

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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**Investigating the Effects of Languages Interference among
Multilingual EFL Learners' Writing Productions**

The Case of First Year EFL Students at Bejaia University

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Masters' Degree in
Linguistics

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Academic Year: 2023/ 2024

Abstract

Language interference has become more and more common, particularly, in English language classes. Learners of English as a foreign language tend generally to refer to their first language when learning the foreign one. In composition, realizing a satisfactory level in English writing is the main interest of teachers and students. Yet, a significant number of EFL students are probably incapable to achieve this level because they commit different errors when writing. The present research aims at exploring the common committed errors in students' English writing and highlighting the causal factors that lead to first language interference. This study is conducted with first year English students in the department of English, at Abdrrahmane Mira, Bejaia University. A mixed method was adopted, in which the data were gathered through a questionnaire addressed to 21 students to survey their opinions about the effects of first language on English writing. Besides, 19 short paragraphs, written by first year EFL students, were qualitatively analyzed to identify the committed errors induced by L1 interference. The findings indicate that first language interference exists at many language levels among EFL learners. Several factors contributing to L1 interference were identified, including lack of students' vocabulary of English language, lack of practicing the writing and the reading skills and the students' thinking in their mother tongue when writing in English.

Key words: Mother tongue, First language, Language interference, Language transfer, writing proficiency

Acknowledgements

We thank God who enabled us to complete this work and who gave us health, well-being and determination.

We extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation for our supervisor Mr. Medjkoune Karim, for his guidance, advise, and valuable information he provided us with, and which contributed to enriching the subject of our study in its various aspects.

We would like to thank the members of the jury for reading and examining our work, the students and the teachers who helped us by their contribution in this work. We also would like to acknowledge our family for their support and love.

Dedication

To our first and eternal supporters, dear parents, we dedicate this achievement to you, which without your sacrifices, your unlimited support and your unrequited giving, would not have existed. We hope that we can make you proud, the same way that we are proud of having both of you as our parents.

To our dear brothers Halim and Soufiane, we dedicate our success to you; we thank you for all the help and love you have given us. We are so lucky for having you in our lives.

Special thanks goes to our precious friend Soria for her caring and help during the fulfillment of this research

As tween sisters and classmates, we would like to dedicate this work to each other. We have reached the end of our academic journey that we have began together from the first year to the present day.

Finally, we dedicate this success to everyone who helped us and had a role, from near or far in completing this work.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FLL: Foreign Language Learning.

FL: Foreign Language

FL: First Language

SL: Source Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

CA: Contrastive Analysis

EA: Error Analysis

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

UG: Universal Grammar

NT: Negative Transfer

PT: Positive Transfer

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TL: Target Language

General Introduction

Language is a crucial aspect of human communication and culture. It enables us to express our emotions, thoughts, ideas, and to connect with others. The importance of language can be seen in various aspects of human life. For many, “*language is the road of a map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going*” (Brown, 2018). This quote highlights the importance of language as a tool for understanding and preserving culture. It suggests that language is not only a means of communication, but also a reflection of peoples’ history, values, and aspirations. It emphasizes the idea that language is a fundamental part of human identity.

Foreign language learning (henceforth FLL) is seen as a complex process, because it is not similar to learning one’s first language (hereafter L1). The difference between the two languages (FL, L1) makes the learner encounter several difficulties in learning a foreign language. With English, as a foreign language, learners tend to use their first language as a means to learn the foreign one. This strategy of learning makes them commit different errors, especially when it comes to the writing skill. The latter is considered as one of the principal pillars for mastering the English language.

First language interference can be an obstacle for mastering any foreign language. Although learners receive writing instructions, they still use some rules, structures, vocabulary of their first language when writing in English. L1 interference, as a linguistic phenomenon, which may lead to limitations in writing proficiency and insufficient academic achievement has become a topic interest for many researchers.

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning English as a foreign language is a challenging task. It requires mastering its four skills especially, when it comes to writing which is considered as an extremely complex skill to be mastered by EFL learners. The most remarked problem is that EFL learners rely on their first language background as a facilitating tool and a medium for learning when producing in the foreign language. The central problem of this research is that languages interference can hinder the progress of the EFL learners' writing.

2. Research Questions

During the learning English as a foreign language, EFL learners could fall into errors when writing, namely at the levels of vocabulary, structure, and rules. We believe that one of the major reasons behind these errors in their production could be the interference of their first language. Our study seeks to find convincing answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Is first language interference a major cause for the limitations faced by EFL learners when writing?
- 2) How does first language interference affect EFL learners writing?

3. The Aim of the Study

The main objective of this study is to check the existence of first language interference in EFL writing, by exploring their common committed errors in writing. It aims at analyzing and identifying the influence of the first language on the writing of English as a foreign language. This research aims to investigate the causal factors that lead EFL learners to interfere from their first language.

4. Research Methodology

The current research work involves 21 first year English students in the English department at the University of Abdrrahmane Mira, Bejaia. The objective of this choice is to give a detailed explanation about the effect of first language on EFL students writing productions. With a view to reach the aim of the research, and answer the research questions, a mixed method is used. The quantitative method is represented by a questionnaire addressed to a sample of 21 students selected randomly. The qualitative method was introduced through the analysis of 19 students' written paragraphs. This methodology of research is used because of the nature of the topic, which requires a description, and analysis of the writing process in EFL classes.

5. Significance of the Study

English has emerged as an international language. Many nations of the world are interested in learning it. EFL learners, especially beginners, struggle when they are asked to speak or to write in that foreign language, because they are not skilled enough in it.

The majority of learners may use their first language to express their ideas in English, which may lead them to commit errors. For this reason, we find that exploring the causes leading to L1 interference among EFL learners is very significant for teachers to develop successful strategies to help their learners improve their language proficiency, which is essential not only for academic purposes but also for personal and professional success. Additionally, conducting such study may help EFL learners to become more familiar with the concept of language interference to avoid it in the field of second language acquisition.

Part One

**Literature Review about Language
Interference in Writing**

Chapter One

First Language Interference in a Multilingual Context

1.1 Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is regarded as a complicated process and a challenging task. It requires mastering its four skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing. Language interference is almost found in every foreign language learning (Lao 2017). It refers to the application of knowledge from L1 to the foreign language by the speakers or the writers. In English as a foreign language classes, learners may have difficulties when writing in English, and that may lead to L1 interference.

Many students rely on their first language when producing the second one. One of the obstacles in acquiring the foreign language is the L1 interference, especially in the productive skills of speaking and writing. In English classroom, students prefer to use more their first language vocabulary, which leads to inaccuracies in their writing (Ab Manan et al 2017). According to Bennui (2016), when bilingual students write in their second language, the qualities of their first language usually show up in their writing. The latter is considered as the most difficult one rather than the other language skills for foreign language students.

The first chapter of this research begins with a brief overview about bilingualism and multilingualism. It proceeds to provide a short definition of language interference, language transfer and its types (positive and negative transfer). Furthermore, it highlights the three main views of language transfer including the behaviorists, the mentalists, and the cognitivists' view. Additionally, this chapter aims at presenting the principles of language interference and its categories. Lastly, the chapter ends with explaining the factors contributing to language interference.

1.2. Bilingualism and Multilingualism: A Brief Overview

Researchers on bilingualism like Grosjean (2010) found that more than half of the world's population is bilingual. Despite that, there is no exact number for the whole world; it is obvious that bilingualism exists in all age groups, levels of society and in several countries. This goes back to the origins of humankind as people consistently traveled for trade, employment, politics and so on. Immigration has also an influence on the spread of bilingualism all over the world; in many cases, migrants acquire the language of the other community and become bilingual. Education is considered as an important reason for the growth of bilingualism; students carry on their studies in a region or country with a different language to their own and hence become bilingual.

1.2.1 Bilingualism

Bilingualism at the social and individual level are an integral part of human behavior. Bilingualism has arisen because of increasing population movements due to immigration, greater geographical and social mobility, and with the spread of education. Contact between cultures and individuals are constantly growing. Mohanty (1994: 13 as cited in Hamers & Blanc, 2000: 7) states in his definition, "*bilingual persons or communities are those with an ability to meet the communicative demands of the self and society in their normal functioning in two languages in their interaction with the other speakers of any or all of these languages*".

Haugen (1953: cited in Liddicoat 1991:2) notes, "*bilingualism begins at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language*". Bilingualism, in its simplest form, is defined as the ability of using two languages fluently (using one language besides ones' mother tongue). According to Webster's dictionary (1961, as cited in Kalayci, 2012) bilingualism is

“having or using two languages especially as spoken with the fluency characteristics of a native speaker; a person using two languages especially habitually and with control like that of a native speaker and bilingualism as the constant oral use of two languages”.

One of the objectives of psychology is the study of children’s bilingualism in terms of language acquisition to determine the right age for a child to start studying and using a foreign language correctly. The majority of bilingual children who learn two languages (one of which their mother tongue), before the age of five, do not have an accent in both languages; whereas, bilingual people who learn a second language after the age of five, frequently do have an accent. Thus, a bilingual will sound more like a native speaker the earlier they learn their two languages (Sirbu 2015).

Linguistics is concerned with the study of bilingualism in relation to the interference between two linguistic systems or to the development of a specific language after its exposure to, or contact with a foreign language.

1.2.2 Multilingualism

Multilingualism can be defined as the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than two languages in their day-to-day. The word multilingualism describes the fact that a community or a person is multilingual, that is to say that, he is capable of expressing his/herself in several languages. Individuals around the world who speak, read and write in three or more languages are considered as multilingual people. However, being a multilingual person does not mean having equal or total fluency in all languages, but a reasonable degree of fluency that would allow a person to live and work in a culture that uses their second or third language (Cenoz 2013).

1.3 A General Overview about Language Transfer

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1988) defines language transfer as “*the effect of one language on the learning of another*”. Oldin (1989) defines language transfer as the result of the influence of the similarities and differences between the foreign language and any other language that has been previously acquired. Ellis (1997) also defines transfer as “L1 transfer refers to the influence that the learners’ L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2”.

One of the strategies that the learners use when learning the second language is language transfer, which comprises replicating the structure from the learners’ first language to the second language when they speak or write. Linguists agree that language learners use language transfer especially when they are not sure about the structure to use in the second language. Lado (1957), in his book claims that

“individuals tend to transfer the forms and meaning, and the distribution of forms and meaning of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture- both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives”.

1.3.1 Types of Language Transfer

Due to the differences between languages, language transfer may have a positive or a negative effect depending on whether the first and second languages share the same structure used by the learner. According to Lado (1957), if the two languages have similar structures and units, linguistic interference can result in correct language production (positive transfer); whereas, if the two languages are different from each other at the level of structure and units, errors are likely to be generated as negative

transfer. Since finding two languages sharing the identical structure and units may be not possible, negative transfer seems to be unavoidable in second language learning

It is found in the study of language transfer that the similarities and the differences between languages can lead to the transfer of first language. Depending on the outcomes of transfer, we can classify language transfer into two main types: positive transfer and negative transfer.

a) Positive Transfer

According to Richard and Schmidt (2002), positive transfer is the one, which facilitates the learning process and makes it easier. It may occur when the two languages (L1, FL) share the same structures and forms. Positive transfer makes the acquisition task straightforward. Ellis (2008) points that at the beginning of second language acquisition, positive transfer of first language is obvious, because at that level learners have not build enough knowledge and developmental rules. Positive transfer of the first language helps learners on reducing the number of errors and learning speed, as it helps them accelerate learning pace. Bialystock (1983) points that learners might use their first language as a tool to solve learning and communication problems.

In L2 writing, positive transfer can be seen as a learning device and strategy to solve writing problems. Mahmud (2000) notes that, when foreign language learners attempt to compose a written piece, they use transfer as a medium to learn or as a mean to convey their meaning.

b) Negative Transfer

Applied linguistics focuses more on negative transfer rather than the positive one, because they believe that negative transfer presents teaching and learning challenges. Negative transfer refers to the process whereby L1 knowledge interferes negatively the L2 acquisition. It occurs when learners use or apply incorrect or

inappropriate strategies from their first language when learning a foreign language, or applying some words, expressions and grammatical rules from their first language to the second one, without understanding that the rules may differ from one language to another.

One of the known linguists who touched on interference is Weinreich; he talks about positive and negative transfer. He states, when the second language learning is taking place, the linguistic phenomenon that are similar in form, meaning, and structure are thought to facilitate the process of acquiring a second language; this is seen as positive transfer. However, if both structures and forms are different, this is seen as negative transfer.

1.3.2 Theories of Language Transfer

Advancements of language research in the twentieth century falls into three primary periods and categories, which are the behaviorist, mentalist, and cognitivist views (Ellis 1994, p. 297-300). Language learning was seen by the behaviorists as habit formation. It was believed that the “habits” that are specific to the L1 would transfer to the FL. Interference, or negative transfer, would occur when the target language is different from the L1. The mentalists’ viewpoint redefines the concept of transfer. They view the process of learning a language as the imaginative creation of linguistic rules. The study of factors influencing language acquisition was the focus of cognitive linguists (Ellis 1994).

a) The Behaviorists View of Transfer

The behaviorist theory of language transfer restricted language learning to habit formation, which is a stimulus-response process. The theory regulated language teaching and learning. Studies carried out in the 1940s and 1950s, when structuralism

and behaviorism argued that the extent to which the target language differed from the native language indicate how difficult it was to learn. Positive transfer from the original tongue may take place if two languages are similar or identical. Negative transfer from the native language would make it harder to learn the target language.

Based on this assumption, Lado (1957, p.23) suggests that the contrastive analysis hypothesis which claimed that language errors and learning obstacles were mainly or entirely attributed to the interference of the native language. By contrasting, assessing the similarities and differences that make two languages, and setting up the difficulty scale, errors and difficulties of learners might be predicted and clarified. The behaviorist point of view on transfer confines to over syntactic structure correspondence between L1 and FL.

