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The Impact of First Language on EFL Students' Paragraph Writing:

A case study of First Year LMD Students in English Division Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Mohamed Kheider Biskra

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Submitted by :   *Supervised by :*

Aichi Marwa   Mr.Bouhitem Tayeb

Board of Examiners

1. Mr. Temagoult Slimen
2. Mrs. Bekhouche Rym

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Dedication

From the depth of my heart, with the feelings of love and respect

I dedicate my work, first, to my precious and greatest parents in the world ,Nadir and Malika who awarded me with their motivation, support and love to complete my work with a higher confidence…

I dedicate this work to

My lovely husband Nabil who helped me a lot with his kindness and encouragement

My brothers Abd Elkahar and Abd Eldjabar for their motivation

My sister Imane for her support

My sweet cousin Manel who helped me with her love

My dearest Friend Zahira for her love and respect, and to my colleagues Khadidja, Naima, Djouhaina, Besma, Chahra and Safa

The family of Aichi

And to everyone who knows me

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Abstract

The present study aims at identifying the influence of the first language on first year EFL students' paragraph writing at the Department of Foreign Languages, English Division, at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. Reaching an acceptable level when writing in English is the main objective for both teachers and students, but the majority of students are unable to achieve this objective because they do not have the right foundation of the linguistic competence i.e. the main aspects of writing.Therefore, in order to emphasize or reject the hypothesis the common errors that students make when writing paragraph in the second language should be analyzed using the descriptive method through students' questionnaire and the analysis of their written production. 80 questionnaires are addressed to first year students to gather their points of view about our study ,and 58 students' compositions were collected for error analysis. The results show that first year EFL students face many difficulties when writing and fail to produce meaningful paragraph because of the negative interference of their first language and the lack of practice in the second language, so they must reduce this negative transfer in order to reach the higher level of proficiency in writing.

List of abbriviations

L1 : First Language

L2 : Second Language

L3 : Third Language

FL : Foreign Language

NL : Native Language

TL : Target Language

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

EA : Error Analysis

CA : Contrastive Analysis

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Chapter Two: The Influence of First Language on Second Language Paragraph Writing

General Introduction

People were born with the ability to communicate with each other in order to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions through language. This language which is known as the first language has been acquired unconsciously in the childhood period from the birth till 6 years when the child moves from the acquisition period to the learning period which is a conscious process. During this period the child starts to learn about the language, knowing about its rules and its linguistic competences , also understanding the form and the meaning of sentences. When the child grows up and becomes elder , he/she begins to learn the second language in the school setting in which he/she may face many difficulties concerning the linguistic competences of that language either in the receptive skills (listening and reading) or in the productive ones (speaking and writing).

Moreover, such problems may arise when second language learners start to write a paragraph because of many factors including word order ;for example, which is totally different in both languages (Arabic and English) or capitalization which does not exist in Arabic language , so students write the first letter at the beginning of the sentence in small letter , and this is a big mistake. Thus the first language affects the second language negatively or it rarely affects it positively , and this is called the negative transfer and the positive one. The positive transfer happens when the two languages (the first and the second language) share the same characteristics ;whereas, the negative transfer happens when the two languages have nothing in common. In addition, EFL students make transfer from their first language when writing paragraph in the second language , and this transfer process is due to different factors.

Statement of the Problem

Second language paragraph writing is not an easy task for EFL students and especially for first year EFL students because they are still unaware about the importance of writing skill in

that language , so they face many difficulties when they write , and they start to make errors concerning grammar and vocabulary because of many reasons . First, EFL students do not pay attention neither to the form nor to the meaning of the paragraph when writing because the word-order in their Arabic First Language is not the same as that in the second language , so they keep the same word-order of the Arabic language , and they fall in the problem of language interference. Second, EFL students do not give an importance to punctuation when they write in the second language ; they do not capitalize the first word of the first sentence , they write too long sentences and they do not use commas and semi-colons. These errors made by second language learners have two sources interlingual errors and intralingual errors.

In addition, because of the lack of reading skill in the second language among first year EFL students, students fail in writing a clear , correct and meaningful piece of writing. For this EFL students should first know the basic elements of writing paragraphs ; improve their vocabulary through reading books, magazines, newspapers and short stories ; and learn about the grammar rules for a successful writing. So how does the first language affect EFL students' paragraph writing? In other words, does the first language impede or facilitate students' paragraph writing?

Significance of the Study

This study is beneficial for EFL teachers as it enables them to know the different errors that students do in second language paragraph writing in order to find the suitable strategies to avoid this problem.

The study is also beneficial for first year EFL learners as it enables them to :

❖ Improve their writing skill.
❖ Pay attention to the form and the meaning when writing paragraph.
❖ Decrease errors in paragraph writing.

- ❖ Be familiar with the steps of witing paragraphs.

- ❖ Encourage their capacities to write correctly

- ❖ Increase their motivation to read in the second language.

- ❖ Avoid the negative transfer from the first language in writing second language paragraph.

Aims of the Study

This study aims at broadening the awareness among first year EFL students about avoiding making errors when writing paragraphs in the second language ; it also aims at showing the negative influence of the first language on the second language paragraph writing , so that students will minimize the negative transfer to the first language and start to write correct and successful paragraphs.

Research Questions

Through this study we are going to try to answer the following questions:

- ❖ What are the causes of EFL students' paragraph writing problems ?

- ❖ Why do EFL students transfer from their first language in paragraph writing ?

- ❖ What are the factors behind students' failure in second language paragraph writing ?

Research Hypothesis

To answer the above research questions we set the following hypothesis:

- ❖ If first year EFL students do not make transfer to their first language , then their paragraph writing will be easily enhanced.

Research Methodology

1. Choice of the method

The suitable research methodology for this study is the descriptive one because we describe how the first language can influence paragraph writing in the second language .The

study is conducted qualitatively through questionnaires in order to describe the results statistically.

2. Population

The population of this study is 15 groups of first year LMD students in English division , Department of foreign languages at Mohamed Kheider University Biskra ; each group contains approximately 50 students.

3. Sample

The sample of this study is 2 groups approximately 80 students from the whole population which contains 750 students because it's difficult to investigate the whole number of students due to the limited time , so we have taken a representative number of students for the investigation and to analyze the results easily.

4. Data gathering tools

The research tools which is used in this study are document analysis and questionnaire. The document analysis is used to know the level of first year EFL students in writing second language paragraphs , and to determine the errors that students do when writing paragraphs . In addition to the analysis, the research contains the students' questionnaire because these two tools help the researcher and also facilitate gathering information. The questionnaire and the analysis of students' paragraphs are very important materials for data collection, and they are considered as being more suitable to this kind of research which contributes in the validity and reliability of the results.

Structure of the study

Our research is divided into three chapters ;two theoritical chapters and one practical chapter.The first chapter is about the role of the first language in second language acquisition,

we will start it with a general overview about the key concepts of the study including the first language and the second language . Also we will talk about the theories of both first language acquisition and second language acquisition and their stages, thus we will compare and contrast the first language to the second language , ending up with the role of the first language acquisition in the second language acquisition.

The second chapter was about the effect of the first language on second language paragraph writing; we are going to give a general definition of writing ,then we will discuss the language transfer ; its types and causes. Moreover, this study will deal with contrastive analysis ,error analysis and the categories of first language interference. We will also see sources of second language learners' errors and the factors behind students failure in second language paragraph writing.

The third chapter is about the field work which contains two main tools; error analysis of students written productions and students' questionnaire.The aim of error analysis is to analyze and identify the students' common errors and find out their causes. However, the students' questionnaire help us in gathering students' perceptions about the subject under investigation.

Chapter One : **General Overview about First and Second Language Acquisition**

Introduction

In this chapter, we are going to give an overview about the first and the second language acquisition , and then we will move to talk about the linguistic competence and linguistic performance . Moreover, this chapter will include the stages of both first language and second language acquisition and their theories. Also we will talk about the affective factors behind second language acquisition. In addition, we will discuss the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 acquisition , and we will end up the chapter with the role of the first language in second language acquisition.

1 . Definitions of the Key Words

1. 1. First Language

The first language as Troike (2006) defines it as the language that the child acquires during early childhood which begins before the age of about three years . That is to say that the first language is any language that the child is exposed to since the birth , thus he/she grows up in a community of people who spoke it , and it is passed from one generation to another.

1. 2. Second Language

The second language is any language which is acquired or learned after the first language. According to Troike (2006) second language is the official language that is used for education or other specific purposes , and it is spoken by a minority of group members or immigrants who speak another language natively.

1. 3. Foreign Language

The foreign language is the language that is used in a country besides its own and mostly studied for cultural purpose. Troike (2006) defines it as:

« A foreign language is one not widely used in the learners' immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other crosscultural communication situations, or studied as a curricular requirement or elective in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application »

It means that the foreign language is the language that is studied for specific purposes either for future travel and cross cultural communications or optional in school.

1. 4. First Language Acquisition

First language acquisition is a children's natural , rapid and unconscious process of acquiring the language they hear around them from the birth until five years. Kuser (2012) claims that children who grow up in an environment where the only language spoken and heard among its members is English then they will acquire only English as their first language.

1. 5. Second Language Acquisition

Some older children and adults may acquire languages in addition to their first language , and this is called the second language acquisition which is an artificial process of acquiring the language. Gass and Selinker (2008 ; 1) sees second language acquisition as ,

« it is the study of the acquisition of a non-primary language; that is, the acquisition of a language beyond the native language. It is the study of how learners create a new language system with only limited exposure to a second language. »

In other words , second language acquisition is the process of acquiring any language that comes after the first or the native language.

2. Linguistic competence

The concept of linguistic competence first introduced by Noem Chomsky in 1965, so competence refers to the person's ability to understand sentences which have never been heard before.

Philips and Tan argue that ,

"Linguistic competence defines the system of rules that govern an individual's tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in the language they speak."

In short , linguistic competence refers to the set of rules which govern the speaker's understanding.

3. Linguistic performance

According to the Free Dictionary by Farlex (2003) ,

"Linguistic performance is a speaker's actual use of language in real situation ; what the speaker actually says , including grammatical errors and other non-linguistic features ; such as, hesitations and other disfluences (contrasted with linguistic competence."

That is to say that linguistic performance is the ability to produce sentences in a language and understand them.

4. Stages of first language acquisition

When children come up to life and open their eyes to the real world , they will be exposed to the language they need to be familiar with for the sake of communication. Moreover, children acquire knowledge of the language around them in a brief time and with little efforts, and this could not be possible without two major ingredients:

"a biologically based predisposition to acquire language, and experience with language in the environment . " (Frenandez and Cairns, 2011:97)

In other words, all children acquire their first language the same way because of their biological nature ; they are born to speak and use the language for real communication . Also, children experience with the language through the different input they are provided with ;such as, parents, sisters , brothers , relatives and caretakers in order to interact with them.

Recent studies have shown that the child pass through different stages ; in the acquisition of the first language ; from the birth until 6 years. Embick and Yuan (2003) ; Salim and Mehawesh (2014) categorized the stages of the first language acquisition as follow:

4.1 Early vocalizations stages

4.1.1 Crying

"Birth Cry" is the first vocal response the child make after his/her birth ; crying is used to express the basic psychological needs ;such as, hunger , thirst , feel pain or discomfort. So that the mother can understand that her child needs something.

4.1.2 Cooing

After a couple of months, the crying stage developed into the cooing stage where the child starts to produce sounds using all the phonemes. During this period the vocalizations

consisted of : short vowels as, /a/ and /u/ and long vowels as, /a:/ and /u:/. This stage continue until 6 months.

4.1.3   Babbling

The babbling stage starts when the child is 6 months and ends in his/her 12 months . The child starts to produce only sounds that exist around him/her including a variety of sounds in both vowels and consonants. The common consonants first produced by the child are /m/,/n/, /b/, /t/ and /d/. Then the child combines those consonants with vowels forming syllabus;such as, "ma","ba","ta","da","ida"and "ima".

4.2   The Holophrastic stage

It is also known as One-word utterances stage ; during this stage the children begin to comprehend the language they hear around them when their parents talk with them , and they start producing words to express their needs ; for example,"water"means "I'm thirsty I want to drink water" ;"doll" means "give me that doll" , so the child acquisition process of the language develops through time in order to achieve a better level for communication. This stage ends when the child is about two years.

4.3   Telegraphic speech

This stage starts when the child is two years old , yet s/he begins to combine words together and produce multi-word utterances that lack functional and grammatical words. For example, when the child says "milk finish" s/he means that "the milk is finished" ; or when saying "mom water" s/he requests his/her mother to get some water.

4.4   Normal speech

The normal speech stage occurs when the child is about five to six years. In this period children speak using sentences of several words , and by the age of six , children start speaking mostly like adults.

5. Stages of second language acquisition

Children acquire their first language from their birth through different stages known as the stages of first language acquisition which are discussed previously. When the child grows up , s/he starts to acquire a second language , and this process of acquisition happens in stages known as the stages of second language acquisition.Therefore, students acquire a second language progress through five predictable stages. Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell first explored five stages of a second language acquisition in their book , The Natural Approach (1983) , and they have categorized them as follow :

5.1. Pre-production

It is also called The Silent stage which may last from several hours to several months depending on the individual learner. Learners spend time learning vocabulary and pronounce new words , but they still incapable to speak fluently.

5.2. Early production

In this stage, learners begin to speak some words and form short sentences which may not be grammatically correct , so they make many errors.

5.3. Speech emergence

Learners acquire more vocabulary during this stage and start to produce loger words and sentences which still grammatically incorrect , but they develop their comprehension and start to read and write in the second language.

5.4. Intermediate fluency

In this stage, learners start to produce more complex words and sentences , and communicate in the second language fluently .It may last for a year or more after the speech emergence stage where few errors may appear , but the learner is able to think in the second language which helps them to gain more proficiency to speak it.

5.5. Advanced fluency

Learners in this stage engage in discussions and express themselves in their new language in order to reach fluency in it, yet they feel comfortable when communicating with the second language.

The following table summarizes each stage of second language acquisition and its characteristics , and it shows also a sample of different teacher prompts which indicate the level of learners (cited in, Krashen and Temell 1983):

Stage	Characteristics	Approximate Time Frame	Teacher Prompts
Preproduction	The student Has minimal comprehension. Does not verbalize.	0–6 months	Show me … Circle the … Where is …? Who has …?

	Nods "Yes" and "No." Draws and points.		
Early Production	The student Has limited comprehension Produces one- or two- word responses. Uses key words and familiar phrases. Uses present-tense verbs.	6 months–1 year	Yes/no questions Either/or questions Who …? What …? How many …?
Speech Emergence	The student Has good comprehension. Can produce simple sentences. Makes grammar and pronunciation errors. Frequently misunderstands jokes.	1–3 years	Why …? How …? Explain … Questions requiring phrase or short-sentence answers
Intermediate Fluency	The student Has excellent comprehension. Makes few grammatical	3–5 years	What would happen if …? Why do you think …? Questions requiring more than a sentence response

	errors.		
Advanced Fluency	The student has a near-native level of speech.	5–7 years	Decide if … Retell …

Figure 1.1. Sample of Teacher Prompts for Each Stage of Second Language Acquisition

6. Theories of First Language Acquisition

First Language Acquisition is an interesting topic for both linguists and psycholinguists; many studies have been carried out to investigate how child language mechanism takes place. Over the past , linguists have proposed theories about the way that children acquire their first language , and each one of them saw it from his own angle .Thus each linguist brings something new in his theory based on the previous one whether to support it with arguments or to disagree with its ideas. The most common theories are , behaviorist theory, mentalist theory, innateness theory, social interaction theory. And we will deal with each one of them in brief, discussing its main points.

