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The Influence of First Language on EFL Learners' Writing

**The Case Study: EFL First Year Students at the Department of English,
University of Biskra**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial
Requirement for the Fulfillment of Master Degree in English Language: Sciences of
Language

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Dedication

From my depth of my heart, with smile and happiness

With my feeling of love and respect, I dedicate this simple work, first, to my parents
“SALAH” and “YAMINA” who always motivate me and pray for me; I respect you
forever...

I dedicate this simple work to
My dear husband “AFREN WISSEM” who makes me feel comfortable; I respect you
forever...

My sisters and brothers and their kids

My dearest sister “KHADIDJA”

“EL-HADJA”

My best friends “ZINA” “ABIR”, “NABILA”, “HASENA”, “SAMIHA”

The family of “LEMSARA” and “BEN NACER”

The family of my husband “AFREN”

to everyone who knows me and respects me.

ABSTRACT

The current study aims at studying the influence of first language among EFL first university students' writing at the Department of English; Mohamed Kheither university of Biskra in order to confirm or reject the hypothesis; if the students do not make negative transfer, their writing will be improved. This research has been carried through questionnaire for students in addition to the analysis of their written production. The analysis of students' questionnaire reveals that some of the participants face difficulties when they write; for that, they refer to their L1 in order to write well but this way leads them to make errors in their writing then they produce a poor piece of writing whereas the analysis of their written production reveals that most of the students make mistakes in grammar (syntactic level) because they believe that grammar rules is hard to learn, then they make also mistakes in lexical level because they are unfamiliar to second language. Finally, they make errors in semantic level too because of their lack of comprehension. The findings indicate that the decrease of making transfer helps students to produce a good piece of writing. The more learners' linguistic competence is high the more they write well and vice a versa.

المُلخَص

هذا البحث يهدف إلى دراسة التأثير السلبي للغة الثانية لطلبة السنة أولى جامعي بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. لتأكيد أو إبطال الفرضية القائلة بأن الكتابة باللغة الثانية لطلبة السنة أولى جامعي ستتحسن إذا لم يكن هناك تأثير سلبي للغة الأم في كتابتهم باللغة الثانية. اعتمدنا في هذه الدراسة على وسيلتين هما: استبيان موجّه لطلبة السنة أولى جامعي إضافة إلى تحليل كتاباتهم باللغة الثانية لاستخراج الأخطاء المرتكبة فيها. نتيجة تحليل الاستبيان بيّنت أن مجموعة من الطلبة يواجهون مشاكل أثناء كتابتهم باللغة الثانية و لهذا يلجأون إلى لغتهم الأم لتطوير كتابتهم، لكن هذه الطريقة تجعلهم يكتبون بطريقة رديئة. ومن جهة أخرى، وجدنا أن معظم الطلبة يرتكبون أخطاء في القواعد و النحو و الصرف و هذا من خلال تحليل كتاباتهم. و لتطوير الكتابة لدى هؤلاء الطلبة يجب التقليل من استعمال اللغة الأم بطريقة سلبية و كقاعدة كلما كانت كفاءة المتعلم عالية كلما كانت نتيجة الكتابة راقية و العكس صحيح.

List of Abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

TL: Target Language

IL: Interlanguage

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General introduction

Second language writing is a complex productive skill for learners; for that, they need to master the main points which allow them writing correctly. Second language writers generally face a lot of problems when they are writing because of the lack of language competence; therefore, they refer to their first language and bring its own rules and apply them when they are writing. The complexity of this productive skill makes the learners fell in the difficulty of mastering all the aspect of writing in addition to that the lack of awareness about the different strategies of writing makes the learners produce a poor piece of writing. So, does first language enhance or hinder the L2 learner's writing?

Significant of the Study

Our research is very important because it is a combination between language acquisition and the writing skill. For that, we see our research as an interesting issue to discuss it.

Our research is so needed in our writing because it allows us to discover the most important linguistic aspects that are transferred from the mother tongue while we are writing in second language and to clarify how they are transferred.

This research is directly presented for anyone who writes in the target language especially for the first year EFL University Students of BISKRA

Aims of the Study

Any research must be containing some exact points that should be reached. Our study aims at:

- To get rid of writing errors and to minimize the L1 interference.
- To send a message for all teachers to be as a responsible for using some techniques for learners to avoid such errors.

Research questions

1. Why do EFL learners make transfer?
2. Which linguistic items that have been transferred negatively?
3. What are the causes behind poor writing of EFL learners?

Hypothesis

If EFL first year students do not make L1 interference; therefore, their writing will be improved.

Research Methodology

1. Research Tools for Collecting Data Analysis

Questionnaire designed for both EFL students and teachers at Mohamed Keider University of BISKRA and analysis of written texts.

2. Population and sampling

Our population is first year student and the sample is three groups

3. Method

The method is a descriptive method; it is a suitable one for such issue in order to describe how first language can influence on writing and also to present some most important elements that are related positively or negatively with this influence. A qualitative research allows us to describe our results statistically. The statistical form is considered as an easy way to present our outcomes clearly without any difficulties.

Literature Review

Writing is an important skill; it is a way in which we can express ourselves, giving new ideas, and opinions... A considerable number of researchers talked about the importance of this skill; Bacon (1605) states that writing is very important when he wrote "writing makes an exact man". Lado (1983) relates writing with foreign language in terms of mastering structures, vocabulary, and their conventional representations. He says "we mean by writing in foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of fact writing".

Achili as she wrote in his thesis, writing is the most needed skill in different academic fields; for that, we see it as an important means of communication. The mastery of the graphological, the grammatical, and rhetorical resources of the foreign language is the proficient level that makes written production remains the most practical means (2007). It is also seeing as a very complex skill than other skills (reading, listening, and speaking). It is considered as an important and central skill in the field of applied linguistics because it plays an important role in social, cultural, professional, academic context (Ouskourt, 2008).

Many researchers had made a great investigation about second language. A research in L2 as it is quoted in Journal of Second Language Writing, 2003 started between 1980s and 1990s and it started to develop gradually as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry with its own disciplinary infrastructure. Ulijin and Strother believe that language usage contains in itself writing as an active skills (1995). Bacha assumes that writing English is an important point in the students' academic study because it helps

them in different way: taking notes, describing objects, writing essay, and answering written questions... (2002). Learners face a lot of problems when they are writing in second language for that they refer to their first language in order to write easily. Fries assumes that second language learners face a great problem which is L1 interference (1945). Lado believes that the lack of success in learning is caused by L1 (1957).

In the 1950's, behaviorist learning theory assume that L1 is systematically influenced on second language learning this is what makes L2 as a habit formation. This theory gave a clear image about the relationship between first language and second language learning. It considered that positive transfer takes place when both languages have the same linguistic aspects; in other hand, negative transfer takes place when there are differences between L1 and L2 (Laurent & Philippe, 2007) . Gluth asserts that first language plays great role in second language learning; it may improve or hinder second language learning. L1 is considered as a facilitator if the learners take similar elements from L1 to L2, and if they take elements which are different, L1 is directly considered as an obstacle i.e. L1 is a hindrance (2003). In other words the previous habit may enhance or hinder the new one (Chelli, 2013). Lado strongly believes that the differences between L1 and L2 may enhance or hinder the L2 learning and the four skills influenced by L1 this is what were discussed in his proposed theory contrastive theory (1957).

Contrastive analysis is a theory that is emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s; it argues that each language has its own features related to the historical improvement of the language and its dialect and their respective genealogies (cited in Alshayben's thesis). Howatt and Widdonson believe that applied linguistics use this analysis in order to give clear and understandable image of different languages with their similar and dissimilar sentence structure (2004).

It is quoted in Temime' thesis that contrastive analysis had no empirical basis for that error analysis has emerged. The focus of EA is on the L2 learner' errors analyze them, and search about their sources.

Structure of the study

Our research is basically divided into two main parts. The first part is devoted to the review of the literature composed of two chapters. Chapter one is general overview about first and second language and chapter two is about writing skill in second language. The second part is about the field work.

Limitation of the study

It should be noted that in addition to its theoretical and practical importance, this study also has some limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the finding. Firstly, this study analyzed EFL first year student written texts only at Mohamed Kheider University of BISKRA. Other universities may offer different teachers and different courses. Secondly, the data will be analyzed only by two researchers. Further research could involve more researchers to go to the classroom to investigate learner's writing problems. In spite of the limitations stated above, this study provides useful information on data regarding learners' writing problems that EFL learners encounter when writing in English.

Introduction

Children and adults are active members in the society. Both of them communicate with the language that they are acquired. Children depend on their first language which can be one, two, or three languages; they interact in a natural way without any pressure. On the other hand, adults can communicate with more than one language, native language and second language which can also be two, three, or four languages. Children require natural setting for acquiring their language whereas adults require formal setting for learning second language. In this chapter we will give definitions of first and second language and other terms related to them. Also we will talk about the critical period giving the evidence to support it. Finally, we will discuss some similarities and difference between L1 and L2 and we will talk about language transfer.

1.1. Definitions of the Key Words

1.1.1. First language

“Is being called: native language, primary language, and mother tongue” (Sinhano et al., 2009). These terms considered as a synonyms; the distinction between them is not clearly cut. Second language acquisition defines them as a language which is acquired before the age of about three years. It is a part of communication between people and children.

“When you are a still very young child, you began acquiring at least one language what linguists call your L1- probably without thinking much about it, and with very little conscious effort or awareness.” (Troike, 2006)

1.1.2. Second language

It is the language which is acquired after the first language (s). It is defined by Sinhano et al. as following: “second language is typically an official or socially a dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes. It is often acquired by minority group members or immigrants who speak another language natively.” (2009)

An Online Dictionary defines second language as “a language other than the mother tongue that a person or community uses for public communication, especially in trade, higher education and administration.” (The Free Dictionary by Farlex)

Second language is “a non-native language officially recognized and adopted in a multilingual country as a means of public communication.” It is also called the Target Language.

Second language is “an additional language; it is commonly called a target language (TL) which refers to any language that is the aim and goal of learning.” (Troike, 2006)

1.2. Definition of Some Key Words Related to First and Second Language Acquisition

1.2.1. Mother Tongue

Sultan. B., (2013) says that:

We use this term to refer to the first language of a child. Normally, a child is exposed to a language immediately after his/her birth. A child starts learning a language that has been surrounding him/her since his/her birth. With the passage of time this learning of language goes on cognitively and time comes when he/she can speak, read and write that language perfectly. So, mother tongue is the first language of a child which he/she has learnt first and uses it for communicating of his/her needs and desires. Mother tongue is also termed as the native or primary language. It is the basics of one's recognition and origin. It's the language which occupies one's thought process and conscience.

1.2.2. Primary Language

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines primary language as follow:

The terms of primary or preferred language are used to refer to the language which bilingual or multilingual speakers are most fluent in or which they prefer using for most every day communicative functions. A child may have more than one primary language if he or she acquires more than one language during the period of primary language development (Richards & Schmidt, 1988).

These definition are given by Troike in 2006

1.2.3. Second language acquisition (SLA)

“Refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of becoming an ‘educated’ individual.”

1.2.4. Foreign language

“Is one not widely used in the learners’ immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other cross-cultural communication situations in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application.”

1.2.5. Linguistic competence

“Underlying knowledge”

1.2.6. Linguistic performance

“The actual production of learners”

1.2.7. Multilingualism

“The ability to use two or more languages”

1.2.8. Bilingualism

“The ability to use two languages”

1.2.9. Monolingualism

“The ability to use only one language”

1.2.10. Multilingual competence

“(Cook’ term is ‘multi-competence’) the compound state of a mind with two or more grammars”

1.2.11. Monolingual competence

“(or “mono-competence” in Cook’s terminology) which refers to knowledge of only one language”

1.3. Critical period hypothesis

Ellis (1994) suggests that there is a limited period of time where the acquisition takes place easily and completely (i.e. the native speakers achieve their ability) and after this period of time, acquisition will be more difficult and uncompleted. The hypothesis was based on a research which states that people who their linguistic capabilities are able to recover them before the end of the limited period of time (before the puberty) but it is not happen after this age.

As it is cited in the work of S. Johnson and L. Wewport (1989), Lenneberg states that we acquire language from the early infancy until the age of puberty. This period of time is only appeared with first language acquisition. Yet, it is important and helpful for us to understand whether it is also related with second language acquisition or not? If so, children are better than adults in acquiring second language, they will be more proficient than adults. Comparing the English proficiency, 46 native Korean or Chinese speakers who lived in the United States between 3 and 26 years; they were tested in grammatical judgment task. The both correlational and t-test analysis show clearly that early arrivals are better than later one. The test was after the critical period, the performance was low but highly variable and not related to age of arrival. The effect is not only related to “the time of experience”, “self-consciousness”, “motivation”, or “American identification” but also seemed in the degree in which the grammatical

structures are well acquired (well mastered) by later learners. These outcomes let us to say that critical period enlarge its effects to second language acquisition (1967).

Ellis believes that:

✓ Adults cannot achieve the native-speaker competence in either grammar or pronunciation.

Evidence to support this claim

Ellis states that studies of immigrants in the United States show that if they come before the age of puberty, they can achieve high level of proficiency in grammar. In other word, they will be more grammatically competent if they do not come after the age of puberty; this will make them speak fluently as native speaker in which you cannot distinguish between them.

Ellis believes that the age is the main feature which predicts the acquisition rather than the number of years. He says: “Interestingly, age of arrival is a much better predictor of ultimate achievement than the number of years of exposure to the target language” (1994).

✓ All learners are subject to critical period

Evidence to support this claim

There are some people who can achieve the native-speaker ability after the age of puberty. In one case, Julie, an English woman; she had lived in Cairo twenty six years; she performs like native speaker in different tests although she started learning Arabic at the age of twenty-one years.

1.3.1. Evidence for critical (sensitive) period for language acquisition

Behavioral and neural studies state that there is a critical period for language acquisition. The case study is about isolated children who are not interacted with members of the society as a result of neglecting, untamed. They face difficulties in phonology, morphology, and syntax. As an example for these studies is the case of Genie (Curtiss, 1997 cited in Ellis, 1994).

The story of this girl is given by number of researchers (Curtiss, Formkin, Rigler, Rigler, & Krashen, 1975). They say:

Genie was born in April 1957. When we first encountered her, she was 13 years and 7 months old a painfully thin child who appeared six or seven years old. When hospitalized for malnutrition, Genie could not stand erect or chew food; she was not toilet trained; and she did not speak, cry, or produce any vocal sounds. The reconstruction of her previous life

presents a bizarre and inhuman story. From the age of 20 months, Genie had been confined to a small room under conditions of apparently increasing physical restraint. In this room she received minimal care from a mother who was herself rapidly losing her sight. She was physically punished by her father if she made any sounds. Most of the time she was kept harnessed into an infant's potty chair, otherwise she was confined in a homemade sleeping bag in an infant's crib covered with wire mesh. She was fed only infant food. When she was discovered, she was taken to children's hospital of Los Angeles. In this hospital, Genie was taken her treatment, and after period of time she developed physically and mentally. She left the hospital in July 1971 and she became member in her society.