The amount of similarities and differences between FL and L1 indicates how much transfer occur. Regardless the behaviorists' affirmation that the native language was essential to FL; yet, they overestimate the effect of L1 and neglect barriers, among them learner individual differences. It was unsurprising that the behaviorist perspective confronts substantial challenges from the mentalist view (Ellis 1994).

b) The Mentalists View of Transfer

In the beginning of the 1950s, Chomsky develops the mentalism theory, also known as conceptualism or psychologism. The idea assures that everyone will ultimately become linguistically proficient and that human language capability was innate. When learning a language, universal grammar rules set an individuals' level of mastery in all languages.

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) further contradict native language transfer, arguing that UG was the only aspect that influenced one's capacity to learn a language. Ellis (2000) criticizes them for being without any empirical evidence to support their

results. Therefore, the mentalists recognized their limitations and began exploring the connection between the native language transfer and UG in 1980s. The mentalists are still criticized for the lack of empirical support of their theory, even though they are no more in a position to completely rejecting native transfer.

c) The Cognitivists View of Transfer

The cognitive theory, which asserts that language learning includes the same cognitive system as learning other kinds of knowledge: perception, memory, problem solving and information processing was developed in the last decade of the 1970s as a drawbacks of the mentalist view. Linguists at that period were typically concentrated on the context where language learning might use their native language. The factors of language transfer were confirmed by the research. Ellis (2000) notes six types of factors that would be the reason of language transfer.

- Transfer takes place in various linguistic levels, including phonology, syntax, discourse, pragmatics, etc.
- Language transfer is affected by social factors, for instance learning environment.
- One of the key factors affecting language transfer is the markedness of a specific language, which is closely related to the periphery grammar of that language.
- Prototypically, the central meaning and the peripheral meaning of a word.
- Language distance and pshychotypology, namely, learners' perception of language distance between L1 and FL.
- Certain factors that hinder the development of interlanguage.

1.4 Language Interference

The term interference is firstly used by Weinreich (1953) in “Language in contact”. It describes the language system change in relation to the proximity of these languages with other languages elements. He mentioned, language interference causes deviations when he said “*those instances of deviation from the norm of their language which occurs in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, will be referred to as interference phenomena*”. Moreover, Ellis (1997:51) refers to interference as “transfer”; which he says is “*the influence that the learners’ L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2*”.

According to Oldin (1989:27), language interference can be called L1 interference, linguistic interference, cross-linguistic interference or transfer. Language interference refers to the application of knowledge from the first language to a second language by the writer or the speaker. It can be the effect of learners’ first language on their production of the language they are learning that is to say that, their second language is influenced by their first language. According to Beardsmore (1982) this influence can be on different aspects of language, including grammar, vocabulary, accent, and spelling. A learner has difficulties in second language such as phonology, vocabulary, and grammar due to the interference of habits from L1 to L2.

Whenever the two languages share approximately the same features, it results in a right language production. Contrarily, the more the differences between the two languages, the more negative interference occurs. Lado (1957:1) reinforces this saying that

The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to the learners’ native language will be simple for him and those that are different will be difficult.

According to the psychologists' view (described below in details), interference is the result of skills and abilities being transferred from one language to another, creating obstacles and hindrances. Interference is viewed in psycholinguistics as an essential part of the slow gradual penetration of one or more elements of a foreign language into the perceiving language system all over the process of mastering it.

1.4.1 Principles of Language Interference

1.4.1.1 The Psycholinguistic Principle

Based on psycholinguistic principles, language interference can be divided into categories based on whether individual speakers or certain groups intend to make specific conscious change in language. In short, everything depends on the presence of consciousness when language changes. Depending on these criteria, language disorders can be conscious or unconscious. Nevertheless, there are no precise boundaries between both types of interference. Any change in language, any interference in its spontaneous development, may consist of factors that can or cannot rely on someone's will. Hence, several types of interference should be considered intermediate or transitional ones, such as language adaptation (Columas 1989).

a) Conscious Language Interference

As it is generally acknowledged, language is a system developed with the goal of meeting the needs of its speakers and writers. Yet, this development is frequently consciously regulated and monitored. Thus, the influence of unconsciousness on language can be regarded as a factor leading to changes in its internal structure (Columas 1989).

This type involves subtypes like language interference under religious or political influence, or as a result of language contact. This is especially obvious in the

field of terminological activities, such as terminological modernization consists in the creation of a new terminological unit, and mainly fill terminological gaps by borrowing directly or creating new terms. Conscious language interference has an impact on language systems, such as vocabulary (Chellappan 1985).

b) Subconscious Language Interference

Subconscious language interference is not directed to bring about specific changes in language. This type of interference is spontaneous and occurs under diverse extra linguistic factors, for instance language contact.

The most obvious interaction between various languages can be noticed in language alliances, when numerous languages that are not necessarily associated share a common basis. This is most vividly reflected in vocabulary, but also in some other biases. Interference may occur when translating from one's mother tongue into another language. Unconsciously the learner may not regard that the characteristics of the languages may be different, or he may be aware of the correct rules but not skilled enough to apply them, and so the learner may rely on the example of his first language.

1.4.1.2 The Sociolinguistics Principle

Hudson (1980) defines sociolinguistics as "*the study of language in society*". Sociolinguistics is the study of how language serves and shapes by the social nature of human beings. It analysis the diverse ways in which language and society entwine. According to Crystal (2011), sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics, which studies the relation between language and society. Language interference is considered as a part of sociolinguistics. If we want to talk about interference, we have to learn about sociolinguistics. Wardhaugh (1986) adds that sociolinguistics deals with investigating

the relationship between language and society for a better understanding of the structure and the use of language in society.

Given that sociolinguistics is concerned with the study of language in operation, situation serves as a stimulus that initiates a message, and without stimulus, message cannot exist. Hence, sociolinguistic factors are essential to any language study, the main element influencing the acquisition of a second language is interference from mother tongue.

1.4.2 Categories of Language Interference

Weinreich (2011) divides first language interference into three categories: phonological, grammatical, and lexical interference.

a) Phonological Interference

The study of phonology emphasizes on the structure and use of sounds in language. Phonology, as defined by Hawkins (2018), is the study of language's sound patterns. It is one of the fundamental branches of linguistic including syntax, morphology, and semantics. Hence, phonology can be considered as the study of the mental modal for human speech from a neurological or cognitive neuroscience perspective (Idsari & Monaham, 2016, p. 141).

According to Skandera and Burleigh (2006, pp. 11-12), phonology is the study of speakers' comprehension of the sound system that exists in a language. It is an explanation of the structure and phonological patterns present in a language. It includes recognizing languages' distinctive sounds and developing a set of rules that define the distinction in these sounds that take place when they occur in different relationship with other sounds (Gries, 2011, p. 491). Furthermore, according to Kaye (2013, p. 9),

phonology can be determined as the study of the systems of linguistically significant sounds. It deals with languages' sound systems out of the vast range of sounds that the human vocal system is capable of producing, and which phonetics studies are used specifically in any language.

According to Mahmud (2017, p.57), phonological interference may arise due to borrowing system from other languages. It is also known as sound interference, when the speaker reproduces sounds of a given language and make mistakes by adapting it with another language. The main reason of phonological interference is learners' tendency to utter one letter using phonemes from their mother tongue rather than a particular target language sound. The cause for this is that some sounds in the target language do not exist in the mother tongue. Additionally, despite the sounds in the target language are different from those in the mother tongue, second language learners identify this to the case.

b) Grammatical Interference

Grammar theory is confirmed by how it explains and describes language. According to (Mahmud. & Arifin 2017), Grammatical interference happens when students recognize a morpheme or structure from their mother tongue in a foreign or a second language. Grammatical interference refers to the situations of language content where a language influences another one beyond simple lexical exchange, potentially influencing the target languages' structures such as morphology, syntax, and phonemic inventory.

Weinreich (2011) determines grammatical interference in syntactical interference. Supriyanto (2013) claims that morphological interference arises when affixes from another language absorbed through the word formation process. However, for Jong Bok and Sells (2008), syntax is the study of the rules create a limitless amount

of grammatical sentences. Frequently, when students learn a second language, they make grammatical errors when speaking English or forming sentences since English and other languages patterns and grammar differ.

c) Lexical Interference

Lexical interference occurs when one language vocabulary interferes with another (Weinreich, 2011). Hence, when learners speak or write in English as a foreign language, lexical vocabulary that is affected by their first language causes interference. The concept of lexical interference in bilingualism is the borrowing of foreign language lexemes, which may appear as either one language to another or in changes to the way a native language words' meaning is structured.

Since the lexical units of the two languages are similar, interference occurs at the lexical level when vocabulary from the native language is integrated into the vocabulary of the target language.

1.4.3 Factors Contributing to Language Interference

According to Lott (1983: 258-259) there are three factors that cause language interference, they are as follow:

a) The Interlingual Factor

Interlingual transfer is a significant source for language learners. This language is originated from contrastive analysis of behavioristic school of learning. It emphasizes that errors can only occur from the negative influence of one's mother tongue, for instance many Hindi speakers say "I read to like" rather than, "I like to read". In Hindi, the verb is pre-positioned. Contrarily, it is post-positioned in English. Negative transfer of first language rules to the target language system results in this type of errors.

b) Over Extension of Analogy

Frequently, learners use inaccurate vocabulary because of the similarity of elements in their first and second languages. For example, the usage of cognate words (terms that have the same form but different functions and meanings in two different languages). For instance, the words month and moon, Indonesian learners may make a mistake by using month to say moon in the space.

c) Transfer of Structure

Dulay et al (1982:101) distinguish between two types of transfer, positive and negative Transfer. NT refers to the transfer that leads to error because the old habitual behavior differs from the new behavior being learned. In contrast, PT is the appropriate utterance because the first and second languages share the same structure. However, negative transfer from the native language refers to interference.

1.5 Conclusion

According to this research, it is seen that the vast majority of EFL students struggle with using foreign language forms and structures correctly. In the process of improving the writing skill, plenty of errors are made by these learners, which prevent them from achieving this productive skill. Researchers interested in this field claim that mother tongue interference is the source of these errors. Language transfer has been a major concern in many academic fields, especially in teaching and learning a foreign language.

This chapter shows that interference is the speakers or writers application of what has been learned in one language into another language. This chapter defines language transfer and presents its two types, in addition to its different theories and views. Moreover, it explains the principles of language interference and its categories. The chapter closes by demonstrating the factors contributing to language interference.

Chapter Two

The Process of Writing

2.1 Introduction

Writing seems to be one of the most important skills to acquire regardless of the significance of the other language skills. Regarding the importance of writing, perspectives of teaching and learning concerning such a skill must be stressed and handled in various pedagogical practices. These practices need to be taken carefully and with great attention in an English as a foreign language context since the level of writing difficulty is higher than in a context where English is the first language.

Writing is a fundamental language learning skill that allows learners to express themselves, share thoughts, emotions, and diverse viewpoints in a written form. Contrarily to the other skills, writing is a skill that must be actively taught and learned by doing, practicing and improving; it cannot be just acquired spontaneously. Each learner has distinct writing requirements depending on their writing level and goal.

This chapter attempts to carry out an in-depth study of writing skill. It primarily starts by a brief discussion about writing, its importance, and its different stages. Furthermore, it aims at identifying the relationship between writing and reading skills. Moreover, it proceeds to highlighting the factors behind students' limitations in writing. This chapter ends up with discussing the concept of contrastive analysis and error analysis including interlingual and intralingual errors, and finally the concept of translation.

2.2 A Brief Definition about Writing

In English language, the four skills are divided into listening and reading which are receptive skills, speaking and writing which are productive skills. Writing is considered as one of the important skills for mastering a language. Through writing, the student can express and deliver his/her thoughts, ideas and emotions. It is a complex task that requires correct grammar, adequate word choice, clarity, coherence and cohesion. Harmer (2007) states that writing involves a process of generating, formulating and refining one's ideas. According to Widdowson (2001:62), "*writing is the use of the visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of language*"; this means that writing is a productive activity in which the student has to be cognizant of the usage of different aspects of language by using the suitable terminology and grammatical structure, for instance. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1996, p. 23) writing is "*the activity of writing or the skill of producing linear sequences of graphemes in time*"--that is to say that, a set of words are produced timely to convey a specific meaning/idea.

Writing is a general tool, which is regarded as a creative process; it is a way of communication between individuals as it is a social activity used for communicative objectives. The writer should know that he is writing for the readers not for him/herself; he has to eliminate any ambiguity that may face the reader and state his ideas clearly for a better understanding. Because of the linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and cultural factors, which are inherent in both a mother tongue and a second language, the writer may face difficulties in stating a certain idea clearly and easily. Nemouchi (2008) explains that the student cannot give his personal standpoint if he does not have enough knowledge of vocabulary and rules of a given language. This means that, to produce a coherent and a clear piece of writing, the student has to know the appropriate

vocabulary, the correct grammatical structures, and the right use of punctuation, in addition to other writing requirements and conditions.

There are different approaches for teaching the writing skill, each approach complete the previous one and focus on a particular aspect of language. Each approach has its own distinct focus and features. The most common approaches are the product approach and the process/genre approach.

The product approach of writing serves to reinforce writing in second or foreign language in terms of grammatical and syntactic forms (Raimes cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008:2). This approach focuses on appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive device (Pinca cited in Badger and White, 2000: 153-154). This approach encourages the students to mimic a model text, which is usually presented and analysed at an early stage (Gabrielatos cited in Hasan and Akhand 2010: 78).