6.1. Behaviorist theory

The behaviorist theory of first language acquisition (L1) plays an important role in understanding the role of the first language acquisition ; the language that the child first be exposed to. It is founded by J.B.Watson.

Torikul (2013; 500) pointed that the behaviorist theory is the most important school of psychology from the 1920s to 1960s ; it can be referred to Watson's habit formation hypothesis . The link between a response and a stimulus expresses a habit. Skinner (1957) came after Watson , and he explained how those habits were formed. Later the behaviorist theory of language was completely developed by Skinner in his book "Verbal Behavior (1957)".

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Behaviorists believed that the human being is a white page at birth and the knowledge is learnt from the environment which surround him , thus the society that affects his language acquisition. According to Cooter and Reutzel,2004 (cited in Waris, 1) ,

"Infants learn oral language from other human role models through a process involving imitation, rewards, and practice. Human role models in an infant's environment provide the stimuli and rewards."

In short, children learn their first language from the language they hear around them through the process of imitating other members of their family , and they start to practise the language step by step and imitate sounds or speech patterns by which they will be given praises and affection that become rewards. Basically,

" The behaviorist theory of stimulus-response learning, particularly as developed in the operant conditioning model of Skinner, considers all learning to be the establishment of habits as a result of reinforcement and reward." (Rivers, 1968; 73, cited in, Waris; 2)

That is to say that the behaviorist theory of language acquisition deals with learning as the set of habits which result from reinforcement and reward , thus a child is given a particular stimulus ,which represents the adults' oral language or speech utterances, and he responds to it through the process of imitation by producing different sounds and utterances, that's why the language is a conditioned behavior. The child will be praised from the part of his parents by a positive comments that express affection.

6.2. Mentalist theory

The mentalist theory came as a reaction to the behaviorist theory of language acquisition; Noam Chomsky (1959) criticized Skinner's theory in terms of imitation in which he neglected the importance of imitation for children when acquiring the language. Torikul (2013;502) pointed that Chomsky in his book "Review of Verbal Behavior" (1959) criticized the

behaviorists in terms of the creativity of child language use which the child never be exposed to before ,and he gave a recent view of language acquisition.His mentalist report of FLA was a contestation to the behaviorist view of acquisition, and introduced a debate whether the mind of the human being contains the language before experience or not. This has steered to an explanation of human-specific language learning faculty.

Chomsky's view of language acquisition is that the child's knowledge and ideas of their mother tongue came from a "Universal Grammar" (UG) selects the important form that any normal and natural language can take (Torikul, 2013; 503).

The mentalist theory of language acquisition suggested by Chomsky argued that children were born with an innate capacity to acquire the language and carrying a language acquisition device in their minds known as the LAD and a kind of Universal Grammar which enable them to acquire the complexities of the language easily.

Chomsky also pointed that the language is governed by rules by means the unconscious ones that exist in the child's mind, these rules helps him in producing grammatical sentences in his language. Thus a four or five years child has the ability to produce a sentence as, "I have taken meal" , because he possesses a "mental grammar" which allows him to construct the correct form of the present perfect and to use such structures in their right situation.(Lucid , 2008)

6.3. Innateness theory

This theory claims that babies are born ، with the capacity and knowledge that languages have patterns and with the ability to identify those patterns. Some theorists have even claimed that humans have innate knowledge of some core characteristics common to all languages ; such as, the concepts of 'noun' and 'verb.' These basic features shared by all languages are called linguistic universals, and the theoretically inborn set of structural

characteristics shared by all languages is known as universal grammar (Bergmann et.al 2007).

The claim that linguistic ability is innate in humans is supported by ; for example, the work of biologist Eric Lenneberg. He studied animal behavior and developed a set of characteristics which are typical of innately determined behaviors. Innate behaviors are occur in all normal individuals of a species ; whereas , learned behaviors are not. Walking, for instance, is a behavior for which humans are genetically predisposed ;that is, humans learn to walk as a natural part of development, without being explicitly taught (Bergmann et.al 2007).

6.4. Social Interaction Theory

According to Bergmann et.al (2007) Social Interaction Theory explained that children acquire language through social interaction with older children and adults in particular by means their surroundings. This approach assumed that children push their parents to supply them with the appropriate language experience they need. Thus, children and their language environment are seen as a dynamic system: children need their language environment to improve their social and linguistic communication skills, and the appropriate language environment exists because it is cued by the child.

7. Theories of second language acquisition

Second language acquisition is an important subject which attracted many scientists to go deeper in its study. Many theories have been proposed and developed in order to explain clearly this field of SLA, but the majority of those theories focus more in the acquisition of syntactic structure and neglect other aspects. We will include the most important theories in our study as, Universal Grammar Hypothesis , comprehension hypothesis, interaction hypothesis and output hypothesis.

7.1. Universal Grammar Hypothesis

Chomsky's followers try to understand SLA in the light of his universal grammar (UG) theory, a human innate endowment. Chomsky is interested in the nature of language and sees language as a mirror of the mind. Although he is not concerned with SLA, his work has been influencing studies in our area. According to his theory, every human being is biologically endowed with a language faculty, the language acquisition device, which is responsible for the initial state of language development. The UG theory considers that the input from the environment is insufficient to account for language acquisition (Menezes 2013).

7.2. Comprehension Hypothesis

According to Menezes (2013), comprehension hypothesis is influenced by Chomsky's assumptions on language as an innate faculty, Krashen, developed an influential proposal with a focus on the contrast between learning and acquisition to explain SLA. First, he named it as monitor model, then he termed it input hypothesis, with emphasis on the data which feed acquisition, and more recently, comprehension hypothesis emphasizing the mental process as responsible for acquisition. According to Krashen (cited in, Menezes 2013),

« The Comprehension Hypothesis is closely related to other hypotheses. The Comprehension Hypothesis refers to subconscious acquisition, not conscious learning. The result of providing acquirers with comprehensible input is the emergence of grammatical structure in a predictable order. »

7.3. Interaction Hypothesis

Other attempts to explain SLA are the various versions of the interaction hypothesis defended by Hatch and by Long, to name ,but two who did not accept Krashen's Input Hypothesis. Both Hatch and Long consider that input by itself is not sufficient to explain

SLA. Hatch disagrees that learners first learn structures and then use them in discourse and speech. She considers the reverse possibility. "One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed" (Menezes 2013).

7.4. Output Hypothesis or Lingualization

According to Menezes (2013), Swain also goes against Krashen's radical position towards the role of input and argues in favor of the output hypothesis, later named as lingualization. She claims that practicing the language helps learners observe their own production, which is essential to SLA. It is her contention that "output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production (p. 128)".

She explains that "learners may notice a gap between what they want to say and what they can say, leading them to recognize what they do not know, or know only partially" (p. 126) . She highlights that "noticing" is essential and very important to SLA and also hypothesizes that output has other two functions: to test hypothesis and to trigger reflection, a metalinguistic function. She explains that learners "may output just to see what works and what does not" (p. 132) and that they reflect upon the language they produce when negotiating meaning because the content of negotiation is the relation between the meaning they are trying to express and the language form (Menezes2013).

8. Affective factors behind second language acquisition

According to BBC Teaching English,

"Affective factors are emotional factors which influence learning […] In the classroom affective factors may be as successful for language learning […] Teachers can reduce negative factors and develop positive ones by doing activities to build a positive group dynamic, by including students in deciding aspects of the course and choosing activities that are motivating for the age and interests of the learners."

That is to say that there are some important factors which affect learning negatively or positively. The teacher has a great role in the classroom to improve students' positive factors ,so that they will be more engaged in the course. The affective factors are numerous including, motivation, attitude, self-confidence and anxiety.

7.1. Motivation

Motivation is considered as the most important factor.Gardner (1985, cited in, Ni 2012) explained it as a combination of effort and desire in order to realize the goal of learning the language plus suitable attitude towards learning the language. According to Gardner (1985, cited in, Lemsara 2015) there are two types of motivation : integrative and instrumental one. Integrative motivation refers to the willingness to be a member of the culture of the second language group ;on the other hand, instrumental motivation is to make learners motivated to acquire the language for specific purposes.

7.2. Self-Confidence

Another affective factor which influences learning is self-confidence. It will support the person to try new learning and have the desire to take some risks so that to be successful. A confident person can succeed in language learning and yielded rarely (Ni, 2012).In other words, students who lack self-confidence are usually fearful, shy and fail to express their ideas and opinions in the classroom in front of their classmates.Self-confidence is the key to

success for learners because it enables them to confront their fears and prove to themselves and their surroundings that they deserve to be successful.

7.3. Anxiety

Ni (2012) stated that, when students attend the class with anxiety will feel nervous and fearful to collaborate with the teacher, so they will lack the concentration on the learning points wasting their energy, and they just want to escape from the learning tasks.Ellis (1994, cited in, Ni 2012) divided anxiety into three types: trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety.The study of situational anxiety has received a substantial attention in SLA research. It refers to the anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation ;such as, public speaking, examinations or class participation. Students become more anxious when they compare their level in the class with other learner's level, so they will feel less competent. Their anxiety will automatically decrease when they believe that they can be better and more proficient.

9. Comparing and contrasting First language and Second language

8.1. Similarities between (L1) and (L2)

When we want to compare the first language and the second language , we will find that they share some points in common, and they differ in others. Ipek (2009) summarized their similarities as follow:

8.1.1. Developmental sequences

Researchers have passed through different studies in order to comprehend the nature of first and second language acquisition.The later studies have showed that first and second language learners follow a pattern of development (Ipek 2009). According to Ellis (1984,

cited from Ipek 2009) explained the idea of developmental sequences in detail and categorized three developmental stages: the silent period,formulaic speech and structural and semantic simplification.The silent period appears in natural settings among people as learners who tend to express the meaning more or less spontaneously using unplanned language. This language is utilized to show that first and second language learners pass through a similar initial stage. The second stage is the formulaic stage ; Ellis (1994, cited in, Ipek 2009) suggested that, "these expressions can consist of entire scripts ;such as, greeting." The Literature points out that formulaic stage does not appear only in first and second language acquisition, but also in the speech of adult native speakers.The last stage is the structural and semantic simplification. The structural simplification means omitting grammatical factors; such as, articles and auxiliary verbs; whereas,semantic simplification refers to the omission of content words; such as, nouns and verbs. These two simplification may appear when the learner have not acquired the necessary linguistic forms , or when they are not able to access linguistic forms during production (Ipek 2009).

8.1.2. Acquisition order

Lightbown and Spada (2006, cited in, Ipek 2009) review studies which have proposed that the acquisition of question words ; such as, why, what, where and how , give an important similarity in first and second language acquisition. Based on the morpheme studies in L2 acquisition, Krashen (1982, Ipek 2009) showed the natural order hypothesis that he developed for second language acquisition. Also he argued that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order.In short, the acquisition order is not determined by simplicity or the order of rules taught in the class.

8.1.3. Linguistic Universals and Markedness

Linguistic universals have two approaches. The first one was suggested by Greenberg (1966, cited in, Ipek 2009) known as Typological universals which are based on cross-linguistic comparisons on a huge group of languages taken from different languages in order to find out which features they share in common ; for example, all languages have nouns and verbs. The second approach is the generative school represented by Chomsky which studies individual languages deeply to identify the principles of grammar which govern specific rules ; it is termed later as Universal Grammar Ellis (1994, cited in, Ipek 2009).

8.1.4. Input

Input is defined as, "language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn" (Richards et al., 1989, p. 143, cited in, Ipek 2009). Behaviorist views explained that there is a direct relationship between input and output. In order to have favorable habits , the language learner must be exposed to feedback that refers to the input. Interactionist views of language acquisition also sees that verbal interaction, or input, is important for language acquisition. Stephen Krashen (1982, cited in, Ipek 2009) argued that the learner needs to receive understandable input in order to acquire the language. Information about the grammar is automatically available when the input is comprehensible. Krashen claimed that the input which a first language learner receives is simple and understood at the beginning ,and it is getting slightly more complicated.

8 .1.5. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky (1982, cited in, Ipek 2009) explained the 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 adults than when left alone, and can do so with understanding and independently."

When children face a problem in their life ,they can not solve it by themselves , so they turn to others looking for help. That is to say that the collaboration with another person is very important for a child to learn ; this collaboration leads to their own development (Gallaway & Richards, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, cited in Ipek 2009).

8.2 . Differences between (L1) and (L2)

As the first and the second language share some similarities in common, they have also some differences. They are summarized by Ipek (2009) as follow,

8.2.1. The Acquisition/Learning Hypothesis

Krashen (1982, cited in, Ipek 2009) claimed that there are two ways for an adult to approach a second language. He carried on to argue that learning does not change into acquisition. He obviously sees first language acquisition and second language acquisition as two different phenomena. Yet, he suggested that acquisition may occur in the classroom when communication is emphasized through dialogues, role playing, and other meaningful interaction.

8.2.2. The Critical Period Hypothesis

The Critical Period Hypothesis explained the idea that there is "a biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire" (Brown 1994, p. 52, cited in, Ipek 2009).Originally the notion of critical period was connected to the first language acquisition.

8.2.3. Fossilization

Fossilization appears when non-target norms become fixed in Interlanguage. There are four possible and suggested causes for fossilization, age (learners' brains loose plasticity at a critical age, therefore, certain linguistic features cannot be mastered), lack of desire to articulate (learners' make no effort to adopt target language norms because of various social and psychological factors), communicative pressure (the learner is pressured to communicate ideas above his/her linguistic competence), lack of learning opportunity, and the nature of the feedback on learners' use of L2 (positive cognitive feedback leads to fossilization while negative feedback helps avoid fossilization) (Ellis, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987, cited in, Ipek 2009).

8.2.4. Social Factors

Ellis (1994,cited in, Ipek 2009) made the difference between two social contexts in second language learning and outlined them as follows,

     a. **Natural Contexts**

Second language learning in majority language contexts: the target language serves as the native language and the language learner is a member of an ethnic minority group (e.g. Turkish workers in Germany).

Second language learning in official language contexts: the second language functions as an official language (e.g. English in Nigeria).

Second language learning in international contexts: the second language is used for interpersonal communication in countries where it is neither learnt as a mother tongue nor used as an official language (e.g. in arts, science, academic, etc.)

      b. Educational Contexts

Segregation: the second language is taught to learners in a separate context from the native speakers of the target language.

Mother tongue maintenance: learners of minority groups are either given classes in their mother tongue or they are educated through the medium of their mother tongue.

Submersion: right from the beginning L2 learners are taught with native speakers.

The language classroom: the target language is taught as a subject only and is not commonly used as a medium of communication outside the classroom.

