employer	Omani	Native	Non-Native
Ministry	7	0	19
CECN	0	1	21
TATI	0	7	12
Bahwan	3	0	11
GlobNet	1	2	4
Al-Nawa	0	2	3
Total	14	12	75
Staff	84		

Employer	Omani	Expat	Total
Ministry	7	9	16
CECN	0	24	24
TATI	0	20	20
Bahwan	3	9	12
GlobNet	1	6	7
Al-Nawa	0	5	5
Total	14	73	84

Gender-Omani	
Male	7
Female	7
Total	14
Gender-Expats	
Male	47
Female	26
Total	73
Omani + Expats	84

	Nationality	Number
1	American	2
2	Australian	1
3	British	3
4	Canadian	1
5	South African	5
6	Ukrainian	1
7	Uzbek	3
8	Bangladeshi	1
9	Egyptian	1
10	Filipino	8
11	Indian	30
12	Jordanian	2
13	Lebanese	1
14	Omani	11
15	Pakistani	9
16	Sudanese	1
17	Tunisian	4
Total		84

Native (English) Speakers	12
Non-Native Speakers	75

Teaching Staff	84
Admin: Non-Teaching	3
Total	87

Gender	
Male	54
Female	30
Total	84

Omanis	14
Expatriates	73

B. Distribution of Staff Workload for Lecturers in Colleges of Technology (as per the Policy Followed by the Ministry of Manpower)

No.	Title	Teaching Staff
		Lecturers
1	Teaching	18
2	Advisory	0
3	Coordination (Admin, Registration, SAC, Course, Exam, etc.)	0
4	Committees (QA, Community, Staff Develop, Observation, etc.)	0
5	Course / Lesson preparation	8
6	Assessment preparation, marking and follow-up	2
7	Teaching material development	4
8	Course/program review & development	0
9	Remedial classes	1
10	Office hours	2
11	Short courses	0
	Total (Hours/Week)	35

C. The Lecturer Interview Inventory

- (1) Do you feel that you are marginalized and discriminated against monolingual (native) teachers?
- (2) In what way do you feel that you are marginalized or discriminated?
- (3) Why do you think you are treated in this way? Or, why do you think such practices favor monolingual teachers?
- (4) How do such practices affect your job and identity?
- (5) How can you empower yourself from this situation?

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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