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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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The Effect of L1 Negative Transfer on EFL Learners' Writing Abilities
Case study of First year EFL Students at Chadeli Bendjedid Taref
University

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements of Master's Degree in EFL Didactics*

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Academic Year: 2022/2023

Dedication

“And the last of their call will be: Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

(Sourat Younes, verse 10)

This Humble work is dedicated to:

My Parents;

My Supervisor;

My Teachers;

And My Closest Friends.

Acknowledgement

I attribute all the success in completing this dissertation to the grace and mercy of Allah, who has given me the strength and resilience to persevere. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. OUIS Hanen, my supervisor, and teacher, whose unwavering kindness, support, and guidance have been instrumental in bringing this work to completion.

I am also grateful to all the teachers and students, who participated in this research, for their valuable contributions and collaboration.

To my family, I extend my deepest thanks for their constant support and encouragement throughout this journey.

Finally, I want to express my special gratitude to my closest friends, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a source of strength and inspiration.

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the impact of L1 negative transfer on the writing abilities of EFL students. A sample of 30 first-year students from Taref University, along with three EFL teachers, participated in the study. The research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing questionnaires administered to both the teachers and students. The main research questions revolved around identifying the influence of L1 negative transfer on writing proficiency and exploring the most common errors made by EFL students in their writing. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that EFL learners tend to rely on their mother tongue when writing in the target language, and that reduced use of L1 negative transfer correlates with increased proficiency in writing. The study recommends further research to expand the sample size, incorporate qualitative methods, explore the effectiveness of instructional interventions, conduct longitudinal studies, and examine individual differences.

The keywords: L1 negative transfer, EFL writing, proficiency, errors.

Résumé

Cette étude visait à examiner l'impact du transfert négatif de la L1 sur les compétences en écriture des étudiants en anglais langue étrangère (EFL). Un échantillon de 30 étudiants de première année de l'Université de Taref, ainsi que trois enseignants d'EFL, ont participé à l'étude. La recherche a utilisé une approche quantitative en utilisant des questionnaires administrés aux enseignants et aux étudiants. Les principales questions de recherche portaient sur l'influence du transfert négatif de la L1 sur la maîtrise de l'écriture et l'identification des erreurs les plus courantes commises par les étudiants en EFL dans leurs écrits. Les résultats ont confirmé l'hypothèse selon laquelle les apprenants en EFL ont tendance à se baser sur leur langue maternelle lorsqu'ils écrivent dans la langue cible, et que l'utilisation réduite du transfert négatif de la L1 est corrélée à une meilleure maîtrise de l'écriture. L'étude recommande de mener davantage de recherches pour élargir la taille de l'échantillon, inclure des méthodes qualitatives, explorer l'efficacité des interventions pédagogiques, mener des études longitudinales et examiner les différences individuelles.

Les mots-clés: transfert négatif de la L1, écriture en EFL, maîtrise, erreurs.

الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى فحص تأثير النقل السلبي للغة الأولى على قدرات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية في الكتابة. شملت الدراسة عينة من 30 طالباً من السنة الأولى في جامعة الطارف، بالإضافة إلى ثلاثة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية. استخدمت الدراسة منهجاً كمياً باستخدام استبيانات تم توزيعها على المعلمين والطلاب. تناولت الأسئلة البحثية الرئيسية تأثير النقل السلبي للغة الأولى على مهارة الكتابة وتحديد الأخطاء الشائعة. أكدت النتائج بانه على الرغم من وجود اختلافات نظامية واضحة بين اللغة الإنجليزية والعربية، فإن المتعلمين يعتمدون بشكل أكبر على لغتهم الأم عند التفكير وتفسير هذه الأفكار في الكتابة باستخدام اللغة المستهدفة كمحاولة للتعامل مع أنماط اللغة الأجنبية. وبالتالي، فإن النقل السلبي للغة الأولى له تأثير ملحوظ على قدرات واحترافية الطلاب في الكتابة، ويزداد مستوى الاحترافية عندما يتم استخدام النقل السلبي للغة الأولى بشكل أقل من قبل الطلاب. توصي الدراسة بإجراء المزيد من البحوث لتوسيع حجم العينة، وتضمين أساليب تحقيقية، واستكشاف فعالية التدخلات التعليمية، وإجراء دراسات طويلة المدى، واستكشاف الاختلافات الفردية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : النقل السلبي للغة الأولى، الكتابة، الاحترافية، الأخطاء.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

TL: Target Language

FL: Foreign Language

SL: Second Language

L1: First Language

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Introduction

Writing is regarded as one of the most important aspects and skills of mastering English as a foreign language (EFL), and it is considered as another form of communication that combines words and symbols to express a specific aim. Regardless of the writing instructions they have received, learners still use some structures, vocabulary, and rhetorical patterns from their first language when writing in English. As a result, researchers have focused their attention on L1 Interference as a linguistic phenomenon that may result in poor writing proficiency and inefficient academic achievement.

Furthermore, the majority of foreign language students' errors are caused by "negative transfer," which occurs when speakers and writers transfer items or structures that are not common in both languages; in the sense that the more differences there are between two languages, the more negative transfer is possible. Furthermore, negative transfer reverses the learner's native language's influence on foreign language acquisition. As a consequence, the impact of negative transfer on writing proficiency is worthy to be investigated in order to shed light on the students' writing problems as an attempt to overcome them and achieve a good academic level of the English language.

1. Statement of the Problem

In the EFL learning context, Writing as a fundamental skill has received researchers and teachers' attention because for many years ago EFL learners have experienced several challenges while writing accurate and structured pieces of language. The main problem is that the majority of First year EFL students' writings at El Taref university indicates how inclined these students are to their mother tongue, which confirmed that native language transfer may influence the learners' proficiency. The latter may become low because of many factors such as misunderstanding the meaning of the text, vocabulary, and the irregular reading of the target language, which may build a background in FL and eliminate the interference of L1 during the FL writing tasks.

2. The Research Questions

To improve our understanding of these linguistic phenomena, the research at hand addresses the following main question:

- 1- What is the impact of L1 “negative transfer” on EFL students ‘ Writing abilities ?
- 2- What are the most common errors students make when writing in the EFL language?
- 3- Are there any solutions to prevent this linguistic phenomenon ?

3. Research Hypothesis

According to the previously raised questions, we hypothesize that although there are clear systematic distinctions between English and Arabic languages , EFL learners rely much more on their mother tongue language when thinking and interpreting these insights into pieces of writing using the target language as an attempt to cope with the foreign linguistics patterns.

L1 transfer has a remarkable influence on EFL students’ writing ability and proficiency, the latter would be increased when L1 negative transfer is less used by the EFL students.

4. The Aim of the Study

The aims of the actual research are :

1. To know the extent to which L1 affects EFL learners’ writing productions
2. To explain the negative impact of L1 interference on writing proficiency

3. To raise EFL teachers and students' awareness of this linguistic phenomena
4. To provide EFL learners with different strategies that may prevent L1 interference

It is worth noting that the current investigation is crucial for the teacher to help the learners to predict their errors before committing them. Thus, the study specific aim is to find out the effective ways which the teacher can use in class to improve the learners' writing skills.

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1. Choice of the Research Method

This research will opt for the quantitative descriptive method as an endeavor to confirm or reject the previously proposed hypothesis via administering two questionnaires, one for EFL teachers and the second for their students besides a task of writing paragraphs in order to determine to which the extent their target language is influenced by their mother tongue language.

5.2 Population and Sampling

The research population represents first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid , El Tarf University. Yet, the sample consists of (150) students, conveniently selected out of (30) . First year EFL students have been selected because they are beginners and their first language background is more than the target language, thus their first language negative interference is more remarkable than the advanced students.

5.3. Data Gathering Tools

The actual research employed two questionnaires , one for EFL teachers and one for their first year students, at Chadli Bendjedid university. The researcher used these tools in order to dig deeper into the interference of L1 negative transfer and its effects on students' writing proficiency using the English language.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two main parts, namely theoretical and practical, the first part includes two chapters, the second part consisted of one chapter . The first chapter is devoted to overview of writing skill, while the second one is dedicated to L1 negative transfer. Chapter three is entitled research methodology, results and discussion , along with a general conclusion .

7. Significance of The Study

Learning a foreign language can be difficult; it has always been a complex challenge for foreign language learners and a contentious issue for researchers. During this process, students may encounter difficulties due to the conflict of their first and second languages. One of these issues is the application of their mother tongue rules in learning a foreign language, which causes them to make errors in written tasks, which can have a negative impact on their writing proficiency.

Chapter One

Overview of Writing Skill

Introduction

Many language learners find writing to be a challenging and complex task, yet it remains crucial as it enables students to excel academically and express themselves. Writing involves more than just putting down random words on a piece of paper, but rather encompasses various skills. This section will provide insightful viewpoints on the definition, importance, elements, approaches, the main difficulties faced by students when writing, and some of the effective strategies utilized by EFL instructors to assist their students in overcoming these obstacles.

1.1. Definition of Writing skill

Writing skill can be defined as the ability to express thoughts, ideas, and information in a clear, organized, and coherent manner using written language. According to Kroll (2016), writing skill involves the use of cognitive and linguistic processes to generate, organize, and revise written texts. These processes include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Writing skill is considered a crucial aspect of communication and is essential in academic, professional, and personal contexts. It enables individuals to effectively convey their ideas, opinions, and information to various audiences. According to Graham and Perin (2007), strong writing skills have been linked to improved academic achievement, higher-paying job opportunities, and better overall communication skills.

Furthermore, writing skill can be developed and improved through instruction and practice. Effective writing instruction focuses on developing both the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in writing, as well as providing opportunities for students to practice

writing in various contexts and for different purposes (Graham & Perin, 2007). By improving their writing skills, individuals can enhance their ability to communicate effectively and achieve their personal, academic, and professional goals.

1.2.The Importance of Writing Skill

Writing is an essential skill in both academic and professional settings, and its importance cannot be overstated. In academic settings, writing skills are critical for students to effectively communicate their ideas and demonstrate their understanding of course materials. In professional settings, writing skills are essential for producing effective reports, proposals, and other documents that are used to communicate with clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Good writing skills also play a crucial role in building a professional image and reputation, as emphasized by Barras (2005) who states that effective writing is essential for students, job applications, and professional careers, where one's writing often shapes others' judgments.

Research has shown that strong writing skills are associated with academic and professional success. For example, a study by Humes, Cushing, and Berger (2010) found that students with strong writing skills had higher GPAs and were more likely to graduate from college. In the professional world, a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found that strong writing skills were among the top qualities that employers look for in job candidates (NACE, 2018).

Furthermore, writing skills are not just important for academic and professional success but also for personal growth and development. Writing can be used as a form of self-reflection and expression, helping individuals to clarify their thoughts and emotions. In addition, writing can improve cognitive abilities such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Pinker, 2014).

1.3. Writing Elements

To create effective academic writing, there are specific standards that should be met to help readers understand and make sense of the text. These standards include several elements

that contribute to the clarity and readability of the written work. A well-written text should have a clear organization, logical flow, consistent use of language, and proper mechanics to ensure that it is easily comprehensible. The purpose of these conventions is to make the text easy to follow, understand, and engage with for the reader. By adhering to these standards, the writer can improve the overall quality of the work and ensure that the intended message is conveyed effectively.

1.3.1. Grammar

The term "grammar" refers to the set of rules that govern the structure of language, both spoken and written. It explores how words are combined to form sentences and how they change in different contexts. The importance of grammar in writing cannot be overstated. Brooks and Penn (1970) suggest that knowledge of language structure, including parts of speech, word relationships, individual word meanings, and grammar and punctuation rules, is crucial for effective writing. Therefore, writers must pay attention to grammar rules, sentence structure, punctuation, and various parts of speech, such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives, throughout the writing process.

Proper grammar helps writers convey their message more effectively, avoiding confusion or misunderstanding. It also contributes to readability and coherence, making the text easier to understand for the reader. In fact, research has shown that good grammar is correlated with better academic and professional performance (Dignan, 2019). Moreover, grammar skills are essential in many areas of life, from academic and professional settings to social interactions (Crystal, 2000).