10. The role of the first language in second language acquisition

According to Gass and Selinker (2008) The role of the native language has a huge history during the course of second language acquisition research. This subfield of SLA has come to be known as language transfer. The acceptance and/or rejection of language transfer as a viable concept has been related to the acceptance or rejection of the specific theory with which it has been associated. It has always been assumed that, in a second language learning situation, learners rely extensively on their native language. Lado, in his early and influential book Linguistics Across Cultures (1957), stated that, individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native

language and culture to the foreign language and culture—both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives.

Conclusion

In short, language acquisition is an interesting topic which motivates many scientists to study it in depth. Each one of them brings something new to the study of language acquisition through different theories in order to to better understand it.Most EFL students are influenced by their first language when writing in the second language which may not enable them to produce a meaningful and successful piece of writing.

Chapter Two : The Influence of First Language on Second Language Paragraph Writing

Introduction

In this chapter, we will give a brief history of writing and a definition of writing ; then we are going to see the steps of paragraph writing and aspects of writing.Moreover, we will deal with the language transfer and its types, and then we will move to talk about error analysis and the difference between an error and a mistake.Also this chapter will include the categories of first language interference and sources of second language learners' error.In addition, we will talk about the factors behind students' failure in second language paragraph writing and error treatment.The chapter will end up with the effect of the first language on second language paragraph writing and a conclusion.

1. Brief history of writing

In order to explain the history of writing, it seems necessary to start with a more inclusive view of writing as the use of created visual marks or other artifacts for communication and expression. From this base, we may then observe more clearly how representations in general relate to representations of language more specifically (Olson 2009).

According to Olson (2009),

« With this more inclusive notion of writing as visual communication we can include the celebrated 40,000-year-old cave drawings at Lascaux and Altamira, as well as the first mark ings incised on bone, in China, dating back some 10,000 years, the clay gods modelled by the Hittites some 8,000 years ago, as well as the petroglyphs carved by North American aboriginal peoples some 4,000 years ago. For it is out of these earliest attempts that the modern forms of communication we think of as 'true writing' evolved and it is from such attempts that even modern children work their way into writing and literacy ».

2. Definition of writing

According to Kane (1988),

" We create ourselves by words. Before we are businesspeople or lawyers or engineers or teachers, we are human beings. Our growth as human beings depends on our capacity to understand and to use language. Writing is a way of growing. No one would argue that being able to write will make you morally better. But it will make you more complex and more interesting in a word, more human."

In other words, people were born to express themselves using words , and they grow up with this ability to comprehend and use the language, so writing is considered as a way of growing.

However, there exist limits in the sense that people cannot learn to write as Shakespeare or Charles Dickens simply because they cannot become genius by reading a book. But they do not need to be genius to write simple ,clear and effective English.People just have to comprehend what writing involves and to know how to handle words , sentences and paragraphs that you can learn. If you do, you can communicate what you want to communicate in words other people can understand Kane (1988).

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, Lemsara). Pinacs (1992) also argues 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, Lemsara 2015).

In short, writing is the process of creating a combination of letters which carry meaning that we intend to address through the written form.

3. Steps of paragraph writing

In order to write a clear and meaningful paragraph there are some steps to be followed, so that efficiency should be achieved in paragraph writing. Kane (1988) classified them as follow:

3.1. Looking for Subjects

In such cases the subject is given, and the first step is mostly a matter of research, of looking for information. Even the problem of organizing the information is often simplified by following a traditional plan like in scientific papers or business letters which is not to neglect such writing as easy. In order to be clear and concise is never easy,but at least the writing process is structured and to that degree simplified. At other times, we use to write because we want to express something about ourselves, about what we have already experienced or how we feel. Our minds turn internal, and writing is complicated by the double role we play. In personal writing, words are not simply an expression of the self; they also help to create and build the self. In struggling to say what we are, we become what we say (Kane 1988).

3.2. Exploring for Topics

Kane (1988) states that, « Before beginning a draft, you need to explore a subject, looking for topics. (Subject refers to the main focus of a composition; topic to specific aspects of the subject...)» . Some people prefer to work through a subject systematically, uncovering topics by asking questions. Others like a less structured, less analytical approach, a kind of brainstorming or a free writing. They just start to write, rapidly, letting ideas go through a free association. Then they edit what they have done, neglecting some topics and selecting others for further development. The use of both ways simply depends on your habits of mind, how much you already know about a subject, and of course the subject itself (Kane 1988).

3.3. Making a Plan

After choosing a subject, exploring it and thinking about the topics you discovered and gathering information. Now all you need is to make a plan , maybe nothing more than a loose sense of purpose, held in your mind and never written down.But sometimes all of us (and most times most of us) require a more tangible plan.One kind of it is a statement of purpose which means when a paragraph describes what you want to say, how you are going to organize it, what you want readers to comprehend, feel and believe. The paragraphs are written for yourself, to explain and clarify your ideas and to give you a guide; you do not have to mind about anyone else's reading them; the other one is a preliminary, scratch outline that is a technique or a way of dividing a subject into its major parts, and of dividing these in turn into subparts, and so on (Kane 1988).

3.4. Drafts and Revisions

A draft is an early version of a piece of writing. Most of us cannot setup anything well at the first try. We have to write and rewrite. These initial efforts are called drafts, apart from the final version. As a rule, the more you draft, the more results be better.However, When you revise you place yourself in the reader's position. Of course you cannot get completely outside your own mind, but you can think about what readers know and do not know, what they believe and consider necessary. You can ask yourself what is obvious to you will be equally obvious to them (Kane 1988).

4. Language transfer

Language transfer has been a dialectical issue in SLA for a long time. Its significance in second language (L2) learning has also been reassessed time and again. Along with the developments of research on language transfer, linguists have perceived that the first language (L1) acts as "a major factor in SLA" (Ellis, 1990, p.297, cited in Lu, 2010).

Lu (2010) states that, « there are evidences of L1 influences at every aspect of L2 learners' interlanguage: discourse, lexicon, semantics, syntax, morphology (including bound morphemes), phonetics, and phonology. In order to get a comprehensive understanding and fully recognize the significance of language transfer, it is necessary to have a close look at its research developments at different stages and relative definitions. »

Over a hundred years ago, Whitney (1881, cited in Lu , 2010) used the term transfer to refer to cross-linguistic effects which had been used by several linguists . However, the term is not without problems and leads to different conceptions. Lu (2010) argues that Corder (1983) and Kellerman & Smith (1986) defended abandoning the terminology or using it with high restriction, yet a lot of linguists continued using it without any limitation. Up until now, linguists have no exact definition of language transfer which varies along with the developments of research on it.

In the twentieth century, the developments of language transfer research went through mainly three periods and categories, namely, behaviorist, mentalist and cognitive view (Ellis, 1994, p.297-300, cited in Lu 2010). Behaviorists saw language leaning as habit formation. In the view of mentalists, language acquisition was a creative construction of linguistic rules. Cognitive linguists focused on factors that affect language acquisition. According to Lu (2010),"Ever since 1990s, language transfer research has experienced unprecedented development no matter in depth or breadth. A detailed and a close look at the historical background, the main hypotheses of different viewpoints and their relative definitions of language transfer can provide us a profound understanding of it."

Lado (1957, cited in Lemsara 2015) 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 simply linked to both the productive skills and the receptive ones whether in the form or the meaning of the native language. In short, people may make a transfer when they speak the foreign language or when they write in it.

5. Types of transfer

The word transfer was appeared during the period of Contrastive Analysis. Language transfer was linked with behaviorists' views of structural linguistics and language learning (Franch, 1998, cited in Alshayban, 2012). Both positive transfer and negative transfer in the context of language learning implie automatic and subconscious use of ancient behavioral patterns in novel learning situations.

According to Alshayban (2012), Corder suggested that the term mother tongue influence is used instead of transfer. Sharwood Smith (1986, cited in ,Alshayban, 2012) named it crosslinguistic influence, which naturally takes into account the effect of L3 on L2 when another learned language (not L1) has an influence on the acquisition of L2. There is also the possibility of having L2 effect on L1.

5.1.Positive Transfer

Alshayban (2012) states that, positive transfer appears when knowledge of the native language does not lead to linguistic errors. Transfers from the learner's mother tongue that do not lead to misunderstanding or errors are called positive transfers. When L1 and L2 have the same features, then positive transfer will appear. Positive transfers speedup the learning process ;whereas, negative transfers hinders it. According to Alshayban (2012), positive relationship was investigated by Torres and Fischer (1989), and he states that, « Their study further proved that being fluent in one's own native language increases the chances of

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becoming proficient in another language. For native Spanish speakers, English acquisition is strongly related to native language proficiency ».

The situation is totally different with Arab learners. Researchers confirm that Arab learners do not receive positive transfer from their first language in vocabulary because there are limited similarities between English and Arabic (Wahba, Taha, and England, 2006, cited in, Alshayban ,2012). Positive transfer from Arabic to English may appear in the case of prepositions. Asma (2010, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) has examined transfer from Arabic to English in this matter. The researcher used a method of inputting prepositions in sentences ; she asked 30 students to put the right preposition in the following sentence: " Antoine was a miserable street ___ Paris." Twenty-seven filled in the blank with the correct answer,'' in''. Because there is an equivalent preposition in Arabic (fii) for the English preposition'' in'', the students were able to transfer this preposition from Arabic to English in a positive way.

5.2.Negative Transfer

checking negative language transfer of first and second language learning is central to second language research. Language learning and teaching could be enhanced by the examination of both negative and positive transfer. Negative transfer from the native language to the target is more common than positive one because there are typically few (or no) similar linguistic features among languages (Alshayban, 2012).

Cortes (2006, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) defines negative transfer as "the negative influence that the knowledge of the first language has in the learning of the target language due 24 to the differences existing between both languages" (p. 4). It can be claimed that this transfer impedes the procurement process, as Ellis (1994, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) has shown. He also stated that it is not enough to concentrate only on the production of errors, as there are many events of transfer that will be missed. Avoidance is considered as one of the most important manifestations of language transfer that cannot be

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discovered in production. We can say that every learner may avoid using a particular linguistic structure in their L2, as such a structure does not occur in their L1. To put it simply, language transfer avoids the use of an entirely different structure rather than producing errors. Schachter (1974, cited in , Alshayban, 2012) « For example, found that, because of the production of far fewer clauses compared to the whole, Japanese and Chinese learners of L2 English made very few errors in the use of relative clauses than did Persian and Arabic learners ».

Many studies have carefully examined possible transfer effects between Arabic and English. Koch (1983, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) studied English essays by Arabic-speaking English learners ,and he found that majority of the learners made extensive use of devices ;such as, parallelism and the repetition of the most strong words and phrases. Her conclusion was that some features of Arabic discourse are transferred, and this may affect Arab students to repeat words or phrases in English.

Ostler (1990,cited in, Alshayban, 2012) emphasized the fact that the infrequent style of Arabic students' writing in English simply reflects classical Arabic style, which differs in many ways from English. This question was posed to Ostler: "Why, when Arabic-speaking students seem to have mastered most English grammatical forms and idioms, do they still produce 'foreign-sounding' essays, and why it is that experienced ESL writing teachers can identify Arabic-speaking students' English essays as having been written by Arabic speakers?" (Ostler, 1990, p. 169, cited in, Alshayban, 2012).

Alshayban (2012) states that, Ostler made a try to respond to this question. She also addressed the issue of the influence of the learner's cultural background on the written discourse. She did this by looking at English and Arabic rhetoric from a historical perspective and by giving a report of devices ;such as, balance and coordination. Most research projects that concern the writing problems of foreign language learners, specifically Arab English

learners, have focused on word and sentence levels. The majority of researchers in this field saw writing problems through a structural approach to error analysis and a contrastive analysis. This proved to be imperfect in describing the actual writing problems of students attempting to master the language for academic purposes. Researchers have perceived that these writing problems are not restricted to the sentence level.

6. Causes of Language Transfer

Language transfer has some causes which are summerized as follow,

6.1. Language and Cultural Variations

Language and culture have a dialectical relationship: every language is an important part of a culture; it commutates cultural requirements. Even the emergent arbitrariness of languages can be discussed within the context of a culture's specific needs. We can say a language is shaped by culture and continuously affected by it. In other words, language cannot be seen as a passive reflector of culture (Jianhua, 2007, cited in, Alshayban, 2012). Jianhua (2007, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) also states that, « language can be viewed as the symbolic representation of a very nation, embracing its historical and cultural backgrounds, its ways of life, its customs, and so on. The way people live influences the language of a particular nation. We can view the legends and myths of a nation as the reservoir of the innumerable idioms and sayings found in its language ».In short, language represents the historical and cultural backgrounds of any nation including, their way of life, their customs and way of thinking.

6.2. Different Modes of Thinking

Jianhua (2007, cited in, Alshayban, 2012) argued that language and thought are strangely interrelated. It is language that facilitates thought. It is through language that people realize and understand the world. Moreover, people express their emotions, feelings and thoughts in

order to communicate easily with others through language. It is language that commutates our views of the world, our modes of thinking and also our psychological states.

6.3. Teaching Strategies

Another factor in language transfer, as claimed by Jianhua (2007, cited in, Alshayban, 2012), is teaching strategies. It is internationally acknowledged that writing is the most attempting language skill because it requires comprehensive knowledge of grammar as well as discourse patterns.

« In China, college students learn English for about six years. They usually experience no trouble in daily conversations and in writing simple sentences. Nevertheless, when it comes to writing coherent paragraphs or essays, there are serious handicaps or hurdles that must be addressed urgently. We should suspect that teachers have either ignored them or failed to sympathize with the students over the years » (Jianhua, 2007, cited in , Alshayban, 2012).

Most English learning books that are taught in Saudi Arabia do not make illustrations about the differences and similarities between English and Arabic. Therefore, it is the English teachers` task which show such similarities and differences between the two languages` structures (Alshayban, 2012).

7. Contrastive Analysis

According to Gass and Selinker (2008, cited in, Alshayban, 2012), contrastive analysis (CA) is a research method that assists language teachers to comprehend significant differences and similarities between an individual's first and second languages. The authors show that this helps the purposing of the proportion of performance and language development; it also specifies which aspects of the target language will be facilitated and which aspects might intervene. It may result in negative and positive language transfer.

8. Error Analysis

Khansir (2012) states that in current years, studies of second language acquisition have tended to concentrate on learners errors since they allow for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. For instance, teachers can be aware of the difficult areas to be encountered by their students and give a special care and confirmation to them. Error Analysis (EA) is a type of linguistic analysis which concentrates on the errors that learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and that target language itself. Error analysis emphasizes the importance of learners' errors in second language. It is significant to note here that interferences from the learner's mother tongue is not only the cause of making errors in his target language. As Richards (1971, cited in, Khansir ,2012) classified errors observed in the acquisition of English as a second language as follows:

a) **Overgeneralization**, covering instances where the learners create an infrequent structure on the basis of his experience of other structure of the target language;

b) **Ignorance of rule restriction**, occurring as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures;

c) **Incomplete application of rules**, arising when the learners fail to fully develop a certain structure required to produce acceptable and correct sentences.

d) **False concepts hypothesized**, deriving from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language.