The process/genre approach is used by teachers to improve students' writing skill. This approach allows the students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as they use recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Using these steps, the students develop their awareness of different text types and of the composing process (Belbase, 2012: 2-3).

In this approach writing is considered as series of stages leading from a particular situation to a text, which the teacher facilitating the students' progress by enabling appropriate input of knowledge and skills (Badger and White, 2000: 160).

2.2.1 How Writing is Important?

Writing is regarded as one of the most fundamental skills for humans since it is related to their daily life. Writing as a craft goes in parallel with human life since individuals need it to accomplish various activities. It has been applied for doing

numerous tasks in peoples' daily life since the early centuries of human life (McArther 1992). Yet, "writing as a creative activity...has been a regular paid form of employment only in recent centuries" (Burton 2009, as cited in Nacer 2016). The importance of writing as one of the language skills stems from the significant influence that language has on human life. Since writing is a tool for interpersonal communication, writing accomplishes a variety of communicative functions. As an example, it recognizes the role that documentation plays in social interactions that make up human life. Nobody can therefore undervalue its importance in all aspects of human life.

Besides the importance of writing in general, English writing is seen to be one of the fundamental components of cross-cultural communication. Since English is a global/international language, it is considered as an important requisite, particularly in the current era, which is characterized by what has been recently called globalization. Crystal (2003) in his book, *English as a Global language*, states, «*English is now so widely established that it can no longer be thought of as owned by any single nation*» (p.26). Thus, English today is a language of intercultural communication between diverse individuals worldwide. Writing in English is essential for achieving this intercultural communication, since English language is necessary for achieving international communication. For example, English language is, by far, the most and, almost, the sole/only utilized language in international correspondence by people from different nations, all over the world.

Thus, what has been said has to do with the importance of writing in general. In addition to its importance in all aspects of human life.

- writing is essential on an individual level
- writing is essential for language learning and teaching

- Writing is a crucial element of a language which contains the fundamental knowledge of a language
- writing plays an important role in language development

Writing also facilitates the transfer of language from one generation to the next within communities.

As far as the contribution that it makes to learning, researchers in the domain of writing place a strong emphasis on its importance. For instance, Zamel (1982:197) views writing as a process of “*exploring one’s thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself what these thoughts are*”. Likewise, Raimes (1983) notes that writing aids us in the process of discovering what to say. Therefore, Raimes confirms the function of writing in enhancing learning. She declares

first, writing reinforces the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students. Second, when our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning (Raimes 1983:3).

In the same way, Rao (2007) recognizes the importance of writing in the EFL teaching. He emphasizes that writing develops the students’ capacity to summarize, analyze, criticize ideas and compels them to focus and arrange their thoughts and stimulate thinking. It also strengthens the acquisition, application and reflection of the English language. In a similar vein, scholars such as Gebhardt and Rodrigues (1989) attribute the value of writing to the fact that it integrates of both brain and sense or thinking and writing at the time of composing.

In another study, Raimes (1985) contends that writing should be seen as an effective means of producing language and as one of the language skills that must be

learned. She believes that writing is an important instrument for language acquisition. Regarding this, Hedge (1988:7) claims that it is “*an aid to learning*”. Harmer (2004:31) asserts, “*it may provoke language development*”. In a similar vein, Klein et al (2007:607) find that “*writing contributes significantly to learning during analogical reasoning*”.

Writing is essential for teaching and teachers, just as it is for learning and learners. The different skills of writing are necessarily for an effective teaching (Burton 2009). In fact, writing is important to a variety of teaching activities, including:

planning lessons, jotting down ideas, taking messages, marking students assignments, drafting class reports, editing draft of text, critique course books, designing units of works, note taking, recording the gist of meeting, feeling in assessments sheets, making journal entries, sending emails, writing up projects... and so on (Burton: 1).

Moreover, according to Burton, “*writing offers teachers a way to learn about what they do*”. Therefore, writing is essential for teaching since it helps teachers in various phases of educational process.

To sum up, writing is an extremely valuable and challenging skill. It is significant in many aspects of human life. These values are represented in the fact that it serves as a channel of communication for individuals and groups. Furthermore, it helps in language maintenance and in transferring these languages’ knowledge from one generation to the following and from a culture to another. In addition, writing stimulates a variety of skills, including, thinking which makes it a very helpful tool for learning. Hence, the roles that writing plays in various aspects of human life highlight how important it is to acquire and practice the writing skill.

2.2.2 The Writing Process

Writing is a task that requires much time and cannot be handled in just one-step. Readers expect interesting topics and clearly well-written and well-organized content rather than only correct grammar. The writer needs to think about what he is going to write before going over his writing, because writing is a complex activity that involves many thought processes all going on at once. According to scholars, there are mainly five overlapped and interrelated stages to be followed in writing. They are presented briefly below.

a) Pre-writing/Planning

The first stage is the pre-writing. According to Lipson (2005), this stage is also called the planning stage. Rohman (1965:106) describes pre-writing as “*the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his subject to himself*». It is where the writer collects data and gathers information. The writer uses various activities including reading, thinking, and drawing. These activities differ depending on what type of text you write and in what discipline you write. At this stage, the writer writes down informally and freely any idea that comes to his/her mind without focusing on the correctness or organization. According to Einstein (1935) to have a great research you need “*a desk or table, a chair, paper and pencils, and a large wastebasket so I can throw away all my mistakes*”. At the pre-writing stage, the plan is not the final draft because it can be modified; the writer can either delete or add some items, as confirmed by Lipson (2005) “*planning is the basic work of organizing your material, writing informally about them, and prepare to write a first draft*”

b) Drafting

Galko (2001) defines drafting as “*writing a rough*”. At this stage, the writer puts his ideas into complete thoughts in a form of sentences and paragraphs. The writer

focuses more on organizing and detailing the information in order to get the first version of the writing piece, rather than concentrating on the correctness of the grammatical structure and spelling mistakes, because it will be taken into consideration in the following stages.

c) Revising

According to Sommers (1982) revision is “*a process of making changes throughout the writing of a draft, changes that work to make the draft congruent with a writer’s changes intentions*”. At the revising stage, the writer should take into consideration the clearness and the appropriateness of the content of his piece of writing. He has to revise well his production to make some changes whenever needed. For instance, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, writing organization etc. He may also delete or add some ideas or a part of the paper (Applebee, et al., 1989).

There are some steps to follow when revising the paper as stated by Galko (2001), the writer has to read his paper loudly to check whether the meaning is well conveyed or not, and whether the ideas are interrelated or not. The writer should be aware of the changes and modifications to make, adding some supporting statements, delete the additional parts. The more the writer revises well his/her writing the better it will be.

d) Editing

Nordquist (2019) defines editing as a stage of the writing process in which a writer or an editor strives to improve a draft by correcting errors and making words and sentences clearer, more precise, and as effective as possible. The process of editing involves adding, deleting, and rearranging words to cut the clutter and streamline the overall structure. Editing refers to the process of reviewing writing to make sure that it conveys its points clearly and as designed and that it is free of errors. In simple words,

in the editing stage the writer should be sure that he said what he meant neatly and clearly.

e) Publishing

The last stage of the writing process involves sharing your piece of writing with the readers. The writing piece should be completed, well revised, and free of any kind of errors. The writer may use some illustrations in his/her writing in an adequate way. For instance, photographs, graphics and drawings. At this stage, the writer submits his work to the publisher.

To recapitulate, the above-mentioned stages are interconnected. If the writer follows all the instructions of each stage, he will get an efficient work with conveyed meaning.

2.2.3 Writing and Thinking

Writing and thinking are closely linked to each other, especially in academic contexts. Writing an extended text at a high level requires more than just linguistic system. It presents serious challenges to our cognitive processes related to thinking and memory. Thinking is related to writing, both are practically identical. For instance, those who write well are considered as substantive thinkers (Kellogg, 2008, p.2). Writing is putting ideas into a linear format that should ideally be coherently and cohesively ordered to allow the readers to understand what is being written.

Writing itself relies on thinking skills. It is an activity that trains and develops a variety of intellectual capabilities including conceptual, systematic, and critical thinking. Writing and thinking rely on linguistic and cognitive skills and their connection. The human mind depends on language just as much as it does on cognition.

Thinking requires cognitive processes to process the flow of thoughts, along with lexical symbols, grammatical forms and linguistic connectors for creating thought units.

When writers think about a subject or issue, writing can assist them in organizing their thoughts and gaining clarity concerning their objectives, arguments, and conclusions. Emig (1977) demonstrates the connection between writing and learning and notices that revision of student papers leads to self-directed learning and thinking. Students who complete writing or research projects use writing as a tool for documenting the data they have collected and for linking them to coherent papers. Writing and thinking in this kind of situation are related to searching the literature, reading and reviewing it, synthesizing knowledge, formulating arguments, organizing a paper. Here, writing is a method of learning about a topic and thinking about it. Thinking by writing is based on the genre used and the tasks assigned (Anderson et al., 2015).

2.2.4 Writing and Reading

The relationship between language reading and language writing has been recognized and studied. The importance of combining them has always emphasized and frequently discussed. Reading and writing are both fundamental for a successful learning. Since writing is the process of transferring knowledge in print, students must have information to communicate before they write. We do not learn to write by writing, but rather by reading. That is to say that, writing and reading have significant parallel relationship.

Earlier approaches followed a trend in literacy pedagogy that approached reading and writing as two different and distinct skills. Scholars and professionals working on ESL/EFL fields have previously acknowledged the significance of reading for the development of writing and other language skills. According to Krashen (1984),

“it is reading that gives the writer the feel for the look and texture of reader-based prose”. Therefore, Stotsky (1984 as cited in Al-Dosari 2016) identifies some consistent correlation in his research on the relationships between reading and writing skills, saying, *“better writers tend to be better readers”*, and *“better writers tend to read more than poorer writers”*, and most importantly *“better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers”*. In agreement, Tierney and Lyes (1986) state, *“selective reading experiences definitely contribute to writing performance»*. According to Salvatori (1996), reading is perceived as *“an analogue for thinking about one’s own and other’s thinking about how one’s thinking is ignited by the thoughts of others”*.

According to modern research, reading has actually become the foundation for writing because the information obtained from reading includes print-encoded messages in addition to clues about how lexical, semantic, grammatical, pragmatic, and rhetorical components of the messages combine to give meaning to the message (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005 p.31 as cited in Al-Dosari 2016). In this regard, Hirvela (2004) argues that reading and writing skills are similar in many constructs, including rhetorical structure, linguistic aspects of writing and analyzing lexical and stylistic features of writing (p.115).

Reading is one of the best strategies to get better in writing. It introduces the learners to a variety of writing styles and new ideas. Reading contains a wide range of topics that helps in learning more about the world, which you can then apply to your writing. By reading the written works of other writers, the learner can improve vocabulary, improve grammar, develop critical thinking skills and explore different writing styles.

- **Improve Vocabulary:** reading increases vocabulary, which is among the most evident advantages that reading has for writing. The learner can improve his vocabulary and have a wealth of new terms to use in his own writing by reading books, articles and looking for unknown words or learning their meaning from context clues.
- **Improve Grammar:** in addition to increasing learners' vocabulary, reading can help them become more proficient in grammar. The more the learner reads the more familiar he becomes with the correct rules of grammar. This helps the learner to apply these rules into his writing, which will help him write with fewer grammatical errors.
- **Develop Critical Thinking:** reading can help the learner strengthen his critical thinking, which will make him a better writer. For instance, when reading a novel, the reader may consider many aspects of writing critically, like the authors' use of symbolism, subtext, themes. Alternatively, when reading a non-fiction piece, the learner may find himself thinking critically about the writers' viewpoints. As he develops his critical thinking skills, he learns to evaluate what constitutes a good piece of writing. Thinking critically while reading can help the writer think critically when writing.
- **Explore Different Writing Styles:** when reading a wide variety of writing genres and forms, the reader will discover that every writer has a distinct writing style. Observe the stylistic choices that other writers make, and consider how incorporating those same styles into one's own writing, or how to combine various prevalent styles from other genres to produce a personal writing. Exploring a range of other genres and styles facilitates finding one's own unique style.

2.3 Factors behind Students Limitations in Writing

The writing skill is different comparing to the other types of language skills. As stated by Nunan (1989 as cited in Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal, 2016), writing is a cognitive

activity that requires students to pay attention to different factors in writing. Many students have troubles in combining concepts, identifying appropriate theories, correct sentence structure. The reason for these difficulties could be the insufficient level of English language proficiency among students. Furthermore, linguistic components like grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation are considered as factors that affect students' writing performance. Alfaki (2015) classifies several factors that contribute to writing problems and difficulties they are as follow:

a) The Nature of the Writing Process

According to Byrne (1988) & Heaton (1990), as cited in Alfaki (2015), writing is a complex process that demands students' proficiency in grammatical devices, conceptual thinking and judgmental elements. Writing is a challenging skill for native and non-native speakers because they must fulfill requirements for vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, structure, audience, and mechanics. The main issues of writing comprise grammatical errors, inadequate vocabulary choice, irregular verb tenses, erroneous punctuation and spelling. Writing plays a communicative and successful role in providing readers with entertainments.

b) Lack of Learners' Motivation

One of the crucial aspects of writing is deciding on the topic. Students often get bored and have difficulties with unfamiliar topics, so this makes it hard for them to write. Davis (1998) claims that students will be motivated and encouraged to write so long as they are interested in the topic. Giving students a chance to select their own topics would enhance their motivation to write.

The writing process may be negatively affected by the lack of motivation. Students who lack motivation may find writing uninteresting and difficult to develop their thoughts and ideas into written forms. This may lead to a lack of efforts and

engagement, which could result in poor writing and decreased writing performance. Moreover, students who lack motivation might be more prone to procrastinating and less likely to persist when faced with writing challenges. Generally, lack of motivation can hinder students' growth and development as writers by making writing more difficult for them to communicate their ideas and thoughts.