In conclusion, understanding and applying grammar rules is crucial for effective communication, especially in writing. It is an essential aspect of language that should not be overlooked by writers or learners of any level.

1.3.1. Coherence

Coherence is an important aspect of written communication, which refers to the logical organization of ideas in a text to ensure that they fit together and contribute to the understanding of the overall message. As Hinkel (2004) notes, coherence can also involve the contextual form of utterances, which helps readers understand the meaning of the text.

Achieving coherence requires careful arrangement of information and ideas related to a specific genre. This could involve using appropriate transitional devices to link ideas or organizing information according to a clear structure or pattern (Carrell et al., as cited in Hinkel, 2004). Without coherence, a text may appear disjointed, confusing, or difficult to understand, making it challenging for readers to follow the author's intended message.

1.3.2. Word Choice

The selection of appropriate words is a crucial aspect of effective writing as it impacts how the message is conveyed to the reader. When writing in a foreign language, it becomes even more important to choose words carefully, to ensure that the message is accurately conveyed. The quality of the composition is influenced by the writer's ability to use the language correctly, while also considering the intended audience. The use of appropriate vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and phrases enhances the readability and comprehension of the written text. It is also important for writers to align their objectives and the context of the written piece with the intended readership to ensure that the text is engaging and relevant to the audience.

According to Hinkel (2004), word choice is essential in creating a coherent and effective text, choosing the right words and expressions is crucial for conveying the intended meaning and establishing a connection with the reader. Therefore, writers should carefully consider their word choices, taking into account the context, audience, and purpose of the text.

In academic writing, word choice is crucial to ensure effective communication with the readers. As stated by Flowerdew (2013), selecting the appropriate words for a given context is important for conveying the intended meaning accurately. Additionally, writers should consider their audience and engage them with interesting topics, aligning the objectives and context of the written piece with the intended readership.

1.3.3. Spelling

Spelling is a fundamental aspect of writing that writers must consider to enhance the readability and credibility of their work. Even though the English language has no systematic spelling rules, writers should strive for accuracy to demonstrate their proficiency and convey their intended meaning effectively. Accurate spelling is crucial as it affects the overall quality of the written work and enables teachers to assess students' language proficiency. Moreover, spelling is interconnected with other language skills such as reading and writing. Ismail and

Kareema (2013) emphasized that good spelling skills require an understanding of these interconnected language skills. Therefore, writers should work on improving their spelling skills to ensure effective communication in writing and to enhance their overall language proficiency.

1.3.4. Punctuation

Punctuation refers to the use of symbols and marks in written language to indicate the structure and organization of ideas and enhance readability. Capitalization is an important aspect of punctuation that plays a significant role in conveying meaning and clarity in writing. Straus et al. (2014) provide useful guidelines for capitalization that writers can follow to ensure consistency and accuracy. The rules include capitalizing the first word of a quoted sentence, proper nouns, titles of people in an address or signature line, titles of higher-ranking government officials, and any title used as a direct address. By adhering to these rules, writers can use capitalization effectively to add credibility and professionalism to their writing. Additionally, using proper punctuation, including capitalization, can help writers communicate their ideas more clearly and effectively.

1.4. Approaches to Teach writing

Teaching writing in the EFL classroom involves various approaches that aim to develop students' writing skills and enhance their communicative competence. Some of the commonly used approaches are:

1. Process Approach: This approach emphasizes the process of writing and focuses on the writer's pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing stages. It aims to help students develop their ideas, organize their thoughts, and produce a well-written text. The process approach encourages collaboration and feedback among peers, allowing students to revise and improve their writing continuously. This approach has been found to be effective in developing students' writing skills and improving their writing quality (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Zarei & Barati, 2021).

2. Product Approach: This approach focuses on the final product, that is, the written text. The goal is to help students produce a well-structured, error-free, and coherent text. It emphasizes grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, aiming to produce accurate writing. The product approach can be useful in teaching specific writing genres, such as academic writing, where accuracy and clarity are crucial (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

3. Genre Approach: This approach focuses on teaching different writing genres and their features, such as structure, language, and tone. It aims to familiarize students with the conventions of different genres, such as essays, letters, and reports. This approach can be effective in developing students' genre awareness and helping them produce genre-specific texts (Swales, 1990).

4. Task-Based Approach: This approach involves giving students real-world tasks, such as writing a letter of complaint or a report, and providing them with the necessary language skills and strategies to complete the task successfully. This approach aims to develop students' communicative competence and help them use writing as a tool for real-life communication (Willis & Willis, 2007).

5. Writing Centers: Writing centers are physical or virtual spaces where students can receive one-on-one assistance with their writing. Writing center tutors can help students with any aspect of the writing process, from brainstorming to revising. Writing centers can be effective in developing students' writing skills, particularly in addressing individual writing issues (Murray, 2016).

In conclusion, teaching writing in the EFL classroom involves various approaches that can be effective in developing students' writing skills and enhancing their communicative competence. The choice of approach should depend on the student's needs, goals, and context.

1.5. Students' Main Difficulties in Academic Writing

Writing is a challenging skill that requires learning and mastery, especially for ESL or EFL learners. According to Kroll (1990), writing for ESL students requires mastery over appropriate formats for presenting ideas, as well as proficiency in various language aspects. This complexity presents a daunting task, as multiple skills contribute to the overall difficulty of writing. Hadfield (1992, as cited in Melouk and Zouaoui) suggests that learners face three main challenges when acquiring the productive skill of writing: the absence of direct consultation with readers, linguistic difficulties, and cognitive difficulties.

While writing is difficult for EFL learners, it is also challenging for native speakers, as Hedge (2000) explains. Writing is often taught as the final skill in language learning due to its

perceived complexity. When expressing their struggle with writing in a second language, students are not merely referring to the difficulty of choosing the right words and applying correct grammar, but also to the challenge of generating and expressing ideas in a new language, according to Raimes (1983).

EFL students encounter an array of problems and difficulties when engaging in writing, spanning grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. Punctuation is an essential element of effective writing skills, serving as one of the tools writers use to convey meaning (Angelillo, 2002). According to Byrne (1988), punctuation lacks precision and standardization, resulting in its problematic nature. Students often make errors in their use of punctuation marks, which can impact the communication process.

Spelling is another crucial aspect of writing, as a single misspelled word can change the meaning of a sentence. Difficulties in spelling include the incorrect spelling of words, resulting from irregularities within the English spelling system (Banca, 2013). Piterson (n.d.) suggests that some students' spelling difficulties may stem from a mispronunciation of words.

Vocabulary is a fundamental language component that influences proficiency in all language skills. Richard and Renandya (2002, as cited in Asyiah, 2017) emphasize the crucial role of vocabulary in foreign language learning and overall language proficiency, affecting speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. A lack of vocabulary poses a challenge, resulting in dull, uninteresting, and ineffective writing. While grammar is essential for effective communication, without a sufficient vocabulary, communication is impossible.

1.6. Effective Methods to Help Students Overcome Their Difficulties in Writing

According to Hedge (2000), writing is a challenging skill to learn, especially for second language learners. EFL students face various difficulties related to grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. Differentiated instruction (DI) has emerged as a teaching approach that caters to the diverse skills and abilities of students within the same classroom, and it plays a significant role in teaching writing (Drapea, 2004). Tomlinson (1995) emphasizes the importance of ongoing assessment in differentiated classrooms. Implementing differentiated instruction in writing instruction can help learners practice and improve their writing skills continuously (Tomlinson, 2001).

To enhance writing abilities, some methodologists suggest focusing on reading. Krasher (1993) asserts that voluntary reading can be a highly effective method for second language

learners to enhance their language abilities, including reading comprehension, writing skills, grammar proficiency, vocabulary expansion, and spelling competence. Reading and writing are viewed as interactive communication processes that facilitate the exchange of information between writers and readers. While writing practice is essential, developing writing skills also requires support from reading, which has a positive impact on writing skills at different proficiency levels. Reading can provide students with new knowledge embedded within the text and offer a wealth of information about various aspects of written texts, including grammar and vocabulary (Krashen, 1993).

Conclusion

In conclusion, writing represents a sophisticated ability that is essential in a variety of contexts, including academic, professional, and personal. It necessitates a thorough understanding of a number of components, including syntax, coherence, word choice, spelling, and punctuation. Students can improve their writing abilities with the support of effective writing instruction, which includes the process approach, product approach, genre approach, task-based approach, and writing centers. However, students often struggle with writing, especially when it comes to elements like syntax, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. Differentiated instruction and incorporating reading into writing education can help students overcome these obstacles and advance their writing skills.

Chapter two

L1 Negative Transfer

Introduction

Through the actual chapter, the researcher is going to present the overview of First language transfer including its definition, and the definition of foreign language in order to distinguish each one from the other. In addition to the types of language transfer embracing Negative and Positive transmission as two main types. Finally, the impact of L1 transfer on EFL students' writing proficiency is delivered.

2.1. Definition of First Language

The term "first language," which is often used to refer to "native language" or "mother tongue," is the language that a person naturally acquires throughout their early years in their family or community. The person develops their linguistic abilities and sense of cultural identity through this language, which serves as their primary language of communication.

Numerous studies including Crystal (2010), Bloom (2000), and Chomsky (1965) have been conducted on the idea of first language acquisition in disciplines like linguistics, psychology, and education. Linguists have studied the steps needed to learn a first language, including phonological growth, vocabulary expansion, and grammatical structure acquisition. The cognitive and social facets of language development have been studied by psychologists, and the value of the first language in educational contexts is stressed by educators.

A first language is acquired by exposure to linguistic input from caregivers and the environment. Children gradually improve their receptive and expressive language abilities, learning to comprehend and assemble words, phrases, and sounds. Without the need for explicit teaching, this process happens naturally and spontaneously.

2.2 Definition of Foreign Language

A language that is not constantly spoken or implemented as the predominant language in the learner's environment is referred to as a foreign language. It is a language that people learn by intentional study, formal instruction, or hands-on exposure in a foreign-language environment (Byram, 1997).

Richards and Schmidt (2010) proclaimed that learning a foreign language entails developing proficiency in that language's reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It often covers the study of the language's vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural nuances. Language learning can take place in a variety of settings, including language schools, self-study courses, and language exchange programs. Additionally, learning a foreign language involves more than just developing linguistic proficiency. It also includes fostering intercultural competency, which enables people to move about and communicate effectively in a variety of cultural contexts. An essential component of learning a foreign language is becoming familiar with the cultural differences and social customs associated with that language.

Learning a foreign language is prominent for many different reasons. It makes it possible for individuals to communicate with people who communicate that language both locally and worldwide, promoting relationships and understanding across cultural boundaries. This offers chances for professional and academic advancement, improving career possibilities in a more and more interconnected world. Additionally, it has cognitive advantages like enhanced memory, enhanced critical thinking, and higher mental flexibility.

This differs from second language acquisition in that the former refers to learning a non-native language in a setting where one already communicates that language (Ellis, 1994)

2.3. Defining Language Transfer

The significance of language transfer in learning a second language is frequently emphasized by linguists. However, the term transfer continues to be problematic because it is used to describe this event in a variety of ways. In reality, there has been debate among researchers regarding language transfer. While some researchers contend that positive transfer does not always occur and that effective language learning can be accomplished without relying on any previously learned languages, others maintain that positive transfer does not always occur and that effective language learning can be accomplished without depending on any previously learned languages.

The definition of "transfer," which comes from the Latin word "transfere," in Webster's Third New World International Dictionary (1986), is "to carry, to bear, or to print, to impress, or in any other way to copy from one surface to another." To generalize or carry over acquired responses from one sort of situation to another is another meaning of the phrase. In other words, learners transfer or generalize their native language knowledge to aid them in using a particular target language. In this case, a transfer does not necessarily mean that what is carried over is beneficial or negative. It demonstrates how neutral a word transfer is in its origin and usage.