Some errors can be related to weaknesses or failure of memory (Gorbet, 1979, cited in, Khansir, 2012).He added that the theory of error analysis suggests that in order to learn a language, a person should create a system of rules from the language for communication to which he is exposed; and this system enables him to use it.

9. The difference between error and mistake

It is general to distinguish between errors and mistakes. Mistakes are caused when the learner do not put into practice something that s/he has learned ;whereas, errors are caused when the learner try out something completely new and get it wrong (Bartram and Walton 1991, p. 25, cited in, Krisnawati, 2013).

Ellis (1997, cited in, Krisnawati,2013) claims that errors refer to the gaps in a learner's knowledge; they appear because the learner does not know what is correct and right. Mistakes, on the other hand, refer to the occasional periods in performance because the learners are unable to perform what they know. According to Ellis, in order to distinguish errors from mistakes is through uniformity of learners' performance. However, the teacher cannot instantly identify if the learner makes an error or a mistake in the classroom. Ellis (1997, cited in, Krisnawati, 2013) himself admits that "a clear distinction between an error and a mistake may not be possible".

10. L1 Interference Categories Found in L2 Writing

In order to help student writers to improve their writing performance, such problems should be identified. Hence, over the past few decades, an amount of research has concentrated on L1 interference that causes errors in L2 writing. Since each language is not identic in terms of linguistic properties ; therefore, categories of the interference of the mother tongue are varied (Watcharapunyawong and Usaha, 2012).

Bhela (1999, cited in,Watcharapunyawong and Usaha, 2012) explored errors in L2 student writers. The participants from four different contexts, including Cambodian, Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese, were asked to write stories according to the pictures given. Then the L1 interference types found in each written story were classified. The errors caused by the mother tongue were as follows: 1) Apostrophe, 2) Punctuation, 3) Spelling, 4) Prepositions,

5) Capital letters, 6) Present & past continuous tenses, 7) Subject pronouns, 8) vocabulary, and 9) Passive & active voice.

Thep-Ackrapong (2005, cited in,Watcharapunyawong and Usaha,2012) claims that grammar is realized to be the most difficult aspect of learning English from the Thai students' points of view. She divides the effect of the mother tongue into six main categories: 1) Subject-verb agreement, 2) Topic-comment structure, 3) Passive voice, 4) Relative clause, 5) Participial phrase, and 6) Subordination. She urges that these six contradictions are often made by Thai students not only in writing but also in translating the target texts.

Bennui (2008,Watcharapunyawong and Usaha,2012) pursued his research on L1 interference found in Thai university students' paragraphs. He used the theories of Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis to identify L1 interference types. According to the results of the study, he classified L1 interference into three main categories:

10.1. L1 lexical interference: This kind of interference happens because of the lack of lexical competence. Furthermore, the vocabulary levels of the two languages are different; therefore, when writing or translating in English, Thai students normally use a form of direct translation, which leads to the errors in terms of word choice. The sub-categories of L1 lexical interference are, 1) Literal translation of vocabulary use, and 2) The use of Thai words

10.2. L1 syntactic interference: This category is linked to grammatical errors found in students' writing. He divides this interference into seven sub-categories as follows: 1) Word order of Thai structure, 2) Subject-verb agreement, 3) Tense,4) The infinitive, 5) The verb 'have', 6) Prepositions, and 7) Noun determiners.

10.3. L1 discourse interference: This happens because of the differences between the styles of Thai and English text formats, including essay patterns, organization, and concepts. For example, in English, it is important to include a topic sentence in every paragraph, while a

Thai paragraph does not need it. The sub-categories of this interference are, 1) Language style level, and 2) Level of cultural knowledge.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that L1 interference in L2 writing has currently been straitly investigated in both foreign and Thai contexts, and a number of L1 interference categories have been found and suggested in the area of teaching L2 writing. To consider the categories of L1 interference as illustrated above, those that influence L2 writing accuracy need to be determined, since L1 interference has been considered to be the main problem of L2 students' writing difficulty.

11. Sources of second language learners' errors

Richards (1971,cited in, Heydari and Bagheri,2012) distinguished three sources of errors:

11.1. Interference errors: errors resulting from the utilization of elements from one language while speaking/writing another.

11.2. Intralingual errors: errors referring to general characteristics of the rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

11.3. Developmental errors: errors appearing when learners try to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experiences.

According to Richards (1971,cited in, Heydari and Bagheri,2012), intralingual errors are also subdivided to the following categories:

a. Overgeneralization errors: the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language (e.g. "He can sings" where English allows "He can sing" and "He sings").

b. Ignorance of rule restrictions: the learner applies rules to context where they are not applicable (e.g. He made me to go rest" through extension of the pattern "He asked/wanted me to go").

c. Incomplete application of rules: the learner fails to use a fully developed structure (e.g. "You like to sing?" in place of "Do you like to sing?")

d. False hypothesis: the learners do not fully comprehend a distinction in the target language (e.g. the use of "was" as a marker of past tense in "One day it was happened").

However, as Schacheter and Celce-Murcia (1977,cited in, Heydari and Bagheri,2012) pointed out, the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors is rather fuzzy in their term. As a result, Richards (1974, cited in, Heydari and Bagheri,2012) classified errors, according to their causes, into two categories later on. The two categories are as follows:

 11.1. Interlingual errors: these errors are caused by mother tongue interference.

 11.2. Intralingual and developmental errors: this kind of errors appears during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. In addition, errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself.

12. Factors behind students' failure in second language paragraph writing

12.1. Lack of an Appropriate Approach to Teach Writing

Ghodbane (2010) states that teaching of writing in EFL classes has witnessed significant changes in the last twenty years; strongly affected by research previsions from mother tongue contexts, resulting in pedagogic shifts. For many years, the teaching of writing, in any context, was largely neglected, forever tested but seldom taught. Thus, the concentration was on what the students produce, not on how to do it. Raimes (1994, cited in, Ghodbane,2010) stressed the significance of how to teach writing not what to teach and gave attention to the

Controlled-to-Free Approach, the Free-Writing Approach, the Paragraph-Pattern Approach, the Communicative Approach, the Grammar Syntax-Organization Approach, etc.

12.2. Lack of Adequate Techniques to Teach Writing

Teachers' main task is selecting the best classroom technique. It is a day-to-day business of every writing teacher. Any decision teachers make ; such as, providing students with a first sentence or not, or correcting all errors or only a choosing few-is a decision about teaching technique. Selecting these techniques rely on their suitability with class, students' levels, and the approach underlying the curriculum and teaching. These issues are not cornered to any one of the approaches outlined before (Ghodbane,2010).

Raimes (1994, pp.15-30, cited in, Ghodbane,2010) proposed seven basic questions that must be asked by any teacher before class namely:

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?"

In addition, he suggested different techniques that have proven successful in the classroom among them: 1) Using Pictures Techniques, 2) Using Reading Techniques.

12.3. Teachers as a Source of Demotivation

When asking learners about the teachers they prefer studying with, they instantly point to "X" or "Y" teachers, but not to "Z"; the reason is that they learn quickly and comprehensively with some and feel bored with others. In fact, teachers do not teach in the same way and under the same conditions. However, teachers can be demotivating when they do not improve learning and make learners unable to write confidently preferring to encourage them for having made mistakes, repeat the same activities over and over, do not encourage them to write in the classroom or outside it. In other words, motivated teachers can produce motivated learners (Ghodbane,2010).

Teachers have a number of crucial tasks to perform to assist the students in order to become better-good writers. Harmer (2007,cited in, Ghodbane,2010) stated that "the main task of the teacher is to motivate and provoke the students" (p.41).

12.4. Lack of Reading

Reading is a useful tool to enhance students writing for it is the study of what is written. Some reports by Krashen (1984, as cited in Harmer 2006,cited in,Ghodbane,2010) compared classes that did more reading than writing allowing the conclusion that the reading group showed more progress than the writing ones in the writing test. In other words, even if the two skills are completely separated, for reading is a passive activity while writing is a productive one, they are nonetheless complementary and can be closely developed.

12.5. Influence of First Language on Writing in English

Foreign language teachers confirm the need for EFL writers to think and write as far as possible in English (Ghodbane,2010). Friedlander (1997, cited in, Ghodbane,2010) states, "writers do any of their work in their first language" (p.109). It means that this way of

writing will prevent acquisition of English due to the transfer of structures and vocabulary from the first language in an incorrect manner (Ghodbane,2010).

13.The effect of The first language on second language paragraph writing

L2 learners may refer to their L1 in order to hide their deficiencies in the L2 knowledge. Like adult learners who are cognitively mature, they may have complex ideas to persuade in their writings. However, the lack of the target language knowledge may push them to depend on the L1 in order to express those ideas. As a matter of fact, learners' reliance on the L1 can have both positive and negative consequences. Errors may appear when the learner inappropriately transfers a linguistic form from one language to the other, or when the learner is misdirected by the fractional similarities between the two languages (Karim and Nassaji ,2013).

As Eckman (1977, cited in, Karim and Nassaji ,2013) pointed out, there are some language features, such as unmarked features, which are more preferable to be transferred. However, transferability of language forms might not always be expected based on their linguistic features. There may also be psychological factors ;such as, the learner's understanding of the distance between the L1 and the L2 that may play a role in the transfer of a linguistic item from one language to the other (Kellerman, 1983,cited in, Karim and Nassaji ,2013).

In Addition, L1 can be utilized as a mean not only to compose ,but also to simplify the complicating L2 writing task (Ringbom, 1987, Karim and Nassaji ,2013). L2 writers ; for example, may use their native language (NL) when they plan and organize their essay by talking to themselves in their L1 or by getting engaged in different forms of L1 private speech. The use of the L1 in such cases can make the task more manageable and may consequently have beneficial influences on the learners' writing product (Karim and Nassaji ,2013).

Conclusion

To sum up, writing is one of the most important and effective skills, and at the same time it is not an easy skill to master even for native speakers. Thus, many EFL students face difficulties when writing paragraph in the second language, so they start making transfer from their first language in order to cover their shortage of knowledge in that language. Besides the negative influence of the first language on the second language, it has a positive side where the first language maybe helpful when writing paragraph in the second language.

Chapter three : Data description and analysis

Introduction

The present research is about knowing students' opinion about the effect of the first language (Arabic) on the second language (English) paragraph writing. Their points of view are very beneficial to test the stated hypotheses because they are the main variable of this study, so the most appropriate tool for the investigation is through addressing a questionnaire to students. The questionnaire aims at checking out the students' level and points of view about this study. The next tool is document analysis through which we analyze student's piece of writing and knowing the common errors that students fall in when writing in English where they make L1 transfer in order to achieve the intended meaning.

1. **Students' Questionnaire**
   1.1. **The sample**

The eighty (80) students who responded to the questionnaires were chosen from the whole population (750) of the first year LMD students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The selection of the sample was based on the consideration that the first year students are still not advanced learners, and they have not studied before the important elements and strategies of writing English paragraphs in depth since this is their first year at the university. They should be aware from now of the effect of the first language on the second language which they need to use it positively.

   1.2. **Description of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire consists of (20) questions which are arranged in a logical order, and they are divided into three sections. The questions are either closed questions needs from students to choose whether "yes" or "no" answers ,or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices , or opened questions in order to give them the opportunity to express their ideas.

Section (A) is devoted to students' personal information including question (1) their gender and question (2) their age. Then section (B) consists of (8) questions related to students' attitude towards written expression course. In question (1) students are asked to choose which skill they have difficulties in. In question (2) students are supposed to answer whether they are interested in written expression module or not. The next question (3) they are asked how they consider their writing ability.

Question (4) is aimed to know how often students write at home. Moreover, question (5) asks whether the teacher of written expression module motivate them to write or not. Question (6) asks if the student pay attention to the form and the meaning of the paragraph when writing in English or not. Then question (7) is aimed to determine how many sessions of written expression module they study per week. Question (8) asks is the time allocated to written expression module enough to enhance the students' writing skill or not.

Section (C) is about the effect of the first language on the second language paragraph writing ; it contains (10) questions .In question (1) asks students if they refer to their first language when they write in English or not. Question (2) is aimed to know how often they refer to their first language.Also question (3) asks when they refer to their first language in writing. Question (4) is designed to know whether the teacher encourages them to refer to their first language when writing paragraphs in English. In question (5) students are asked in which level they often make errors when writing paragraphs in English.

Furthermore, question (6) is devoted to know the degree of agreement of students with four statements. Question (7) is devoted to know whether the first language facilitates or impedes students' paragraph writing in English.Moreover, question (8) is designed to know if the homework provided by the teacher of written expression helps them in enhancing their paragraph writing or not.In Question (9) students are asked how they can minimize or reduce

the first language interference in writing paragraphs.The last question (10) is designed for further suggestions by the student.

1.3. Analysis of the results

Section A : Personal Information

1. Your Gender ,
   a) Male
   b) Female

Option	Number	Percentage %
Male	22	27 %
Female	58	73 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 1: Students' Gender
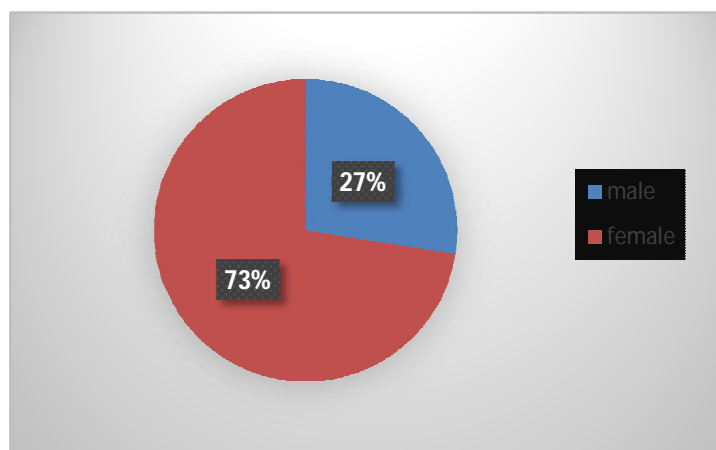
Graph 1: Students' Gender

First of all, the chosen sample in this study shows that females (73 %) are dominant over males (27%), this may lead us to say that females are more interested in studying foreign languages than males who prefer to carry on their studies on scientific fields. The level of students allows us to carry on the investigations of our research because first year students of English are still beginners, and they have not experienced the language more that's why they make much errors compared to other levels.

2. Your age,

   a) 18-20   b)   21-25   c)   26 and above

Option	Number	Percentage %
18 --- 20	53	66 %
21 ---25	24	30 %
26 and above	3	4 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 2: Students' Age
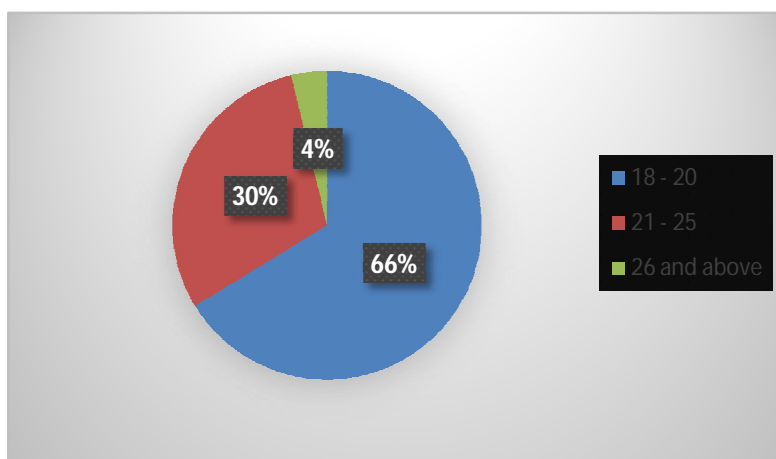
Graph 2: Students' Age

In the previous table, it is remarkable that the majority of students (53) are between the age

of (18-20) and only (3) of them are between the age of 26 and above.