1.4. Comparing and contrasting first language (L1) and second language (L2)

1.4.1. Similarities between (L1) and (L2)

When we want to compare between first language learners (FLL) and second language learners (SLL) we find that they share some points and differ in others. L1 and L2 learners go through the same stage which is known as silent stage where they prefer to listen to language before using it. Furthermore, they require comprehensible input for better understanding; it should be simplified and modified. In addition to that, we find that overgeneralization is common in both.

In contrast, L1 and L2 acquisition have dissimilar points. First language learners are always in interaction with their society depend on their L1. They express their needs using their language. For them, it is the only language for communication. Second language learners interact with their L1 and L2 but their interaction with L2 is not continued. Moreover, FLLs acquire the language naturally in an informal setting, there is no previous planning; for that, we find them a successful learners. At the same time SLLs learn the language in a formal setting, they follow certain planning in a limited period of time; their success is not complete...etc

Here are some similarities and differences mentioned in the work of both Ipek and Al- Gharali (2009) in comparing and contrasting L1 and L2.

Ipek gives some shared points between L1 and L2:

1.4.1.1. Developmental sequences

In order to understand the nature of L1 and L2, considerable numbers of researchers have made investigations about that. The result of these is that the pattern of development is followed by the two languages despite exceptions. Ellis (1984) suggests three main stages of the idea of the developmental sequences: the silent period, formulaic speech, and structural and semantic simplification.

a. The silent period

Both first and second language learners go through the same important and initial stage which is the silent stage. Children try to acquire their language passing through the silent period depending on listening. This stage allows them to discover the language (what language is). Second language learners also choose the same stage when they are not required to produce an immediate production. Most of them insist on speaking. It is acceptable to say that there is a silent period for both first language learners and second language learners but there is a dispute (conflict) on what contribution that the silent period has in second language acquisition. While Krashen (1982) states that “it builds competence in the learner via listening.”

Gibbons (1985, cited in Ellis, 1994) argues that “it is a stage of incomprehension.”

b. Formulaic speech

Is defined as “chunks of language that are stored either as complete units (e.g. I don't know) or as partially analyzed units (e.g. can I have a _). Formulas are lexical in nature” (Ellis, 1994).

Krashen (1982) says this expressions appears in form of ‘routines’ (whole utterances learned as memorized chunks e.g. I don't know.) or in form of patterns (partially analyzed utterances with one or more slots e.g. can I have a _.) and Ellis (1994) views that these expressions can contains the complete scripts such as greeting. The literature points out that formulaic speech presents in the speech of adult native speaker as it appears in L1 and L2.

c. The structural and semantic simplification

Structure simplification is the omission of the grammatical items such as: articles and auxiliary verb whereas semantic simplification is the omission of the “content words” such as: nouns, and verbs. These types of simplifications happen due to two main reasons. Firstly, the learners do not acquire the linguistic forms. Secondly, they are incapable to use the linguistic forms in their production.

1.4.1.2. Order of acquisition

A numbers of researches have tried to discover if the acquisition of the grammatical morpheme happens in order of acquisition. The outcomes are crucial but contradictory and they have effects on L1 and L2 acquisition. Morpheme studies intend to investigate the acquisition of “grammatical functions” (articles) or “inflectional features” (the plural’s). The essential study in this field is that of Roger Brown (1973). According to him, there are at least 14 function words in English as first languages are in common sequence of acquisition: “nouns”, “verb inflections”, “prepositions”, and “articles”.

The previous studies show that there is a definite order in acquisition of morphemes in English first language learners.

Lightbown and Spada (2006) believe that the acquisition of question words (what, where, who, why, when, and how) are similar in both L1 and L2. Depend on the morpheme studies in L2 acquisition, Krashen (1982) suggests the natural order hypothesis; he argues that we acquire the rules of language in predictable order. It is not decided by the order and the simplicity of rules taught in the class. It appears that L1 and L2 follow the same order of acquisition but other morpheme studies have proposed that not all learners of L1 follow the same predictable order of acquisition. It is believed that “inter-learner variation” affecting the order of acquisition. Wells (1986) suggests that:

“Inter-learner variables affecting the order of acquisition such as sex, intelligence, social background rate of learning, and experience of linguistic interaction.”

1.4.1.3. Linguistic universal and Markedness

Linguistic universal has two different approaches:

Typological universals approach suggested by Greenberg (1966) and Generative school suggested by Chomsky.

a. Typological universals approach: it is focused on the cross-linguistic comparison on wide similar group of languages taken from different languages in order to find the shared features between languages (e.g. all languages have nouns and verbs, etc).

b. Generative school: it studies deeply the language in individual to identify the principles of grammar which underlay and govern specific rules. It is what known as Universal Grammar (Ellis, 1994). The two approaches share the same aspect which is related to L1 and L2 acquisition. It is found that one language has marked and unmarked features.

Typological universals differentiate between the two kinds; unmarked features are those that are common or they are found in most languages, and they are transferred by learners. In contrast, marked features are specific features in a language and it refuses transferring.

Universal grammar gives another image for the both terms; unmarked features as word order are innate and can be reached through the application of general, abstract principles of language structure. Unlike, peripheral rules are rules that are not under the common principles. They are related to the history of the language, that have been borrowed from other languages; or that have arisen accidentally. These elements are marked; they are more difficult to learn.

Even though neither of these approaches aimed at explaining L1 and L2 acquisition, the results of both are applicable. The findings show that unmarked features are learned earlier and easier than marked features in both L1 and L2 while marked forms require more time and effort by the learner (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin; 1987).

1.4.1.4. Input

It is defined as “language which learner hears or receives and from which he/she can learn” (Richards et al, 1989). It is also defined as “the sample of oral and written language a learner is exposed to while learning or using a particular L2” (Ellis, 1994). Behaviorist views that the output is related to input whereas interactionist views that input (verbal interaction) is so important for language acquisition.

Stephen Krashen(1982) suggested the Input Hypothesis which he considers it as an important element in acquisition process. He believes that learners acquire language relying on the comprehensible input; it is simple and easy and comprehensible when it is received by first language learner and become more complex. Krashen believes that comprehensible input and understanding a message is the only way for the acquisition (1985). The way that comprehensible input works is symbolized by (i+1):

i= “represents the current competence.”

1= the assistance of context and extra-linguistic information.

“The input hypothesis explains how learners subconsciously acquire language from input they comprehend” (Ellis, 1994).

As it is mentioned in Al Ghazali’s work, children at home receive unlimited and continued input from their parents; this input is variable in terms of quality and quantity. We find them communicated through different forms of language ‘formal, semi-formal, colloquial, and chatty forms’. By using these forms of language, children will be more

competent; they tend to talk all the time and they are characterized by strong memory 'storage and retrieval.' Halliday (1986) believes that children are lucky because they have a chance to acquire subconsciously the culture of the language which they learnt it. This cultural acquisition is happened because the language is contextual. In this way, children improve their social system as a linguistic system which is developed in first language acquisition. These two systems enhance each other; they are interrelated.

In the classroom, learners receive limited input that is related to teachers' talk and course book whereas language is often used for fulfilling particular activities. As Lemke (1985) says that language is used for two main reasons:

- i. To perform specific types of actions
- ii. To create a setting where these actions take their meaning.

Fillmore (1989) views that the missing context is the only cause behind unteachability of the language in the formal setting, he says:

What happens in the school has very little to do language learning. Language cannot be taught. It can be acquired. Kids acquire language in spite of what goes on in the classroom. They learn it in the playground and on the street, but not in the classroom.

In contrast, Krashen views that there are two conditions make the language teachable:

- i. If the comprehensible input is available
- ii. If the teacher is able to create meaningful situations and reducing the 'affective filter' of the students (1985). He says:

Comprehensible input delivered in a low filter situations is the only 'causative variable' in second language acquisition. All other factors thought to encourage or cause second language acquisition only work when they provide comprehensible input.

1.4.1.5. Age factor

It is found that there is a relationship between age of acquisition and the ability of achieving some aspects of language acquisition. The age is seen as an important element in acquiring language; it is a strongest predictor of success (Tohidian & Tohidian, 2009). McLaughlin suggests that learning second language is started from birth. It is a period when you acquire unconsciously two languages (1992).

Penfield and Roberts see that the first ten years is the important period for acquiring language because in this period of time the brain keeps its plasticity (1959).

Most linguists believe that children learn languages better than adults. Harley (1986), Lightbown and Spada (1999) state that "...childhood is the golden age for creating simultaneous bilingual children due to the plasticity and virginity of the child's brain for superior ability specifically in acquiring the early sets or units of language."

This mental flexibility and muscular plasticity ("used in the articulation of human speech by children to produce a native-like accent") mean that children are better in learning language than adults. Brown (1994) argues that this ability appears only before puberty for that we find some adults face difficulties in achieving a native-like accent. He says:

Children who acquire a second language after the age of five may have a physical advantage in that phonemic control of a second language is physically possible yet that mysterious plasticity is still present. It is no wonder that children acquire authentic pronunciation while adults generally do not, since pronunciation involves the control of so many muscles.

Brown's argument support the idea that children are capable to adopt quickly the second language with its cultural background and they become as native speakers whereas adults are rarely have this chance of being as native speakers. Ehrman (1996) refers this to critical period hypothesis. Vygotsky (1978) gives different explanations for critical period hypothesis. He believes that children are more holistic, they acquire language without changing in its forms whereas adults are more analytical, they make an analysis to language how it is constructed before using it in conversation?

1.4.1.6. Behaviouristic views of language acquisition

Behaviouristic approach originally tries to explain learning in general. This approach shows the similarity between L1 and L2. The two famous psychologists Pavlov and Skinner tried to explain learning in terms of conditioning and habit formation by Pavlov. B. F and in terms of operant conditioning by Skinner. Both of them see language as behavior to be taught.

1.4.1.7. Zone of proximal development

Vygostky (1978) defines the zone of proximal development as "a symbolic distance between a learner's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (cited in Camela Module on: SLA Theory).

Vygostky. L. S. a Russian Psychologist talks about education in general and language education in particular as a social emphasis. Vygostky (1982) explains ZPD as follows:

The child is able to copy a series of actions which surpass his or her own capacities, but only within limits. By means of copying, the child is able to perform much better when together with and guided by adult than when left alone, and can do so with understanding and independently. The difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help and the level of independently solved tasks is the zone of proximal development.

Children always need other's help in order to learn and to solve learning problems. For that, collaborative learning is beneficial for children to get the development. A good example for this process is development of literacy (Gallaway and Richard, 1994; Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). Vygostky asserts that collaboration between the child and the members of the community is required for language education; instruction creates the zone of proximal development, stimulating of series of inner developmental processes (Daniel, 1996; Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). According to ZPD, two main elements in learning and development are assistant performance and collaboration

1.4.2. Differences between L1 and L2

1.4.2.1. The acquisition/ Learning hypothesis

Krashen (1982) claims that there are two ways that underlie second language acquisition: acquisition and learning. Adults can acquire as children unconsciously in an informal setting; this way of acquisition makes them feel natural. Also, they can learn through explicit learning in a formal setting. He believes that acquisition and learning are two different ways and acquisition cannot turn into learning. He suggests that through dialogue, role playing, and other meaningful interaction may help acquisition process happen in the formal setting. Krashen states that learning may turn into acquisition through focused input and focused practice for that language teachers should be careful when they evaluate the claims related to acquisition and learning.

1.4.2.2. Fossilisation

It is defined as "The processes responsible for the cessation of learning some way short of target-language competence." (Ellis, 1994)

Fossilization appears when non-target norms become fixed in interlanguage. There is different causes lead to fossilization:

- a. "Age" (the learners' brain loses its capacity at certain age; for that, some linguistic elements cannot be acquired).
- b. "Lack of desire to articulate" (different social and psychological factors affect on learners' desire to adopt the target language norms).
- c. "Communicative pressure" (the learners are obliged to communicate ideas where the communication is higher than their linguistics competence).
- d. "Lack of learning opportunity, and nature of the feedback on learners use of L2" (fossilization occurs when the cognitive feedback is positive and it does not occur if the cognitive feedback is negative) (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987). these causes show that fossilization is only related to second language acquisition.

1.4.2.3. Social factor

Ellis (1994) gives two main different social context related to second language learning:

- a. Natural context

Second language learning in majority language contexts

The target language consider as native language and the language learner become as a member of an ethnic minority group "(e.g. Turkish workers in Germany)".

"Second language learning in official language contexts

"Second language considered as an official language (e.g. English in Nigeria)".

Second language learning in international contexts

"Second language is used for communication between people in countries where it is neither learnt as native language nor used as an official language (e.g. in arts, science, academic etc)".

- b. Educational context

Segregation

Second language learners are learning second language separately from the native speakers.

Mother tongue maintenance Learners of minority group learn through their mother tongue or through the means of their mother tongue.

Submersion

"Right from the beginning, second language learners taught with native speakers."

Language classroom

The target language is only a means of communication in the classroom as it is taught only as a subject.

L1 and L2 have different contexts which play a great role in the acquisition process. L2 is being taught in different contexts which can lead to the variation in second language proficiency while L1 is only take place in natural setting where the child gets his/her input.

1.4.2.4. Affective factors

There a difference between the ways in which both of children and adults acquiring any language. This difference is due to some factors influence children and adults; these factors may include inhibition, motivation and attitude... etc.

We find that adults more influenced by these factors. Inhibition or “building defenses”. It is the result of a lack of self-confidence in a situation or task; it plays a negative role in acquiring the second language. Second language learners face such problem whereas children find them egocentric and after their growth they become aware and they improve their self-identity and they try to protect it after their puberty (Moinzadeh, Dezhara& Rezaei, 2012). Brown (1994) states that adults make their first language exist when they develop the “language ego”. What is clear her is that any language learning results in new ego; this is what happen when adults acquire a new language with the existence of the mother tongue. This existence leads to inhibition (Moinzadeh, Dezhara& Rezaei, 2012). Adults always feel afraid of making mistakes whereas children acquire language without inhibition; they feel natural; they think with the level of their capacity (Trucker, 2003)

The second affective factor is motivation. It is a natural urge for communication psychologically and socially. Second language studies show that motivation is the behind variation between learners (Ervin-Tripp, 2001). Garden suggests that there are two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is the desire to become a member of the culture of the second language group whereas instrumental motivation is to motivate learners to acquire language for specific purposes (1985). One of these types of motivation helps the acquisition process takes place (Trucker, 2003).

The third affective factor is the attitude. It is the way learners’ beliefs. It appears when the child grows up; it is related to the success of language class. The two types of attitude (instrument and integrative attitude) may enhance or hinder the second language learning process. The integrative attitude is better than instrument one (1994).

These affective factors can be an obstacle toward acquisition; they can act as a mental block (affective filter). If learners are demotivated, the affective filter goes up

and it goes down if learners are not anxious to be member of group (Du, 2009).