Language transfer must be defined in connection to other linguistic phenomena, such as interference, interlanguage, and cross-linguistic effect, in order for the term to be fully understood. Between transfer and interference was first distinguished. Weinreich (1953) introduced the term "interference" to describe instances of language deviation from either language's norms that arise in bilinguals' speech as a result of their acquaintance with multiple languages. His definition, which only focuses on negative transfer, views native language influence as a barrier to learning and producing the proper target language forms.

Nevertheless, linguistic researchers contend that the native tongue may participate in language acquisition. Di Pietro (1971), for Thus, distinguishes between interference and transmission. According to him, the transfer comes before interference, and interference can only happen after the transfer. He contends that interference occurs when errors are made as a

result of transfer, the act of understanding the specific grammar of one language in terms of another.

The transfer was differentiated from interlanguage. Language transfer is the application of native-language rules in second-language performance, which either results in a deviation from target-language norms or facilitates the second-language acquisition, according to the definitions given in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1987). Interlanguage is the linguistic system that characterizes the production of a non-native speaker at any stage prior to the full acquisition of the target language. Language transfer is the key component in developing an interlanguage, according to the interlanguage hypothesis (Selinker: 1972), because learners must use the resources that are accessible, which frequently come from their native language.

2.4. L1 Transfer

There are numerous synonyms and definitions for first language transfer, including "Cross meaning" Interference, "L1 interference," "Linguistic interference," and "Cross-linguistic influence." Skinner (1957), Waterson (1924), Pavlov (1936), and Thorndike (1936) all believed that a child's present learning was influenced by his past learning because they had demonstrated how the learner's mother tongue's stored knowledge would make teaching the second language easier if the two languages' structures were similar. Language transfer is the process by which a learner applies rules and forms of the first language to a second language. Nonetheless, if the two languages are different, it would be challenging for students to learn the second language. The first language practices will be helpful and useful to acquire the second language habits.

In accordance with Weinreich (1953), "Transfer" refers to instances of deviance from either language's norms that arise in bilinguals' speech as a result of their acquaintance with multiple languages. However, Corder (1992) refers to the phenomenon as "mother influence" because he acknowledges the importance of L1 on the development of foreign languages. Additionally, he emphasized how the learner's cultural experience will obstruct their ability to learn FL "patterns" that are unique to their culture.

The use of the mother tongue or other language information in the acquisition of an FL is referred to as transfer, according to Gass (1996). However, Odlin (1993) has strengthened the prior concept of transfer by referring to it as the influence coming from similarities and

contrasts between the target language and other languages that have previously and sometimes inadequately been learned.

2.5. Language Transfer Types

Ellis (1994) claimed that there are various types of transfer, but the two most prevalent are positive and negative transfer.

2.5.1. Negative Transfer

The negative transfer is the systematic impact of the learner's native language on their attempts to utilize (receive or produce) the target language, according to the field of second language acquisition. Due to the existing distinctions between the two skills, it is the transfer of skill X that hinders learning or negatively affects the command of skill Y. This most usually manifests as intrusions from the native language, which can affect syntax, grammar, lexis, and phonology (James, 1994).

According to Dechert (1983), there are more instances of errors committed in L2 that have vestiges of L1 structures the farther apart the L1 structures are. At those locations in the L2 that are further away from the L1, additional learning challenges can be anticipated because the learner will find it challenging to learn and understand a completely new and different usage. As a consequence, learners would turn to L1 structures for direction. Therefore, negative transfer happens when the L1 and L2 are different, making it harder and taking longer to acquire the L2.

2.5.2. Positive Transfer

Furthermore, Robert Lado (1957) highlights the learner's problem in his well-known formation by stating that those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those that are different will be difficult (Littlewood,1984). Positive transfer is a beneficial part of the L1 in L2, and it occurs when the mother tongue and the target language are structurally the same, or when the two languages share the same characteristics.

Not all language transfer effects are negative, which is important to note. This implies that beneficial impacts could result from language relationships. According to Corder (1974), when the L1 and L2 are comparable, it may enable the learner to advance more quickly along the universal route, which could aid in the growth of learning the L2.

2.6. The impact of the L1 transfer on the L2 writing proficiency

Adult learners will always have their first language structure internalized and will try to apply them, even if there is a lack of knowledge in the target language (TL), whereas children sometimes are not even conscious of using different languages and if they do not always translate from one language into another, in some occasions, they can even learn to think in two different languages.

Lado (1957) emphasizes the mother tongue's influence on the use of forms, meanings, and culture when learning a second language: As they attempt to speak the language and act in the culture, as well as they attempt to grasp and understand the language and culture as it is practiced by natives, people frequently transfer the forms and meanings as well as the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture.

This indicates that L1 transfer can occur at the level of meanings and culture as well as simply transferring forms. The degree of L1 influence on FL writing has been the subject of numerous research among EFL students worldwide. Reid (1988) asserted that Spanish English learners frequently use long sentences, more pronouns, more nouns, and lexical (McClure 1991), fewer simple sentences, more synonyms, and more conjunctions, which results in student writing that is indirectly longer in length, with more repetition and idiom use.

According to Cumming (1989), students' proficiency in English writing is determined by how much of their mother language they adopt while creating, producing, and composing information. This leads to students' poor proficiency levels in English writing.

Khuwaileh and Shoumali (2000) found that Arab students transferred the style and manner of writing into their L2 writing, suggesting that Arab students are more likely to develop their thoughts and prepare them in their mother tongue before they start using English.

2.7. Language Transfer Consequences

Firstly, avoidance is a cognitive strategy that involves the L2 learner making a decision (conscious or unconscious) to simply ignore specific structures that are substantially unlike those in his mother tongue (Faerch and Kasper, 1986). In other words, learners who have encountered failure or difficulties with some L2 structures will likely avoid the structure in question rather than make mistakes. This occurs when a student will ignore the structure when presented with an unusual or challenging version of the L2. This is really challenging to determine, though, because skilled pupils will be able to substitute another similarly acceptable structure for, say, a particularly challenging one.

Secondly, overuse behavior is a strategy employed by L2 learners to generate more of the L2 forms they are familiar with rather than attempting the ones they are unsure of. As a result, excessive use occasionally results from avoidance. According to Olshtain (1983), American English appears to overuse excuses more often than Hebrew.

2.8. The Interlanguage and the Transfer

The term "interlanguage" refers to the foreign or second language that learners go through when moving from the mother tongue to learn the target language (TL), and Corder (1987) called it a "idiosyncratic dialect" to clarify that the study of interlanguage is the study of the learner's language. Additionally, Corder (1957) asserted that the learner possesses a singular dialect (Language) that is regular, systematic, dynamic, and meaningful. It is an independent system with a communication goal and particular traits.

According to Corder (1981), EFL learners have a level of proficiency in learning a second or foreign language that is known as "Transitional competence" (p. 10), which suggests that interlanguage is like any other autonomous system. But Nemser (1960) refers to interlanguage as "The approximate system," and he is the first to use the term "Deviant Learner Language," which refers to a learner's speech at a particular time and is the patterned output of a linguistic system distinct from mother tongue and target language and is internally structured.

According to Selinker (1972), in addition to training transfer, which refers to how the L2 is thought of and L2 strategy transfer, language transfer is one of the cognitive processes that take place during the interlanguage development in second linguistic acquisition.

Conclusion

To conclude , we said in the previous chapter that most of students see writing as a complex skill because they face a lot of difficulties that is why they always rely on their 1st language which make their writing poor because of the negative transfer.

Chapter Three

Methodology, Results, and Discussion

Introduction

Through the actual chapter, the researcher is going to present the methodological part, including the used instrument, the data collection procedures, questionnaire administration procedure. as well as presenting the results, analyzing and discussing the yielded data which allowed to answer the research questions and to confirm or deny the already proposed hypotheses.

3.1. Methodology

The undertaken study was conducted through using a quantitative approach, questionnaires are used as appropriate tools to answer the addressed research questions and to test the hypothesis. To inquire into the beliefs of both EFL teachers and students about the impact of the interference of first language on students' writing abilities.

3.2. Quantitative Instruments

In order to investigate the perceptions of students towards L1 negative transfer in writing, a questionnaire can be utilized to gather relevant data. The questionnaire can be designed to assess student and teachers' opinions on the negative impact of L1 negative transfer on their writing abilities. Participants can be asked to provide their insights on how the influence of their first language affects their writing skills in the target language. Questions can explore specific areas such as the challenges faced due to L1 interference, the extent to which L1 grammar and sentence structure impact their writing, and the difficulties encountered in overcoming L1 negative transfer. Additionally, the questionnaire can inquire about the strategies employed by students to minimize the negative impact of L1 interference and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies. By gathering this information, the questionnaire aims to shed light on the role of L1 negative transfer in shaping students' writing abilities and identify potential areas for intervention and improvement.

Research has shown that questionnaires are a valuable tool for investigating the negative transfer of L1 on students' writing abilities. By using questionnaires, educators can gather data on specific variables related to L1 negative transfer, such as students' awareness of L1 influence on their writing, the specific areas in which they experience difficulties, and their strategies for mitigating the negative transfer effects. The questionnaire can also explore students' perceptions of the impact of L1 negative transfer on the overall quality of their writing and their attitudes towards seeking support or guidance to overcome these challenges. The data collected through the questionnaire can provide insights into the prevalence and nature of L1 negative transfer, allowing educators to tailor their instruction and interventions to address specific areas of concern. Ultimately, by utilizing questionnaires, educators can gain a better understanding of the impact of L1 negative transfer on students' writing abilities and make informed decisions to support their development in the target language.

3.3. Participants

In order to achieve the research aims. The participants selected to be part of this study were first-year students of English at Taref University. The study sample was composed of 30 students who were chosen conveniently from 150 students , in addition to three EFL teachers of writing. The reason behind this sample selection refers to the time allocated to writing techniques and expressions, where they are asked to write and paragraphs, essays.

3.4. Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The administration of the questionnaire to first-year EFL students in the writing sessions was conducted with careful consideration of the purpose and objectives of the survey. The students were informed about the significance of their participation and the importance of their honest and thoughtful responses. The questionnaire was distributed in a structured manner, ensuring that all students received a copy and had sufficient time to

complete it. Clear instructions were provided, highlighting the importance of reading each question carefully and providing their genuine opinions and experiences. Any questions or concerns raised by the students were addressed to ensure their full understanding of the questionnaire.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to encourage open and honest responses. The completed questionnaires were collected and handled with confidentiality to protect the privacy of the participants.

3.5. Presentation of Data

3.5.1. Section One: Background Information:

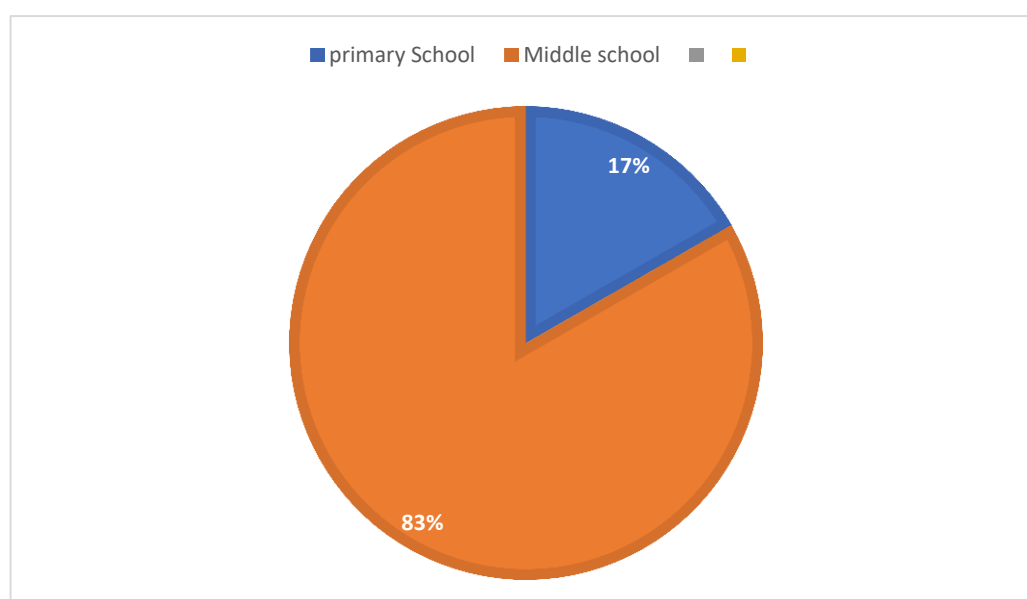
Q1: At what level have you started studying English?