Section B : Attitudes towards Written Expression course

1. Which skill do you have difficulties in ?
   a) Speaking   c) Listening
   b) Writing   d) Reading

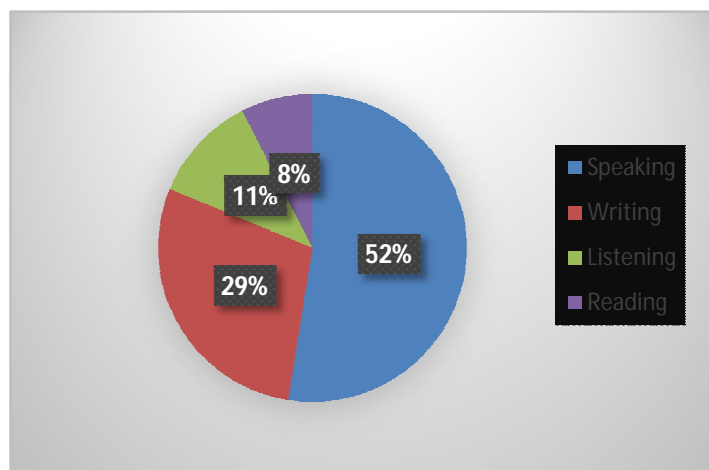| Option	Number	Percentage %
Speaking	42	52 %
Writing	23	29 %
Listening	9	11 %
Reading	6	8 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 3 : students' Skill Difficulty

Graph 3 : Students' Skill Difficulty

Students face many difficulties in the four skills ; however, as it is mentioned in the table that nearly half of students (42) have difficulties more in speaking skill (52 %) this may be due to the insufficient allocation of time of oral expression module and the lack of practicing the language in the classroom because the mastery of any language is a matter of practice.Whereas, the rest of students are distributed on the other skills ; (29%) for writing skill , and it is because of the lack of writing at home or even in the classroom where most students do not write seriously when they are asked by their teacher to write such a paragraph. Moreover, (11%) is devoted to listening and (8%) to reading ; this shows that the minority of students face difficulties in the receptive skills maybe because of the shortage of self-reliance. One of students justified her answer that she has difficulties in writing by saying, "because I have a problem with words, sometimes I do not know how to write them" .Another one said that she has not enough vocabulary to write .In short, first year students face many difficulties when writing in English, and they still not aware about the importance of writing in education.

2. Are you interested in Written Expression module ?
   a) Yes
   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	65	81 %
No	15	19 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 4 : Students' interest in written expression module
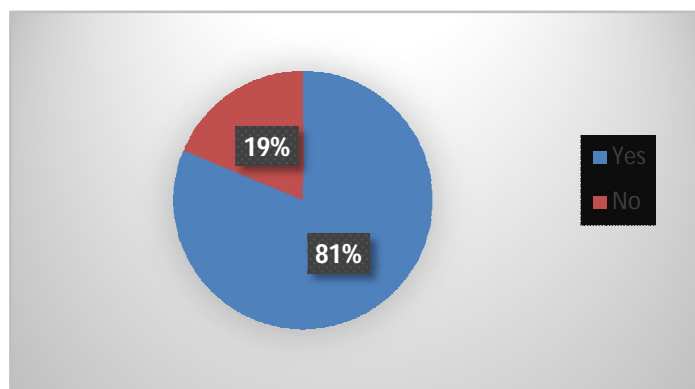
Graph 4 : Students' interest in written expression module

From the above table, the majority of students (65) are interested in written expression module about (81%) this maybe due to the fact that they have the chance to express their thoughts , or maybe their teacher motivate them and encourage them to write.However, (19%) of them do not think so maybe because of the difficulties they face when writing including, lack of vocabulary, that is why they are not interested in writing.

   If yes, because

   i. You like writing

   ii. It gives you the opportunity to express your ideas and feelings

   iii. The teacher motivates you to write

Option	Number	Percentage %
I	34	42 %
Ii	36	45 %
Iii	10	13 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 5: Reason behind students' interest in written expression
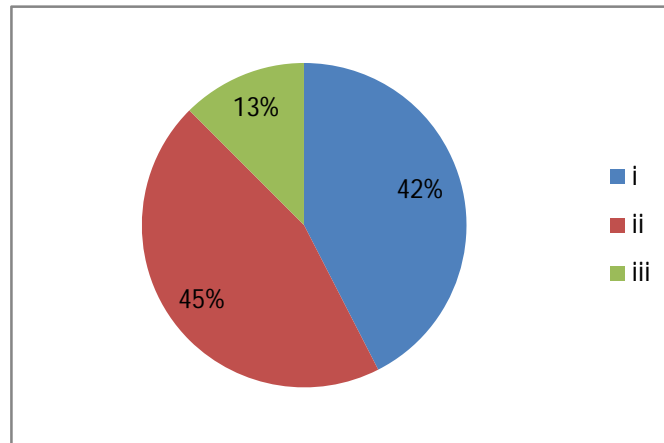
Graph 5: Reason behind students' interest in written expression

As it is seen in the table, (36) students have seen that the reason behind their interest in written expression module is that it gives them the opportunity to express their ideas and feelings about (45%) maybe because it is the only way which makes them feel free , and (42%) of first year students like writing ; however, only (10) from them said that the teacher motivates them to write approximately (13%).

3. How do you consider your writing ability ?
   a) Very good
   b) Good
   c) Average
   d) Weak

Option	Number	Percentage %
Very good	4	5 %
Good	47	59 %
Average	25	31 %
Weak	4	5 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 6 : Students' Writing Ability
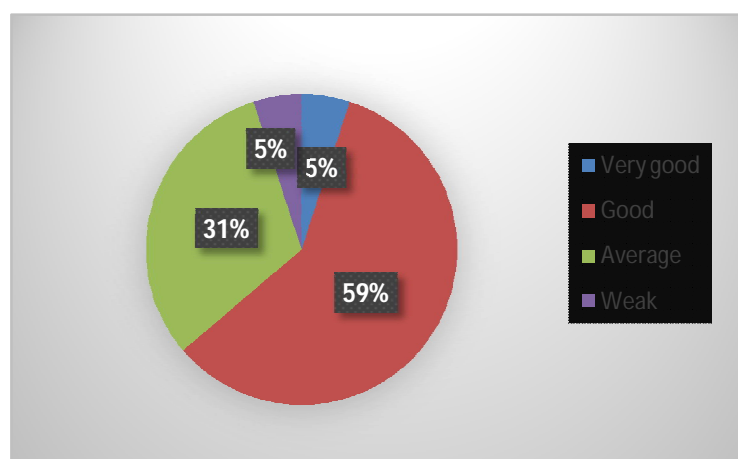
Graph 6 : Students' Writing Ability

From the previous table, it is remarkable that (47) students consider their writing ability good about (59%) ; it is a good thing that nearly half of students have this level, but i think that they still beginners ,and they have a large path to follow in order to reach proficiency because English language is considered as an ocean of knowledge and information which they need to deal with it drop by drop. Furthermore, (31%) of students consider their level average, and (5%) saw it week ; whereas, (5%) stated that their level is very good who made me think about if their level now in the first year is very good what about after 5 years in the university.

4. How often do you write at home ?
   a) Always   b) Sometimes   c) Rarely   d) Never

Option	Number	Percentage %
Always	4	5 %
Sometimes	43	54 %
Rarely	27	34 %
Never	6	7 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 7 : Students' Degree of Writing at home
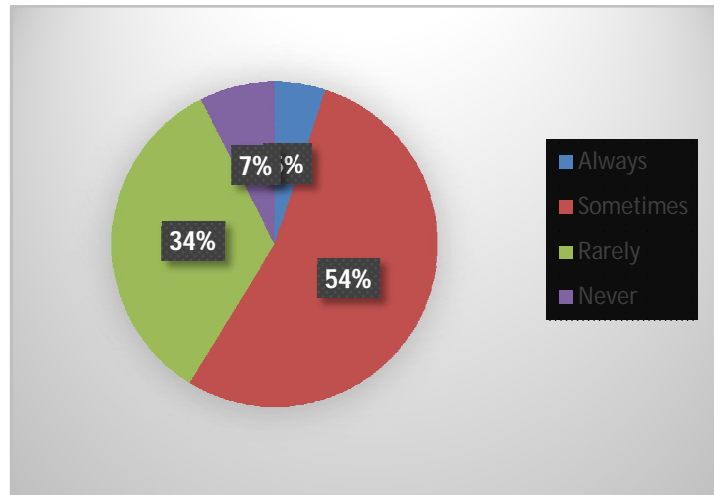
Graph 7 : Students' Degree of Writing at home

It is seen that (43) students write at home sometimes about (53%) ; it is nearly half of students when they go home they prefer to write maybe because the pen is the only tool which makes them feel better .And (34%) of them said that they write at home rarely , and this is due to the technology which made people abandon many beneficial things. However, (7%) of students never write at home, and this is a serious problem which leads to failure not only in school, but also in the entire life ;whereas, (5%) of them write always and this is gladdened.

5. Does your teacher of written expression motivate you to write ?
   a) Yes   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	63	79 %
No	17	21 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 8 : Teacher's motivation to write
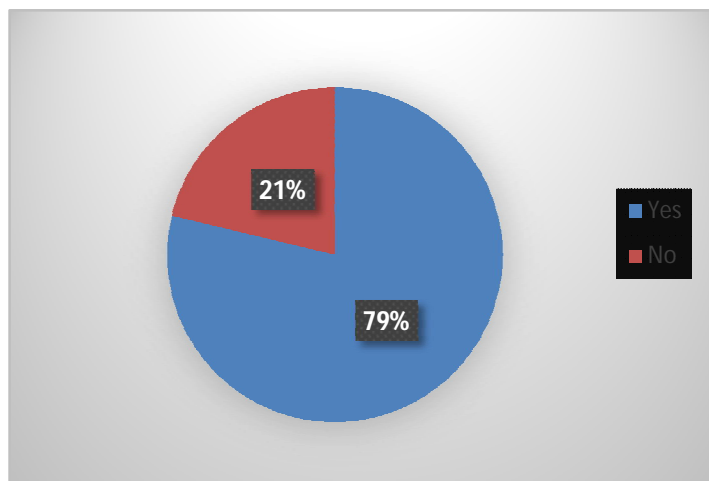
Graph 8 : Teacher's motivation to write

From the above table, it is seen that (63) of students their teacher motivates them to write about (79%) because the teacher has a great role in the classroom in enhancing student's level, and S/he is considered as the source of success.whereas, (21%) of them their teacher of written expression does not motivate them to write ; it is a big problem. Maybe their teacher have not the enough experience to teach that module .

6. Do you pay attention to the form and the meaning of the paragraph when writing in English ?
   a) Yes   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	75	94 %
No	5	6 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 9 : Students' attention when writing
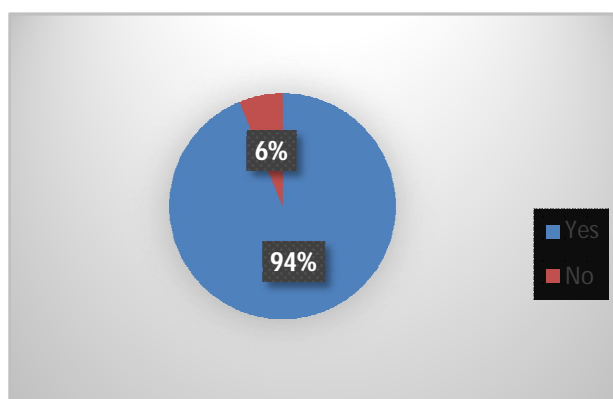
Graph 9 : Students' attention when writing

As it is seen that nearly the whole number of students (75) about (94%) pay attention to the form and the meaning of the paragraph when writing in English which is a good thing because it is very important for students to pay attention when writing to the form and the meaning of paragraph ;whereas , (6%) do not , and this leads to failure in writing.

7. How many sessions do you study written expression module per week ?
   a) 2-3 b) 4-5

Option	Number	Percentage %
2 --- 3	79	99 %
4 --- 5	1	1 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 10 : Number of Written Expression Sessions per week
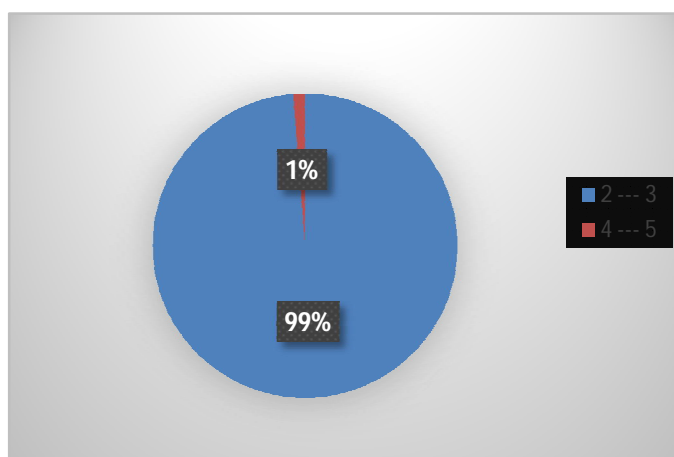
Graph 10 : Number of Written Expression Sessions per week

From the above table, the majority of students (79) about (99%) said that they have between 2-3 sessions of written expression module per week.And only (1%) said 4-6 this shows that the student does not attend written expression module at all.

8. In your opinion, is the time allocated to written expression module enough to enhance your writing skill ?

a) Yes   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	43	54 %
No	37	46 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 11 : Students' opinion about the time allocated to written expression module
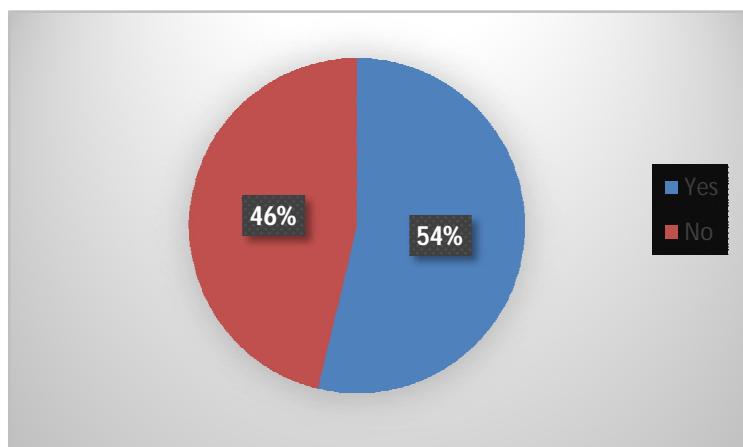
Graph 11 : Students' opinion about the time allocated to written expression module

As it is mentioned in the table, nearly half of students (43) saw that the time allocated to written expression module is enough to enhance their writing skill about (54%) this means whether they benefit from the sessions or they feel boring, and they do not want extra sessions. Moreover, (46%) of students stated that it is not enough ,and they need extra sessions to enhance their writing.