McLaughlin sees that the affective filter of children is in contrast to that of adults that their affective filter is high because of the events that occurred in adolescence (1987).

1.5. Interlanguage

Interlanguage is produced by Larry Selinker (1972) to refer to the state of language learners in between the L1 and L2, as an intermediate state. It has some characteristics:

a. Systematic

It is under rules which reformulate the internal learners' grammar; this happens in any developmental particular point. The analysis of language learners that is produced or interpreted correctly or incorrectly leads to discover these rules.

b. Dynamic

It is a changeable system that results in successful intermediate state. Selinker sees that this change is a discontinuous progression "from stable plateau to stable plateau" (1992).

c. Variable

The language which is used is closely related to context. So, if there is a different context, we get different patterns of language use.

d. Reduced system, both in form and function

When we compare interlanguage with target language, we find that IL receive less complex grammatical structure than TL this is a reduced form whereas reduced function "refer to the smaller range of communicative needs typically served by an IL (especially if the learner is still speech communication in contact with members of the L1).

Selinker (1972) states that IL development in second language acquisition and in L1 are totally different containing particular cognitive processes involved:

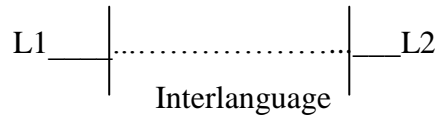
a. "Language transfer: from L1 to L2

b. Transfer of training or how the L2 is taught

c. Strategies of second language learning or how the way that learners approach the L2 materials and the task of L2 learning

d. Strategies of second language communication or techniques that learners use to communicate in L2 with others

e. Overgeneralization of the target language linguistic materials: unlimited application of the L2 learned rules"



The Scope of Interlanguage (cited in Temmimi Asema, 2009).

Conclusion

First language and second language are interrelated; each one can influence on the other. This influence can be positive or negative; it can be in speaking or in writing skills. The following chapter is specified to the influence of first language on second language choosing the writing skill for discovering this influence.

Introduction

In general, writing is a complex and difficult skill either in first language or in second language because most of writers are not aware about the strategies, techniques, steps and stages of writing; this feeling of unawareness leads them to make mistakes in different linguistic items (grammatical and syntactic errors, lexical errors ,and semantic errors). Second language writers make these mistakes due to certain reasons and factors. So, in order to describe and analyze these kinds of errors, contrastive analysis is an example of predictor and error analysis is an example of an analytic description.

1.1. A brief history of writing

As it is cited in Ghodbane' work (2010), writing is considered as a recent phenomenon because the first thing that people start with is speaking. Harmar (2007a) states that “human activity of writing is a fairly recent development in the evolution of men and women ... some of the earliest writing found so far dates from about 5.500 years ago”. Yule (2010) claimed that “human beings started to write some 20.000 to 25.000 years ago”.

The first type of writing is “the naturalistic painting of animals and people”, no words, no phrases, and no sentences; this makes us know little things about the earliest people. It was started by picture-writing, idea-writing, and then word-writing. The development of writing is summarized by O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba as follow:

The development of writing has been one of humanity's greatest intellectual achievements. From pictograms and logograms, the graphic representation of language has developed through syllabic writing to the alphabet. This was achieved through the discovery that the sounds of language can be associated with arbitrary graphic symbols. Eventually, this was followed by mother discovery that a fairly small number of symbols is sufficient to represent language in written form (1996).

1.2. Definition of writing

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1988) defines writing as “the result of complex and processes of planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing teach students to use these processes”. Harmer (2007) says that:

Writing is a process, that is, the stages the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. This process may, of course, be

affected by the content of the writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written in ...this process has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft (cited in Ghodbane, 2010).

This means that writing as a complex skill must go through different stages which make writing well organized.

Writing is linked to speech because any writer write down his/her speech on his/her paper, it means that the writer transfer his/her sounds to a visual words. This skill allows both writers and readers to discover a new ideas, new vocabulary...etc As Cristal says that writing is an act of discovery, he states in (1999) that “writing is not merely mechanical task, a simple matter of putting speech down on paper. It is an exploration in the use of the graphic potential of a language –a creative process- an act of discovery” (cited in *ibid*). Pinacs (1992) also says that “writing is a system of graphic symbols, i.e. , letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we produce while speaking” (cited in *ibid*).

It is also considered as a means of expressing ourselves, our personality as it is a means of communication and interaction between members of a society. Miller(2001) “even though the writing production is an expression of one’s individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people” (cited in *ibid*).

Writing needs coherence because it gives a real sense to writing; it can make it near to be an academic writing which must be mastered by learners; as Bailey in 2003 argues that “learners at schools [and university] must muster the academic writing which was needed in writing essays and paragraph or other assignments for exams” (cited in *ibid*). It is kind of power that human beings have; Mc Aathur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2008 say that “although writing is not this explosive, it is one of the humankind’s powerful tool. But they are sometimes confused about the source of its power” (cited in *ibid*).

As cited in Ghodbane (2010), Knowing the difficulties of writing is something important especially the difficulties of L2 writing; Brooks and Gundy (2009) state that “it must be worth asking precisely what is difficult about writing and, especially, about writing in second language”. Lado (2000) “we mean by writing in foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter - of - writing”.

Most of adults spent a little bit of their energy in writing; according to Hedge (2000) “all the time spent in communicative activities, adults devote 45% of their energies to

listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading, 9% to writing” cited in *ibid*). This statistical data shows that writing is a complex and difficult skill; it takes much time and energy; for that, it is not preferable by adults (as we know that adults prefer to do something easy and enjoyable, this is their nature).

1.3. 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.”

1.3.1. Transfer

Transfer is taking something from X situation and put it in Y situation where the context is different; this changeable situation can be beneficial or not but the thing which is known is that the way of transfer is more difficult and not beneficial. In other word, the term transfer mostly refers to a negative situation.

Ellis defines transfer as “L1 transfer refers to the influence that the learner’s L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2.” According to behaviorist view, transfer is a “habit formation” it means that native language habits can be transferred to foreign language. Lado (1957) says clearly:

Individual tend to transfer the forms and meaning and the distribution of form 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 to understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives.

The term transfer is related to the productive and receptive skills either in form or meaning. We may make transfer when we speak the target language or when we write in that language.

Corder (1975; cited in Temmime, 2009) explains transfer saying that: “[...] the learner is carrying over the habits of his mother-tongue into the second language.” As he saw, when there is a similarity between native language and target language, learning a target language is easy through positive transfer, but if there is a difference between them, learning that language (target language) is difficult and it results in negative transfer where the errors occur.

Language learning theories are the point which is a “turning” and crucial point when the revolution happened in linguistics and in psychology (1960s and 1970s). It is marked by Chomsky’s review of Skinner’s verbal behavior in 1957. As a result of this

revolution, the role of transfer was decreased because the learner's errors were not considered as a prove for language transfer but rather of the creative construction process. Gass (1983) states that:

Language transfer seemed to be an “embarrassment” since there was no way of in cooperating it within existing models. Further, support for the lack of L1 importance could be offered since many of the errors previously attributed to the L1 could be accounted for differently, for example, “by developmental” factors (cited in Temmime, 2009)

As cited in Temmime, 2009, numbers of researchers used different terms that refer to language transfer: Selinker, 1972 and Kellerman, 1983 called it language mixing. Schachter and Rutherford, 1979 and Ringbom, 1987 named it Linguistic interference. Language transfer (Lado, 1957; Selinker, 1972; Kellerman, 1983; Odlin, 1989). The role of mother and native language influence (Master, 1987; Mesthrie and Dunne, 1990; Jarvis, 2000; Torryos, 2009). Cross-linguistic influence (Kellerman & smith, 1986 i).

Kellerman and Smith claim that this term is “theory neutral, allowing one to subsume under one heading such phenomena as transfer interference, avoidance, borrowing and L2 related aspects of language loss and thus permitting discussion of the similarities and differences between these phenomena.” (1986)

Odlin (1989) disagree with behaviorist view which sees the habit formation as a cause of transfer. He does not relate the word transfer to interference, this latter, as he says, is only contain a negative transfer and the positive one was ignored. He believes that other languages rather than native language can influence on target language, and he says: “when individuals know two languages, knowledge of both may affect their acquisition of a third ...knowledge of three or more languages can lead to three or more different kinds of source language influence”, and “transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.”

1.3.2. Types of transfer

As cited in Temmime (2009), Ellis (1994) illustrates the different kinds of transfer in this quotation:

Transfer is to be seen as a general cover term for a number of different kinds of influence from languages other than the L2. The study of transfer involves the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms and their over-use.

1.3.2.1. Positive transfer

Positive transfer is a beneficial part of first language in second language; this happens when two languages share the same characteristics. This kind of transfer is rarely occurring. For that, it was neglected than the negative transfer which takes all the parts of transfer. It is not good to focus on negative transfer and ignore the other one, “since cross-linguistic similarity which may generate positive transfer is an integral part of the whole cross-linguistic influence set” (Yu, 2004). Allen and Corder (1975) maintain that: “positive transfer helps new learning, for instance, it is easy to learn to pronounce aspirated voiceless stops in second language if the language also has aspirated voiceless stops.”

1.3.2.2. Negative transfer

Negative transfer for some linguists refers to interference. Weinreich is one of them. He talks about this in terms of positive and negative transfer. He states:

When a process of second language learning takes place, those linguistics phenomena which are similar in form, meaning and distribution are regarded as facilitating the process, and transfer is seen as positive, if they are dissimilar, the transfer is considered negative and acquisition is viewed as distorted because the two structures differ. The phenomenon involved in these difficulties called interference (1953).

1.3.2.3. Avoidance

It is a strategy made by learners in order to avoid difficult cases. Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1988) defines it as “when speaking or writing a second or foreign language, a speaker will often try to avoid using a difficult word or structure, and will use a simple word or structure instead.”

1.3.2.4. Over-use

It is the use of preferable grammar or words in L2; it is a result of avoidance to produce some difficult structure (Tamm, 2009)

1.4. Contrastive analysis

1.4.1. Definition of contrastive analysis (CA)

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1988) defines contrastive analysis as:

The comparison of the linguistic systems of the two languages; for example, the sound system or the grammatical system. Contrastive analysis was developed and practiced in the 1950s and 1960s, as an

application of structural linguistics to language teaching, and is based on the following assumptions:

- a. The main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language.
- b. These difficulties can be practiced by contrastive analysis.
- c. Teaching materials can make use of contrastive analysis reduce the effects of interference.

It is an approach to the study of second language acquisition. It focuses on determining the similarities between L1 and L2 in order to predict and explain learner problems. It was heavily influenced by structuralism and behaviorism (1940s, 1950s). Lado's *Linguistics Across Culture* 1957, is the basic work that opened the way for contrastive analysis hypothesis. The claim of this hypothesis that there is an affect of L1 transferred on second language acquisition. Lado claims that "those elements are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for him, and those areas that are different will be difficult" (cited in Trike, 2006).

As cited in Temmime (2009), Contrastive analysis has two main versions, the weak and the strong versions:

- a) The strong version

Knowing the linguistic differences between L1 and L2 helps in predicting the problem of L2 learning. Banathy, Trager and Waddle (1966) gave a good explanation for this idea; they say:

[...] the change that has to take place in the age behavior of a foreign language. Students can be equated with the differences between structure of the student's native language and culture and that of the target language and culture, the task of the linguist, the cultural anthropologist, and the sociologist is to identify these differences. The task of the writer of a foreign language teaching program is to develop materials which will be based on a statement of these differences; the task of the foreign language teacher is to be aware of these differences and to be prepared to each them; the task of the student is to learn them.

In the time where structural linguistics and behavioral psychology take place in the study of language learning, contrastive analysis was prevalent (1960s) (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) Contrastive analysis propents "advocates" that by comparing two languages, the preparation of L2 instructional materials will be more efficient, and

learner's behavior and difficulties will be predicted through C.A. As many researchers though, pedagogy takes its usefulness and effectiveness through the care of both similarities and differences between L1 and L2. So, contrastive analysis built its basic depending on these different arguments.

b) The weak version

The supporters of this version state that the linguistic differences between L1 and L2 leads to the explanation of L2 learning problems. Schachter says that “learners of language A are found by the process of errors analysis to make recurring errors in a particular construction in their attempts to learn language B, the investigations make an analysis of the construction in language A, in order to discover why thr errors occur.”

1.4.2. The main focus of contrastive analysis

Following ideas in structuralist linguistics, the main focus of contrastive analysis is on the description, comparison and the surface forms of L1 and L2. The contrasting of L1 and L2 is started by phonology, morphology, syntax with the lexicon, and discourse. Fries clearly makes this priority, he says: “In learning a new language ... the chief problem is not at first that of learning vocabulary items. It is, first, the mastery of the sound system... It is; second, the mastery of the features of arrangement that constitute the structure of the language” (1945). Contrastive analysis was more successful in phonology than in other areas of language, and declined in the 1970s as interference replaced by other explanations of learning difficulties. In recent years, contrastive analysis has been applied to other areas of language; for example, the discourse systems.

But in 1970s, contrastive analysis lose its credibility in different levels, even it give no much attention to pedagogy as it once did before.

1.4.3. Contrastive analysis objectives

The goal of contrastive analysis was primarily pedagogical in nature to increase efficiency in L2 teaching and testing.

Contrastive analysis attempts to find what is similar and difference between languages; we can say that it make a scan for two languages to identify what makes these languages near to each other and what makes them far from each other. Also, it explains the findings and from them, it predicts what learners can face when learning a second language as Lado (1957) states that “[...] the comparison of any two languages and cultures to discover and describe the problems that the speaker of the languages will have in learning the other”. He states in his book preface, *Language across Culture* that:

The plane of the book rests on the assumption that can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the students.

It is beneficial for language teaching because it develops the teaching course materials as Lado (1957) says:

The results of such comparisons have proved of fundamental value for the preparation of teaching materials, test and language learning experiments. Foreign language teachers who understand this field will acquire insights and tools for evaluating the language and culture content of text-books and tests, supplementing the materials in use, preparing new materials and tests, and diagnosing students' difficulties accurately.

1.4.4. Criticism of contrastive analysis

According to Abbas (1995), contrastive analysis is criticized in one point which is considered as a weak point that it focuses only on one type of error called 'interference'. Numbers of researchers feel that this only emphasis of CA makes it careless to predict other errors that learner often make. In contrast, as Johnson states that there are many applied linguists who did not neglect the contrastive's ability and no one cannot "deny" that contrastive analysis may have some capabilities in particular domains. The case of adverbial positions, both English and Arabic learners are able to reach more than one place to accommodate the mentioned adverbial in the sentence. This kind of free-position, teachers are able to predict that Arabic learners will not have much difficulty with adverbial.

1.5. Error analysis

1.5.1. Definition of error analysis

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines it as "the study and analysis of errors made by second language learners."