Richards (1989 as cited in Robinett and Shachter 1989:202) asserts that motivation to make grammatically correct sentences may not always be as strong as motivation to establish communication. Once the learners have an interest on the writing process, they are more motivated to write. If learners of a foreign language have a desire to incorporate their FL knowledge, they will become more proficient and their positive attitudes will benefit their written productions.

To produce a high quality in written English, the learners have to read in English, understand the foreign language system, and engage in frequent language practices to develop their writing skills. However, none of these will be successful unless the learners have an interest and desire to become proficient writers.

c) The Lack of Reading

Reading and writing are essential for an effective study, given that writing is the act of transferring knowledge in print. Thus, students need to have information to convey before they write. According to Krashen (2016), we learn to write by reading rather than writing. Raimi (1994) highlights the importance of using reading techniques because "*reading can do far more in the teaching of writing than simply provide subject matter for discussion and for comprehension topics*". This indicates that when students read they actively become acquainted with the new language and culture. For instance, English that they do not often speak or hear spoken face to face. She asserts that the more students read the more familiar they become with the speakers' native

language vocabulary, idioms, sentence structure, organizational flow and cultural assumptions. In other words, reading is a pre-condition for writing because it is important to its development. If one does not read often, he cannot improve his writing. The two skills are interrelated, one cannot function without affecting the other, we often read to get the information we need to include in our writing.

d) Lack of Practice

Students have to practice the languages they have learnt in order to write. Knowledge is useless if students acquire the skill without practicing it. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), writing never comes immediately; instead, it requires efforts and practice. The more students practice the skill the more they get proficiency.

e) Teachers' Feedback

Some students become perplexed by the teachers' feedback when reviewing their writing; some teachers may provide students with insufficient or vague feedback. According to Zamel (1985), teacher feedback is useful in responding to students' writing instead of examining them because some students feel anxious or afraid about their personal writing (as cited in Alfaki, 2015). Furthermore, Can (2009) adds, *"Students' lack of confidence in their writing skill might be caused by conflicting feedback provided by instructors from different departments in an institution"*.

f) Insufficient Time

Hedge (1988) states that writing activities have several stages that demand enough time. Students require time to organize their ideas, produce rough drafts, revise them, and then write the final product. According to Colions (1980 cited in El Bashir 2023), writing is determined by a number of conditions that must be satisfied at multiple levels, such as written content, paragraph format, sentence structure, and word choice. Writing requires time and efforts to organize these criteria. Time is necessary for the

formation of ideas. Raimes (1983) believes that time is an essential component of writing technique which distinguishes it from speaking. Time can be an important factor in producing coherent and cohesive writing. In addition, many teachers and students think that writing for a short period can prohibit the production of a high writing quality (Kroll, 1990).

2.4 Approaches and Methods to Investigate the Origins of Languages Interference in Writing

The analysis of students' errors is very important in applied linguistics as well as FL learners. EFL learners commit different errors, when learning a foreign language. These errors are like an obstacle for improving the learning process. Indeed, it is important to clarify the types of errors and its places in a FL. Thus, researchers suggest two main approaches to identify and analyze EFL learners' errors; they are contrastive analysis and error analysis.

2.4.1 Contrastive Analysis

Lado (1957) in his book "*linguistics across cultures*" introduced the basic concept of contrastive analysis, which suggests that if the two languages (L1/L2) are similar, the learner encounter less difficulty when learning a foreign language. While, if both languages are different the learner encounter more difficulties in learning a foreign language. It is believed that by using this type of analysis, teaching instructions could be customized depending on the demands of learners learning a particular foreign language.

CA is known as the systematic comparison of two or more languages with the goal of highlighting their similarities and differences. It has been frequently applied in

pedagogical/practical purposes. The objective has been to provide an improved descriptions and better teaching materials for language learning.

In the 1960s and 1970s, contrastive analysis was often used to figure out why certain elements of a target language were harder to learn than others. The behaviorist theory believes that forming new habits could reinforce preexisting ones. Thus, the degree to which learners' mother tongue and the language they were trying to learn differed determine how challenging it was for them to comprehend certain structures in a second language.

Contrastive analysis is thought to involve predicting and explaining the difficulties confronting EFL learners by contrasting the similarities and differences between the mother tongue and the target language (Troike 2006: 34). Research on contrastive analysis finds that errors occur when learners transfer their first language habits to a foreign language. Interference happens whenever there is mismatch between the target language and the native language. According to contrastive analysis proponents, the primary cause of errors made by learners is interference from the mother tongue. They believe that the learning issue and interference area occur at the boundary between two languages. Based on researches, it will be easier to pick up similar features than the differences between the native and target languages' elements.

The objective of CA is to figure out the distinctions between the first language and the target language to enhance the effectiveness of foreign language teaching based on the assumptions that:

- Foreign language learning is based on the mother tongue.
- Similarities promote learning (positive transfer) and differences lead to issues (negative transfer/interference).

- Difficulties can be foreseen and considered in the curriculum through contrastive analysis.

However, not every issue that contrastive analysis anticipates comes out to be hard for the learners. In contrast, contrastive analysis does not predict many errors that exist.

Error Analysis, a counter theory, consider errors in a second language acquisition as similar to first language acquisition issues, or what linguists termed “developmental errors”. By the early 1970s, CA had been replaced by EA, which examined the impact of transfer errors as well as those related to the target language (Schackne, 2002).

2.4.2 Error Analysis

Corder and colleagues (1967) developed error analysis. An alternative for contrastive analysis was error analysis. Both researchers argue that CA was unable to forecast a large number of errors, even though its more precious aspects have been integrated into the study of language transfer. Results of error analysis found that many errors are caused by incorrect assumptions made by the learners about the rules of the new language. The quest for a comprehensive theory of learner errors has mainly been abandoned, although error analysis is being utilized to investigate certain SLA issues. Brown (1994:205) made a distinction between errors and mistakes.

- A **mistake** is a performance error that can be traced to a slip-up in correctly using a known system or to random guess. Any individual make mistakes in both native and second languages situations. According to Corder in Larsen (1992), a mistake can be easily self-corrected since it is a random performance slip caused by exhaustion, excitement etc.

- **An error** is an observable deviation that indicates the learners' proficiency. It is a systematic deviation made by the learner, who has not yet mastered the rules of the foreign language. Because the error is a reflection of the learners' current stage of L2 improvement or underlying competence, the learner is unable to self-correct it (Larsen, 1992:59).

The objective of error analysis is to identify, categorize, interpret and describe the errors made by learners when they speak or write. It is used to collect information about the common challenges faced by speakers or writers. Since writing is one of the difficult skills for EFL learners to master, plenty of research has been carried out to determine the common errors made by learners. A better understanding of these errors and their causes in writing process for EFL objectives will help teachers to understand why learners have difficulties in learning a language.

a) Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are often referred to interference, transfer and cross-linguistic interference. According to Corder (1981), these errors happen when a learner's habits of his mother tongue (patterns, system, or rules) interfere or hinder his/her partially acquiring the patterns and rules of second language. Lado (1964), states that interference is the mother tongues' (L1) negative effect on the performance of the target language (L2). Chelli (2013) defines that language transfer which is caused by the learners' first language, is what results in interlingual errors. Richard (1974:173) states that if a learner of a foreign language makes errors because of his mother tongue, this is considered as interlingual errors. Brown (1980:160) adds that the learners' assumption that the forms of the second language are similar to those of their native language is the main cause of the majority of errors made by learners of second language.

According to Allen and Corder (1974), transfer error is the main cause of interlingual errors. Touchie (1986) states that mother tongue interference is mainly the source of interlingual errors. However, Al-Khresheh (2010) suggests that literal translation can be the cause of interlingual errors.

Transfer Error: an error is caused by mother tongue interference. When the learner is not familiar with the rules of the target language, he will use the first language rules.

Mother Tongue Interference: learners commit errors in their attempt to understand the structure of the target language rather than transferring models of their first language.

Literal Translation: errors occur when a learner translates idiomatic expression or sentences from his first language into the target language word by word.

b) Intralingual Errors

Learners' first language interference is not the only cause for perpetrating errors. Learners may commit errors in the target language, since they do not master it they struggle to use it. According to Richard, (1974:6) notes, intralingual interference refers to items produced by learners that indicates generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language rather than the structure of the mother tongue. Brown (1980:162) says that research has shown that the earliest stages of language learning are characterized by the prevails of interlingual transfer, but once the learner starts acquiring elements of the new system, more and more transfer generalization within the target language is manifested.

Richard (1974:120) divides the intralingual errors into four categories including over generalization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of the rules, false concept hypothesized.

1. Overgeneralization: it occurs when a learner produces non-standard structure based on his knowledge of alternative structure in the target language. Littlewood

(1984) gives the example of the plural formation even to irregular plurals by adding “s”, and generalizing the past form of “ed”.

2. Ignorance of Rule Restrictions: according to James (1998:63), ignorance is specific in that one is normally said to be ignorant of structure; the learner of a second language is unaware of the target languages’ structure. In this kind of errors, the learner misses the limitations of the current structure. Learning of rules may be the reason of some rule restriction errors, which can be explained using analogies.

3. Incomplete Application of the Rules: this error may arise when a learner does not apply the rules entirely because of the stimulus sentence.

4. False Concept Hypothesized: learners’ incorrect understanding of the differences of items in the target language leads to form wrong conceptualization. Learners’ inaccurate perception of the distinctions of target language items causes false concept hypothesis.

2.4.3 Translation

Translation is the process of transmitting texts’ ideas, meaning, or messages from one language to another. There are some considerations, which follow this process, which are connected to the translations’ accuracy, clarity and naturalness of the meaning, messages or ideas. It means that it is important to take into account whether readers of the target text will accept the same amount of information as those of the source text do. Some scholars provide some definitions of translation that clarifies these considerations.

One of the most well known definitions of translation is defined by Newmark (1988:5) “*rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text*”, this definition emphasizes on transferring the authors’

intended meaning from the source language text to the target language text. According to Hatim & Munday (2004:6) translation is “*the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to the target language (TL)*”. Nida and Taber (1982:12) state, “*translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message*”, they state clearly that translation is closely tied to the issues of language meaning and equivalence.

➤ **Word-for-word Translation**

Word-for-word translation refers to the process of rendering a text from its originating language into the target language while maintaining the exact words of the original text. It is regarded as bad translation because it does not take into consideration structural mismatches like word order and modification differences between languages.

According to Newmark (1988), word-for-word translation is meant to be an interlinear translation from the SL to the TL, where the SL is maintained and words are translated separately with their most common meaning. Word-for-word translation is mostly used to interpret a difficult text as a pre-translation procedure or for understanding the mechanics of the source language. He adds that this method is generally applied at the pre-translation stage. Translation might takes place either at the analysis stage or at the first stage of transfer. In addition, he states that the word-for-word translation method is also known as the line-to-line translation method since the words in the target text are typically positioned under the version of the source text. The translator looks up words that are equivalent from the source language in the target language, each word is translated separately either according to its overall meaning or out of context.

Word-for-word translation does not consider context although it could be useful as a starting point for the translation. Much more editing and modifications must be

done to make the meaning understandable to the reader in target language. The translator must ensure that the translation adheres to the target languages' word order and that appropriate semantic equivalents are chosen.

2.5 Conclusion

From previous discussions, it is seen that writing is a difficult skill to learn. It requires certain knowledge and information from both teachers and students to support and facilitate the teaching and learning of the writing skill. Being a proficient writer does not only demands knowledge about the skill, but also an understanding of the fundamental and theoretical principles of writing, which allow the writer to advance in the practical phase that demonstrates his/her efforts.

This chapter defines the concept of writing by exploring its importance, explaining its five stages including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and finally publishing. Therefore, this chapter explores the relationship between writing and other skills namely, reading and thinking. Moreover, it highlights the factors behind students' limitations in writing. Additionally, it presents theories of transfer including contrastive analysis and error analysis and identifying the sources of errors students' writing, which are interlingual and intralingual. The chapter ends up with a brief discussion about translation and word-for-word translation.

Part Two

Research Methodology and Field Work

Introduction

In this study, we dealt with the phenomenon of first language interference as one of the most common sources of errors made by students of English language in their writing. We tried to collect as much as possible of theoretical works related to our theme. We focused on all what is in relation to language interference and writing.

To give our research more credibility, it is important to move to something more practical. In the first chapter of the practical part, we provided a detailed theoretical background, research instruments, population and sample that we have chosen to use in this study; we explained the procedure we followed for the data collection. At the end of this chapter, we will elucidate the results and findings of our research instruments in a general way.

The second chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the students' questionnaire and test in a very detailed way.

In the last chapter of this part, we will discuss the results of this study carefully. We will explain the limitations we encountered over this research, in addition to some recommendations.

Chapter One

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

1. Theoretical Background

The theoretical background is an essential step in conducting any research. It refers to the framework and theoretical tools to analyze experiments or studies. It provides the necessary theoretical foundation for understanding, defining concepts and interpreting the results presented in a research.

Different studies have been conducted on language interference, and many definitions are proposed since interference is a reality in the process of second language learning. Among the different models, approaches and theories of L1 interference, we have chosen Beardsmore theory being the most appropriate one for our research. First language interference is investigated according to Beardsmore's (1982) ideas and theories. As previously introduced in the first chapter, language interference is the reason behind students' limitations in writing; it occurs when learners apply their L1 rules in learning the FL. Beardsmore (1982) argues that a learner has difficulties in second language such as phonology, vocabulary, and grammar due to the interference of habits from L1 to L2. This means that learners of a foreign language tend to transfer the forms, meaning, words, structures and even the culture of their first language to the FL when they attempt to speak or write in the target language.