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents—83.3%—started learning English in middle school, while only 16.7%—or fewer respondents—started learning English in elementary school. Nevertheless, none of the respondents said they began studying English in secondary school or college. This implies that a majority of people in the population polled begin their English learning journey in middle school, with a lesser proportion beginning their studies in primary school. The lack of responders who entered secondary school or university suggests that English language education was prioritized in the initial years of schooling.

Figure 3.1: English learning Initiation Levels

Q2: What is your level in English?

According to the findings, the majority of respondents, or 70%, rated their level of English as "Good," with 20% rating it as "Average." Only 10% of respondents said they were "Very good," and no one said they were "Bad" in their English proficiency. The results indicate that a sizeable percentage of the participants had a favorable opinion of their English skill, with the majority believing they are at least "Good" speakers.



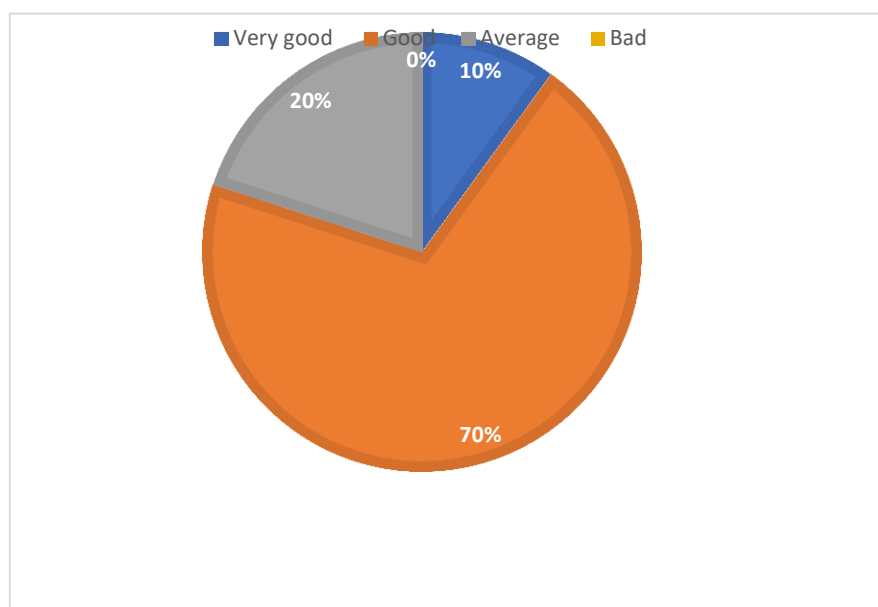


Figure 3.2 Students' Levels in English

Q3: Are you interested in written expression module?

The interpretation of the given data and justifications indicates that a significant percentage, 73%, of the respondents are interested in the written expression module. The justifications provided shed light on the reasons behind their interest. The respondents find the course motivating, as it helps them write correct sentences and offers various exercises and

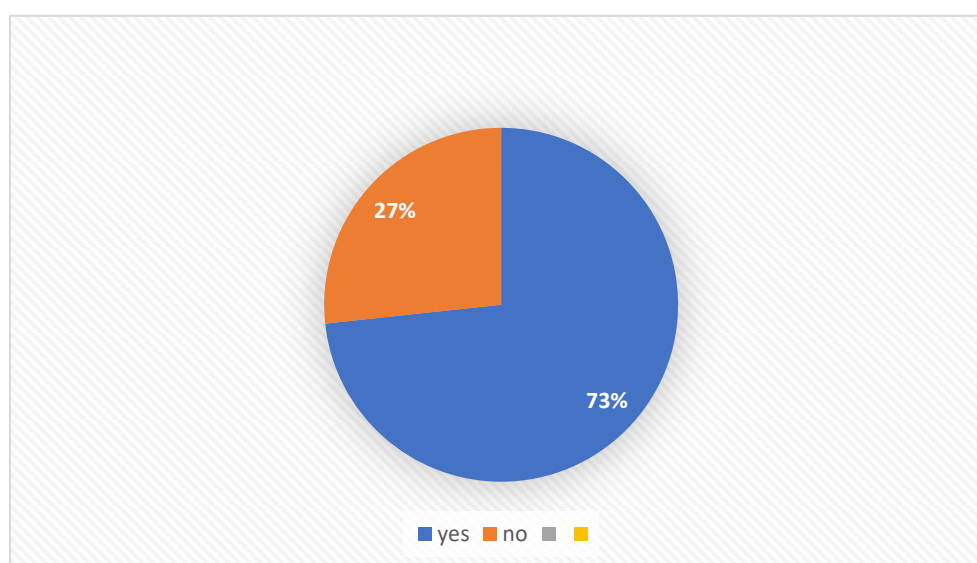


Figure 3.3: Students' Attitudes toward Written as a Module

Q4: Do you think that written expression' session helps you to improve your writing Ability?

The interpretation of the given data and justifications indicates that a significant majority, 79%, of the respondents believe that the written expression sessions help them improve their writing abilities. The justifications provided shed light on the reasons behind their belief. Respondents highlight that the sessions contribute to their writing growth and provide them with additional information, including new words, sentence and paragraph structures, and teaching methods for future reference. They also acknowledge the importance of written expression in enabling them to express their thoughts and ideas effectively. Some respondents specifically mention the benefit of learning how to create outlines and recognize the crucial role of teachers in facilitating understanding during the sessions. On the other hand, a few respondents express a preference for oral skills (speaking) and indicate that they don't understand anything during the written expression sessions. However, the majority of respondents emphasize the importance of written expression for expressing thoughts, practicing and developing writing skills, gaining feedback, understanding punctuation rules, and avoiding mistakes. They appreciate the opportunity to express ideas accurately and comprehensively and recognize the benefits of improved vocabulary, reduced errors, and enhanced academic writing skills. The respondents also mention the study of paragraph types, writing techniques, and the basics of writing as valuable aspects of the sessions. While a small percentage of respondents expressed a contrasting view, the overwhelming majority supports the belief that the written expression sessions positively contribute to their writing abilities and overall language proficiency.

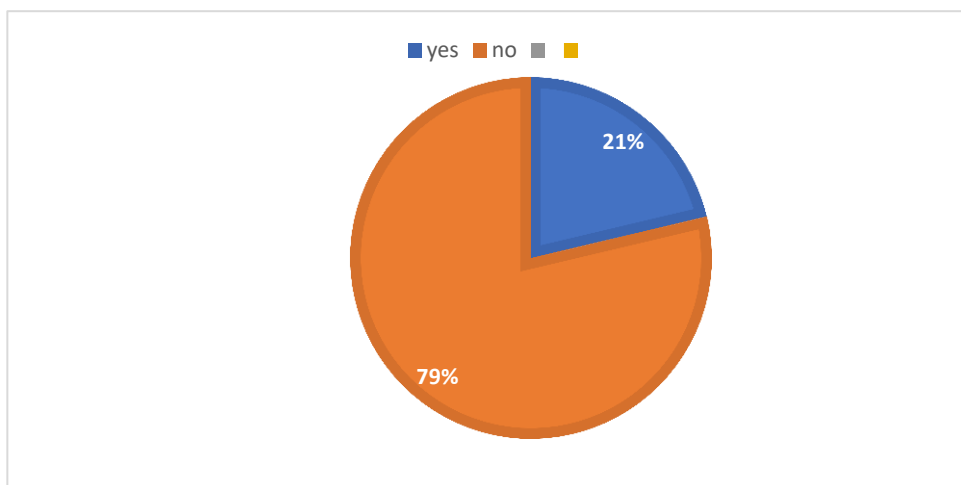


Figure 3.4: Impact of Written Expression Sessions on Writing Ability Improvement

Q5: How do you consider your writing skill?

The analysis of the data reveals that respondents' perceptions of their writing abilities vary. 50% of respondents think their writing abilities are average. This implies that they don't think highly or poorly of their writing skills. A higher level of confidence in one's ability to write successfully is also shown by the fact that 40% of respondents think their writing abilities are good. 6.6% of respondents, a lesser percentage, believe their writing abilities are very strong, indicating a high level of written expression competency. In contrast, 3.3% of respondents feel insecure about their writing abilities, which shows a lack of perceived writing competency.

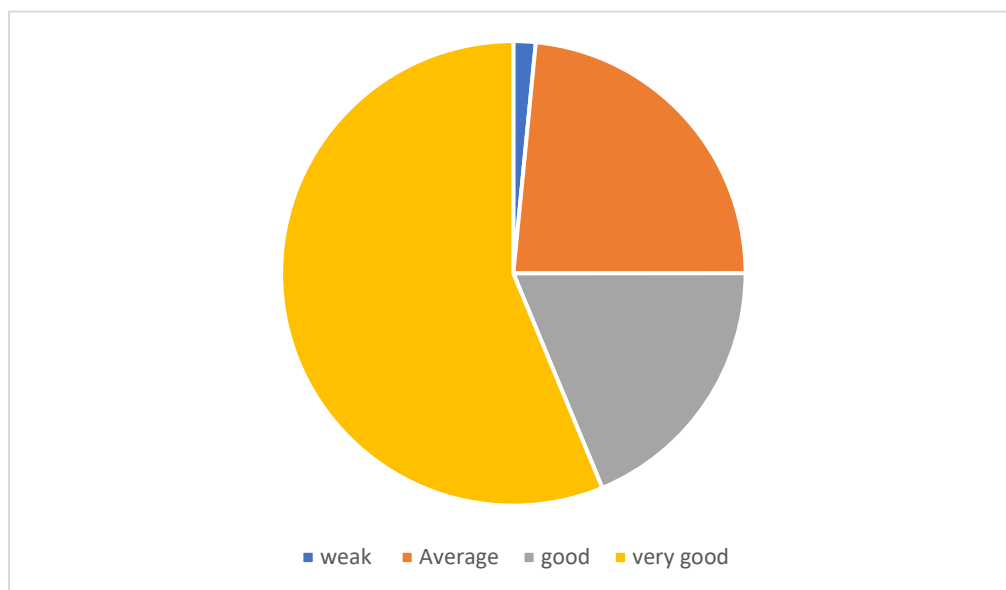


Figure 3.5 : Writing Skill Evaluation

Q6: Which kind of writing do you prefer?

According to the interpretation of the statistics, 80% of respondents enjoy writing stories. This shows a keen interest in imaginative storytelling and creative writing. 13.3% of people say they prefer to write articles, which shows a penchant for factual, informative writing that expresses particular ideas or perspectives. 6.6% of respondents said they preferred to write novels, showing a preference for longer-form storytelling and the creation of intricate stories and characters. In general, the findings suggest that respondents clearly prefer to write stories, demonstrating a drive for creativity and expression through innovative storytelling.