1.5.2. The emergence of error analysis

Error analysis has taken place during twenty years ago in the domains of both applied linguistics and foreign language teaching by Corder and his colleague. It is related to second language acquisition in order to study some particular questions and its key finding is that the rules of new language make the learner felt into errors which is considered as interference. Recent work in error analysis has emphasized errors as a source of knowledge of learner's interlanguage and linguistic hypotheses. Its theoretical

and practical research relate closely in one side to the contrastive hypothesis and in the other side to interlanguage hypothesis. It is emerged as a result of the decrease of the importance of contrastive analysis which focuses only on prediction and explanation of L2 learning problem; this approach left L2 learners out of consideration. Error analysis came to replace the contrastive analysis which is seemed as a weak means in identifying the most errors that are made by learners.

1.5.3. Error analysis objectives

It has two main objectives:

a. Theoretical objectives

It is related to theories; here, error analysis looks for the validity of each theory, it is called “psycholinguistic theory of transfer”.

b. The applied objectives

It is related to pedagogy; it looks for “pedagogical purposes” (Corder, 1973 cited in Temmim, 2009).

1.6. The difference between errors and mistakes

Longman dictionary differentiates between errors and mistakes saying that: Errors “which results from incomplete knowledge.” Mistakes made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Errors are sometimes classified according to vocabulary (lexical error), pronunciation (phonological error), grammar (syntactic error), misunderstanding of speaker’s intention or meaning (interpretive error), production of the wrong communicative effect, e.g. through the faulty use of a speech act or one of the rules of speaking (pragmatic error). In the study of second and foreign language learning, errors have been studied to discover the processes learners make use of in learning and using a language. Novish (1987) defines errors as “a systematic deviation, when learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong.” Cummingworth (1987) “errors are systematic deviation from the norms of the language being learned.” Corder in various papers (e.g. 1967), error is “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker reflects the competence of the learner” while mistake refers to “a performance error that is either random guess or a slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly.” James (1998) error “cannot be self corrected” whereas mistake “can be self corrected if the deviation is pointed out to the speaker.” Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) and Richards, and Schmidt (2002), it is mentioned that “a learner makes mistakes when writing or

speaking because of a lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Thus, mistakes can be self corrected when attention is called.” Whereas an error is defined as “the use of linguistic items in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning.” Ellis (1994) distinguishes between errors and mistakes saying that “errors reflect gaps in a learner’s knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct.” While “mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance, they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.”

1.7. Categories of L1 interference

As cited in Malaysia Journal of ELT Research (2008), there are three main categories of L1 interference according to the research result of Bennu (2008) found in Thai university students’ paragraphs. To identify these types of L1 interference, he depends on the use of contrastive analysis and error analysis.

1.7.1. L1 lexical interference

The different levels of vocabulary of both languages lead to this type of errors. It occurs due to the lack of lexical competence.

1.7.2. L2 syntactic interference

Students’ writing contains the grammatical error which is directly linked to the syntactic interference. He picked up seven sub-categories of this interference:

- a. Word order
- b. Subject-verb agreement
- c. Tense
- d. The infinitive
- e. The verb ‘have’
- f. Prepositions
- g. Noun determiners

1.7.3. L1 discourse interference

The different writing style of both language causes to this kind of interference. The sub-categories of this interference are:

- a. Language style level
- b. Level of cultural knowledge

1.8. Causes and sources of errors

1.8.1. Interlingual errors

Five elements that are transfer from learner's mother tongue to the learning of second language (target language) are:

- a. Phonological
- b. Morphological
- c. Grammatical
- d. Lexico-semantic
- e. Stylistic element

These elements which are suggested in Keshavarz's taxonomy result to interlingual errors (Keshavarz, 1994).

- a. Transfer of the phonological elements

Each language has its own phonological features; it may be shared in another language and may not be common in another language. These features may be characterized by new adjectives which make them a distinctive element in that specific language. Terence Odlin says rightly "[...] sounds in two languages often show different physical characteristics, including both acoustic characteristics (e.g. the pitch of a sound) and articulatory characteristics (e.g. how widely the mouth is open in producing a sound)" (1990).

- b. Transfer of morphological elements

Fallahi says: "when the semantic interpretation of some nouns is collective in one language but the semantic interpretation of their equivalent in another language is sometimes collective and sometimes [these nouns] are count plurals" (1991).

- c. Transfer of grammatical elements

Grammatical elements, to some extent, have a great part of interference. This type of transfer is discussed in some different works as Fallahi's work (1991) and Fisiak's work (1981). Also, we find that most of contrastive analysis books give a big part to it. We find that most of the students make a lot of mistakes in grammar even in Arabic; they believe that grammar rules are hard to learn.

1.8.2. Intralingual errors

Intralingual and developmental errors are defined by Keshavarz as "errors caused by the mutual interference of items in the target language, i.e. , the influence of one target language item upon other." They are divided into the following categories:

- a. Overgeneralization

It is to know the rules without the exceptions that are related to it. Ziahosseiny in 1999 states that overgeneralization "occurs when the learner has mastered a general rule

but does not yet know all the exceptions to that rule”. For example, at the beginning of learning, Arab learners do not know that in English grammar the use of ‘ed’ is only fixed in the regular verbs.

b. Transfer of training

According to Ziahosseiny, transfer of training refers to the cases “when teaching creates language rules that are not part of the L2...” (1999).

Richards (1971) gave three sources of errors are:

a. Interference errors

They are the use of first language items in speaking or writing in second language.

b. Intralingual errors

This type of errors is divided by Richards into the following:

i. Overgeneralization

The learners use the same rule of some language structure in the target language (e.g. , “He can sings” where English allows “He can sing” and “He sings”).

ii. Ignorance of rule restrictions

The learners use the correct rule in an inappropriate context (e.g. , “He made me to go rest” instead of “He asked/wanted me to go”).

iii. Incomplete application of rules

The learners use incomplete language structure (e.g. , “You like to sing,?” instead of “Do you like to sing”).

iv. False hypothesis

The learners do not make a clear distinction between the items of target language (e.g. , “The use of ‘was’ as a marker of past tense in ‘One day it was happened”).

c. Developmental errors

They occur when novice learners try to take an image about the target language.

In 1974, Richards distinguished between errors according to their causes.

a. Interlingual errors

They are happened due to mother tongue interference.

b. Intralingual and developmental errors

They are happened when the learners do not master the second language knowledge and because of the problems and difficulties in target language itself.

Dulay and Burt (1974), stated three main categories of learners’ errors:

a. Developmental errors

“errors that are similar to L1 acquisition.”

b. Interference errors

“errors that reflect the structure of L1.”

c. Unique errors

“errors that are neither developmental nor interference.”

Brown (1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002) stated four categories of errors:

a. Interference transfer

It is the negative transfer of learner’s mother tongue.

b. Intralingual transfer

It is the negative transfer of some items of the target language itself.

c. Context of learning

It covers the two types of transfer (e.g. , “the classroom with the teacher and its materials. In a classroom context, the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalization about language.”

d. Communication strategies

It is used by learners when they have a difficulty to communicate in a linguistic form. Here are five strategies:

i. Avoidance

ii. Prefabricated patterns

iii. Cognitive and personality style

iv. Appeal to authority

v. Language switch (Brown, 1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002).

James (1998) stated that there are four causes of errors:

a. Intralingual errors (mother-tongue influence)

They are the influence of mother tongue on target language learning.

b. Intralingual errors

They are caused by the target language itself.

c. Communication strategy-based errors

They are a “holistic or approximation strategies” and “analytic or circumlocution”.

d. Induced errors

“They are caused mostly by the teaching and learning process”. “materials-induced errors, teacher-talk induced errors ,exercise-based induced errors, errors induced by pedagogical priorities, and look-up errors”.

1.9.Factors behind students' poor writing

There are many factors that make learners produce poor piece of writing; they can be come from teachers or students themselves.

1.9.1. Lack of adequate technique to teach writing

In fact, teaching writing is very difficult and any teacher is responsible for making it easy to their learners. Unfortunately, most of the teachers search to find 'what' to teach in writing and neglect the important question which is 'how' to teach it. The question of 'what' is a hidden problem for teachers and learners because it makes the teachers lose the main techniques of teaching writing. For that, teachers must ask seven questions before class as it is suggested by Raimes:

1. "How can writing help my students learn their second or foreign language?"
2. How can I find enough topics?
3. How can I help to make the subject matter meaningful?
4. Who will read what my students write?
5. How are the students going to work together in the classroom?
6. How much time should I give my students for their writing?
7. What do I do about errors?"

1.9.2. Teacher as a source of demotivation (external motivation)

As we know, there are a great interaction between teachers and their learners; each one influence on the other one positively or negatively. In this case, teachers must be characterized by some features which make them effective teacher. The external motivation is important for learners to produce a good piece of writing; as Harmer (2007b) says that "the main task of the teacher is to motivate and provoke the students" in contrast demotivated teachers create uncomfortable atmosphere that do not make the learners feel at ease to write. Nowadays, we find that teachers do not encourage their students to write and if they do, they say it just with words and not from their hearts.

1.9.3. Lack of motivation to write (internal motivation)

This type of motivation is the most important because it is a desire that comes from the learners themselves; this desire makes them challenge all the problems that they face; as Harmer (2006a) says:

People involved in language teaching often say that students who really want to learn will succeed whatever circumstances in which they study. They succeed despite using methods which experts consider unsatisfactory. In the phase of such a phenomenon, it seems reasonable to

suggest that the motivation bring to class is the biggest simple factor affecting their success.

What we are noticed in our learners is that they do not even try to motivate themselves to do such task; this case make us ask different questions. According to Bascolo and Hidi (2008) “there are two main questions that language skill teachers frequently pose to writing. First, why are students so often not motivated to write? Second, how can their motivation to write be increased?”

1.9.4. Lack of reading

A famous proverb says that “good readers are good writers” and I say “poor readers are poor writers.” Eisterhold (1997) states that “better writers tends to be better readers, better writers read more than poorer writers, and finally better readers tend to produce more syntactically nature writing than poorer reader.” This is the biggest problem that our learners suffer from; they do not read although they know that reading makes them perfect in writing, they are interrelated skills. Byrne (1991) reported that “reading, of course, can be the goal in itself and in any case is likely to be a more important one than writing, but the two skills can and should be developed in close collaboration.” Reading is a bridge towards writing; it facilitates learners’ writing and ‘of course, it is key of better writing as Raimes (1994) says “the more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational follow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language.” this means that writing goes hand in hand with reading.

1.9.5. The influence of first language on writing in English

When you ask any learners especially first year if they can write in second language without referring to their first language, directly they answer with no because they are dealing with new language. Friedlander (1997) argues that “writers do any of their work in their first language.” They find them transfer a lot of things from their mother tongue; they feel that they are incapable to write without it. Friedlander (1997) says that “writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second or third language.” writing convention differs from one language to another because each language has its own rules and principles; this difference leads to interference which makes learners’ writing bad. Blanchard and Root describe writing conventions as driving a car, he says:

It is like driving a car, if you have ever driven in another country, you know that some of the rules of the road may be different. Just as the rules

of driving differ from country to another, the conventions of writing may change from language to another (2004).

Conclusion

To conclude, as we said previously, most of the students see writing as a complex and difficult skill because they face a lot of problem when they write; these problems create barrier between writers and an effective writing. Also, they make the writer take a wrong image of writing skill which makes him/her fails to achieve this productive skill. We can say that writing is your own art, be creative. Transform its complexity and difficulty to simplicity through practicing and learning from your mistakes.

Introduction

For this present study, we designed one questionnaire for first year students; this questionnaire contains questions of multiple choice type. It aims at describing students' opinions about the investigated subject. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: first section is about the attitudes towards written expression course; the second one is about the influence of first language on EFL students' writing.

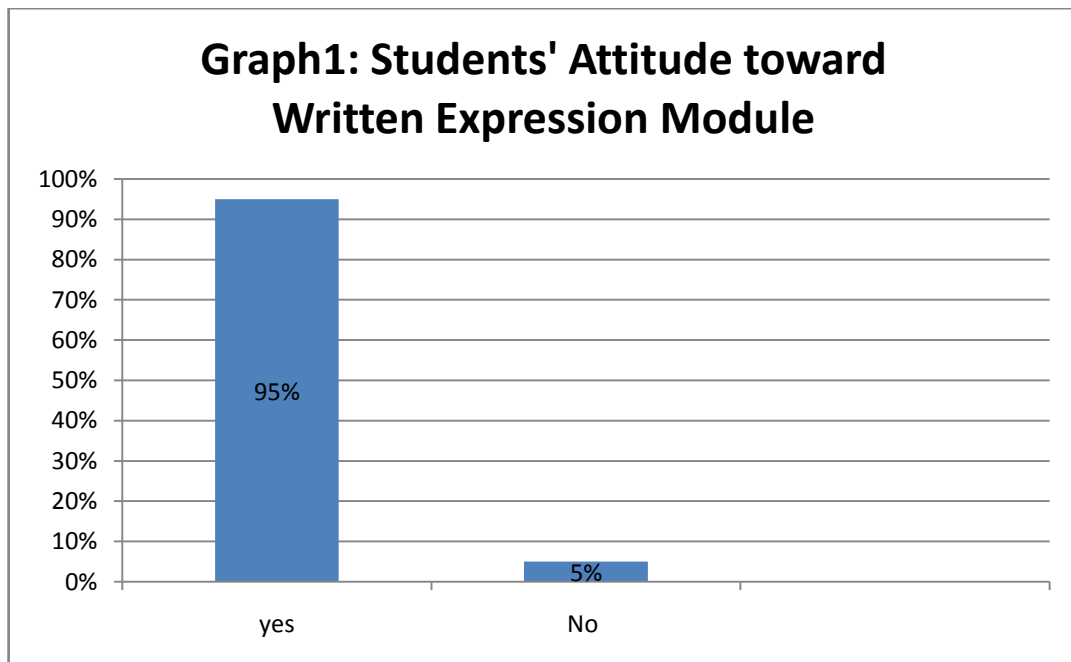
The second tool of our research is the analysis of written production. I have asked first year students to write a free topics then I analyzed them.

Data Analysis

1) Are you interested in learning written expression module?