1. Research Methodology

The current study aims to shed light on the first language interference in learning English as a foreign language writing skill and to explore the causal factors behind it. In our study, a mixed method approach is adopted, which means that the research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. This methodology of research is used because it seems more appropriate to reach our research aim.

The data of this research is collected through a questionnaire in order to describe the students' attitude towards the investigated subject, and a test, which consists of analyzing the written paragraphs of the students to identify the different types of errors made by students because of their L1 interference.

2. Description of the Research Instruments

The data collection instruments used in our study were a questionnaire to see to what degree the L1 interference affects the foreign language writing skill, and to describe the students' attitudes and opinions towards the investigated topic, and a test to identify the different types of errors committed by the learners in their writings. The both tools are used to give reliable findings about the research. They are explained with more details below.

3.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was the quantitative tool used in our research. It consists of 17 questions; some questions are close-ended where students are required to tick the appropriate answer. Some other questions are semi-open-ended, in which the students are asked to give a justification and more details about their choice of answer.

The questionnaire is composed of three sections. The first section contains four questions about students' background information. The first two questions are about students' gender and age, the third question is about the choice of studying the English language, and the last one is about the opinions of the students concerning their level of English in general.

The second section consists of seven questions about the writing skill. The first two questions are about the reading and writing frequency. Moreover, students were asked about their level of writing, in addition to their viewpoint about the easiness of the writing skill, and the three last questions investigate the difficulties faced by students when writing.

The third and last section contains six questions. It tackles the influence of first language on students' English writing. In the first question, students were asked whether they think in their mother tongue, English or other language when composing in English. The next three questions are about the use of the L1 and the translation from the students' mother tongue in their English writings and the benefit of the use of L1 in the classroom. The last two questions are concerned with the reason behind the use of L1 in students' writing and students' opinion about the influence of L1 in their writings.

The questionnaire was distributed on Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, with the permission of Mr. Arrache, at the beginning of the session. The number of the students who were present and answered the questionnaire is 21.

3.2 The Students' Test

The test is the qualitative tool used in our study. Since our research topic deals with the writing skill, we found that the most suitable tool for gathering information is to ask students to write small productions.

Each student was required to write a small paragraph about a topic of his/her interest. Because of the limited time for writing the paragraphs, we have tried to help them by proposing some topics. The main objective of this test is to detect the use of L1 in their writing and identifying the different types of errors committed by EFL learners.

The students' test was collected on Wednesday, March 20th, 2024, with the permission of Mrs. Slimi. The number of students who were present and wrote the short paragraphs is 19 students.

3. Procedures for Data Collection

For having a good research, a careful procedure is needed. For that, the data collection of our study was taken gradually. Our research deals with investigating the effects of languages interference on EFL learners' writings. For achieving our research objective, we have chosen to use a questionnaire and a test (written paragraphs) which we found the most suitable and appropriate tools for our data collection. The second group of the first year EFL students was chosen randomly to answer the questionnaire and to write the paragraphs.

The first instrument we used in our procedure for data collection was a test in which the students were required to write small paragraphs. It was a little bit difficult to find all the group members present since it was the end of the semester. For this reason, we were obliged to talk with Mrs. Slimi; a teacher of written expression module to inform the students to be present on March 20th, 2024. The number of the students who attended the lecture were 19 students.

The paragraphs were written at the last 15 minutes of the session. Because of the insufficient time given to students, they were confused about what to write, so we tried to help them by suggesting some topics in order to gain time. We asked them to write their own ideas without using any other tools like dictionaries or smart phones.

Based on the written paragraphs of the students, which were full of different errors, we found that it is important to use a questionnaire as another tool. It would allow us to know more about the students' attitudes towards the L1 interference in their productions and to make sure that the main reason behind those errors are due to the first language interference.

The questionnaire took place on April 16th, 2024, at the first 15 minutes of the grammar session with Mr. Arrache. The students were invited to answer the questions sincerely and seriously because they are important for our study to get more reliable and more

valid data. Some questions were not clear for some students; we tried to explain them well to make the students understand.

4. Population and Sample

For the purpose of obtaining the needed information concerning the problem of L1 interference of first year students in their writings in the English Department at the university of Abdrrahmane Mira, Bejaia. The second group, which consists of 21 students, were chosen randomly to answer the questionnaire. The group includes 18 females and 3 males, aged between 18-21 years; all of them were Kabyle native speakers. 19 students from the same group were asked to write short paragraphs. The choice of the sample was based on the perception that most of first year students encounter several difficulties in their English writing because of the first language interference.

They also speak other languages at varying degrees of competence. These languages include Arabic and French. Arabic is the official language of Algeria since 1963 and today it is spoken by approximately 81% of the Algerian population. All the official documents are printed in Arabic. People from non-Arabic households are taught the Arabic language in schools at a very early age. Although French has no official status in Algeria it still often taught in schools, higher education and used in government. The large majority of the country can understand, speak, read and write in French language. Our sample is considered as multilingual since they use Arabic and French in parallel with Kabyle which is their mother tongue.

6. Results and Findings of the Research

6.1 The Findings of the Students' Questionnaire and Test

6.1.1 General Findings of the Questionnaire

Section One

Table 01: Students' Background Information

Question	Answer	Number	Percentage
What is your gender?	Male	03	14.28%
	Female	18	85.71%
	Total	21	100%
Did you choose to study English language with conviction?	Yes	14	66.66%
	No	07	33.33%
	Total	21	100%
How could you evaluate your level of English?	Very good	2	9.52%
	Good	12	57.14%
	Average	6	28.57%
	Low	1	4.76%
	Total	21	100%

Section Two

Table 02: The Writing Proficiency

Question	Answer	Number	Percentage
1)-How often do you read?	Always	04	19.04%
	Sometimes	05	23.80%
	Rarely	12	57.14%
	Total	21	100%
2) How often do you write?	Always	04	19.04%
	Sometimes	10	47.61%
	Rarely	07	33.33%
	Total	21	100%

3) Do you think that your level of English writing is?	Very good	02	9.52%
	Good	13	61.90%
	Average	03	14.28%
	Weak	03	14.28%
	Total	21	100%
4) Do you find that writing is an easy task?	Yes	15	71,42%
	No	06	28,57%
	Total	21	100%
5) Among the different writing stages, which one you do not follow in your academic writing?	Pre-writing	05	23.80%
	drafting	05	23.80%
	Revising	04	19.04%
	Editing	00	00.00%
	Publishing	07	33.33%
Total	21	100%	
6) - In which aspects of writing do you find difficulties?	Vocabulary	08	38.09%
	Grammar	08	38.09%
	Spelling	05	23.80%
	All of them	00	00.00%
	Total	21	100%
7)-Do you face difficulties when expressing your ideas in English language?	Yes	13	61.90%
	No	8	38.09%
	Total	21	100%

Section Three

Table 03: First Language Interference

Question	Answer	Number	Percentage
When writing in English do you think in mother tongue, English, other language?	Mother tongue	08	38,09%
	English	07	33,33%
	Other language	06	28,57%
	total	21	100%
When you do not understand something do you prefer first language explanation or English clarification?	First language explanation	14	66.66%
	English clarification	07	33.33%
	Total	21	100%

Is the translation from your mother tongue to the English language useful in writing?	Yes	13	61,90%
	No	08	38,09%
	Total	21	100%
Do you think that the use of L1 in the classroom beneficial?	Yes	12	57,14%
	No	09	42,85%
	Total	21	100%
According to you what is the reason behind the use of your L1 in writing?	1 you face difficulties in formulating ideas in pure English.	07	33,33%
	2 you have limited knowledge of English vocabulary.	12	57,14%
	3 you think that it helps you in your writing.	02	9,52%
	Total	21	100%
Do you think that your first language has negative influence on your English writhing proficiency?	Yes	12	57,14%
	No	09	42,85%
	Total	21	100%

6.1.2 General Findings of the Test

Types of Errors

Table 01: Spelling Errors

Types of errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Spelling	Personne, developpe, invente, caractere, paragraphe, periode, objectif, oncles, positif, importante, profite, probleme, visite.	Person, develop, invent, character, paragraph, period, objective, uncles, positive, important, profit, problem, visit.

Table 02: Syntactic Errors

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Syntactic Errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is differ. - . Also it helps. - . Also I like. - Not just that. - It is a masterpiece and also the best invention. - Man wise. - Joke funny. - My oncles who live abroad, my sister who also live abroad. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Differs. -Besides, it helps. -Moreover, I like. -In addition to. -It is a masterpiece and the best - invention. -Wise man. -Funny joke. -My uncles and my sister who live abroad.

Table 03: Semantic Errors

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Semantic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I prepare the table of souhour. -I prepare my woudhou. -in my way I throw the basket. -reading is a very important thing that we should respect it. -I don't have a stable hobby. -I have many energy. - so me I have many hoppys such as me I like discovered new thinks in the world and I like practice sport because I was practice sport sinse I was young and I like run because I have many energy. - We have the opportunity to approach to God. - Allah subhanawataala. - The prophet Mohammad sallaallahalayhiwasallam. - To give charity for those in need and what we have. - Approxing with people and God. - Muslims stop all the negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I prepare breakfast. - I perform ablution. - I throw the trash. - Reading is a very important skill that we should appreciate. - I do not have a specific hobby. - I am energetic. - I have many hobbies including practicing sport, which I used to do since my childhood. I like running because it gets my energy out. -We have the opportunity to become closer to God. - May God be praised and exalted. - The prophet Mohammad peace and blessings of God be upon him. - To give people valuable things in order to help them. - To become closer to people and God. - Muslims are prohibited from every

	<p>things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fasting is a must. - To eliminate boredom. - I waste my free time on watching TV. - You should profit your time in doing sport. - Doing make up. - The shahada. - Allah. - I see it as a way to calm down. - Football has influenced my life by teaching me valuable life skills. - It is a fantastic way to make new friends. - It helps to low sugar blood. - fasting can be difficult in the beginning of the month because we are not adopted to it but after that it will become easy. - Unbelievable sensation. 	<p>negative thing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fasting is a duty. - To get rid of boredom. - I spend my free time on watching TV. - You should take advantage to practice sport. - Putting make up. - Testimony. -God. - I consider it as a way to calm down. - My life has been influenced by football since it has provided me important life values. - It gives me the chance to meet new people and build new relationship. - It helps on reducing blood sugar level. - Fasting seems to be difficult at the beginning because we are not used to it yet, but as the days pass, it becomes less difficult. - Unbelievable feelings.
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Table 04: Article Errors

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The God - The Ramadan. - the Muslims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -God. -Ramadan. -Muslims.

From the analysis above, we have found that the students committed different types of errors in their writings. Mainly, most of errors made by students are due to the interference of their first language (Kabyle). The linguistic aspects of writing we analyzed are semantic,

syntactic, spelling and articles being the aspects in which the interference occurs in our findings.

When analyzing the students' compositions, we have noticed that they often interfere from Arabic and French languages since they studied them since an early age (10 years French language), (12 years Arabic language); this means that they have a long contact with both languages before studying English at the university. The Arabic language is the official national language of Algeria. It is the second language for most Kabyle people. That is the reason behind the Arabic interference in the students' writings.

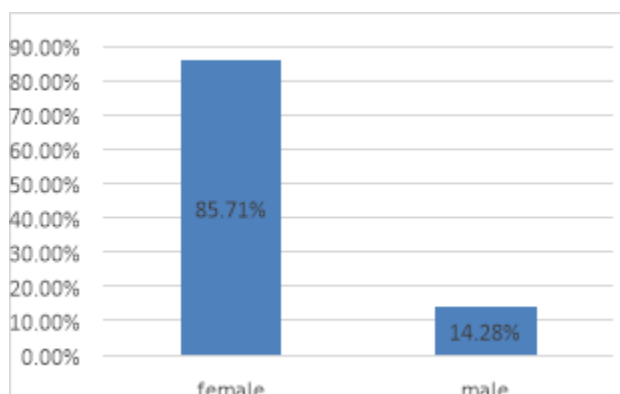
The French language was inherited from the French colonization, which lasted a very long time (1830-1962). Although there is no France any more in Algeria but their language still exists until now. Its status is much strong that it is continuously increasing; it is used in various domains such as industry, media, administrations, education, etc. In Kabyle society, the language spoken by most if not all people remains a mixture of Kabyle and French languages.

Chapter Two

Analysis of the Research Findings

1. Detailed Findings of the Questionnaire

Question 01: Students' Gender



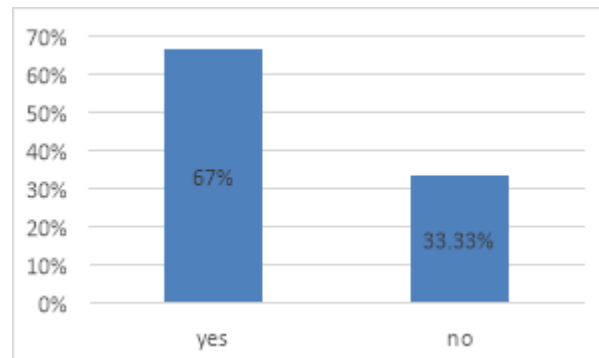
Graph 01: Students' Gender

The majority of the sample are females (N18) that represent (85, 71 %) of the whole sample, while the male subject (N3) with the percentage of (14, 28%) attended this work. This shows that the population is mainly composed of the females particularly in foreign language learning. When it comes to language learning there are many theories for the reason behind this gender gap. The most popular theory is that girls and boys process languages differently. It has been proven that when learning languages girls' brains show greater activity than males.