Section C : The Effect of the first language (Arabic) on the second language (English) writing paragraph

1. Do you refer to your first language (Arabic) when you write in English ?
   a) Yes   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	63	79 %
No	17	21 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 12 : Students' transfer to the first language when writing in English
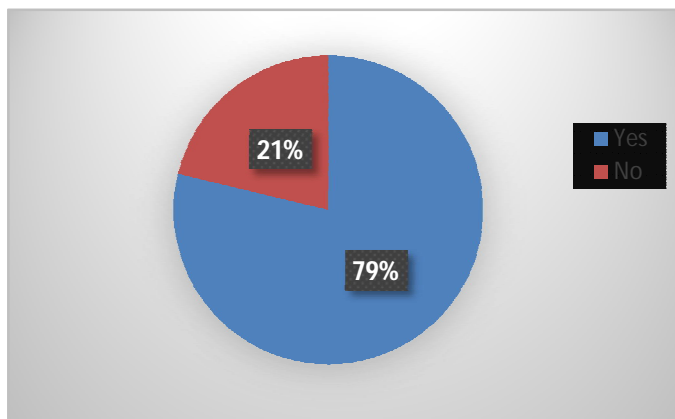
Graph 12 : Students' transfer to the first language when writing in English

From the previous table, the majority of students (63) about (79 %) refer to their first language when they write in English , and this is due to the lack of vocabulary. Students are unable to produce a meaningful piece of writing without referring to their first language using translation to make things easier; it is not a preferred method of writing because words in arabic does not mean the same thing in English.However,(21 %) of them do not make transfer when they write , yet it is the best way of writing a successful paragraph.

2. If yes, how often ?
   a) Always
   b) Sometimes
   a) Rarely

Option	Number	Percentage %
Always	17	21 %
Sometimes	56	70 %
Rarely	7	9 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 13 : Students' degree of transfer to L1 when writing in English
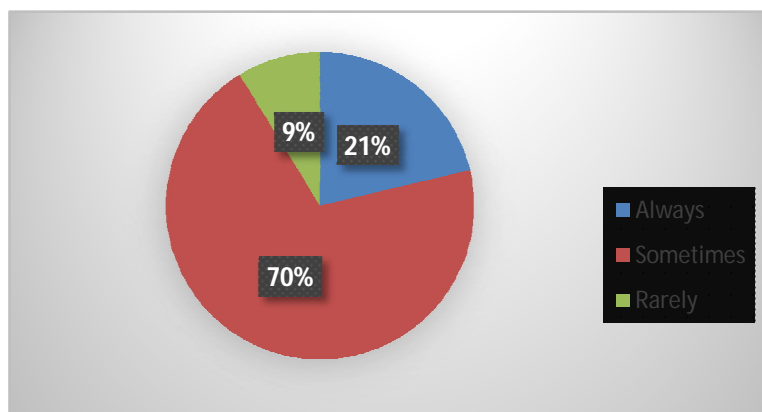
Graph 13 : Students' degree of transfer to L1 when writing in English

As it is seen in the table, more than half of students (56) sometimes make transfer to L1 when writing in English about (70 %) because of the lack of vocabulary and practice ; whereas, (21 %) of them make it always which is not a good way to produce a meaningful paragraph.And only (9 %) of students make transfer rarely ,and this is the best way to succeed in writing.

3. When you refer to your first language (Arabic) in writing ?
    a) Thinking
    b) Translating
    c) Planning

    d) All of them

Option	Number	Percentage %
Thinking	28	35 %
Translating	33	41 %
Planning	9	11 %
All of them	10	13 %
Total	80	100%

Table 14 : The ways students make transfer to their first language when writing
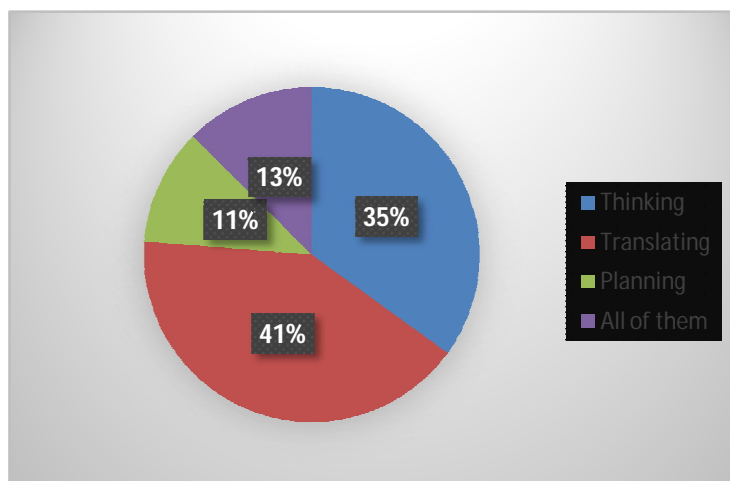
Graph 14 : The ways students make transfer to their first language when writing

From the above table, (33) of students said that they translate from their first language when they write in English about (41%) because they do not have enough vocabulary in English; whereas, (35%) of them think first in Arabic and then they write in English which is not a good way to write because they will fail to transform the idea in English. Moreover, (11%) of students make transfer to their first language when they write in English through planning ; (13%) of them follow all the three ways when transferring to their L1.

4. Does your teacher encourage you to refer to your first language when writing paragraphs ?
   a) Yes
   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	5	19 %
No	75	81 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 15: Teacher encouragement in the transfer to the first language when writing
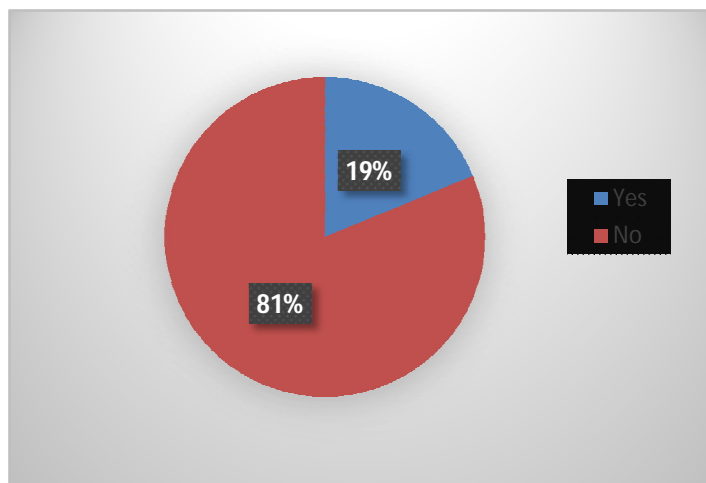
Graph 15: Teacher encouragement in the transfer to the first language when writing

As it is seen in the table, the majority of students (75) saw that their teacher does not encourage them to transfer to their first language when writing in English about (81%) ,and it is a good thing when the teacher teach them to avoid making transfer to their first language when writing in English in order to develop their ability to think in English. Whereas, (19%) of students said that their teacher encourages them to transfer to L1 when writing in L2 which is not the best way for students to follow.

5. In which level do you often make errors when writing L2 (English) paragraphs ?
    a) Semantic level (translation)   c) Lexical level (vocabulary)
    b) Syntactic level (grammar)   d) All of them

Option	Number	Percentage %
Semantic level	13	16 %
Syntactic level	36	45 %
Lexical level	26	33 %
All of them	5	6 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 16 : Students' Level of errors when writing in L2
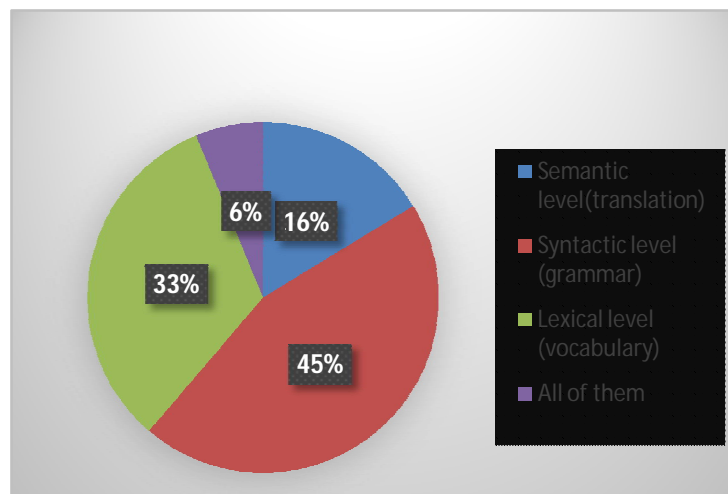
Graph 16 : Students' Level of errors when writing in L2

From the previous table, (36) students make errors in the syntactic level (Grammar) when writing in L2 about (45%) maybe due to the shortage of practice and learning the rules of grammar; however, (33%) of them stated that they make errors in terms of the lexical level (vocabulary) because of the lack of reading skill. Moreover, (16%) of students make errors in the semantic level (translation) when writing in L2.As it is stated that (6%) of them said that they have errors in the three levels.

6. Students' agreement about the following statements:

    A) Students who translate word by word from their first language when writing L2 paragraphs succeed in producing meaningful piece of writing.

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	3%
Agree	10	12%
neutral	12	15%
Disagree	49	61%
Strongly disagree	7	9%
Total	80	100%

Table 17: Students' agreement about translation to L1
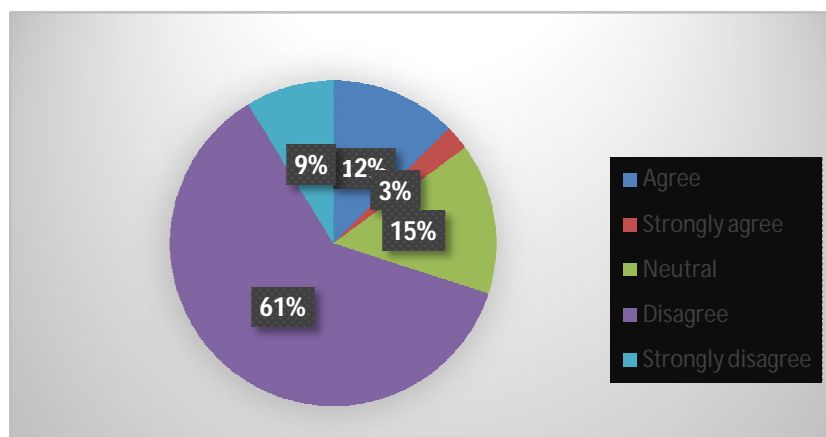
Graph 17: Students' agreement about translation to L1

As it is seen that, more than half of students (49) about (61%) disagree with the statement of translating word by word ; whereas, (15%) of them are neutral.Moreover, (12%) of students agree with it maybe because they saw it as the best way to write correctly in English, and (9%) of them strongly disagree with this idea which is totally wrong, but (3%) of them strongly agree with it which means that first year students rely too much on their first language when writing in L2.

B) Students think in Arabic and write in English as the best way of writing

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	1%
Agree	27	34%
Neutral	22	28%
Disagree	25	31%
Strongly disagree	5	6%
total	80	100%

Table 18: Students' agreement about the best way of writing
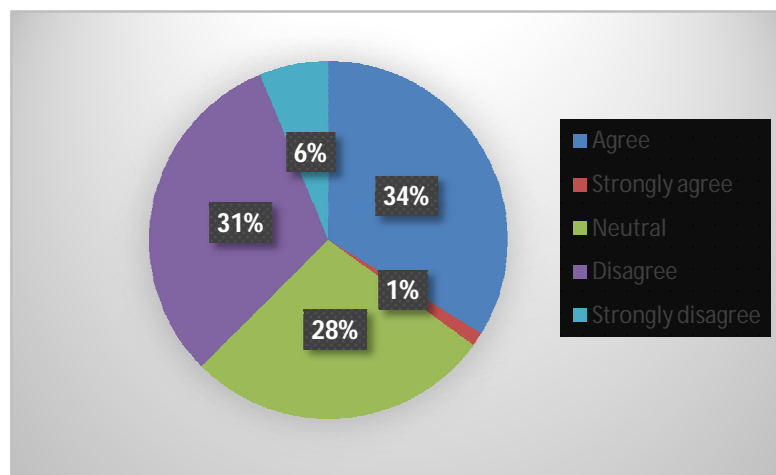
Graph 18: Students agreement about the best way of writing

From the above table, its is seen that (27) of students about (34%) agree with the statement of thinking in Arabic when writing paragraphs in English as the best way of writing which is totally wrong, and (31%) of them disagree with this idea.However, (28%) of them are neutral maybe because they have not well understood the statement ;whereas, (6%) of students strongly disagree with it , and they are right, but only (1%) of them is strongly agree with the idea maybe he wanted just to fill in the gaps randomly or he does not understand the question.

C) The use of the first language affects L2 paragraph writing negatively.

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	6%
Agree	45	56%
Neutral	5	6%
Disagree	23	29%
Strongly disagree	2	3%
Total	80	100%

Table 19: Students' agreement about the negative effect of L1
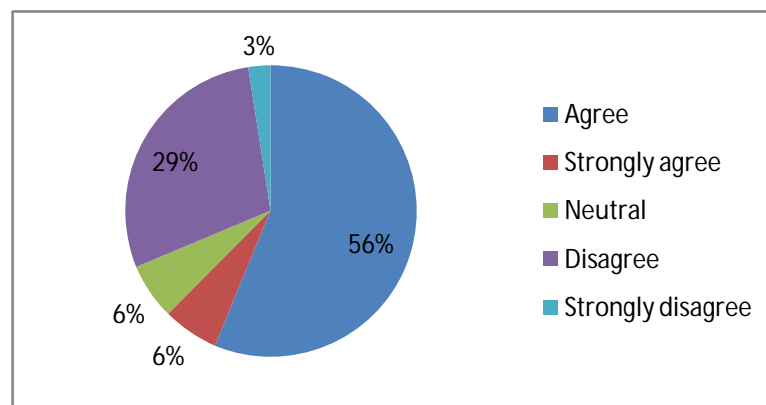
Graph 19: Students' agreement about the negative effect of L1

From the previous table, more than half of students (56%) agree with the statement of the

negative effect of L1 on L2 writing; whereas, (29%) of them disagree with it; this shows that

first year students think that their first language always helps them when writing paragraphs

in L2 ,and it is a wrong idea.(6%) of them are neutral maybe they have not understood the

statement or they have no idea about this field, also (6%) of them strongly agree with the

previous idea, and they are right; however, (3%) of them strongly disagree with it.

D) Students will be more motivated to write when the teacher helps them and explains
the task to them using the first language.