	Yes	No	total
Number	38	02	40
%	05	95	100

Table 01: Students' Attitude towards Written Expression Module



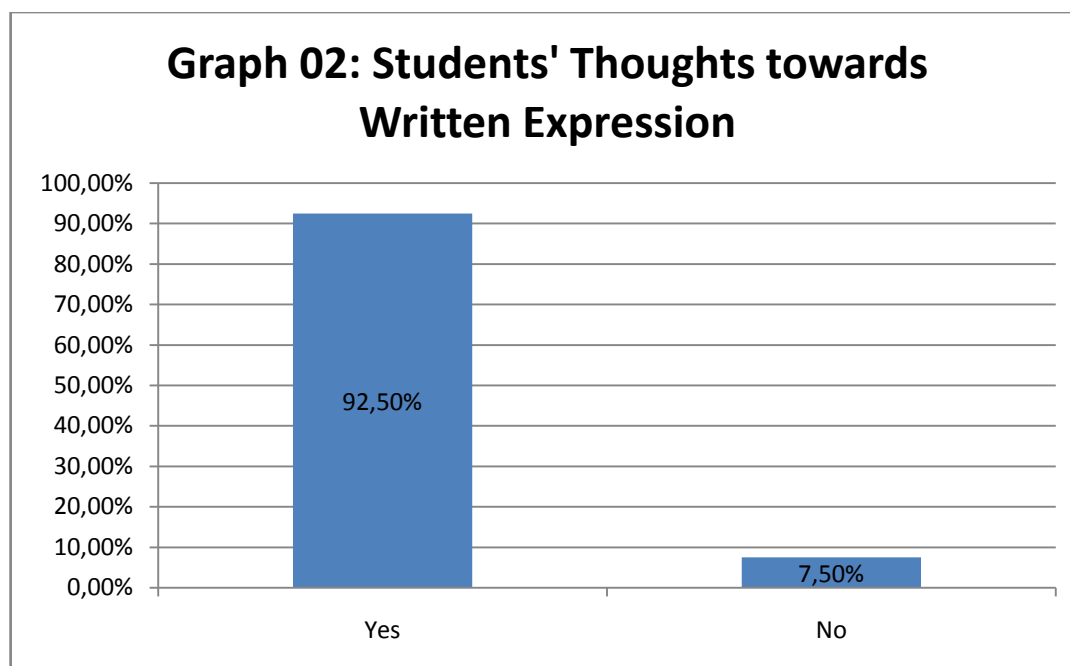
The finding reveals that 95% of first year students like written expression module for different reasons; some of the students justified their answers saying that written expression is a motivating course; others said that it allows them to express their ideas and feelings therefore to get good marks in the various module while group of them said

that they just like this module. Whereas 5% of them do not like it; maybe because they face difficulties in writing or they prefer other skills such as: speaking (oral expression session). Mastery of written expression module leads them to success (as we know all exams are in written forms).

2) Do you think that written expression' session helps you to improve your writing ability?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	37	03	40
%	92.5	7.5	100

Table 02: Students' Thoughts towards Written Expression

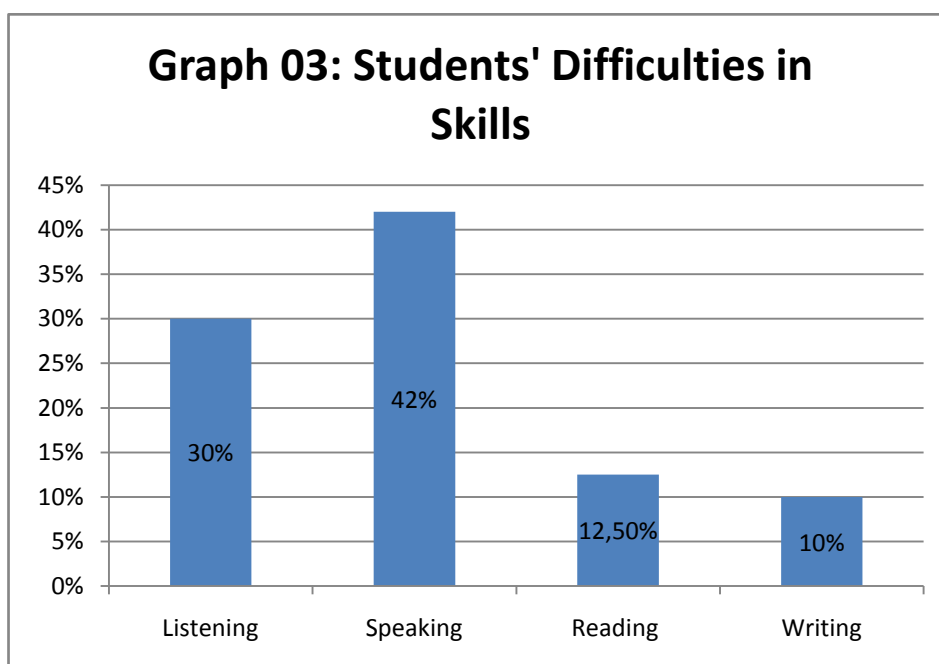


92.5% of the students reported that written expression session help them to improve their writing ability. Only 7.5% of them do not think so.

3) In which skill you have experienced difficulties more?

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Total
Number	12	17	05	06	40
%	30	42.5	12.5	15	100

Table 03: Students' Difficulties in Skills

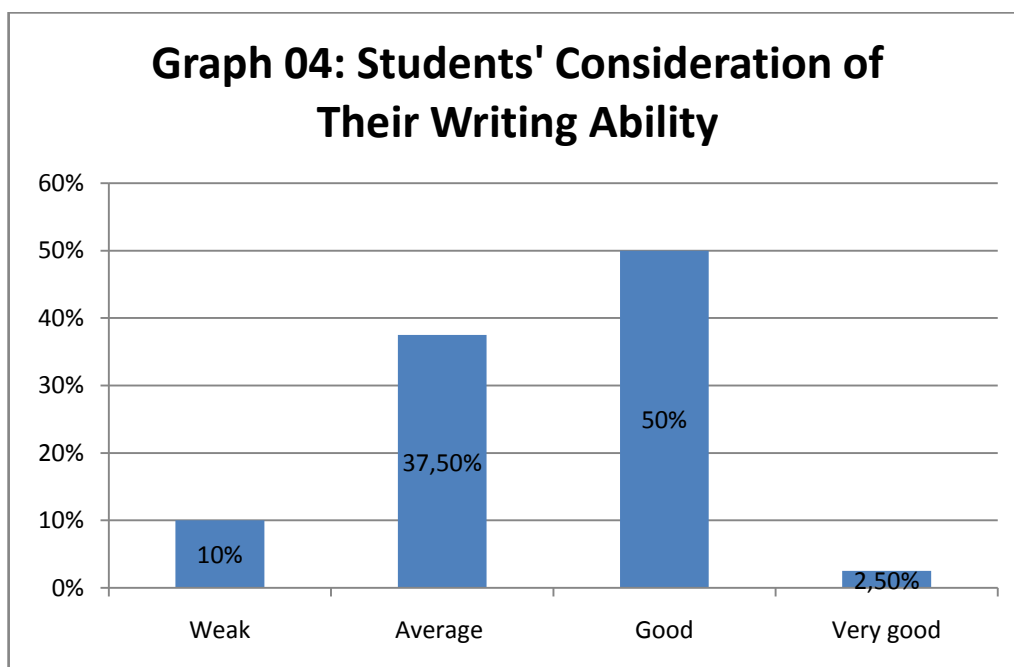


The finding illustrates that students have experienced more difficulties in speaking skill, this represents 42.5% of the whole sample; this occurs maybe due to the lack of vocabulary, the incorrect pronunciation of word and the most causes is the lack of self- confidence; these obstacles make students feel shy to speak or make them feel anxious to speak in L2/FL. while 30% of them have experienced difficulties in listening especially when they listen to non-native songs, poetry...etc; these difficulties is a result of the lack of non- native language and culture and because of the way that non-native speakers talk (quick speakers). However, 15% of first year students have experienced difficulties in writing; this refers to the different obstacles that learners face while they are writing or it refers to the lack of awareness about the steps and strategies of writing whereas 12.5% have experienced difficulties in reading because they are not previously deal with such language.

4) How do you considered your writing ability?

	Weak	Average	Good	Very good	Total
Number	04	15	20	01	40
%	10	37.5	50	2.5	100

Table 04: Students' Consideration of their Writing Ability

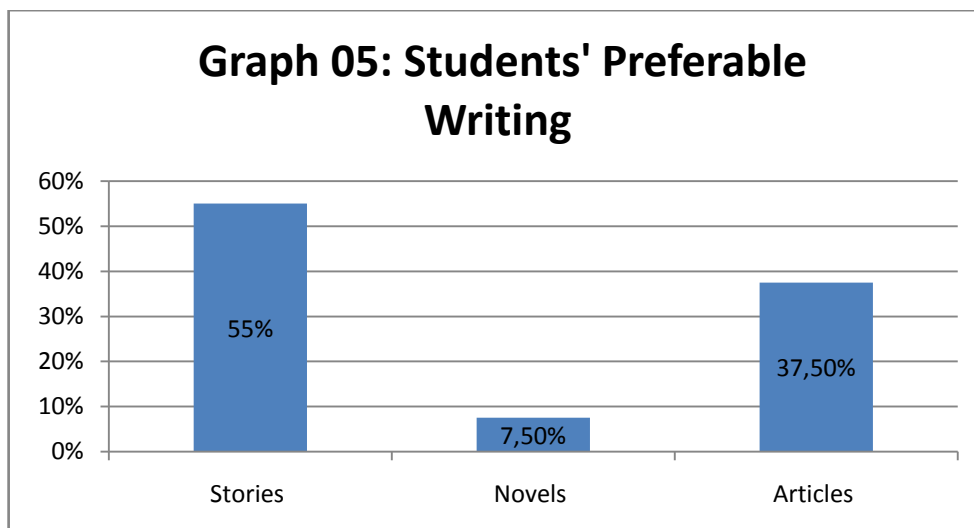


50% students considered their writing ability at “good”. It is good to find that half of first year students are good in writing as they said but in my opinion, the reason that makes half of them considered their writing ability “good” is that they evaluate their writing just from one angle. However 37% of them opted for their considerations of writing ability to be “average”. Those students may be discovered their errors in their writing for that they feel that their writing is average. On the other hand, 10% of them opted for “weak”; those students have chosen this level because they face difficulties in the second language itself whereas 2.5% of the students considered their writing at “very good”; those students may be have a good style, good ideas, and good language...etc

5) Which kind of writing you prefer?

	Stories	Novels	Articles	Total
Number	22	03	15	40
%	55	7.5	37.5	100

Table 05: Students' Preferable Writing

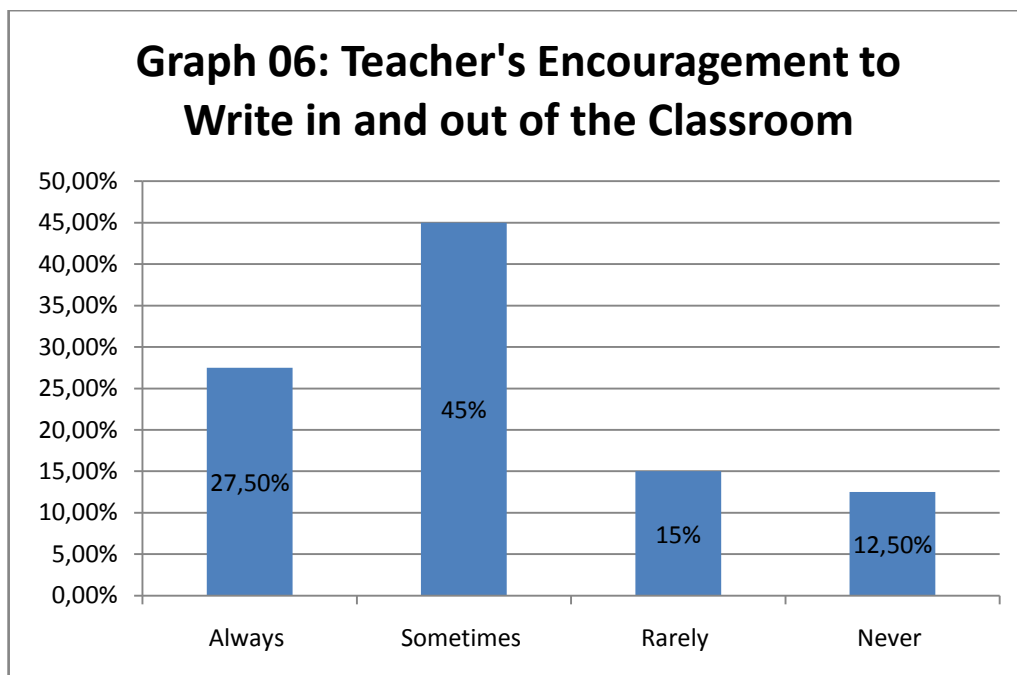


More than half of the students (55%) prefer writing stories because they feel at ease when they write such kind of writing; this kind have a suspense sense and it contains different events which make the writers search for making the story more creative. We can consider those students as creative one because they like stories; this latter is related to creation whereas 37.5% of them prefer writing articles because they like news, and they are interested in a scientific writing while 7.5% of learners prefer to write novels because they are preferring long and complex writing, they are more creative than those who like writing stories.

6) How often does your teacher encourage you to write in and out of the classroom?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	11	18	06	05	40
%	27.5	45	15	12.5	100

Table 06: Teacher' Encouragement to Write in and out of the Classroom

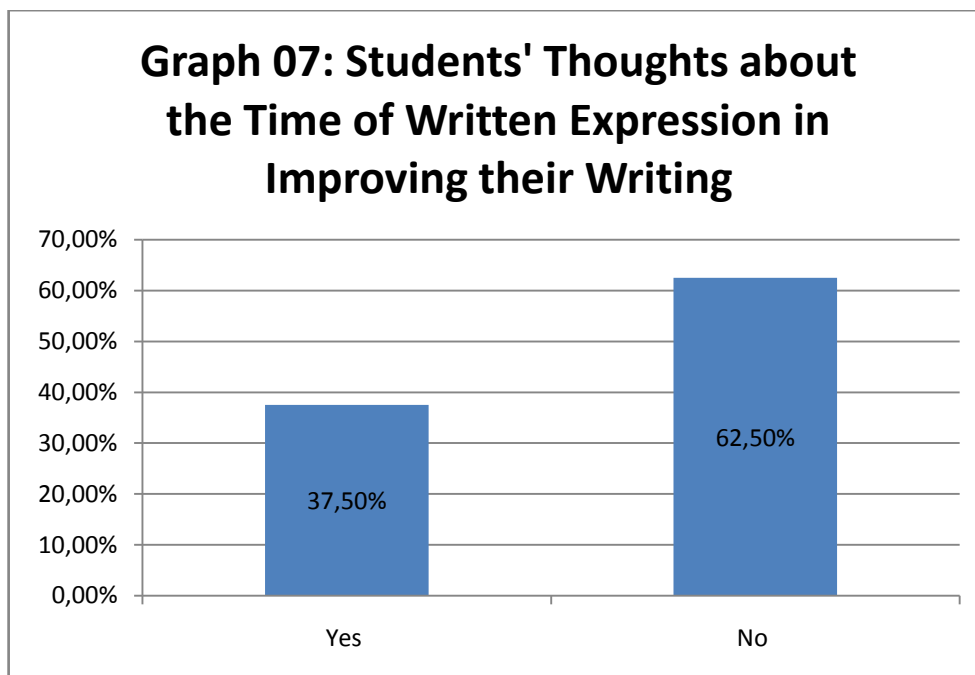


The result of our research shows that students are sometimes encouraged by their teacher to write in/ out of the classroom, this represents 45% of the whole sample may be because the teacher do not like to stress on their student; for that, from time to time he/she encourages them. While 27.5% of them are always encouraged to write; this means that these teacher like writing; for that, we find him/her always encourages his/her students to write. However, 15% of the students are rarely encouraged to write because the teacher may be follow only the syllabus. Others are never encouraged to write are represented by 12.5%; I disagree because there is no teacher who does not encourage his/her students at all.