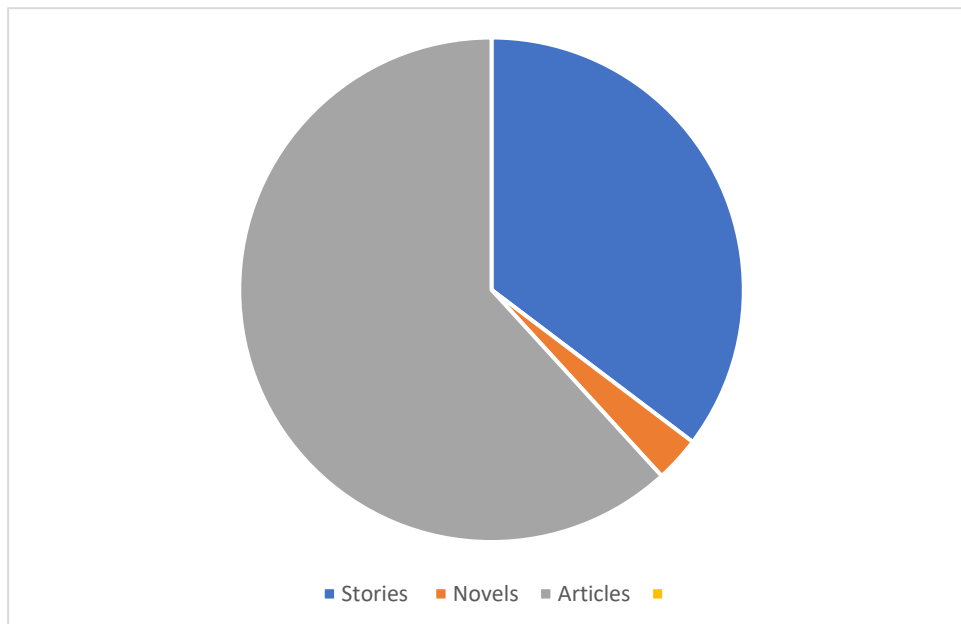


Figure 3.6: Writing Types preferred

Section Two: The First Language Negative Transfer

Q7: Is it important to refer back to your L1 when you write in L2/FL?

When writing in a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL), people often feel the need to return back to their native language (L1) for a variety of reasons, according on the interpretation of the data and arguments provided. According to the findings, 40% of respondents think it's crucial to refer back to their L1, but 60% don't. The justifications offered clarified some of the causes behind these viewpoints. Some respondents acknowledged having trouble with vocabulary and translation, and how turning to their L1 can help them come up with the proper words or decipher what a phrase is saying. Others stressed the value of their native tongue and how it might help with concept expression or overcoming writing obstacles.

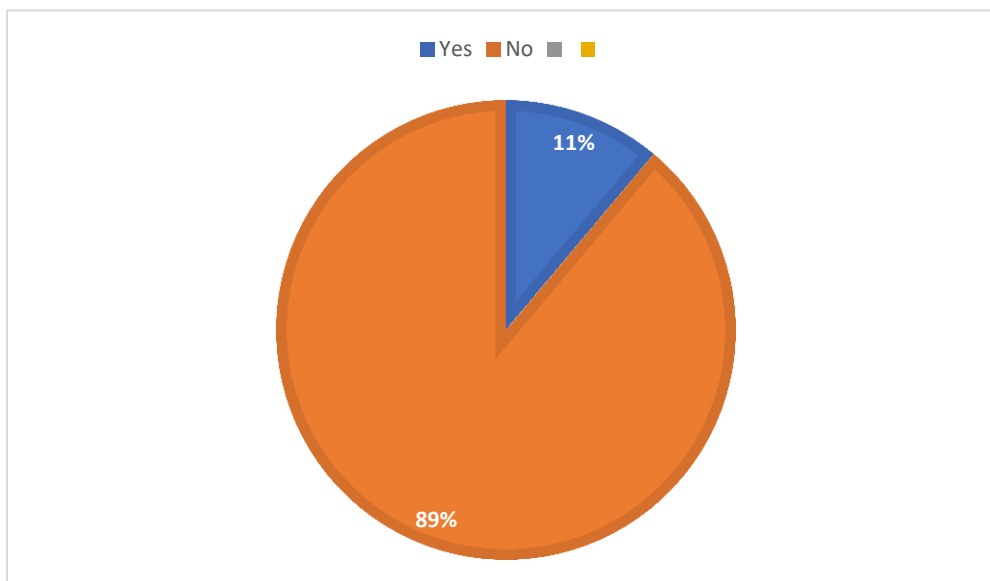


Figure 3.7 : Importance of referring to L1

Q8: How often do you refer back to your L1?

When writing in a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL), people often feel the need to return back to their native language (L1) for a variety of reasons, according on the interpretation of the data and arguments provided. According to the findings, 40% of respondents think it's crucial to refer back to their L1, but 60% don't. The justifications offered clarified some of the causes behind these viewpoints. Some respondents acknowledged having trouble with vocabulary and translation, and how turning to their L1 can help them come up with the proper words or decipher what a phrase is saying. Others stressed the value of their native tongue and how it might help with concept expression or overcoming writing obstacles.

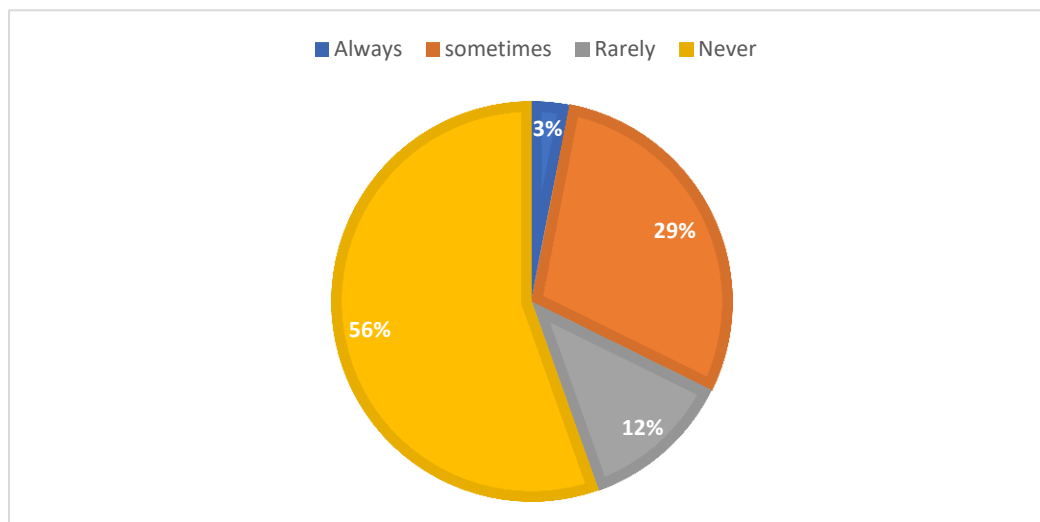


Figure 3.8: Frequency of Referring to L1 in Writing

Q9 : When you use it?

The interpretation of the provided data illustrates the situations in which people write in a second language (L2) or a foreign language (FL) while still using their native language (L1) in those situations. The findings show that 30% of respondents said they use their L1 when gathering data, 56.6% said they do so when thinking, and 13.3% said they do so when organizing their work. This suggests that most respondents use their first language (L1) during the planning stage of writing, which may imply that they find it beneficial to digest ideas and formulate their views in L1 before translating them into L2 or FL. Furthermore, a sizeable percentage of respondents use their L1 to obtain data, which may entail getting information from sources in their L1 and then incorporating it into their L2/FL writing. Additionally, the data indicates that fewer respondents use their L1 during the planning stage, perhaps to arrange their ideas and create an outline before beginning the real composition in L2/FL..

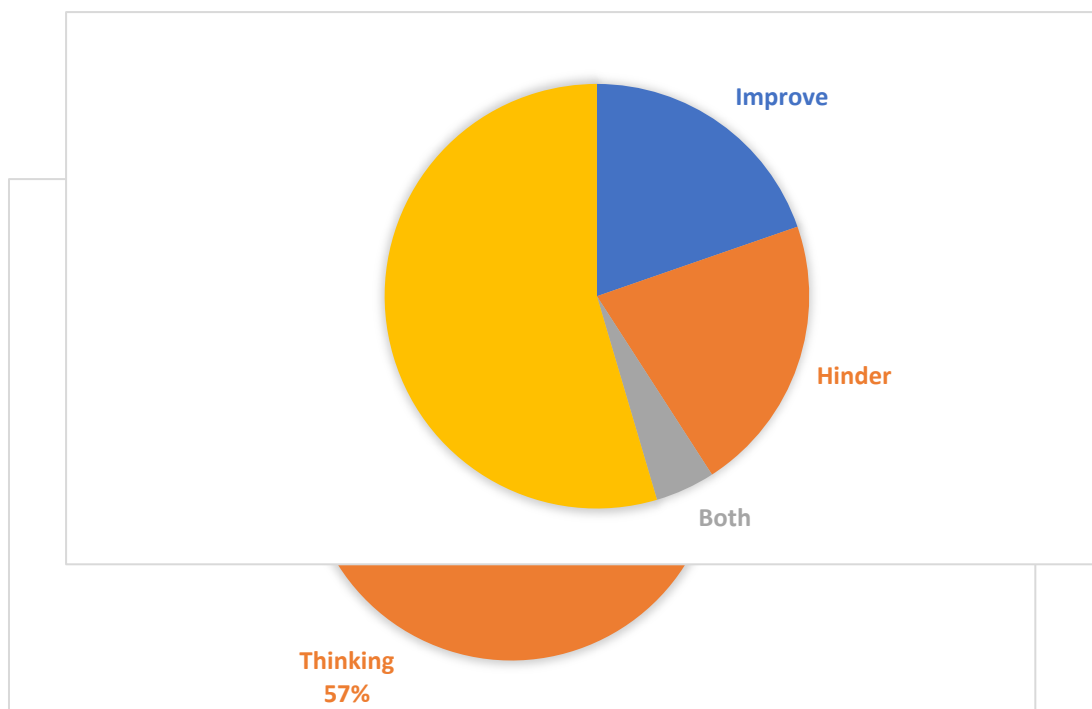


Figure 3.9: Students' Use of L1

Q10: Do you feel that L1 improve/hinder your writing in EFL?

The interpretation of the given data and justifications reveals a mixed perception regarding the impact of one's native language (L1) on writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Among the respondents, 43.3% believe that their L1 improves their writing in EFL, suggesting that referring back to their first language helps them in understanding and expressing themselves effectively. On the other hand, 46.6% of respondents feel that their L1 hinders their writing in EFL. They mention challenges such as differences in sentence structure, the limitations of translation, and the potential loss of meaning during translation as factors that impede their writing progress. Additionally, 10% of respondents express that the impact of L1 on their writing in EFL is a combination of both improvement and hindrance. This suggests that the relationship between L1 and writing ability in EFL is complex and influenced by various factors, such as the individual's language proficiency and the methods used for translation. Overall, the interpretations demonstrate that individuals hold diverse opinions on how L1 affects their writing in EFL, highlighting the complexity of language transfer and adaptation in the writing process.

Figure 3.10: The Impact of L1 on Students' Writing

Q11: Do you face difficulties when you write in EFL?

The interpretation of the given data shows that a majority of respondents, 60%, face difficulties when writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), while 40% do not. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents encounter challenges or obstacles when it comes to expressing themselves in written English. The difficulties may vary and could include issues such as vocabulary limitations, grammar and sentence structure, spelling errors, coherence and organization of ideas, or overall language proficiency. The high percentage of respondents facing difficulties suggests that writing in EFL is perceived as a demanding task that requires additional effort and skill development. On the other hand, the 40% who do not face difficulties may possess a higher level of proficiency, experience, or confidence in their writing abilities in EFL.

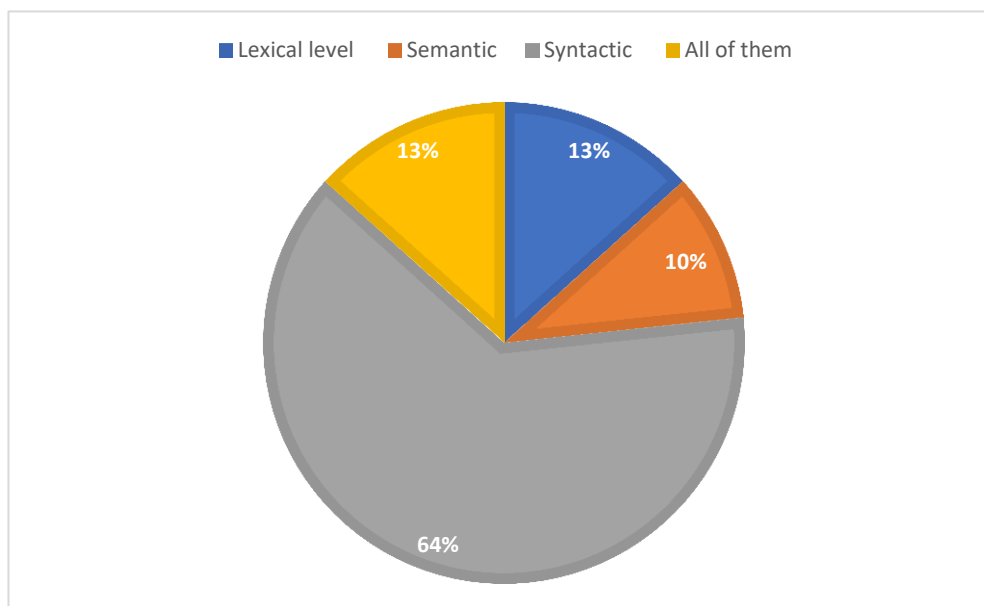


Figure 3.11:
Difficulties of
Writing in
EFL

Q12: In which
level you are
often make
mistakes/erro
rs?