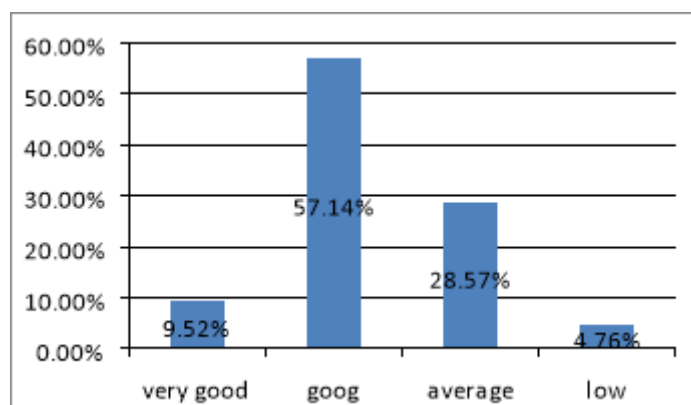
Question 02: Students' Age

The sample is aged between 18 and 21 years old.

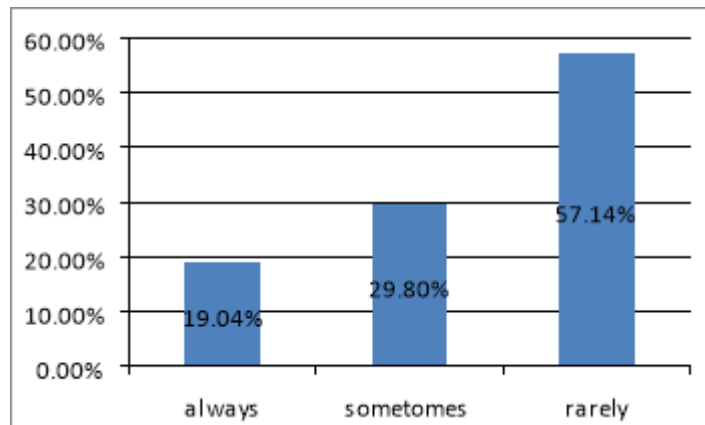
The mean is 18.

Question 03: Students' Choice of English**Graph 02:** Students' Choice of English

The larger part of the sample (66.66%) answered by “yes”, the rest of the students (33.33%) opted for “no”. From these results, we can deduce that most of the students are interested in studying the English language. In contrast, only 07 from 21 students that represent (33, 33%) studied English without conviction.

**Graph 03:** Students' Evaluation of their English Level**Question 04:** Students' Evaluation of their English Level

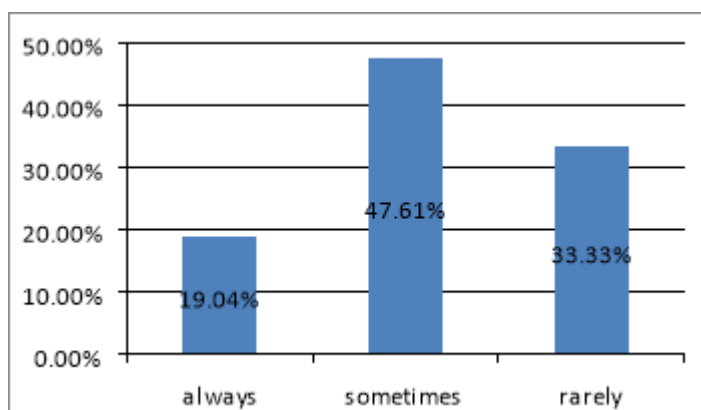
Based on the results obtained, we notice that the majority of the students believe that they have a good level in English with a percentage of (57.14%). However, (28.57%) of the sample think that they have an average level; while (9.52%) think that they have a very good level in English and only (4, 76%) indicate that they have a low level.



Graph 04: The Frequency of Reading

Question 05: The Frequency of Reading

According to the results indicated in the table, (57.14%) of the participants rarely read books, while (23, 80%) of them read books from time to time, and only (19, 04%) of the students always read books. The results show that more than half of the students undervalue the importance of reading skill although its importance for the improvement of the writing skill. The both skills goes in parallel, there is no good writing without reading.

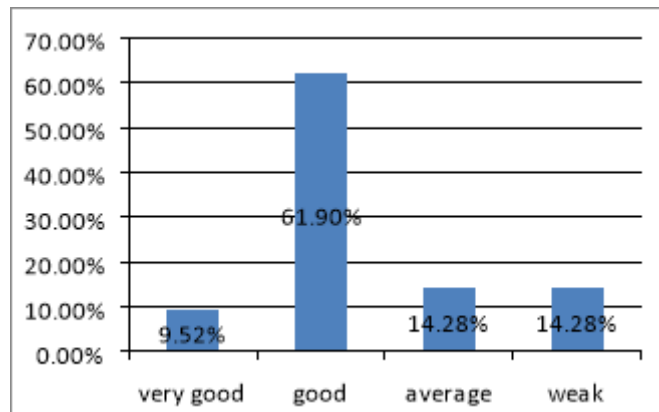


Graph 05: The Frequency of Writing

Question 06: the frequency of writing

The findings show that the majority of the sample (47.61%) write occasionally, whereas (33.33%) Of the students rarely write and few of them with the percentage of (19.04%) read every time. From these results, we conclude that most EFL learners do not

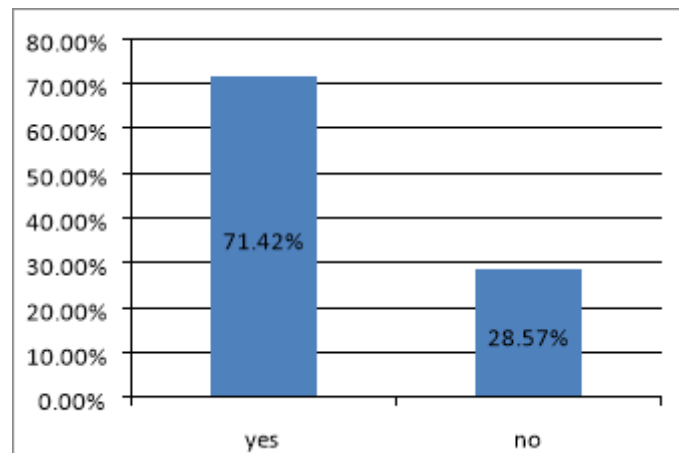
consider the importance of the writing skill. Practicing writing is the basis for having a good style and a rich piece of writing.



Graph 06: Students’ Thinking about their English Writing

Question 07: Students’ Thinking about their English Writing

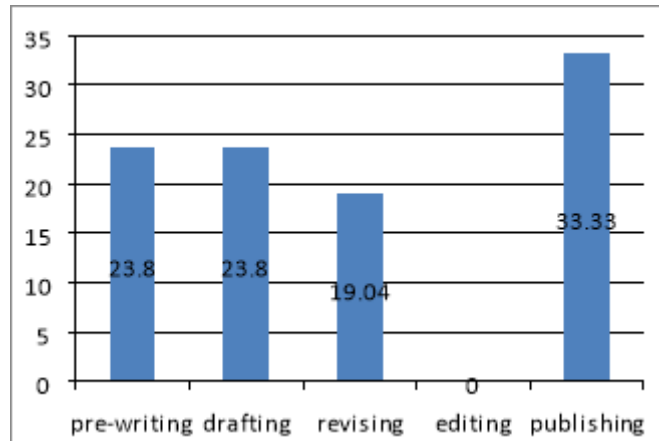
The results in the table show that the large number of the participants (61, 90%) think that their level of English writing is good. However, the same number of students with the percentage of (14, 28%) claimed that their level of writing is average and weak. The minority (9, 52%) of the students believed that they have a very good level of writing.



Graph 07: Students’ Opinion about the Easiness of Writing

Question 08: Students' Opinion about the Easiness of Writing

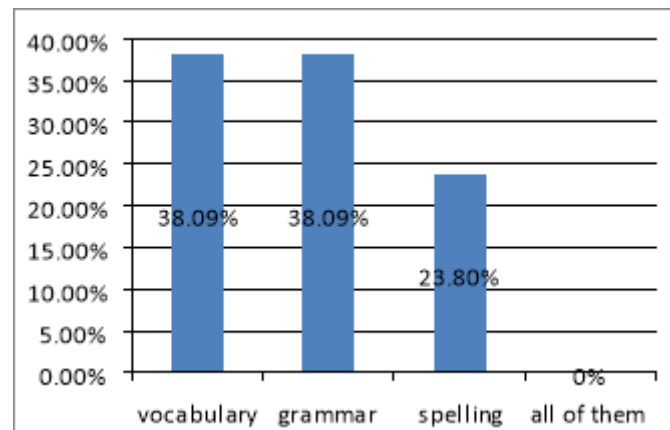
From the results obtained, the majority of the students (71, 42%) find that writing skill is an easy task. In contrast, the minority of the students (28, 57%) find that writing is a complex skill to master.



Graph 08: Stages of Writing that the Students do not follow

Question 09: Stages of Writing that Students do not Follow

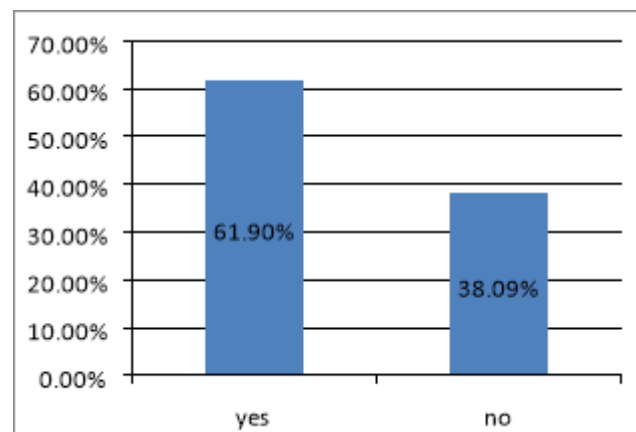
The findings point out that most of students (33.33%) do not follow the publishing stage of writing and around (23, 80%) do not precede the pre-writing and drafting stages. However, (19, 04%) do not give much importance to the revising stage which is considered as one of the most important stages of writing for having a good piece of writing. No one (00.00%) opted for the editing stage. From the results, we can understand that students just write and put down their ideas in the paper without paying attention to the different important stages.



Graph 09: Students' difficulties in the Aspects of Writing

Question 10: Students' Difficulties in the Aspects of Writing

Among the responses, there were (38, 09 %) of students who face difficulties in the aspect of vocabulary. The same rate (38, 09%) of the sample find that grammar is a complex aspect in writing. There are only (23, 83%) of the participants who have difficulties in spelling and no one answered for the option of "all of them". Vocabulary and grammar which are the most needed and important components in writing, students still face difficulties in using the appropriate vocabulary and the correct grammar.



Graph 10: Students' Difficulties when Expressing their Ideas in English

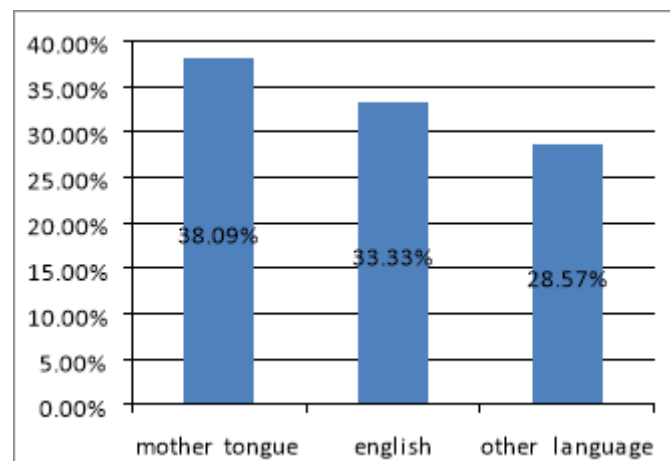
Question 11: Student's Difficulties when Expressing their Ideas in English

Based on the results obtained, the large number of the participants (61, 90%) find difficulties when expressing their ideas in English language because of different reasons namely the lack of self-confidence, lack of vocabulary and ideas and because of shyness.

Justification in case of "yes"

There are 13 out of 21 students answered by "yes", they have justified their answers as follow:

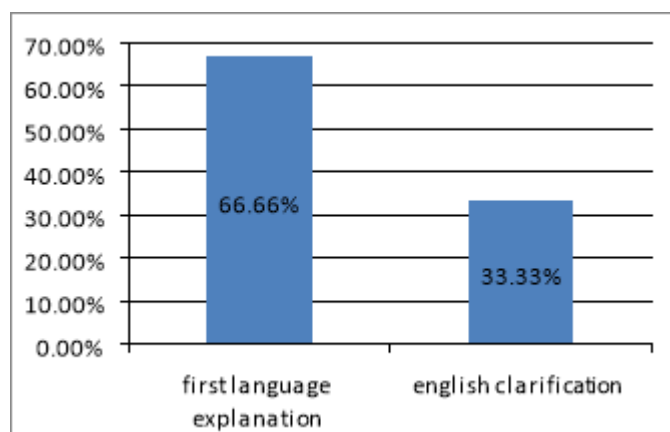
- *"I don't have a good vocabulary and appropriate words to express and explain my ideas" (8 students).*
- *"Because I think and I speak in French more than English. Therefore, I find difficulties to express my ideas in English" (02 students).*
- *"Because we don't often use English and it is the 2nd foreign language" (02students).*
- *"Because I am shy a little bit" (01 student).*



Graph 11: Students' thinking when Writing

Question 12: Students' Thinking when Writing

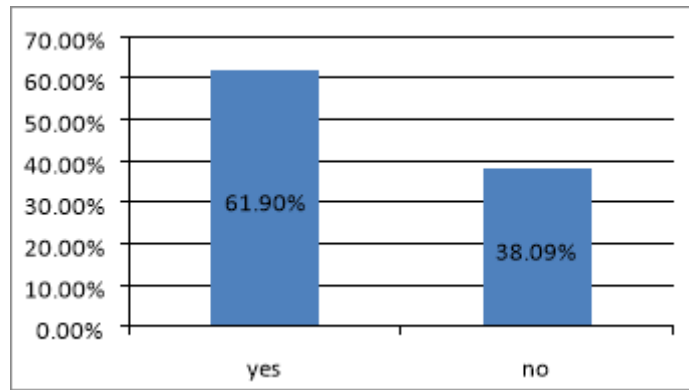
The results of this question show that the great number of students (38, 09%) think in their mother tongue when producing in English. However, (33, 33 %) of them claimed that they think in English when they write in English language. Among the participants there are 06 out of 21 students that represent (28,57%) who think in other languages when composing in English, 03 of them claimed that they think in French, 02 other students think in French and Arabic and only one student said that he think in German. From the findings, it is noticed that students do not interfere just from their mother tongue, which is Kabyle, but also from both Arabic and French, which are acquired since an early age before English.