7) Do you think that the time allocated to written expression enough to improve your writing skill?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	15	25	40
%	37.5	62.5	100

Table 07: Students' Thoughts about the Time of Written Expression in Improving their Writing



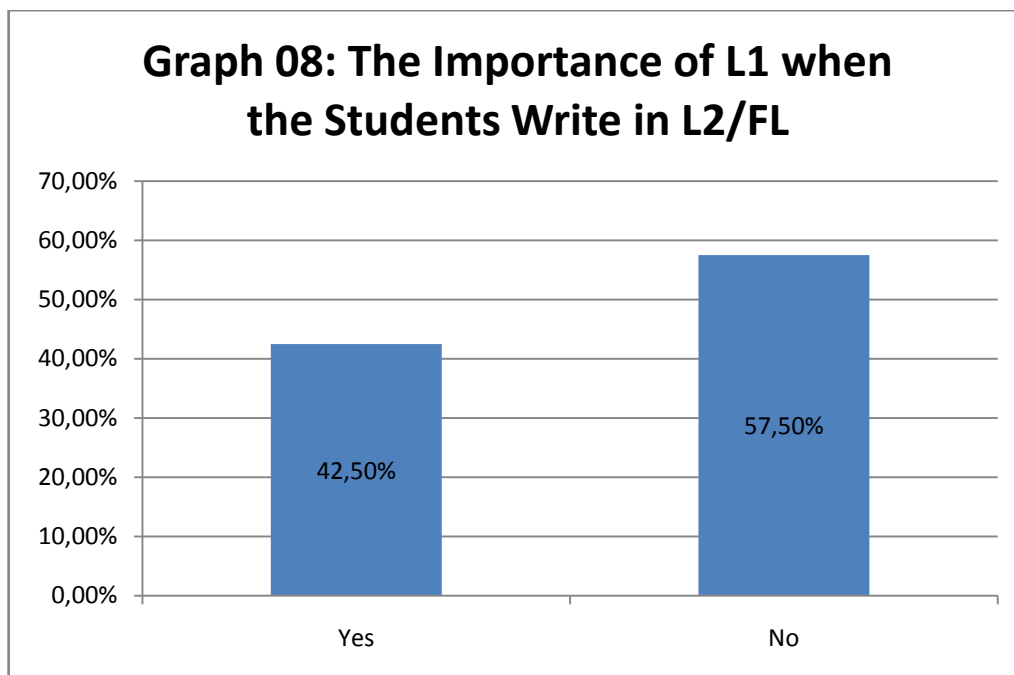
62.5% of the respondents opted for “No” because writing as a complex and difficult module needs much time to master it. Only 37.5% of them opted for “Yes” may be those students are quick learners for that do not need much time to master this module. This refers to the capabilities of each student.

Section two:

- 1) Is it important to refer back to your L1 when you write in L2/FL?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	17	23	40
%	42.5	57.5	100

Table 08: The Importance of L1 when the Students Write in L2/FL

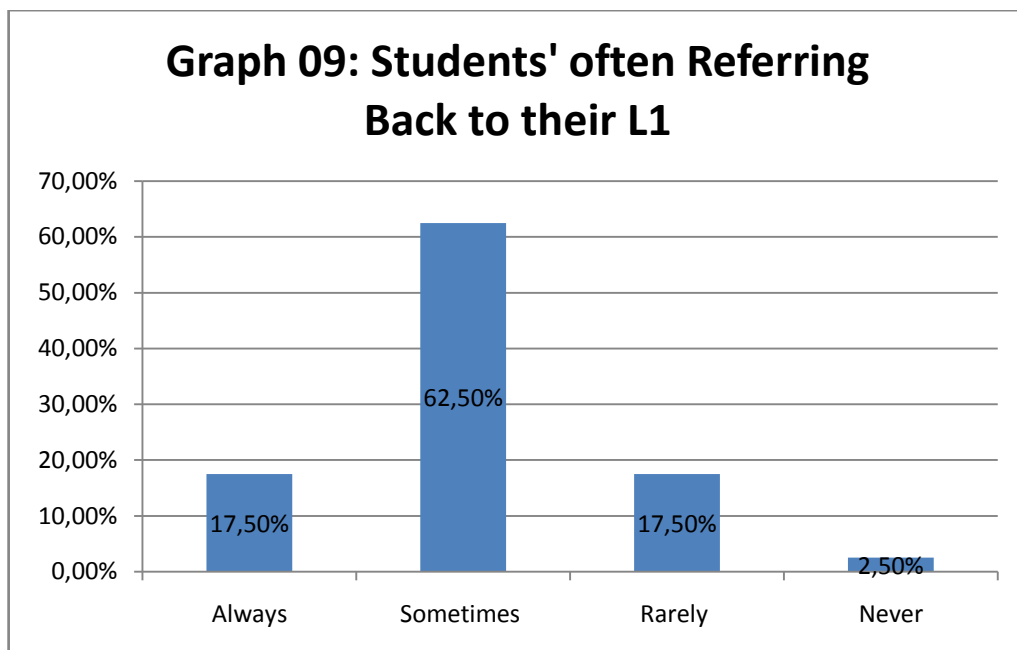


The finding shows that 57.5% of the students believe that it is not important to refer to their L1 when they write in L2/FL; it means that the students are capable to write in L2/FL without referring to their L1 while 42.5% reported that it is important to do that because they think that L1 help them to write well.

2) How often you refer back to your L1?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number	07	25	07	01	40
%	17.5	62.5	17.5	2.5	100

Table 09: Students' often Referring Back to their L1

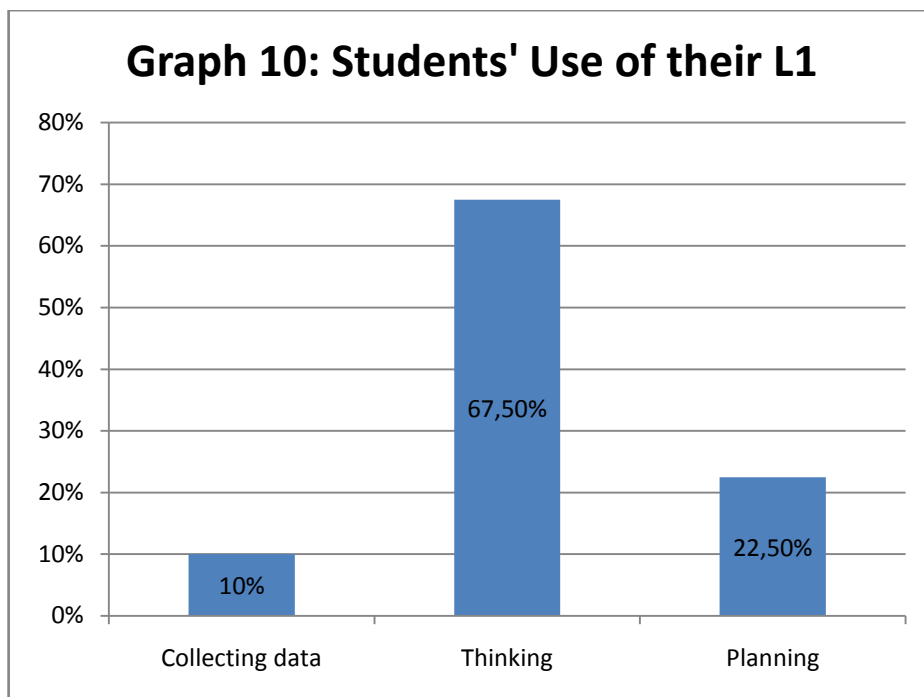


First year students stated that they are sometimes referring back to their L1 may be in planning or thinking...etc while 17.5% of them opted for always because they always face difficulties when they write in L2/FL whereas 17.5% of them opted for rarely; this is something natural because anyone of English students and even teachers are rarely refer to their mother tongue. What is noticeable is that 2.5% are never referring back to their L1; may be they are good students.

3) When you use it?

	Collecting data	Thinking	Planning	Total
Number	04	27	09	40
%	10	67.5	22.5	100

Table 10: Students' Use of their L1

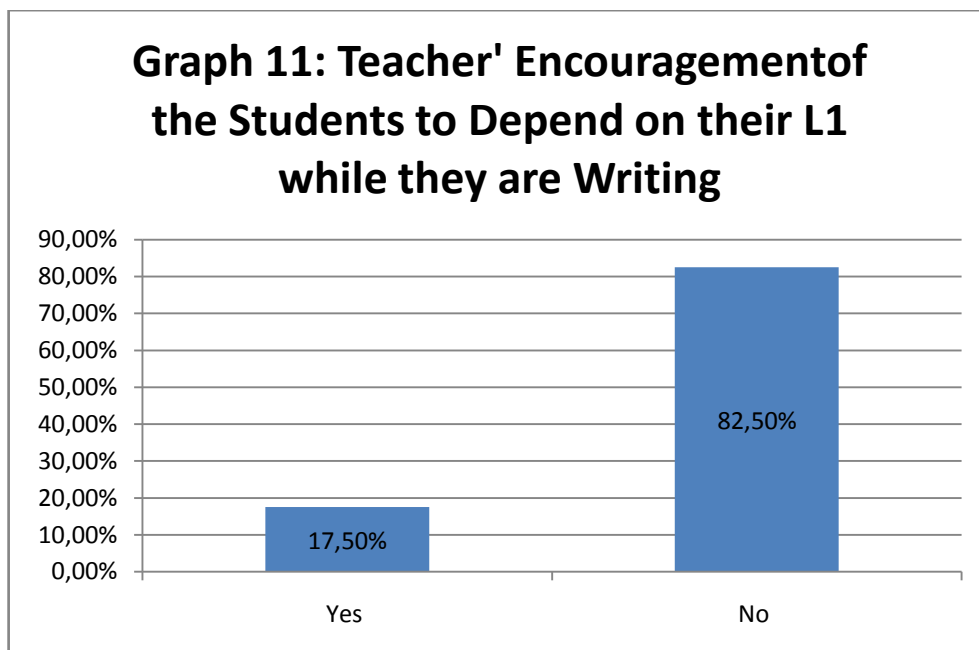


The finding reveals that 67.5% of the student stated that they are using their L1 when they think because when they think in their L1, they can distinguish between the useful and usefulness ideas whereas 2.5% of them stated that they are using it in planning because it helps them to organize their ideas. 10% of them using it when they collect data; it means that they gather information in Arabic and they try to translate them in English.

4) Does your teacher encourage you to depend on L1 while you are writing?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	07	33	40
%	17.5	82.5	100

Table 11: Teacher' Encouragement of the Students to Depend on their L1 while they are Writing

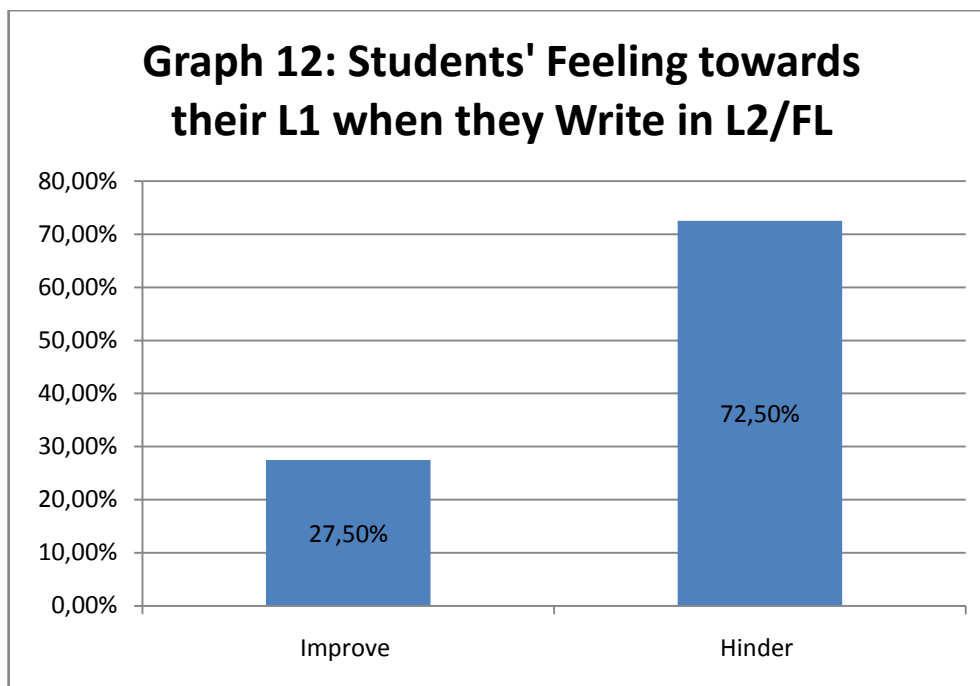


The finding reveals that the majority of the students are not encouraged by their teacher to depend on their L1 while they are writing because most of the teachers do not like this way of writing; they always advise their students to think and write in L2/FL. However, 17.5% of the students are encouraged by their teacher to refer to their L1 while they write may be the teacher feel that their students cannot write without the help of their L1 or may be these teachers believe that we cannot separate between L1 and L2/FL.

5) Do you feel that L1 improve/hinder your writing in L2/FL?

	Improve	Hinder	Total
Number	11	29	40
%	27.5	72.5	100

Table 12: Students' Feeling towards their L1 when they write in L2/FL

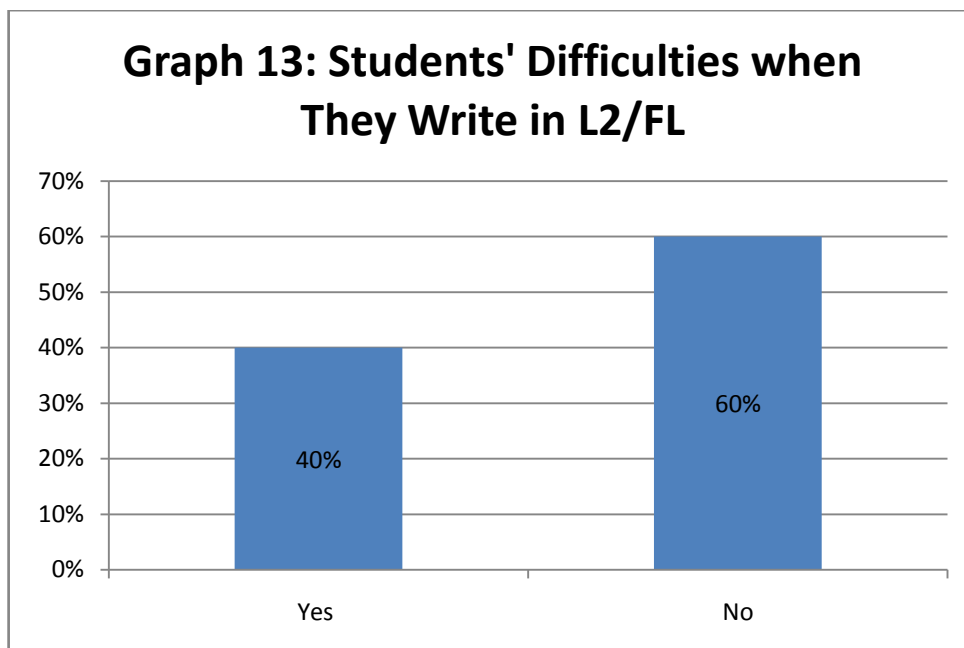


The majority of the students believe that their L1 hinder their writing, this represents 72.5% because they know that most of their errors come from their L1 in contrast 27.5% of them think that L1 improve their writing because they believe that it facilitates and simplifies the way of their writing.