The data
reveals that
when writing

in EFL, the majority of participants, 63.3%, frequently make mistakes at the syntactic level, indicating challenges with grammar. This highlights difficulties in aspects such as sentence structure, verb tenses, and word order. Additionally, 13.3% of respondents reported lexical level errors, suggesting issues with vocabulary selection and usage, while 10% mentioned translation errors at the semantic level. Furthermore, 13.3% of participants faced mistakes across all levels. These findings underscore the significance of addressing grammar proficiency in EFL writing and highlight the need for learners to focus on improving their grammatical knowledge and skill .

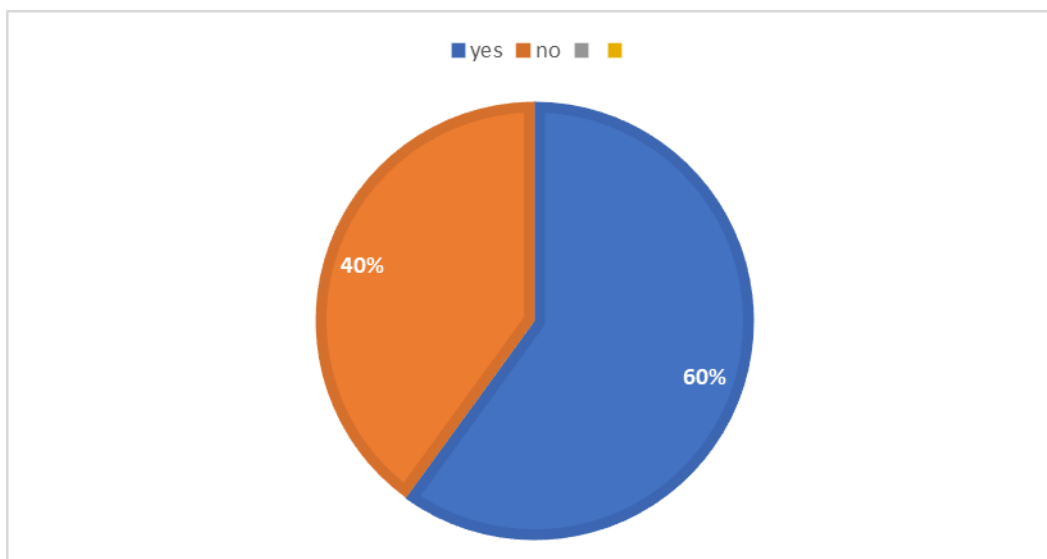


Figure 3.12: levels of mistakes/ errors in writing .

Q13: Do you think that the 1st Language (Arabic) has an impact on the writing proficiency?

The data indicates that a majority of respondents, 60%, believe that the first language (Arabic) has an impact on their writing proficiency in English. This suggests that the influence of the L1 on writing skills is perceived as significant. To reduce L1 interference, several strategies were proposed by the participants. These include immersing oneself in an English-speaking environment, avoiding reliance on translation and attempting to think directly in English, actively practicing and using the English language, mastering oral skills, expanding vocabulary through reading and exposure to different topics, engaging more with English-speaking individuals, refraining from using bilingual dictionaries, and listening to native speakers. These strategies emphasize the importance of consistent practice, language immersion, and adopting a mindset that promotes English as the primary mode of communication in order to minimize the impact of L1 on writing proficiency in EFL.

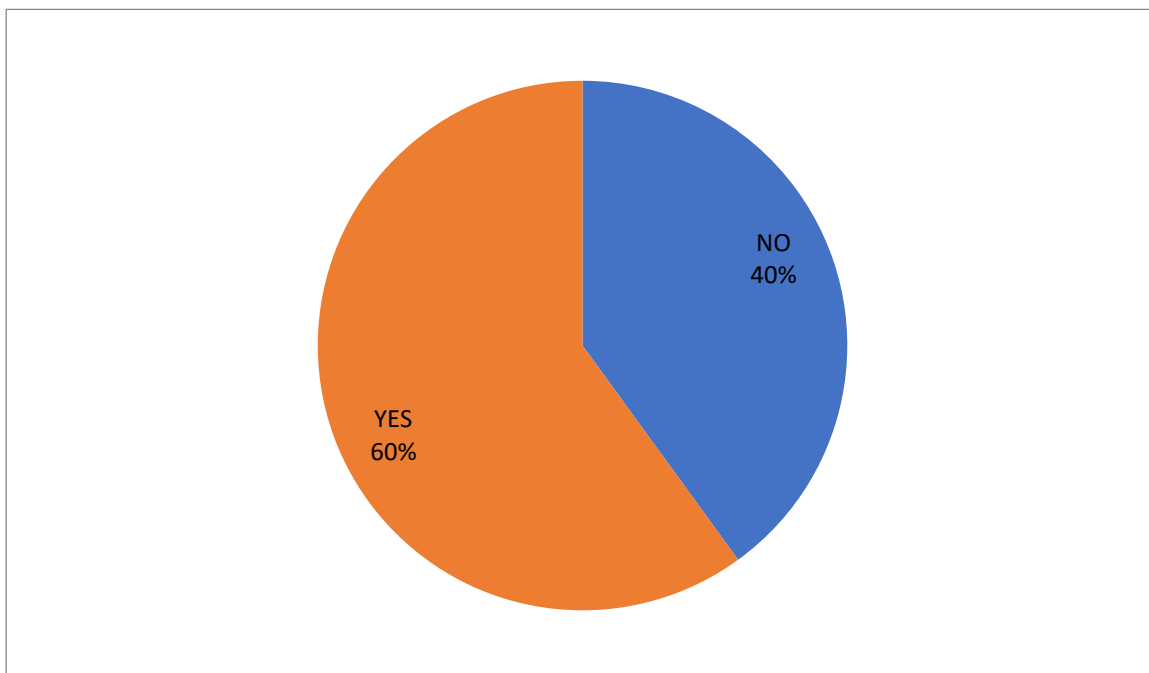


Figure 3.13: Impact of Arabic on Writing Proficiency.

Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One : General Information

Q1: Gender

The data reveals that all of the teacher participants in the study are female, with no male participants. This indicates a gender imbalance within the teacher sample, with a complete representation of female teachers. It's important to note that this distribution might have implications for gender diversity and perspectives within the study findings. The absence of male teachers in the participant group may limit the generalizability of the results and potentially overlook valuable insights or experiences that male teachers could provide. Future research should aim to include a more diverse range of participants to ensure a broader representation and a more comprehensive understanding of the topic under investigation.

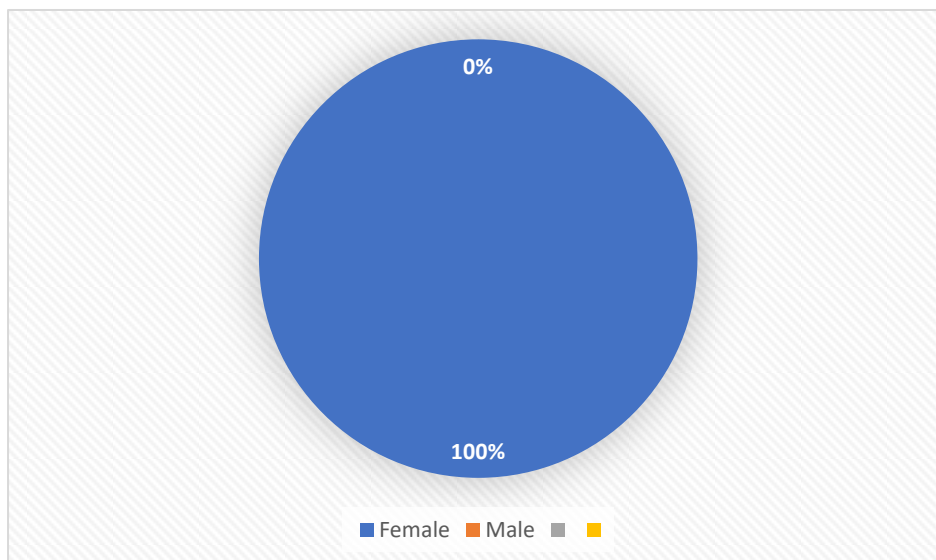


Figure 3.14: Teachers Participants Gender

Q2 : Academic Qualification

The data shows that all of the participants in the study possess a Magister degree, while no participants have a License or Doctorat degree. This indicates that the sample is exclusively composed of individuals with a Magister level of education. It's important to acknowledge that this limited range of educational qualifications may have implications for the generalizability of the findings. The exclusion of individuals with License or Doctorat degrees might overlook valuable perspectives and insights that could be provided by individuals with different educational backgrounds. Future research should aim to include a more diverse range of participants with varying levels of education to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied.

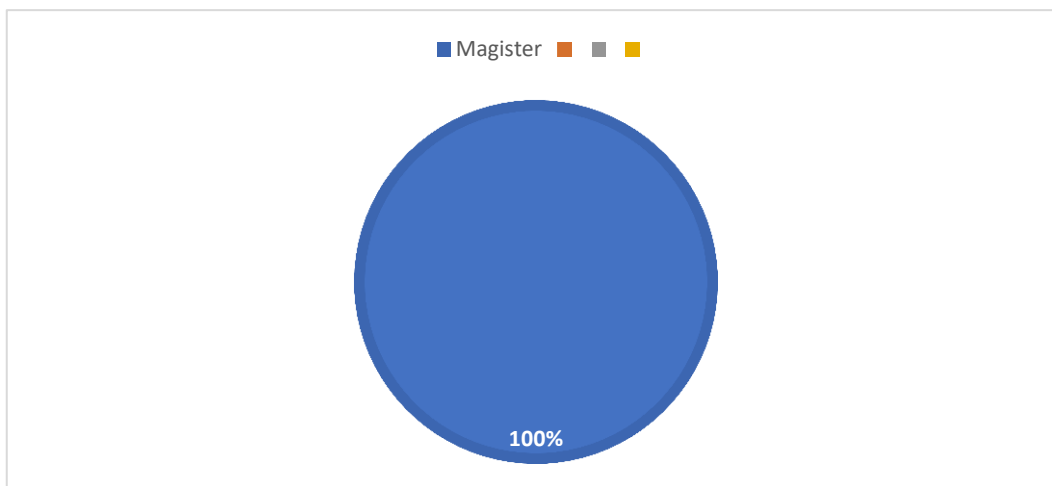


Figure 3.15: Teachers Academic Qualification

Q3: Years of Experience

The data indicates that the participants in the study have varying years of experience. One participant has 9 years of experience, another has 11 years, and one has 3 years. These numbers represent the accumulated years of professional experience in the field under investigation. The range of experience suggests a mix of participants with different levels of expertise and knowledge.

Section Two: Writing Proficiency:

Q4: In your opinion do you think that writing is an easy skill?

The unanimous response of the participants indicates that they do not consider writing to be an easy skill. The participants justify their answer by emphasizing that writing is a complex cognitive skill that requires the mastery of various subskills. They believe that successful writing involves going through a process that entails planning, organizing ideas, structuring sentences and paragraphs, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and effectively conveying the intended message to the reader. The participants recognize that writing requires time, effort, and continuous practice to develop proficiency. Their opinion reflects the understanding that writing is not a simple task but rather a multifaceted process that demands critical thinking, creativity, and attention to detail.