Graph 12: Students' Choice in Case of Lack of Understanding

Question 13: Students' Choice in Case of Lack of Understanding

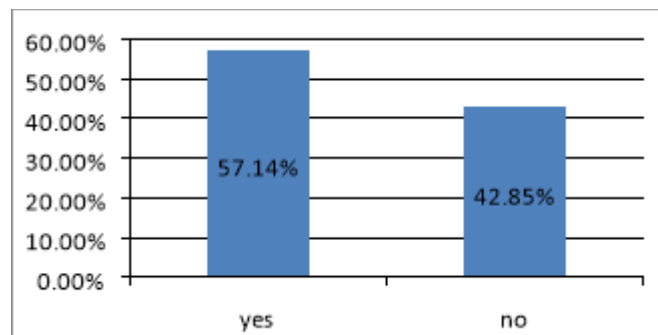
It is observed that the majority of the students (66, 66%) prefer first language explanation when they do not understand something in English. However, the minority of the students (33, 33%) mentioned that when they do not understand something in English they prefer an English clarification. From these results, we can deduce that most of the participants rely more on their first language to fulfill their lacks in English language.



Graph 13: Students' Opinions about Using Translation from their Mother Tongue

Question 14: Students' Opinions about Using Translation from their Mother Tongue

The major part of the participants (61, 90%) find that translation from their mother tongue is helpful in English writing, probably because they cannot express their ideas accurately, so they tend to use translation as a facilitating tool when writing. While, the rest of students (38, 09%) do not prefer to use translation from their mother tongue when writing in English. Unfortunately, EFL students are not aware of the negative influence that their mother tongue has in the developments of their writing process.



Graph 14: The Use of L1 in the Classroom

Question 15: The Use of L1 in the Classroom

From the results achieved, it is indicated that (57, 14 %) of the participants think that the use of L1 in the classroom is beneficial for them. However, (42, 85%) of the students do not prefer to use the L1 in the classroom; they think that it is useless.

- **Justification in case of “yes”**

11 out of 12 students justified their answers by:

07 students justified their answer by saying that the use of L1 in the classroom is beneficial because *“it helps them in better understanding and learning the English language”*.

01 student justified by *“teacher always speaks in English”*

02 students think that the use of L1 is beneficial because *“it helps them in learning the basis and rules of English”*.

01 student justified his choice saying, *“it improves our skills in English”*.

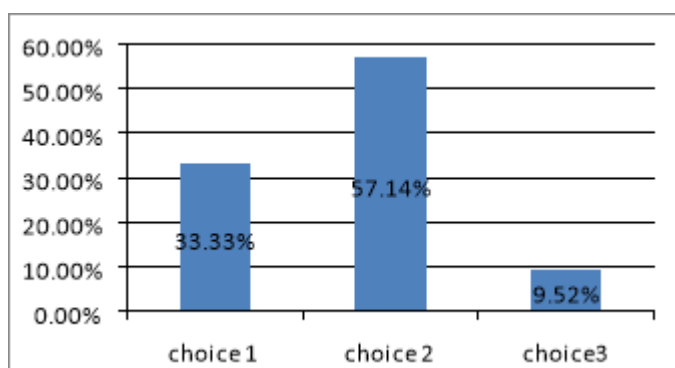
- **Justification in case of “no”:**

05 out of 09 justified their answer by:

01 student justified his answer by saying that *“the more you use your mother tongue in the classroom the more hard it is for you to speak in another language”*.

03 students prove their choice by *“when using the L1 in the classroom we can't learn and improve our English”*.

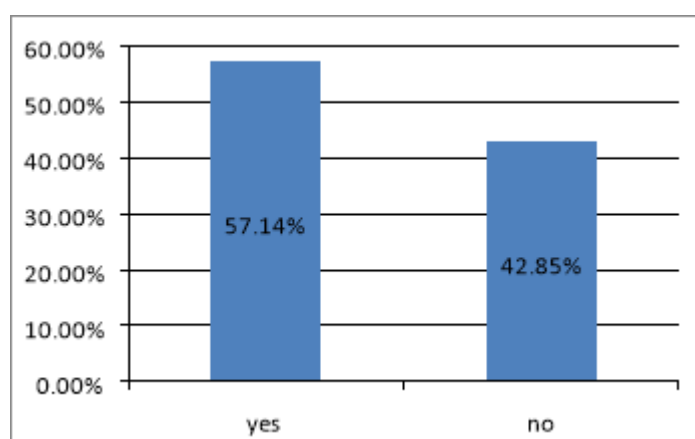
01 student give a justification for his answer saying, *“there are no similarities between the two languages”*.



Graph 15: The Reason behind the Use of L1 in Writing

Question 16: The Reason behind the Use of L1 in Writing

Among the responses, there are (57, 14%) who choose the second statement in which they use the first language in their writings because they have a limited knowledge of English vocabulary. (33, 33%) of the students opt for the first statement in which they use their first language because they are not able to formulate an idea or a sentence in pure English. Last (9, 52%) of the students choose the third suggestion in which they think that it helps them in their writings. The results indicate that the majority of EFL students really have a limited vocabulary in English language because of many reasons including interference, lack of reading and lack of practicing the writing skill.



Graph 16: The Influence of L1 in English Writing

Question 17: The Influence of L1 on English Writing

(57, 14 %) of the sample think that the first language has a negative influence on the English writing proficiency. Contrary to (42, 85%) of the students who find that the first language does not affect negatively their English writing proficiency.

- **Justification in case of “yes”:**

11 out of 12 students justified their answer.

04 students think that L1 “*is like an obstacle in learning and developing the English writing*”.

03 students justified their answers saying, “*when using the L1 each time the English vocabulary will not develop*”.

03 students see that L1 affects negatively their writings because “*the aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary of English language and mother tongue are not similar and this leads to committing different errors when writing in English*”.

01 student said that “*he cannot formulate his ideas in English because he think and translate from his fist language*”.

2. Detailed Findings of the Students’ Test

Table 01: Results of Paragraph 1

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct Form
Semantic	-Iprepare the table of souhour. -Iprepare my whoudhou. -In my way I throw the basket.	-I prepare breakfast. -I perform ablution. -I throw the trash.

In this paragraph, the student made errors only at the level of semantic. Interference from Kabyle and Arabic languages are shown in the table above. The interference can be seen in kabyle thinking in formulating English sentences, “in my way I throw the basket”, “I prepare the table of souhour”. In addition to the use of Arabic interference that appears in the words “souhour”, “whoudhou”, which should be translated into English as “breakfast”, “ablution”.

Table 02: Results of Paragraph 02

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	- Personne.	-Person
Syntax	-Is differ. -. Also it helps....	-Differs -Besides, it helps.....
Semantic	-Reading is a very important thing that we should respect it.	-Reading is a very important skill that we should appreciate.

The second paragraph shows that the student made errors in spelling, semantic and syntax. The spelling error occurs in the word “personne”, which is interference of the French language. Kabyle thinking can be seen in the semantic error made by the student; the sentence “reading is a very important thing that we should respect it” should be “reading is a very important skill that we should appreciate”. Regarding the L1 interference of the syntactic errors, it appears in the word “is differ” and the word “also” that cannot be preceded by a full stop in English language.

Table 03: Results of Paragraph 03

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	-Personne, developpe, invente, caracter.	-Person, develop, invent, character.
Semantic	-I don't have a stable hobby.	-I do not have a specific hobby.

The most committed errors in this production are those of French interference at the level of spelling (see the table above). This interference occurs because the two language (French and English) are descended from the same language which is “Latin”. We have found just one semantic error in the sentence “I don't have a stable hobby” which is as well interfered from French.

Table 04: Results of Paragraph 04

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	-Paragraphe	-Paragraph
Syntax	. Also I like read	-Moreover, I like to read
Semantic	-I have many energy - So me I have many hobbys such as me I like discovered new thinks in the world and I like practice sport because I was practice sport since I was young and I like run because I have	-I am energetic -I have many hobbies including practicing sport, which I used to do since my childhood. I like running because it gets my energy out.

	many energy. -I like improve my skills in speaking because I like speak especially speaking English.	-I like to improve my English speaking skill.
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The majority of the errors in this piece of writing are those of semantic, in which the way of expressing ideas and the style used are interfered from Kabyle language (L1) (see the table above). The sentence “.also I like read” contains a syntactic error, which is “also”, in English language it is not correct to write “also” after a full stop because it is a joining word. The spelling error that appears in the word “paragraphe” is interfered from French language.

Table 05: Results of Paragraph 05

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	-Periode	-Period
syntax	-Not just that	-In addition to
semantic	-We have the opportunity to approach to God	-We have the opportunity to become closer to God.

The writer of this written expression made one error in syntax, one error in semantic, and one error in spelling. The syntactic error “not just that” is interference from Kabyle language, it can be replace by “in addition to” which is more appropriate. The semantic error occurs at the level of the word “approach” and the spelling occurs in the word “periode” are interfered from the French language.

Table 06: Results of Paragraph 06

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
	-Allah soubhana wa taala -The prophet Mohammad salla allah alayhi wa sallam	-May God be praised and exalted -The prophet Mohammad peace and blessings of God be upon

Semantic	-To give charity for those in need and what we have -Approxing with people and God	him _To give people valuable things in order to help them. _To become closer to people and God.
Spelling	-Objectif	-Objective.

The majority of the errors that this student committed are semantic errors, and there is only one spelling error that comes from French interference. The two first semantic errors are purely Arabic interference (see the table above), while the two others are from L1 interference.

Table 07: Results of Paragraph 7

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	-Importante	-Important
Semantic	-Muslims stop all the negative things -Fasting is a must	-Muslims are prohibited from every negative thing -Fasting is a duty
Articles	-The God -The Ramadan -The Muslims	-God -Ramadan -Muslims

The student who wrote this paragraph made errors at the level of articles, semantic and spelling. “The Muslims”, “the God”, “the Ramadan” are interference of French language; the student used the article “the” as an equivalence for “le” in French language. Spelling error is also interfered from French language. The Kabyle thinking is seen at the level of semantic errors.

Table 08: Results of Paragraph 8

Types of errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Syntax	-It is a masterpiece and also the best invention.	-It is a masterpiece and the best invention.

There is only one syntactic error in this paragraph. The interference is from Arabic, it can be seen in the joining words “and also” which cannot be used in English language because they have the same function.

Table 09: Results of Paragraph 9

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Spelling	-Profite	-Profit
Semantic	-To eliminate boredom -I waste my free time on watching TV -You should profit your time in doing sport	-To get rid of boredom -I spend my free time on watching TV -You should take advantage to practice sport

Most errors committed in this production are semantic errors. All of them are interfered from Kabyle language (see the table above). One spelling error found in this paragraph, which is the word “profite” that should be written “profit”; this is French interference.

Table 10: Results of Paragraph 10

Types of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Syntax	-Man wise -Joke funny	-Wise man -Funny joke
Spelling	-Probleme	-Problem

The student made errors at the level of syntax (word order system) “noun, adjective” which is the structure of Kabyle Language, contrary to the English word order “adjective, noun”. This is shown in the words “man wise” instead of saying “wise man” in which the adjective should come before the noun in English. “joke funny” instead of saying “funny joke” according to the English word order. This kind of errors happen in the

students' writing due to the negative interference from their first language. Spelling error occurs in the word "probleme" comes from French.

Table 11: Results of Paragraph 11

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Semantic	-Doing make up	-Putting make up

One semantic error occurs in this composition, which appears in the sentence "doing make up" which should be "putting make up". Here the student interfered from his L1.

Table 12: Results of Paragraph 12

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Syntax	-My oncles who live abroad, my sister who also live abroad.	- My uncles and my sister who live abroad.
Spelling	-Oncles.	- Uncles

In this paragraph, there is only one syntactic error and one spelling error. The syntactic error mentioned in the table above refers to the L1 interference, which appears in the way of expressing the idea. The spelling error in the word "oncles" is obviously interfered from French language.

Table 13: Results of Paragraph 13

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Semantic	-The shahada -Allah	-Testimony -God

The two semantic errors in this paragraph are interfered from Arabic language. The word “shahada” which should be “testimony” and the word “allah” which should be “God”.

Table 14: Results of Paragraph 14

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Semantic	-I see it as a way to calm down	-I consider it as a way to calm down
Spelling	-Positif	-Positive

One semantic and one spelling errors occurred in this production. The semantic error is due to the Kabyle thinking, “I see it”. As usually, the spelling error is interfered from the French language.

Table 15: Results of Paragraph 15

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Semantic	-Football has influenced my life by teaching me valuable life skills. -It's a fantastic way to make new friends.	-My life has been influenced by football since it has provided me important life values. -It gives me the chance to meet new people and build new relationships.