6) Do you face difficulties when you write in L2/FL?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	16	24	40
%	40	60	100

Table 13: Students' Difficulties when they Write in L2/FL

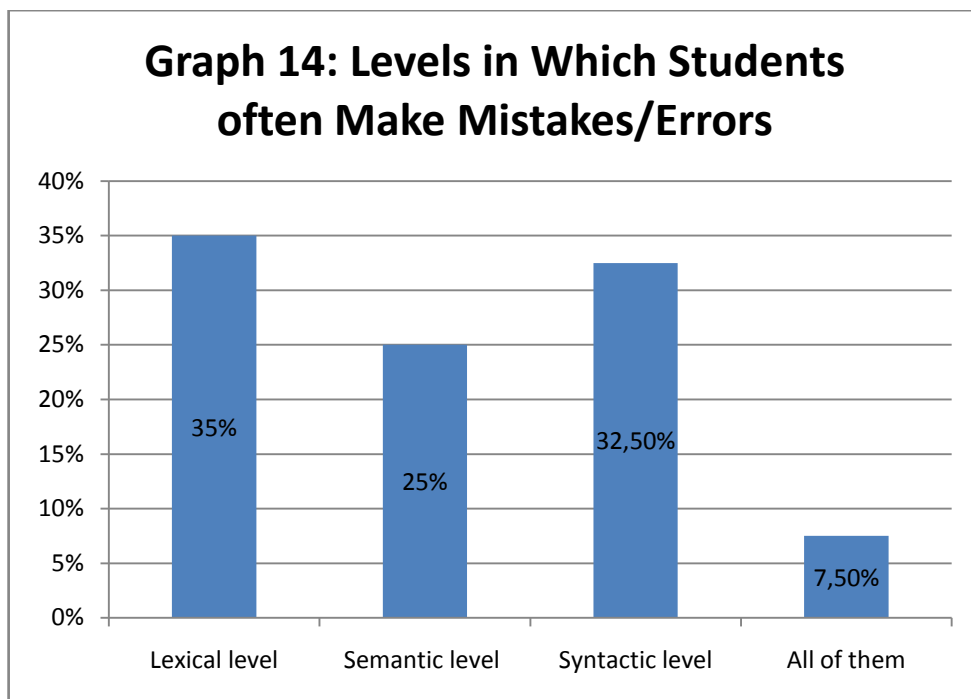


60% of the students do not face difficulties when they write in L2/FL. From this answer, it seems that students' writing level is very simple for that they do not face difficulties. In the other hand, 40% of them face difficulties may be they have difficulty in the way they start writing, they have a lack of vocabulary, and they cannot write in good style...etc.

7) In which skill you are often make mistakes/errors?

	Lexical level	Semantic level	Syntactic level	All of them	Total
Number	14	10	13	03	40
%	35	25	32.5	7.5	100

Table 14: Levels in which Students often Make Mistakes/Errors

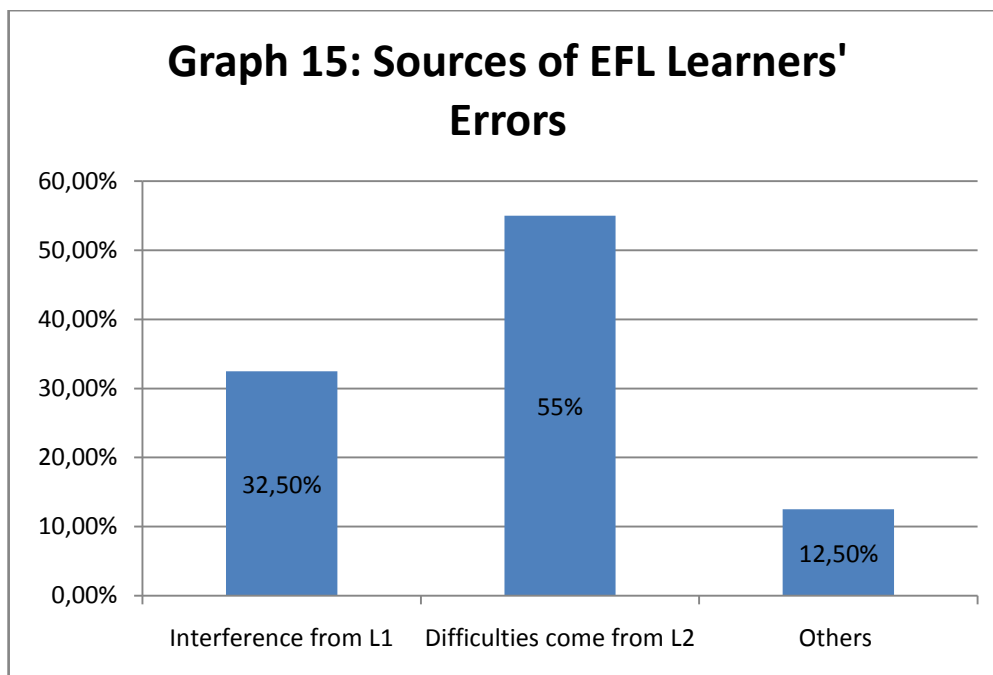


Lexical level is the first level that students make mistakes/errors in, as the result shows, 35% of the students reported that. The lack of vocabulary makes the student's piece of writing very poor; this is due to the lack of reading it said that "good readers are good writers". Whereas 32.5% of them stated that they make mistakes/errors in the syntactic level; they feel that grammar is hard to learn, even in Arabic, they make mistakes/errors in. Also, 25% of them make mistakes/errors in the semantic level; students translate some words, proverbs incorrectly, this makes their writing lose its sense whereas 7.5 of them make mistakes/errors in all of them because they are front of new language, and new rules...etc

8) Why do you make mistakes/errors?

	Interference from L1	Difficulties come from L2	Others	Total
Number	13	22	05	40
%	32.5	55	12.5	100

Table 15: Sources of EFL Learners' Errors



More than half students make mistakes/errors due to difficulties come from the L2 in itself whereas 32.5% of them stated that making mistakes/errors due to the interference from L1. Others said that a lack of practice (02 students), problem of grammar (02 students), and the lack of vocabulary (01 students)

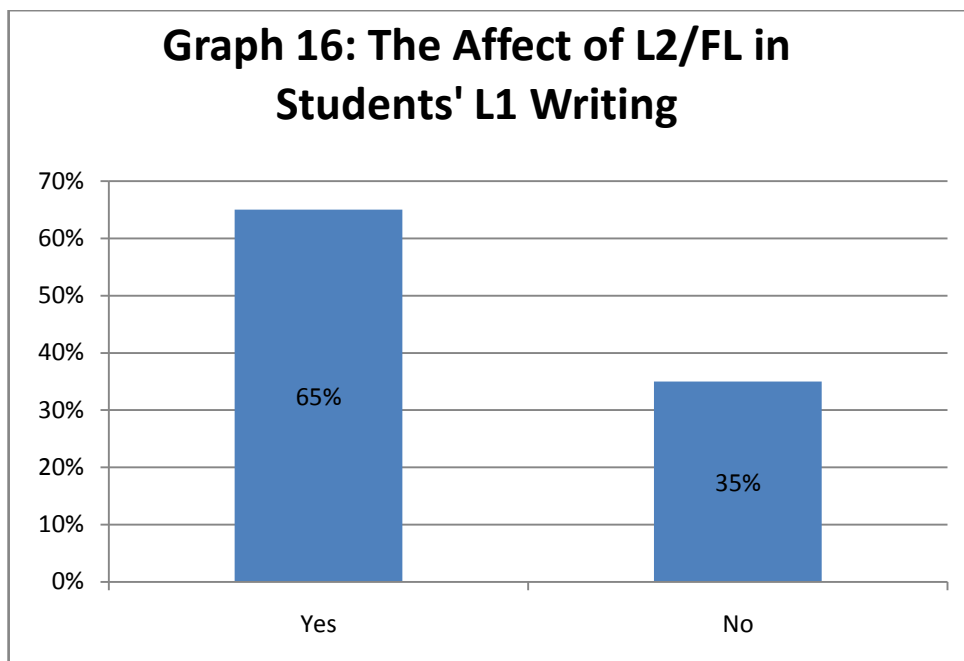
9) How you can reduce the L1 interference?

The majority of the students reported that in order to reduce the L1 interference, they have practice the L2/FL, read and write more in L2/FL, using only L2, and avoid thinking in L1. Others, they do not answer correctly may be they did not understand the question. Others, they did not answer the question at all. What is remarkable is that one of them answered this question saying that “I have no attention to do that because as long as I can distinguish between the characteristics of languages.”

10) Does L2/FL affect in your L1 writing?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	26	14	40
%	65	35	100

Table 16: the Affect of L2/FL in Students' L1 Writing



The majority of the students reported that L2/FL affects in their L1 because sometimes when they speak in their mother tongue (Arabic), they use some words in English whereas 35% of them said that L2 does not affect in their L1 because they do not use any words from L2/FL.





Identification and Classification of Students' Errors

First year students are asked to write free topics in grammar session with Mr Mhiri. That session was started at 08:00 till 09:30. I have just taken 15 to 20 minutes from the whole session. I have collected 27 papers from 48 because only 27 students were present. The students talked about: Friendship, Pollution, Sport, Life, Aid El-Adha, Study, English Language, Mother, Dreams, My Days, Money or Love?, Advice, Wishes, Football, Poor People, Baccalaureate Exam, and the World's Health Day. From the analysis I discovered a lot of mistakes/errors; I have classified them as follow:

Types of errors		
Grammatical and syntactic errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
a. agreement	1. he/she <i>ask</i> 2. ... <i>this peoples</i> 3. it, and <i>make</i>	1. he/she <i>asks</i> 2. ... <i>these people</i> 3. it, and <i>it</i> <i>makes</i>

	<p>4. Friendship are <i>relationship</i></p> <p>5. If <i>he work ...</i></p> <p>6. <i>Friendship are relationship</i></p> <p>7. ... <i>this phenomene are developed</i></p> <p>8. ... <i>it make you feel well</i></p>	<p>4. <i>friendship is a relationship</i></p> <p>5. <i>if he works ...</i></p> <p>6. <i>Friendship is a relationship</i></p> <p>7. ... <i>this phenomenon is developed</i></p> <p>8. ... <i>it makes you feel well</i></p>
b. Articles	<p>1. If we have to choose between <i>the love</i> and <i>the money</i> what we will choose?</p> <p>2. <i>The Football</i> is my favorite sport</p> <p>3. Friends are <i>diamonds</i></p> <p>4. ...to study my best language in <i>university</i></p> <p>5. Aid Adha is <i>religion</i> occassion</p> <p>6. ...Because <i>the god</i> exhort to celebrate in this occassion</p> <p>7. when Aid Adha coming <i>the people</i> buy mail sheep</p>	<p>1. If you have to choose between <i>love</i> and <i>money</i> what you will choose?</p> <p>2. <i>Football</i> is my favorite sport</p> <p>3. Friends are <i>a diamonds</i></p> <p>4. ...to study my best language in <i>the university</i></p> <p>5. Aid El-Adha is <i>a religion</i> occasion</p> <p>6. ...because GOD exhort to celebrate in this occasion</p> <p>7. When Aid El-Adha comes, <i>people</i> buy mail sheep</p>

	<p>8. ...starts with <i>a hope</i> and <i>a spotlight</i> in darkness</p> <p>9. I hate <i>team</i> of Barchelona and Messi</p> <p>10. Pollution is <i>phenomena</i></p> <p>11. ..., they are <i>the poor</i> people</p> <p>12. ...and they live in <i>muserbel</i> life</p> <p>13. It has effect</p> <p>14. It great feeling</p>	<p>8. ...starts with <i>hope</i> and <i>spotlight</i> in darkness</p> <p>9. I hate <i>the team</i> of Barchelona and Messi</p> <p>10. Pollution is <i>a phenomenon</i></p> <p>11. ..., they are <i>poor</i> people</p> <p>12. ...and they live <i>a miserable</i> life</p> <p>13. It has <i>an</i> affect</p> <p>14. It's <i>a</i> great feeling</p>
c. Preposition	<p>1. ...they hav't any place <i>to live</i></p> <p>2. We learned <i>of it</i> a lot of lessons</p> <p>3. <i>In last year</i>, ...</p> <p>4. I have to be present <i>all my session</i></p> <p>5. ... to celebrate <i>in this occassion</i></p> <p>6. ...the people go <i>for the prayer</i> in the mosque</p>	<p>1. ...they have no place <i>to live in</i></p> <p>2. We learned <i>from it</i> a lot of lessons</p> <p>3. <i>Last year</i>, ...</p> <p>4. I have to be present <i>in all my session</i></p> <p>5. ... to celebrate <i>this occasion</i></p> <p>6. ...the people go <i>to pray</i> in the Mosque</p>
d. Singular vs. plural words	<p>1. There are <i>many solution</i></p> <p>2. Any one have problems in his/her life but none know how to</p>	<p>1. There are <i>many solutions</i></p> <p>2. Anyone have problems in his/her life but no one know how to</p>

	<p>solve this problem</p> <p>3. I have <i>some question</i>, ...</p> <p>4. ...and a <i>lots of others</i></p> <p>5. ...to get more <i>informations</i></p> <p>6. ..., in the <i>others words</i></p>	<p>solve these problems</p> <p>3. I have <i>some questions</i>, ...</p> <p>4. ...and a <i>lot of others</i></p> <p>5. ... to get more <i>information</i></p> <p>6. ..., in the <i>other word</i></p>
e. Word order	<p>1. ... he can't come back <i>ever</i></p> <p>2. ... in our <i>team national</i></p> <p>3. I'm very happy in <i>this year...</i></p> <p>4. There's <i>always</i> people who will stand in your way</p> <p>5. My mother <i>is simply</i> my life</p>	<p>1. ... he can't <i>ever</i> come back</p> <p>2. ... in our <i>national team</i></p> <p>3. <i>This year</i>, I feel that I'm very happy</p> <p>4. <i>Always</i> there are people who will stand in your way</p> <p>5. My mother <i>simply is</i> my life</p>
f. Omission of the copula	<p>1. She  always with me</p> <p>2. That  what makes any dream so beautiful</p> <p>3. ...it  considered as one of the features</p> <p>4. It  not enough</p>	<p>1. She <i>is</i> always with me</p> <p>2. This <i>is</i> what makes any dream very beautiful</p> <p>3. ...it <i>is</i> considered as an important thing</p> <p>4. It <i>is</i> not enough</p>
g. capitalization	<p>1. I can't imagine my life without her. <i>and</i></p>	<p>1. I can't imagine my life without her.</p>