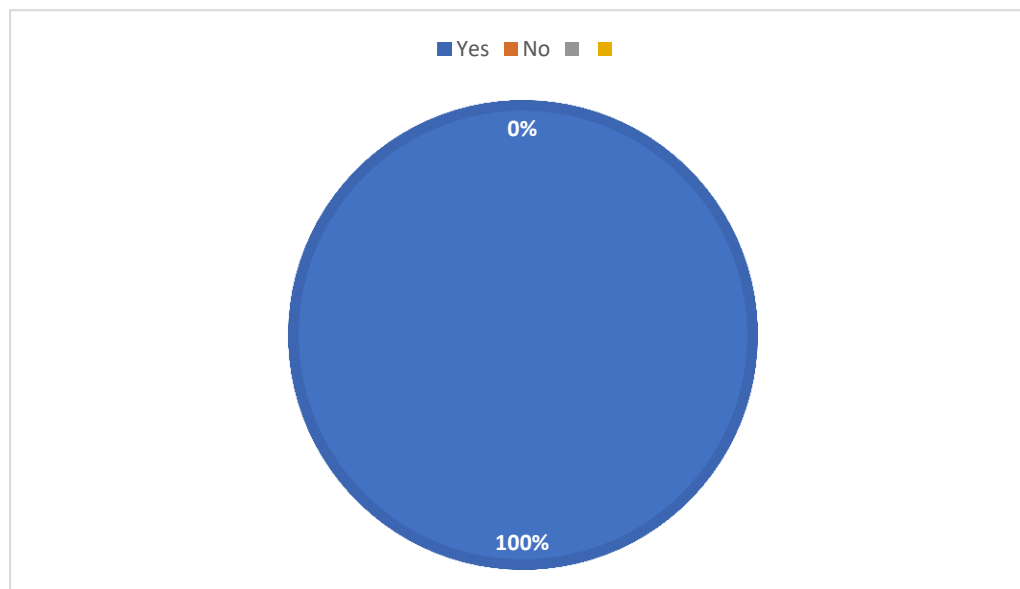


Figure 3.16: Teachers Perceptions of Writing Skill

Q5: When you teach writing module which approach do you follow?

The majority of the participants (80%) indicate that they follow the process approach when teaching the writing module. They justify this choice by explaining that students are beginners in writing, and therefore it is important to provide them with a model to follow. The process approach focuses on guiding students through the various stages of writing, such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. It allows students to develop their writing skills gradually and encourages them to actively engage in the writing process. The participants believe that this approach is effective in helping students improve their writing abilities and become independent writers. Although a smaller percentage of participants (20%) prefer the product approach, which emphasizes the final written product, the majority recognizes the value of the process approach in nurturing students' writing skills and allowing them to produce their own original pieces of writing.

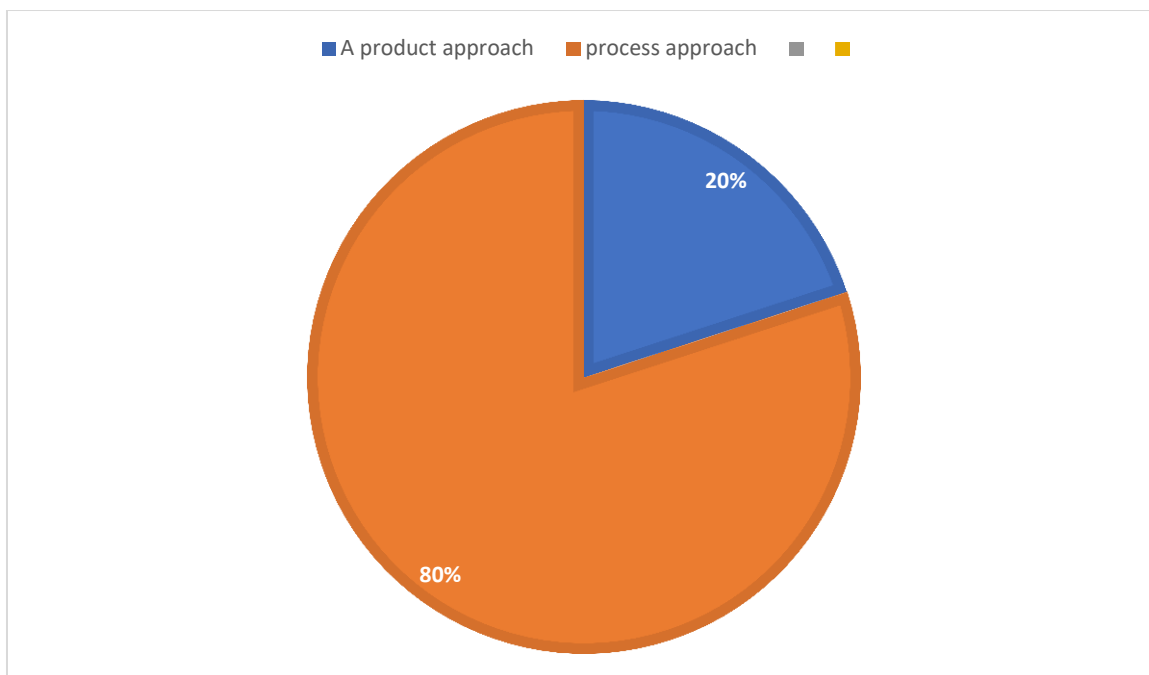


Figure 3.17: Teachers Approaches of Teaching Writing

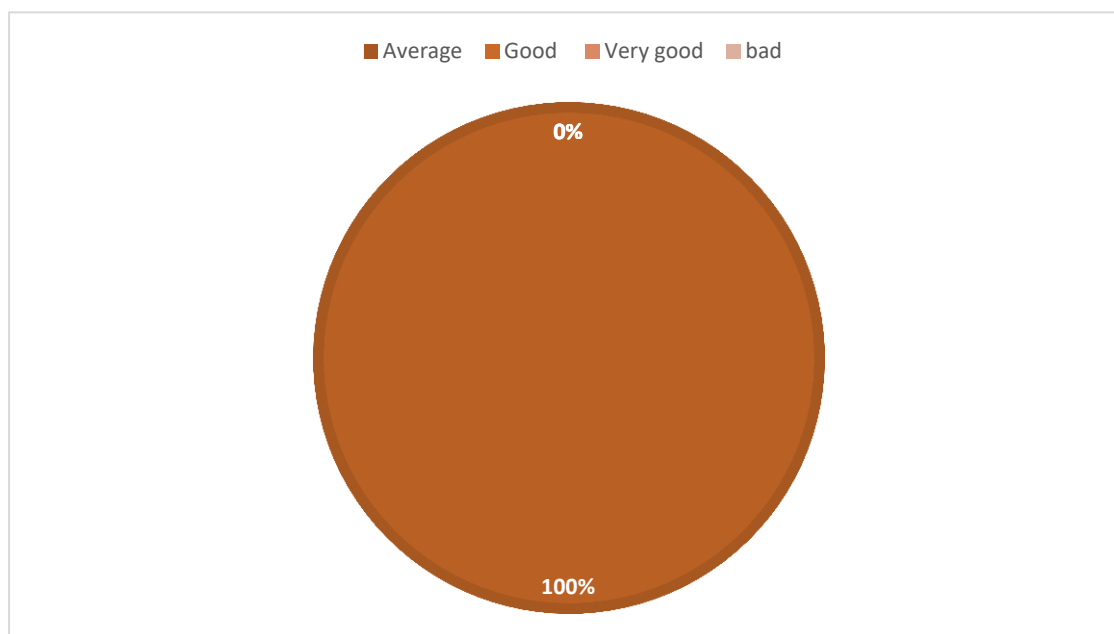
Q6 : How do you considered your students' level in writing?

The interpretation of the results shows that the participants perceive their students' level in writing as average, with 100% of the respondents selecting this option. This suggests that the majority of the participants view their students' writing skills as neither exceptionally good nor bad but falling within the middle range. This could indicate that the students have a basic proficiency in writing but still have room for improvement. The participants' assessment of their students' level as average may influence their teaching strategies and approaches, as they can tailor their instruction to address the specific needs and challenges faced by students at this level.

Figure 3.18: Teachers' Opinions of their Students' Levels in Writing

Q7: what are the reasons of the low of your learners in writing skill?

The interpretation of the results suggests that there are multiple reasons for the low writing skill of the learners. The participants identified two main reasons: "They do not like writing" and "The first language interference." The fact that learners do not enjoy writing may indicate a lack of motivation or engagement in the writing process, which can affect their progress and proficiency in this skill. First language interference refers to the challenges faced by learners



when transferring language patterns, structures, or vocabulary from their native language to the target language, leading to errors or difficulties in their writing. Additionally, the participants acknowledged that there may be other reasons contributing to the low writing skill of the learners, which could include limited vocabulary, poor grammar knowledge, lack of practice, or insufficient guidance and instruction. Understanding these reasons can help educators identify areas for improvement and implement targeted strategies to enhance their learners' writing abilities.

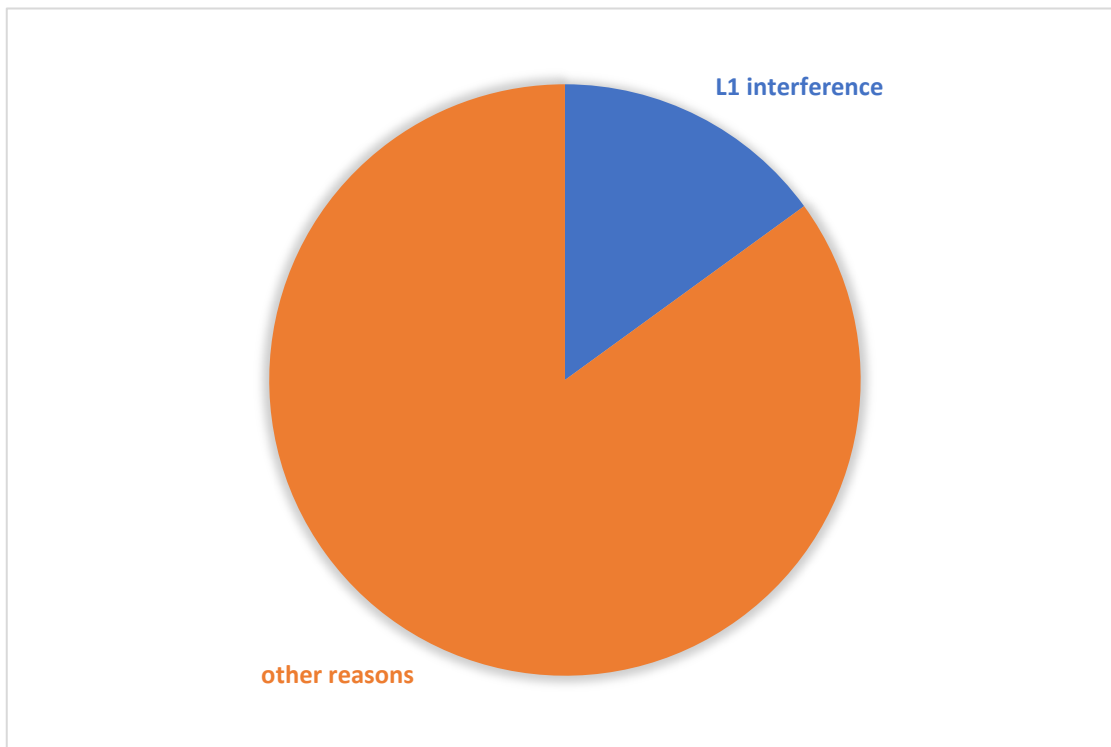


Figure 3.19: Reasons behind Students' Writing Inadequacy

Q8: For teaching the “written expression” module how many hours you think are sufficient?