We found two semantic errors in this piece of writing; the two are because of the first language interference, which affect the students' way of thinking in formulating these ideas.

Table 16: Results of Paragraph 16

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Spelling	-Develope	-Develop
Semantic	-Allah -It helps to low sugar blood	-God -It helps on reducing blood sugar level

	-Fasting can be difficult in the beginning of the month because we are not adopted to it but after that it will become easy.	-Fasting seems to be difficult at the beginning because we are not used to it yet, but as the days pass, it becomes less difficult
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The student who wrote this paragraph made three semantic errors and one spelling error. As the table above shows, the first semantic error is a clear interference from Arabic language. The two others are interfered from the students' L1, this interference is due to the way of thinking in formulating and expressing the ideas. The spelling error comes from French language interference.

Table 17: Results of Paragraph 17

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Spelling	-Importante	-Important

There is only one spelling error in this production. It is interfered from the French language.

Results of Paragraph 18

When analyzing this paragraph, we have found some errors but they are not related to interference. Probably, this paragraph belongs to the student who answered in the questionnaire that his level of English is very good and that he thinks in English when producing.

Table 18: Results of Paragraph 19

Types of Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
Spelling	-Visite.	-Visit.
Semantic	-Unbelievable sensation.	-Unbelievable feeling.

The semantic error, which we found that it is interfered from the French language appeared in the word “sensation” which can be replaced with the suitable English word “feeling”. The student used the word “visite” instead of the word “visit”; this is due to the interference of the French language.

Chapter Three

Analysis and Discussion of the Research Findings

1. Discussion of the Students Questionnaire

The main objective of the questionnaire is to have a closer view about the students' attitude towards L1 interference in the writing skill. We have used this tool because it is the most appropriate way to reach our research aim.

From the analysis of the students' questionnaire, the results obtained show that the population is mainly composed of the females, particularly in foreign language learning. This gender gap can be explained by the theory, which says that girls' brain show greater activity than males when learning languages. We have noticed that the major part of the students are interested and motivated in studying the English language because they believe that they have a good level in this language.

The majority of the students think that the writing skill is an easy task, that is why they ignore the practice of writing and reading, which are fundamental for mastering the English language. Unfortunately, students are wrong in their thinking because this ignorance leads them to face many difficulties when writing and expressing themselves and their ideas mainly at the level of vocabulary and grammar. Beardsmore (1982) states that learners encounter difficulties at the level of phonology, vocabulary and grammar due to the interference of their L1. Despite the great importance of the pre-writing and drafting stages, many students do not give them much importance. This undervalue makes their writings lack cohesion, coherence, clarity and not structured.

Through the analysis of the students' questionnaire, we noticed that the high number of students think in their mother tongue when composing in English, and some of them think in English. We have found that there are some students who think in French and Arabic because they were acquired since an early age. It is observed that (66, 66%) of the students prefer first language explanation when they do not understand something in

English language. From the both results, we can say that students rely on their first language when they write in English and their L1 dominates their thinking.

The main part of the students believe that translation from their mother tongue in their writings and the use of L1 in the classroom is useful and beneficial because they think that it helps them to understand and facilitate learning. According to the majority of the students, the main reason behind the use of L1 is the limited knowledge of their English vocabulary. Because of this limitation, (57, 14%) of the students believe that the first language interference has a negative influence on their English writing proficiency.

According to the third section of the questionnaire where we combined between L1 interference and writing, we were able to reach our goal and to answer the research questions.

2. Discussion of the Students' Test

The analysis of first year EFL learners' written productions reveals that they make a significant number of errors that occur in different linguistic aspects of writing skill when composing. Since the objective of our study is to identify and analyze the committed errors made by the learners because of L1 interference and to investigate the causal factors that lead them to interfere from their first language. This section intends to show the findings which aim to give an answer to the research questions. The written paragraphs were carefully analyzed to find the errors and their sources.

From the analysis and interpretation of the students written paragraphs, we have found that interference from their L1 really exists. Beardsmore (1982) suggests that language interference is the reason behind students' limitations in writing. However, we have noticed that they also interfere from the Arabic and the French languages. Actually, we have expected this before, since Algeria in general and Kabyle in specific is a

multilingual society, in which both languages are used frequently almost in all domains such as administrations, education, etc. As it is mentioned before (general findings), Arabic and French are two important languages in Kabyle society being studied since a very early age. That is why we cannot neglect their influence in English writing, which is the fourth language acquired by the students. We found that it is necessary to mention that there are many words borrowed from both languages (Arabic and French). For instance, the word “table” which is borrowed from French language and the word “souhour” which is borrowed from Arabic.

When correcting the students’ productions, we have found that the majority of students seemed to have serious semantic errors, which affect the quality of their writings. The large number of semantic errors are due the interference of the students’ L1. For instance, “You should profit your time in doing sport” which can be more appropriate if the student said, “You should take advantage to practice sport”. When students are not able to express a certain idea in pure English language, they often compare it with its equivalence in their L1. This can be justified by the students’ answers of the first, second and third questions in section three of the questionnaire (see table 03).

The interference of French and Arabic languages also take place. For instance, Arabic interference can be seen in the expression “Allah subhana wa taala” instead of “May God be praised and exalted”. French language interference can be seen in the example “I don’t have a stable hobby” instead of “I do not have a specific hobby”. This can be justified by the answer of some students of the first question in the third section of the questionnaire where they claimed that they think either in Arabic or French (see table 03). The spelling and article errors occurred in students’ short paragraphs are mainly interfered from French language.

We have noticed that almost the majority of students' spelling errors appear in adding the letter "e" at the end of the English words, for example "periode" instead of "period". For the article errors, it is seen that the students are confused with the use of the definite article; they add it where it is not appropriate, for instance "the God", "the Ramadan". The French interference is certainly, because the two languages are descended from one language "Latin".

The analysis reveals that the frequent syntactic errors are those of word order. This is because the order of the sentence in the first language and the foreign one is different; in English language, the adjective precede the noun, however in Kabyle (L1) the noun should precede the adjective. For instance "man wise" which should be "wise man". This analysis shows that first year EFL students have problems in syntactic level because they are influenced by their L1 structure.

3. Limitations of the Research

Limits exist in any research; no study is completely flawless or inclusive of all possible aspects of the research. During our study, we have faced some difficulties that are out of our control that hindered our study to be full field in easy circumstances. These difficulties are clarified below.

3.1 At the Level of Existing Literature

The prior literature on the investigated subject are limited. We took a lot of time to look for the appropriate and the closest theories related to our research topic. Moreover, it was difficult to select our theoretical background from the theories we have found. The finite number of the researches related to our study made the process of finding available data that are similar to our study complicated.

3.2 At the Level of Data Collection

The collection of our data was quite difficult, at the first time the majority of the students were absent because it was the last week before holidays. We were obliged to talk with their teacher of the written expression module to inform them to be present the next time. We have faced some difficulties in reading the short paragraphs of the students because of their unclear handwriting and to understand the ideas they want to express. Another limitation is that some justifications given by the students when answering the questionnaire were very difficult to understand and this complicated the analysis of the questionnaire.

3.3 At the Level of Given Time

The time available was another challenge in conducting our research, it needs more time to be accomplished. The results obtained required to be tested and well analyzed twice or more in order to be confirmed. We were obliged to submit our research before the deadline; otherwise, it would be conducted better and differently under different conditions.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendation for Teachers

- Teachers have to focus on the students' writing errors and provide them with remarks and feedback to make students aware of their errors to correct them.
- Teachers should advise, motivate and encourage their learners to practice more frequently the writing skill. In the light of exponential growth and the widespread of technologies such as internet, smartphones and chatgpt, etc. Students rely on them to write their assignments and tasks and they neglect the classical way of the

writing. This make the students lose the ability to express complete thought and cannot think on their own.

- When teaching English, teachers should not focus only on language skills but also on sub skills such as syntax, semantics, spelling, punctuation, correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary to produce a cohesive, coherent and more formal piece of writing.
- Teachers should be knowledgeable of not only English but also the learner's first language, so they will directly know where the L1 interference occurs.
- Teachers have to encourage learners to collaborate throughout writing brainstorming ideas about a topic, responding to draft in a writing group or helping peers edit or revise their work.

4.2 Recommendations for Students

- Students should read more because through reading they get a rich vocabulary. It exposes the students to different writing styles and absorb syntax, grammar and punctuation.
- Students have to try to think in English when they write instead of thinking in their first language or the other languages that they know, to avoid L1 interference and making errors.
- Students should be aware that languages are different from each other; each language has its own rules and structures.
- Students can prevent the L1 interference by joining an English conversation group, practicing with a native speaker or listening to English language radio or TV program.
- Students have to talk about the difficulties they encounter when writing in English in order to receive the help they need from the teacher.

4.3 Recommendations for Further Research

- The current study is restricted to only 21 students. Further research has to be conducted with a large population to have more reliable and valid evidences.
- One of the limitations we faced in our study was the limited time. So future researches should provide more time for data collection in order to give more reliability and credibility to the results.
- We recommend the future study to construct the same research problem in a new context and different culture to provide a deeper understanding about language interference, and to prove its existence in all over the world mainly bilingual and multilingual nations.
- Our study is concerned with the writing skill. Thus, future research is foreseeable to deal with the other skills mainly the speaking skill, because both skills are productive. Learners who have problems in vocabulary and language patterns in speaking are likely to have the same constraints in writing and vice versa.

Conclusion

The practical part of our research is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, we dealt with the explanation of the theory we opted to use in our research and the methodological design used. We described the research instruments we choose in a details way. We explained the procedure that we followed all along our data collection. We stated the investigated population and the reason of choosing them. At last, we presented the findings of our instruments in a general way.

The second chapter of the practical part provided a detailed analysis and interpretations of the students' questionnaire and test.

In the last chapter, we dealt with the discussion of the findings of our study. We explained the difficulties and limitations we faced during our research, in addition to some recommendations for teachers, students and further research.

General Conclusion

As a conclusion, the current research aim is to check the existence of first language interference in EFL writings through exploring the committed errors produced by the learners in their writings, particularly the first year EFL students at Bejaia University. The present study analyzed and identified the influence that first language interference has on EFL writing productions. As it aims at investigating the causes that lead EFL learners to interfere from their first language.

The research was divided into two parts. The first part was devoted to reviewing the related literature. It provided a general overview about interference and the writing skill. This part is consisted of two chapters, the first chapter focused on defining concepts that are related to L1 interference, its different theories, principles, categories and the factors contributing to it. The second chapter of the first part discussed some valuable theoretical issues about the writing skill.

The second part of the research is composed of three chapters, dealing with the practical aspects of the study. The first chapter introduced the methodology used and the two tools opted for the data collection. The mixed method were chosen being the appropriate methods to gather information from the sample concerning the L1 interference. Moreover, this chapter presented the general findings of the questionnaire and the test.

The second chapter of this part analyzed the findings of the research tools in a detailed way. In the last chapter, we discussed each research tool with precision and detail. We highlighted the limitations we faced during our study and we suggested some recommendations for teachers, students and further research.

From the results obtained, it is confirmed that L1 interference occurred in EFL students' writing productions mainly at the level of semantic, syntax, spelling and articles.

It is found that EFL learners also interfere from Arabic and French languages since both of them were learnt very early before English. The main factors contributed to these errors are the lack of vocabulary of the English language and the lack of practicing the writing skill.

As a remedy to this problem, we suggested that students should be aware of academic writing. Furthermore, read more academic writing, since a good reader is a good writer and the more students read the more they acquire the language. Moreover, proposed practicing writing more frequently, searching, reading books, articles and newspapers in English as strategies to avoid L1 interference. Thus, first year students should write as much as possible, not only when they are asked to write but also as a habit of writing. Finally, more training (homework, exercises) with more guidance and feedback help students develop their knowledge of the English language.

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Appendix I:

Student's Questionnaire

Dear students;

You are gently invited to answer the following questions. We would be grateful if you answer them sincerely and seriously because they are really important for our research study.

Put a tick (✓) in the appropriate answer.

Thank you

Section One: Student's Background Information

1) Gender: Male Female

2) Age:

3) Did you choose to study English language with conviction?

Yes No

4) How could you evaluate your level of English?

Very good Average

Good Low

Section Two: The Writing Proficiency

1) How often do you read?

Always Rarely

Sometimes

2) How often do you write?

Always Rarely

Sometimes

3) Do you think that your level of English writing is

Very good Average

Good Weak

4) Do you find that writing is an easy task?

Yes No

5) Among the different writing stages, which one you do not follow in your academic writing?

Pre-writing Drafting Revising
Editing Publishing

6) In which aspect of writing do you find difficulties?

Vocabulary Spelling
Grammar All of them

7) Do you face difficulties when expressing your ideas in English language? If yes, Why?

Yes No

.....

Section Three: First Language Interference

1) When writing in English, do you think in

Mother tongue English other language

In case of other language, what is it?

.....

2) When you do not understand something, do you prefer first language explanation or English clarification?

First language explanation English clarification

3) Is the translation from your mother tongue to the English language useful in writing?

Yes No

4) Do you think that the use of L1 in the classroom beneficial? Justify your answer

Yes No

.....

5) According to you, what is the reason behind the use of your L1 in writing?

You face difficulties in formulating ideas in pure English

You have limited knowledge of English vocabulary

You think that it helps you in your writing

6) Do you think that your first language has negative influence on your English writing proficiency? Justify your answer, please

Yes No

.....

Appendix II

Student's Written Productions

Students will be asked to write a short paragraph about a topic of their interest (free topic). The main objective of the analysis of students' paragraphs is to detect the use of first language (L1) in their writings by identifying the sentences that include L1 interference in each paragraph. This tool of data collection is used besides the questionnaire given to students to support the results so as to give reliable findings about the research.