	<p>I love her. <i>because...</i></p> <p>2. I search for a solution to get away from this addiction...<i>can</i> you help me?!?</p> <p>3. <i>football</i> is my favourite sport</p> <p>4. ...my favourite player is <i>cristiano</i> Ronaldo</p> <p>5. ... and in our <i>team National</i> I love <i>feghouli</i></p> <p>6. ...<i>fortunately</i>, human being</p> <p>7. <i>life</i> it's very difficult</p> <p>8. ...to see many thing. <i>to</i> see</p> <p>9. ..., she is different to me. <i>she</i> has</p> <p>10. I like to watch games on TV</p>	<p>And I love her <i>because...</i></p> <p>2. I search for a solution to get away from this addiction... <i>Can</i> you help me?</p> <p>3. <i>Football</i> is my favorite sport</p> <p>4. ...my favorite player is <i>Cristiano</i> Ronaldo</p> <p>5. ... and in our <i>National Team</i> I love <i>Feghouli</i></p> <p>6. ... <i>Fortunately</i>, human being</p> <p>7. <i>Life</i> is very difficult</p> <p>8. ...to see many things. <i>To</i> see...</p> <p>9., she is different from me. <i>She</i> has...</p> <p>10. I like to watch games on TV especially</p>
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	<p>especially the <i>European</i> once</p> <p>11. I advise others to play football and love <i>leonel messi</i></p> <p>12. ... get a good job. <i>in last year</i></p> <p>13. ...her name is <i>chiraz</i></p>	<p>the <i>European</i> one</p> <p>11. I advise others to play football and love <i>Leonel Messi</i></p> <p>12. ... to get a good job. <i>Last year</i></p> <p>13. ... her name is <i>Chiraz</i></p>
<p>h. punctuation</p>	<p>1. I will choose the love <i>of course</i> Because if you have persons like you...</p> <p>2. ...but none know how to solve this problem <i>for that reson</i> he/she ask...</p> <p>3. ...can help you. <i>For that</i> the friends are very important</p> <p>4. ...or watching games in TV, <i>so</i> I advise...</p> <p>5. ... the best of the best. <i>So</i> we must not give up</p> <p>6. Mybe in our teeneger age the most defecult step...</p>	<p>1. I will choose love <i>-of course-</i> because if you have person like you...</p> <p>2. ...but no one can solve this problem; <i>for that reason,</i> he/she asks...</p> <p>3. ...can help you. <i>For that,</i> friends are very important</p> <p>4. ...or watching games on TV. <i>So,</i> I advise...</p> <p>5. ... the best of the best. <i>So,</i> we must not give up</p> <p>6. May be in our teeneger age, the most difficult step...</p>

	<p>7. ...fast food consumer, Also they have the largest series of restaurants</p> <p>8. Well, honesty is a key point you have to Be honest with your friend</p>	<p>7. ...fast food consumer. Also, they have the largest series of restaurants</p> <p>8. Well, honesty is a key point. You have to be honest with your friend</p>
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Tables 17: Students' Grammatical and Syntactic Errors

Lexical errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
	<p>1. <i>Friendsheep</i></p> <p>2. The european <i>onces</i></p> <p>3. ... <i>becouse</i> I knew new friend</p> <p>4. She <i>halps</i> me</p> <p>5. She always with me <i>spicialy</i> in the bad situation</p> <p>6. <i>Mybe</i> in our <i>teeneger</i> age</p> <p>7. The most <i>defecult</i> step</p> <p>8. ...its <i>a fisic</i> and <i>mantal</i> test</p> <p>9. ... and <i>thinke</i> about us</p>	<p>1. <i>Friendship</i></p> <p>2. The European <i>one</i></p> <p>3. ... <i>because</i> I knew new friend</p> <p>4. She <i>helps</i> me</p> <p>5. She always with me <i>especially</i> in bad situation</p> <p>6. <i>May be</i> in our <i>teenager</i> age</p> <p>7. The most <i>difficult</i> step</p> <p>8. ...its <i>physic</i> and <i>mental</i> test</p> <p>9. ... and <i>think</i> about us</p>

Table 18: Students' Lexical Errors

Semantic errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
	<p>1. She is different to me</p> <p>2. She has passion and funy persone and courage</p> <p>3. I think that we will be success in our lif when we contenu with her</p> <p>4. all of us dream of different things</p> <p>5. ...everyone must fight for his dream</p> <p>6. There's always people who will stand in your way and try to let you down, demotivate you and block your path</p> <p>7. ...and show them your true coulours and who you really are</p> <p>8. They will always say you can't and you are not able, but who</p>	<p>1. She is different from me</p> <p>2. She is a patient, funny, and courageous girl</p> <p>3. I think that we will be a successful girls if we are together</p> <p>4. All of us have different dreams</p> <p>5. Everyone of us should do his/her best in order to achieve his/her dream</p> <p>6. Always there some people demotivate you in order to give up</p> <p>7. ...and show them who are you</p> <p>8. ...they do not motivate you and encourage you to do</p>

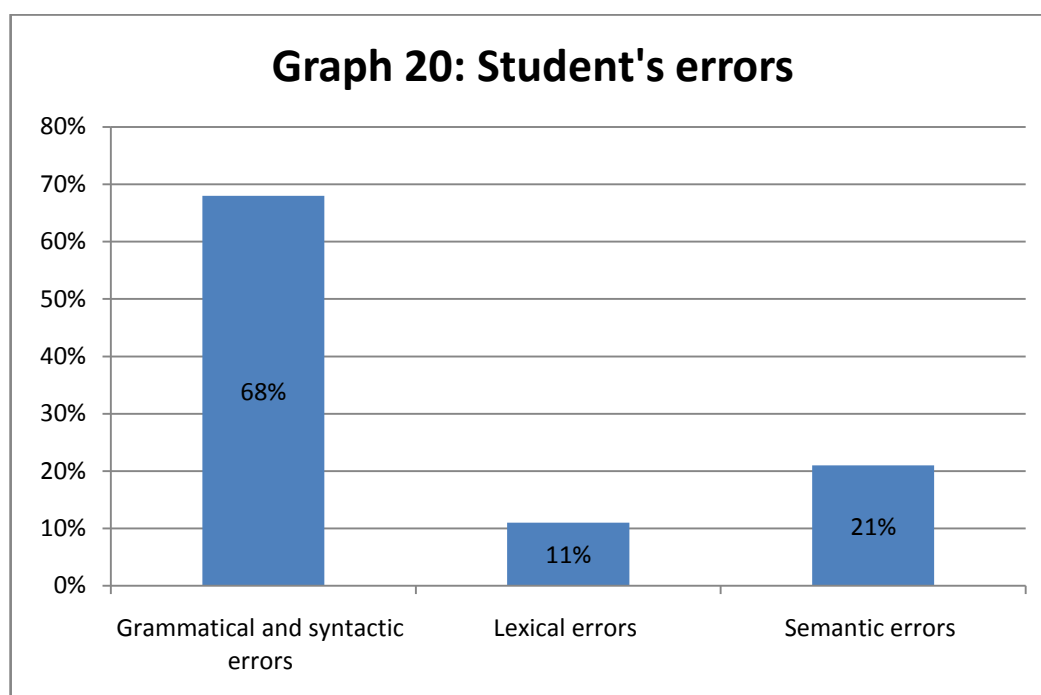
	<p><i>they really are to tell you that you can't who they are to tell you don't do</i></p> <p>9. <i>You gotta believe in your self</i></p> <p>10. <i>...I hope to come true, between my wishes ...</i></p> <p>11. <i>... to be a good "Mom" in futur to learn my children the good way</i></p> <p>12. <i>... and they live like there is no hope</i></p> <p>13. <i>Friendship It is important to make our life, because "Friend need indeed"</i></p> <p>14. <i>... and all the persons you have a Best friends within her friends finde it in deffculties ourlife that help you</i></p> <p>15. <i>in ourlife don't find a friend easy</i></p> <p>16. <i>the Best feeling in life is to have something in your mind</i></p>	<p><i>something but don't give up</i></p> <p>9. <i>You have to believe in yourself</i></p> <p>10. <i>...I hope to become real. My wishes are: ...</i></p> <p>11. <i>...to be a good mother in order to teach my children the good things</i></p> <p>12. <i>...they are pessimistic people</i></p> <p>13. <i>Friendship it is important to make our life, because "Friend in need is a friend indeed"</i></p> <p>14. <i>Each one of us has his closest friend</i></p> <p>15. <i>Nowadays, it is not easy to find a good friend</i></p> <p>16. <i>The best feeling in our life is when we make our wishes real</i></p>
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	<p><i>and you want to make it come true</i></p> <p>17. <i>One By one to go</i></p> <p><i>The seccess</i></p> <p>18. ... to write some ideas in my mind</p> <p>19. ... I like if learn it and I could speak it</p>	<p>17. <i>One by one towards success</i></p> <p>18. To learn by hard some ideas</p> <p>19. ... I hope to learn it and speak it very well</p>
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Table 19: Students' Semantic Errors

	Grammatical and syntactic errors	Lexical errors	Semantic errors	Total
Number	64	10	20	94
%	68.08~68	10.63 ~11	21.27~21	100

Table 20: Students' errors



11) After the analysis of first year students' writing production, we find that the majority of them make a lot of errors in grammatical and syntactic level than in semantic level and the last one is the lexical level whereas the students' answers of the questionnaire is completely different. This means that the students did not correctly answer the question (07) which is included in the questionnaire (In which skill you are often make mistakes/errors?); may be they have chosen the choices randomly or they have answered without care...etc

Conclusion

This chapter is devoted to test hypothesis. Questionnaire and analysis of written production are suitable for that. The result of the questionnaire revealed that students make mistakes/errors in different linguistic levels; to support this statistical finding, the analysis of written production showed that students' writing are full of mistakes/errors. In order to reduce these mistakes/errors, students suggested reading and writing more in L2/FL (practice); this way of avoiding mistakes/errors (L1 interference) allows students to be competent in their L2; directly, EFL learners' writing will be more improved.

General conclusion

The current study aims at studying the influence of first language on EFL learner's writing in first year university students at the Department of English, university of BISKRA. We have chosen the writing skill because it is the difficult one among other skills; we find it the most receivers of mistakes especially the interference one which leads to poor writing, this latter can be improved if the learners do not make negative transfer.

Our research divided into four chapters; the first chapter was about general introduction to our research. The second one was about general overview about first and second language acquisition; the interesting point is that of the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition and the interlanguage theory. The third one was about the influence of first language on second language writing; we have discussed the errors that students make when they write in second language with their causes and sources. The fourth one was about the field work. In this chapter we have collected data from first year students using questionnaire and analysis of students' written production about 27 paragraphs. The analysis of data showed that first year students are more interested in written expression because they feel that this module helps them to express their feeling and ideas... etc and also because it is a motivated course. Most of them reported (in the questionnaire) that they do not face difficulties when they write but as we noticed from our analysis of their paragraphs, we found that they really face difficulties in their writing because they made a lot of mistakes in different levels. Their judgments about their writing difficulties refer to their level because they lack linguistic competence; their knowledge about writing is limited; for that, they think that they do not face difficulties in writing.

EFL learners "fall back" on the first language when they need to produce (write) in English because of the lack of competence in the target language. The influence of L1 is due thus to ignorance not interference, the influence of L1 diminish as students acquire more.

The poor writing productions of most of first year students were a good example about the difficulty of writing skill; this makes me feel that our students are really in danger because writing is the basic of their learning process and if they do not make transfer, their writing will be improved. I think that the best way of avoiding such problem is to teach our learners how to link between the four skills and not ask them

about the preferable skill because each one completes the other. Here, the solution in “how” and not in “which”.

We have done our best to confirm that EFL learners writing will be improved if they do not make transfer and we wish that our research is acceptable and beneficial for both teachers and students in the future.

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Questionnaire

Topic: The Influence of First Language on EFL Learners' Writing

Dear students;

You are kindly invited to answer these different questions. I will be thankful if you answer them seriously because they are important and helpful for this study.

Thank you

Section one: Attitudes towards Written Expression Course

1) Are you interested in written expression module?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, because

i. It is a motivating course

ii. It allows you to express your ideas and feeling

iii. You like writing

2) Do you think that written expression' session helps you to improve your writing ability?

a. Yes

b. No

Explain

.....
.....

3) In which skill you have experienced difficulties more?

- a. Listening
- b. Speaking
- c. Reading
- d. Writing

Why?.....
.....

4) How do you considered your writing ability?

- a. Weak
- b. Average
- c. Good
- d. Very good

5) Which kind of writing you prefer?

- a. Stories
- b. Novels
- c. Articles

6) How often does your teacher encourage you to write in and out of the classroom?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

7) Do you think that the time allocated to written expression enough to improve your writing skill?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section two: The Influence of First Language in L2/FL Writing

1) Is it important to refer back to your L1 when you write in L2/FL?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes,
why.....
.....

2) How often you refer back to your L1?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

3) When you use it?

- a. Collecting data
- b. Thinking
- c. planning

4) Does your teacher encourage you to depend on your L1 while you are writing?

- a. Yes
- b. no

5) Do you feel that L1 improve/hinder your writing in L2/FL?

.....
.....
.....

6) Do you face difficulties when you write in L2/FL?

- a. Yes
- b. no

7) In which level you are often make mistakes/errors?

- a. Lexical level (vocabulary)
- b. Semantic level (translation)
- c. Syntactic level (grammar)
- d. All of them

8) Why do you make mistakes/errors?

a. Interference from L1

b. Difficulties come from the second language itself

c. Others

9) How you can reduce the L1 interference?

.....
.....

10) Does L2/FL affect in your L1?

a. Yes

b. no

11) Suggestions

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for cooperation

Suggestions and Recommendations

Writing skill is very interesting skill to be improved; for that, we have suggested some points for learners and teachers to develop this skill:

1. Motivation is a key point for producing good piece of writing.
2. In order to get rid of making negative transfer, students should practice the target language each time.
3. Mastering the other three skills helps the students to improve their writing.
4. Learners should read more in second language; as it is said “good readers are good writers”.
5. Teachers must be well-trained in writing skill in order to teach this skill correctly.
6. Teachers must choose the appropriate approach to teach easily the writing skill.
7. Natural and comprehensible input helps the students to acquire the correct vocabulary (in form and meaning).
8. Teachers should be responsible to show their students the differences between L1 and L2 grammar.
9. Teachers must assess their students’ writing.

Avoiding the interference of first language leads to produce a good piece of writing; this requires the desire of learners and the responsibility of teachers.