Option	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	25	31%
Agree	27	34%
Neutral	5	6%
Disagree	14	18%
Strongly disagree	9	11%
Total	80	100%

Table 20: Students' agreement about teacher's use of L1 in the classroom
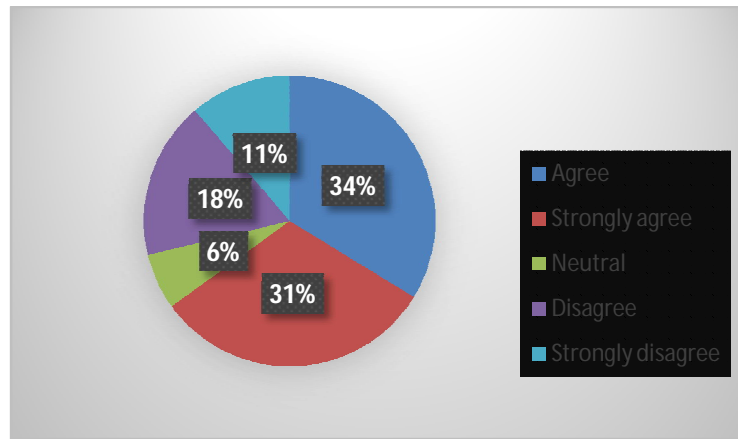
Graph 20: Students' agreement about teacher's use of L1 in the classroom

As it is seen in the table, (34%) students agree with the statement of teacher's use of L1 in the classroom , this shows that first year students could not get free from their first language ; they always rely on it , and it is not a good idea. About (31%) of them strongly agree with it; whereas, (18%) of them strongly disagree with the previous statement which means that they are ready to be enhanced. Moreover, about (11%) of students strongly disagree with the idea, and they are totally right ;whereas(6%) of them are neutral.

7. Does the first language (Arabic) facilitates or impedes your paragraph writing in English? and why?

Option	Number	Percentage %
Facilitates	48	60 %
Impedes	32	40 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 21: Students' opinion about the effect of L1 in their L2 paragraph writing
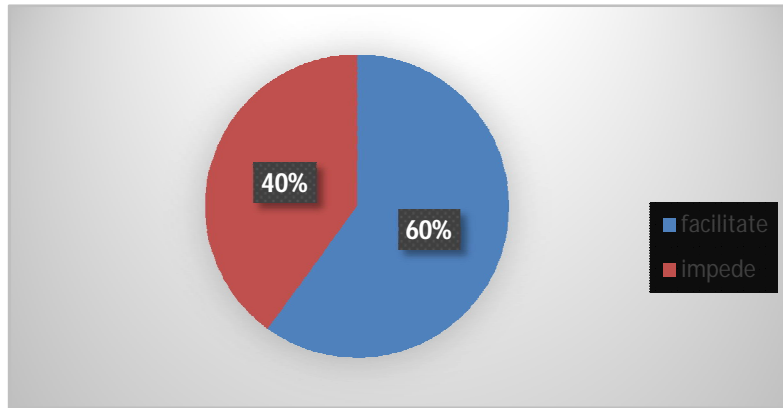
Graph 21: Students' opinion about the effect of L1 in their L2 paragraph writing

As it is mentioned in the above table, more than half of students (60%) saw that the first language (Arabic) facilitates their writing in English because they think that when they translate word by word from their first language they can achieve the intended meaning, but this is not a right idea.However, (40%) of them stated that their L1 impedes their writing in English maybe because they know the negative side of the L1 interference. One of them said that, "Arabic facilitates my paragraph writing in English because sometimes I can not find words to express my ideas in English , so I return to Arabic language to know the word and translate it".Another One justified his answer by saying that," L1 impedes my paragraph writing in English because when we think in Arabic the translation in English will be hard and not in the same meaning, so it is better to think in English".

8. Does homework provided by the teacher of written expression helps you in enhancing your paragraph writing ?
    a) Yes   b) No

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	68	77 %
No	12	23 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 22 :students' opinion about the homework provided by the teacher in terms of their paragraph writing
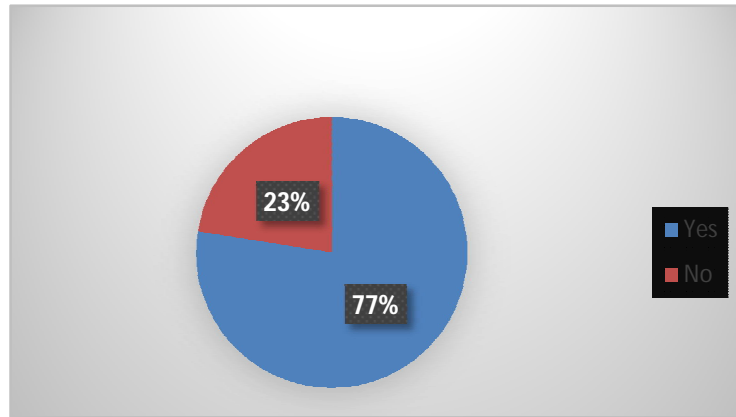
Graph 22 : students' opinion about the homework provided by the teacher in terms of their paragraph writing

From the previous table, the majority of students (77%) saw that the homework provided by the teacher of written expression helps them in enhancing their paragraph writing because they are serious, and they do their homework as they are asked by their teacher , so they want to succeed. However, the rest of students about (23%) stated the contrary, and that the homework does not enhance their paragraph writing due to the fact that they are lazy and careless, and it's obvious that they do not do their homework seriously. One of the students answered how the homework enhance her paragraph writing by saying that," because when we do any homework, we acquire new vocabulary and new grammatical rules, so all of them help us in writing a good paragraph".Another students said that, "we learn a lot from our mistakes and the teacher also helps us to correct them".

9. How can you minimize or reduce the first language (Arabic) interference in writing paragraphs?
   a) Reading books and articles in English to improve your vocabulary
   b) Writing from time to time paying attention to the basic elements of writing paragraphs in English
   c) Chatting with native speakers
   d) All of them

Option	Number	Percentage %
A	10	12 %
B	8	10 %
C	4	5 %
D	58	73 %
Total	80	100 %

Table 23 : Solutions to reduce L1 interference in writing paragraph
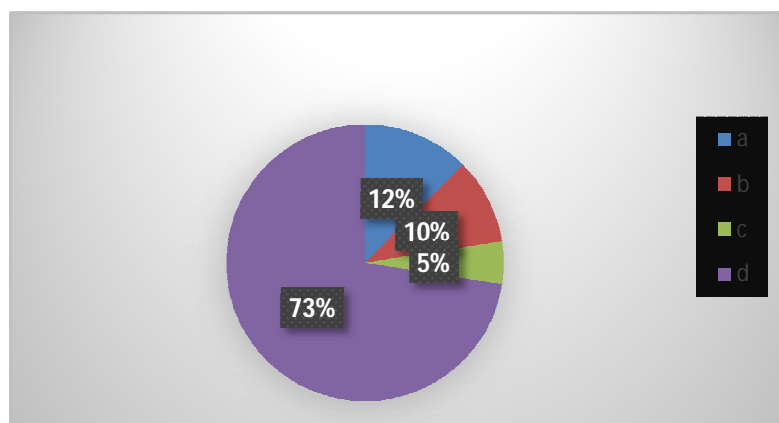
Graph 23 : : Solutions to reduce L1 interference in writing paragraph

As it is seen in the previous table, more than half of students (73%) saw that all the proposed solutions; reading books and articles in English to improve your vocabulary ;writing from time to time paying attention to the basic elements of writing paragraphs in English and chatting with native speakers , reduce and minimize L1 interference in writing paragraph. The rest of students are distributed between the three proposed solution as the pie chart reveals. The majority of students suggested many solutions to reduce L1 interference in paragraph writing including, watching movies in English, Listening to English music, reading short stories and magazines, chatting in English, speaking with classmates using English.

2. Identification and Classification of Students' Errors

Group (3) of first year students was asked to write two paragraphs ;the first one about free topics and the second one about ''the future job''as a homework which was given by Mr. Bouhitem two times in the session of written expression which starts every Monday at 13:10 to 14:40. I have collected 27 papers and the second day 31 papers; 58 in general .Students talked about different topics; topics which interested them to write about including, Mother,

Friendship, my dream, my parents, smoking, Sport, Miserable Life and Football. From the analysis of students' paragraphs, I have found many errors/mistakes; I will summarize and classify them in the table below:

Types of Errors		
1) Grammatical Errors	Incorrect form	Correct form
A) Omission of "s" of third person	1)…if Allah *close* the door which you want he *open* to you…	1)…if Allah *closes* the door which you want,he *opens* to you…
	2)…what he/she *have* inside them mind…	2)… what he/she *has* inside his/her mind…
	3)…when teacher *want..*	3)…when the teacher *wants..*
	4)…everyone *respect* and *fear* from cops.	4) everyone *respects* and *fears* of cops
	5)…the person develop from…	5)…the person develops from…
	6)…because it inhence our vocabulary…	6)…because it enhances our vocabulary…
	7)…it help us to protect our health…	7)…it helps us to protect our health…
	8)… because it make me…	8)…because it makes me..
	9)..it have many effects…	9)…it has many effects…
	10)…it keep you aware…	10)…it keeps you aware..
	11)…it give us a precious lessons.	11)…it gives us precious lessons.
	12)Everyone in this life have a dream…	12)Everyone in this life has a dream…

B) prepositions	1)…make people listening for what I say..	1)…make people listening to what I say…
	2)…it keep you aware about many things.	2)...it keeps you aware of many things.
	3)Some of us are used to of listening music…	3) Some of us are used to listen music…
	4)………love him and do my best for make it prode of me.	4)….love him, and I will do my best to make him proud of me.
	5)…have points of view on things of live.	5)…have points of view about things in life.
	6)…I think for living a luxurious life…	6)…I think that in order to live a luxurious life….
	7)…thinking in the future job…	7)…thinking about the future job….
	8)…to take care with babys…	8)…to take care of babies…...
	9)… I believe for that…	9)… I believe in that….

C) Articles	1) The friendship is something important…	1)) Friendship is something important…
	2)…without friends we can not be good member in society.	2)…without friends we can not be a good member in the society
	3)The friends take care of each others…	3)Friends take care of each others…
	4)The friends help each others…	4)Friends help each others…..
	5)…and thankful by the people..	5)…and thankful by people…
	6)I hate a smoking…	6) I hate smoking…
	7) The smoking causes many dangrous diseases…	7)Smoking causes many dangerous diseases…
	8)Finally, the reading get…	8)Finally, reading gets…
	9)…this phenomenon is lost of the money and time.	9)…this phenomenon is lost of money and time.
	10)…it give us a precious lessons.	10)…it gives us precious lessons.
	11)Teaching is great job..	11)Teaching is a great job..
D) Word-order	1)…because the person addicted has…	1)…because the addicted person has…
	2)Being a teacher is very a difficult job…	2)Being a teacher is a very difficult job…

E) Omission of the verb	1)Teaching very important.…	1)Teaching is very important..
	2)…it not easy to be a good teacher.	2)…it is not easy to become a good teacher.
F) Capitalization	1)my future career..	1) My future career..
	2)first I like this domain…	2)First, I like this domain..
	3)then I think…	3)Then I think that…
	4)…the greatest message which allah advices..	4)…the greatest message which Allah advices…
	5)…like oxford…	5)…like Oxford…
	6)my favorite job..	6)My favorite job…
	7)next, the education is a way…	7)Next, education is a way….
	8)finally, I pray to allah to give me….	8)Finally, I pray to Allah to give me…
G) Punctuation	1)When I translate a book or a paragraph it is to help people…	1)When I translate a book or a paragraph, it will be helpful for people..
	2)I plan for my future job, because I have only one choice…	2)I plan for my future job because I have only one choice..
	3)..teaching english language specialy at the university stay always my big dream and I am doing all my best to make it true.	3)..teaching English language especially at the university stay always my big dream, and I am doing my best to make it true.

	4)I have lot of plans in my mind but one by one I will succeed in everything..	4)I have a lot of plans in my mind, but one by one I will succeed in everything…
	5) When I want to talk about my future and what I have dreams inside my mind…	5) When I want to talk about my future, and what I have dreams inside my mind…
	6)..a lot of questions but like every human being…	6)..a lot of questions, but like every human being…
	7)English is very famous language , you found it everywhere…	7)English is a very popular language; you find it everywhere….
	8)Thanks to the benefits of internet, because it makes the life easier.	8)Thanks to the benefits of internet because it makes life more easier.
	9)….I am proud of having such parents and I can't think of a single moment without them.	9)..I am proud of having such parents, and I can not think about a single moment without them.
	10)I like cats, I have been into cats since….	10)I like cats; I have been into cats since….
H) Addition	1)..we can improving our writing…	1)…we can improve our writing…
	2)…you can to check the pupils' copybook…	2)…you can check pupils' copybook...
	3)…you found it	3)…you find it

		everywhere…	everywhere…
		4)…and try to enjoying….	4)…and try to enjoy….
		5)We must to stop…	5)We must stop….
		6)…way to being rich.	6)…way to be rich.
		7)..it may required…	7)…it may require…
		8)…my first step to being a teacher.	8)..my first step to be a teacher.
I)	Singular and plural words	1)Friends is like brothers they love each other. 2)There are a lot and different kind of choices…	2)Friends are like brothers; they love each others. 2)There are a lot and different kinds of choices…
2)	Semantic Errors	1)All I can do for now is hoping god to help me and make it better and right. 2) I hope that I will get a position in middle school…… 3)First, from I was little I like the environment of university and type of education in it.. 4)..I like reading because it make me very cultural person. 5)..it can enjoy you if you felt upset	1)All what I can do now is asking God to help me and make things better than it is. 2)I hope that I will have the chance to be a teacher in middle school. 3) First, I like the university and its kind of education since my childhood…………. 4)…..I like reading because it makes me a literate person. 5)..it can change your mood when you are upset.

	6)Mothers are bless from god and the paradise indown her fiet …	6)mothers are blessing from God , and their satisfactions is the way to paradise…
	7) we must to stop this phenomenon to make our health clean.	7)we must stop this phenomenon to make ourselves healthy.
	8)Maybe sometimes we fight.But we still friends…….	8)Sometimes we may have disagreements, but we still friends…
	9)My dream is to work in the sky as an air hotess….	9)My dream is to become an air-hostess…
	10)…anothers for culture self..	10)..another for self-acculturating
3) Lexical Erros	1)…if I make my dreams trou.	1)…if I make my dreams true.
	2)…save some mony…	2)…save some money..
	3)…my owne project wich is opining…	3)…my own project which is opening
	4)…and the most emportant reason..	4)…and the most important reason…
	5)…ho don't care aboute …	5)…who do not care about…
	6)…I realy went to work with…	6)…I really want to work with..
	7)…her fiet…	7)…her feet..
	8)…you improuve your self…	8)…you improve yourself…..

	9)….to get the experions…	9)…to get the experience…
	10)…great worck…	10)…great work…
	11)…in the development…	11)…in the development…

Table 24: Students' Errors

After the analysis of students' written production and from the table above; we noticed that first year students face many difficulties in writing.Their errors showed that they have not experienced the English language well because they still unable to form a correct and meaningful sentence without any errors. Thus, the majority of students produced very short sentences, and they also make many spelling mistakes.In addition, it is remarkable that students have a lack of vocabulary and a shortage of knowledge that is why they form a very simple sentences and use very simple words.

Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter is to test the hypothesis and to reach the right and comprehensive answers for the questions put before.We use the analysis of students' questionnaire and written production as tools for the investigation of the results which show that concerning the questionnaire, students admit that they make errors in different linguistic levels.Whereas, the analysis of the written production reveals that first year students made many errors when they write whether in terms of grammar, semantic or lexis ,so they still unable to produce a successful piece of writing because of the negative interference of Arabic language. In short, students should be aware of the obvious difference between Arabic language and English language, and they need to be exposed more to the second language through practice whether inside or outside the classroom in order to be able to produce correct paragraphs.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the main findings of this study, we suggest the following suggestions and recommendations for both teachers and students to develop EFL students' paragraph writing abilities and decreases the negative transfer :

1. Teachers should provide students with class reading because it is one of the most effective strategies of learning vocabulary in the classroom, so that students will be obliged to read and grasp new words which will improve their written production as it is known that, "good readers are always good writers".

2. Students should learn the foundation and the basic linguistic competence in the classroom in order to never forget it ,and apply it when writing.

3. Teachers of written expression module have to make extra sessions particularized for writing because two sessions per week is not sufficient.

4. Teachers should show the structural and lexical differences between the first language (Arabic) and the second language (English) to be aware of when writing.

5. Students must be obliged to correct their errors through peer editing in order to master writing skill correctly.

6. Students needs to be motivated and encouraged by their teachers to write through the use of authentic materials and providing their students with the topics they are interested in.

7. Teachers should reinforce their students when writing a successful paragraphs whether through adding extra points to their test marks or through giving them the chance to tell stories or jokes in the classroom which at the same time will improve another skill and make them more confident ; as a result, it builds a sense of competition among students.

That it to say that, in order to reduce students' errors when writing paragraph in the second language and avoid first language interference un aforementioned suggestions could help students to write clear and correct sentences.

General Conclusion

The current study aims at studying the effect of the first language on EFL students' paragraph writing; the case of first year students of English at Mohamed Kheider university of Biskra. We have chosen writing skill because it is the most important invention in human history ; it provides a permanent record of information, beliefs, opinions, feelings and emotions.Writing enables us to communicate with each other and share our ideas which may last for the coming generations. So that many students face difficulties when writing especially in the second language, and they fail to produce a meaningful piece of writing.

Our research is divided into three chapters ;two theoritical chapters and one practical chapter.The first chapter is about the role of the first language in second language acquisition; the second chapter was about the effect of the first language on second language paragraph writing and the third chapter was about the field work which contains two main tools; error analysis of students written productions and students' questionnaire.The aim of error analysis is to analyze and identify the students' common errors and find out their causes. However, the students' questionnaire helped us in gathering students' perceptions about the subject under investigation.

The data analysis showed that first year students are interested in written expression module because it gives them the opportunity to express themselves and their ideas. As we have seen in the analysis of the questionnaire that most of them respond that they do not have difficulties in writing skill, but after the analysis of their written productions which reveals the contrary; the majority of them made a lot of errors whether in terms of grammar, lexis or syntax. Students think that they have no difficulties when they write in English because of their limited knowledge about writing.

We can not deny that the first language is helpful sometimes and facilitates writing L2 paragraphs when we use it in its positive way. But L1 interference still a serious problem

among EFL students when writing paragraph because they are not aware about the obvious differences between L1 and L2, so L1 affects them negatively and impedes their L2 paragraph writing.

Finally, we have done our best to emphasize on the idea that EFL students paragraph writing will be enhanced, if they do not make a negative transfer. Thus, we hope that this study will be beneficial for both teachers and students, and we try to solve the previous problems by proposing some suggestions and recommendations which may lead to the betterments in writing skill among EFL students.

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Appendix 01

Students' Questionnaire

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

English Division

Students' Questionnaire

Topic : The Effect of the First Language on EFL Students' Paragraph Writing:

A case study of 1st year LMD Students in English Division Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Mohamed Kheider Biskra

Introduction

Dear students

   I am a student at Mohamed Kheider Biskra University . I am conducting a research about the above topic , so this questionnaire is designed to gather information in carrying out this research which is part of my academic requirements for Master degree .Thus you are kindly asked to answer honestly about the following questions ; I will be thankful if you answer them seriously because they are important for this study. Your responses and information in this questionnaire will be confidential and anonymous.

                                  Thank you very much

Instruction : Please put a tick in the box ☐ next to the answer of your choice or write in the space provided as the case may be.

Section A : Personal Information

   3. Your Gender ,

a) Male ☐   b) Female ☐

4. Your age,

   a) 18-20 ☐   b) 21-25 ☐   c) 26 and above ☐

Section B : Attitudes towards Written Expression course

9. Which skill do you have difficulties in ?

   c) Speaking ☐

   d) Writing ☐

   e) Listening ☐

   f) Reading ☐

   Why ? …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………………………………………………………………..

10. Are you interested in Written Expression module ?

   c) Yes ☐

   d) No ☐

   If yes, because

   i. You like writing ☐

   ii. It gives you the opportunity to express your ideas and feelings ☐

   iii. The teacher motivates you to write ☐

11. How do you consider your writing ability ?

   e) Very good ☐

   f) Good ☐

   g) Average ☐

   h) Weak ☐

12. How often do you write at home ?

   b) Always ☐

   c) Sometimes ☐

   d) Rarely ☐

   e) Never ☐

13. Does your teacher of written expression motivate you to write ?

   b) Yes ☐

c) No ☐

14. Do you pay attention to the form and the meaning of the paragraph when writing in English ?

b) Yes ☐

c) No ☐

If no ,

Why ? …………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………..

15. How many sessions do you study written expression module per week ?

b) 2-3 ☐

c) 4-5 ☐

16. In your opinion, is the time allocated to written expression module enough to enhance your writing skill ?

b) Yes ☐

c) No ☐

Section C : The Effect of the first language (Arabic) on the second language (English) writing paragraph

10. Do you refer to your first language (Arabic) when you write in English ?

b) Yes ☐

c) No ☐

11. If yes, how often ?

c) Always ☐

d) Sometimes ☐

e) Rarely ☐

12. When you refer to your first language (Arabic) in writing ?

e) Thinking ☐

f) Translating ☐

g) Planning ☐

h) All of them ☐

13. Does your teacher encourage you to refer to your first language when writing paragraphs ?

c) Yes ☐

d) No □

14. In which level do you often make errors when writing L2 (English) paragraphs ?

   c) Semantic level (translation) □

   d) Syntactic level (grammar) □

   e) Lexical level (vocabulary) □

   f) All of them □

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statments ?

Statment	Strongly agree	Agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1) Students who translate word by word from their first language when writing L2 paragraphs succeed in producing meaningful piece of writing.					
2) Students think in Arabic and write in English as the best way of writing.					
3) The use of the first language affects L2 paragraph writing negatively.					
4) Students will be more motivated to write when the teacher helps them and explains the task to them using the first language.					

16. Does the first language (Arabic) facilitates or impedes your paragraph writing in English? and why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

17. Does homework provided by the teacher of written expression helps you in enhancing your paragraph writing ?

   b) Yes □

   c) No □

If yes, How?

……

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

18. How can you minimize or reduce the first language (Arabic) interference in writing paragraphs?

    e) Reading books and articles in English to improve your vocabulary ☐

    f) Writing from time to time paying attention to the basic elements of writing paragraphs in English ☐

    g) Chatting with native speakers ☐
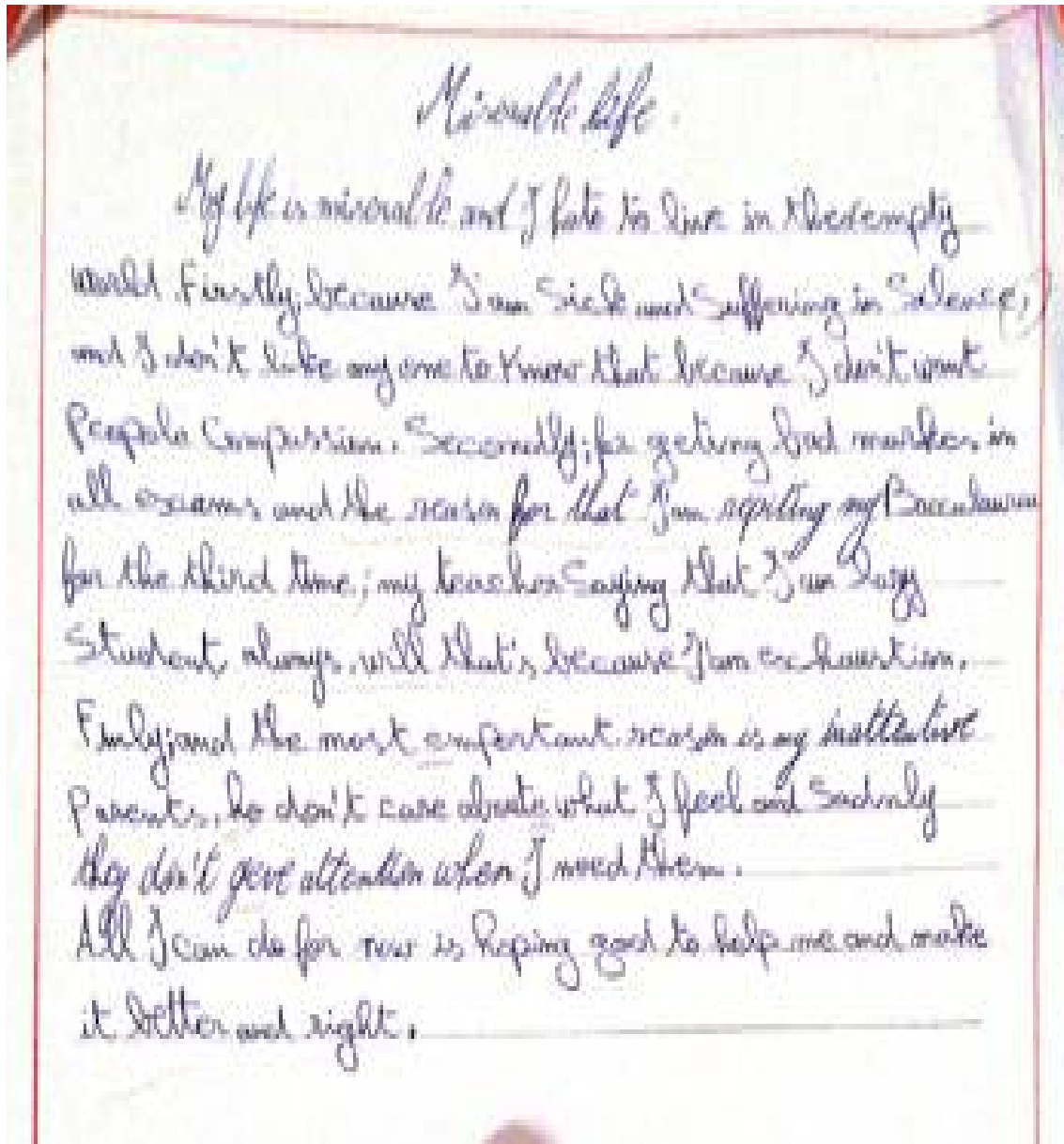
    h) All of them ☐

19. Suggestions

……

……

……

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

☺ Thank you ☺

Appendix 02

Sample of Students' Homework

Miserable life

My life is miserable and I hate to live in this empty world. Firstly, because I am sick and suffering in silence, and I don't like any one to know that because I don't want people compassion. Secondly, for getting bad marks in all exams and the reason for that I'm repeating my Baccalaureate for the third time; my teacher saying that I am lazy student always, will that's because I am exhausted. Finally, and the most important reason is my tactless parents, who don't care about what I feel and sadly they don't give attention when I need them.

All I can do for now is hoping good to help me and make it better and right.

* My future Job *

One day I hope to become a teacher.

First, I like teaching because it's a great job for a woman. I hope that I will get a position in the middle school. Then I really went to work with the student and people. Next, I'am going to work hard to benifit and to educate student from what I have learn. Finally, I'am going to work and save many in order to make my dream true.

Teaching is great job, I really went to work as an honest teacher.

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19 / 02 / 2017

My future Job

In the future, I plan to be a good teacher. I know that Waiting me a lot of work and slog. But I will work hard to succeed and. Because one of people said: "Work hard in silence let your succeed make the noise". Finally, I wish that I was a teacher in the future.

My dream,

In the near future, I hope to become an english doctor at the university. First, from I was little I like the environment of university and the type of education in it. In generally I like teaching information to the others. Secondly, for me, there is not foreign language better than the english language, it is the best of best. Thirdly, theacking at the university for me is the most elegant and appropriate job for a woman. Finally, english doctor have extra avantage because of the supplement of studying in big universities in the world like Oxford — so have the chance to visit the most beautiful countries in the world. For the last, teaching english language specialy at the university stay allways my big dream, and I am doing all

my best to make it True.

future job

My favorite job is teaching in my future for many reason. First, teach is very important what we need in life us; because; it has many benefit such as, A teacher has got a very big responsibility. when teacher want give more information. Second, it has to prepare self before getting into classroom, so just give for student The lessons very clear. when teach everyday you can to check The pupils copy-book o want another for culture self. In Addition, teacher can become more honest, courage in life when educate. Third, it has make confidance and more developement. teach not only teaching in school, you have more consideration and respect.

Teaching very important for built people very strong and developement.

My Dream

In the mean time, I will be a famous teacher because Believe for that First I like this domain so and always dream to be a teacher since I was child. Then I think that the Best work for any woman is teaching because it is so respected. And, the education is one of greatest message which allah advices to it.

Ment, the education is a way to get money and Big status in the society

Finally, I pray to allah to give me a good luck in my life and in my education.

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على تأثير اللغة الأولى على طلاب السنة الأولى في كلية اللغات الأجنبية، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لجامعة محمد خيدر بسكرة عند كتابة فقرة. الوصول إلى مستوى مقبول في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية هو الهدف الرئيسي لكل من المعلمين والطلاب، ولكن غالبية الطلاب غير قادرين على تحقيق هذا الهدف لأنهم لايمتلكون الأساس الصحيح من الكفاءة اللغوية. من أجل التأكيد على الفرضية أو رفضها، يجب تحليل الأخطاء الشائعة التي يقوم بها الطلاب عند كتابة الفقرة في اللغة الثانية باستخدام الأسلوب الوصفي من خلال استبيان الطلاب وتحليل إنتاجهم المكتوب. 80 استبانة موجهة إلى طلاب السنة الأولى لجمع وجهات نظرهم حول دراستنا، وتم جمع 58 تراكيب الطلاب لتحليل الأخطاء. وأظهرت النتائج أن طلاب السنة الأولى تخصص لغة إنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون صعوبات كثيرة عند الكتابة ويخففون في إنتاج فقرة ذات مغزى بسبب التداخل السلبي للغتهم الأولى وعدم الممارسة في اللغة الثانية، لذلك يجب أن يقللوا من هذا النقل السلبي من أجل الوصول إلى أعلى مستوى الكفاءة في الكتابة.