Among the 3 participants, none of them selected "More than 4 hours" as the sufficient duration for teaching the "written expression" module. One participant (33.3%) chose "3 hours" as the preferred duration, while two participants (66.7%) selected "4 hours." This indicates that the majority of the participants perceive a longer duration of around 3 to 4 hours to be more suitable for teaching the "written expression" module. It suggests that they believe more time is needed to cover the necessary content, engage in writing activities, provide sufficient instruction, and allow for practice and feedback. However, it's important to note that with only 3 participants, the interpretation should be viewed with caution due to the small sample size.

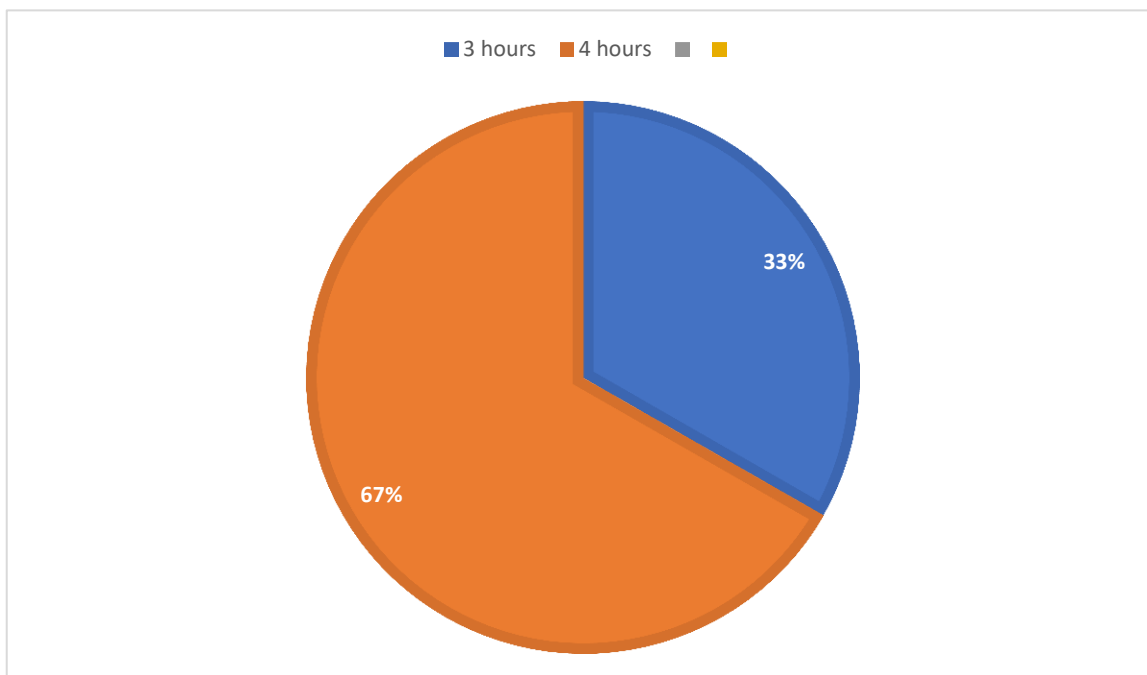


Figure 3.20: Time Allocated to Teaching Writing Expression Module

Section Three: The First Language (Negative Transfer)

Q9 : Did you find that your students use L1 to express ideas?

The justification provided supports the answer of "Yes" (100%) to the question. According to the justification, students tend to think in their first language (L1) and then translate their ideas into English, which indicates that they use L1 to express their ideas. This suggests that students rely on their L1 as a tool for generating and formulating their thoughts before attempting to express them in English.

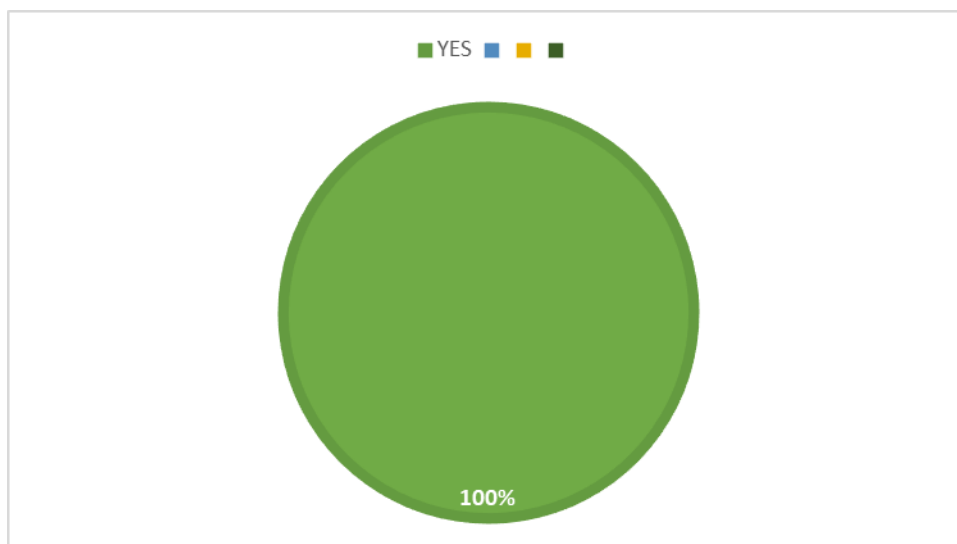
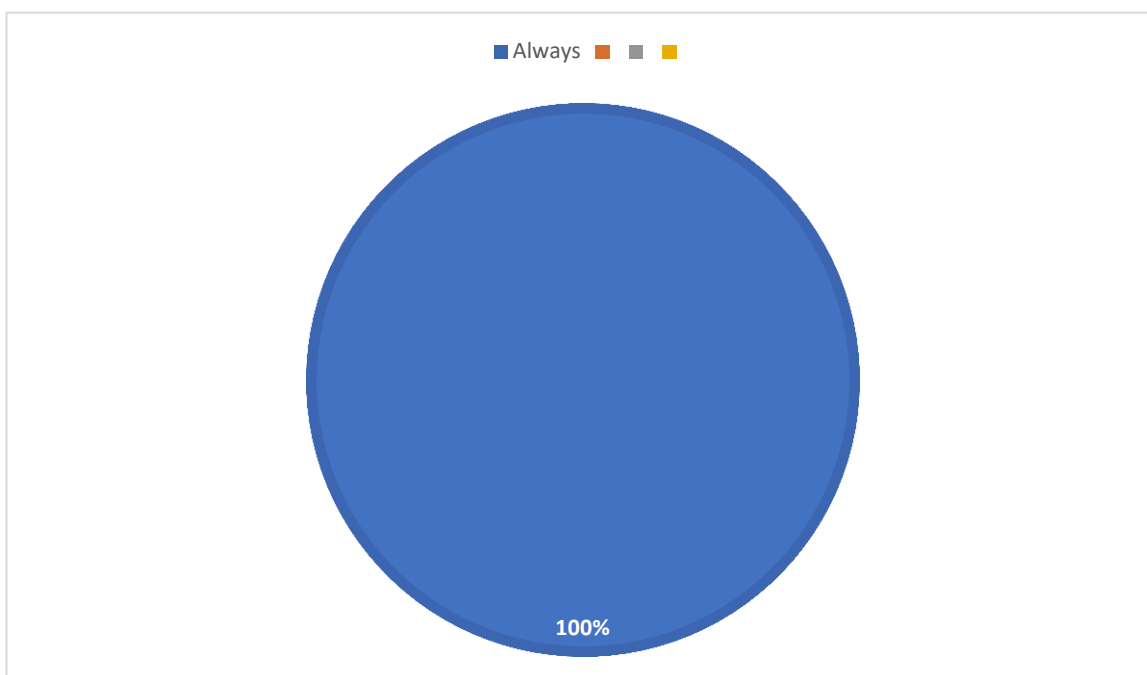


Figure 3.21: Students' Use of L1

Q10: How often do your students refer back to their L1 in writing?

Based on the given percentages, it can be interpreted that the students refer back to their first language (L1) in writing "Always" (100% of the time). This indicates that the students consistently rely on their L1 when writing, suggesting that they frequently use L1 as a reference or resource during the writing process. The absence of percentages for "Sometimes," "Rarely," and "Never" suggests that the students do not report referring back to their L1 in writing in those instances.

Figure 3.22: Frequency of Refereeing to L1 in Writing



Q11: Do you think that L1 negative transfer has an effect on writing proficiency?

The unanimous agreement among the respondents that L1 negative transfer has an effect on writing proficiency (100% choosing "Yes") indicates their awareness of the challenges posed by their native language when writing in the target language. The justification provided highlights the negative impact on the structure, coherence, and vocabulary precision of their writing. This recognition reflects the difficulties they encounter in successfully navigating the differences between their first language (L1) and the target language (L2) in written expression. It underscores the need for targeted strategies and language instruction to mitigate the negative transfer and enhance their writing skills in the target language.

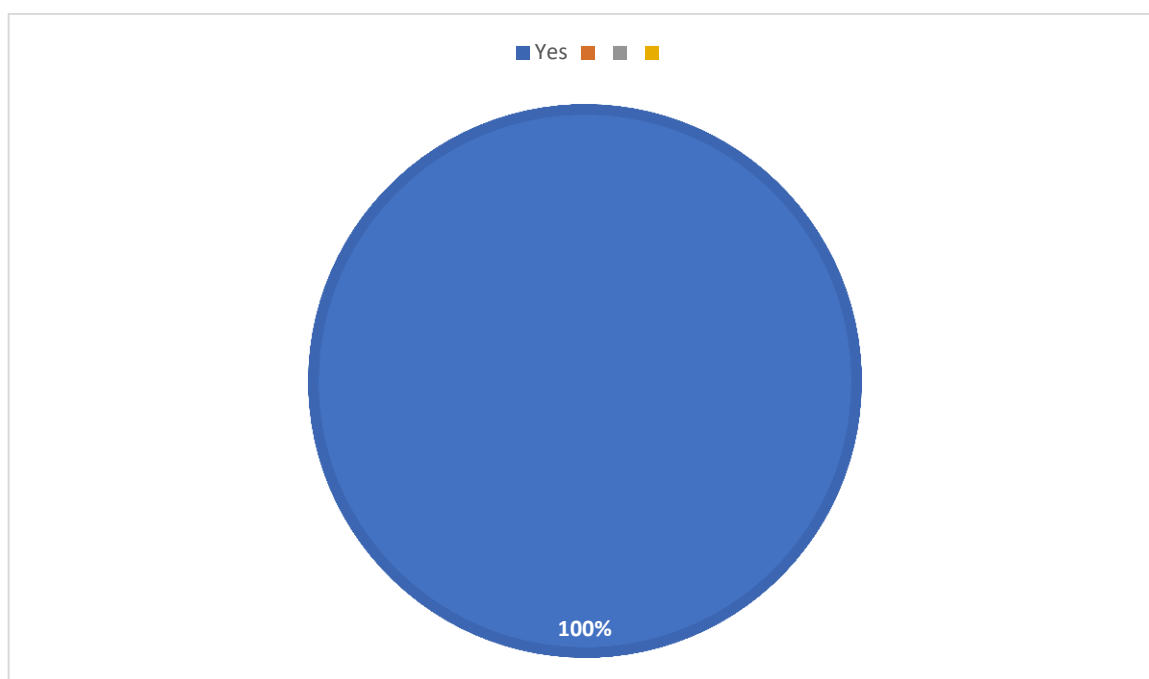


Figure 3.23: Teachers Perceptions of the Effects of the Negative Transfer

Q12: Is the English – Arabic dictionary effective for the EFL learners?

The respondents unanimously agreed that the English-Arabic dictionary is not effective for EFL learners (100% choosing "No"). The absence of any justifications supporting the

effectiveness of the dictionary suggests that the participants perceive it as inadequate or ineffective in their language learning process. This viewpoint could be attributed to several reasons, such as the limitations of direct translation, the inability to capture the nuances and cultural context of words, and the potential for reliance on translation rather than developing independent language skills. The overwhelming consensus against the dictionary's effectiveness highlights the need for alternative resources and strategies to support EFL learners in their language acquisition journey.

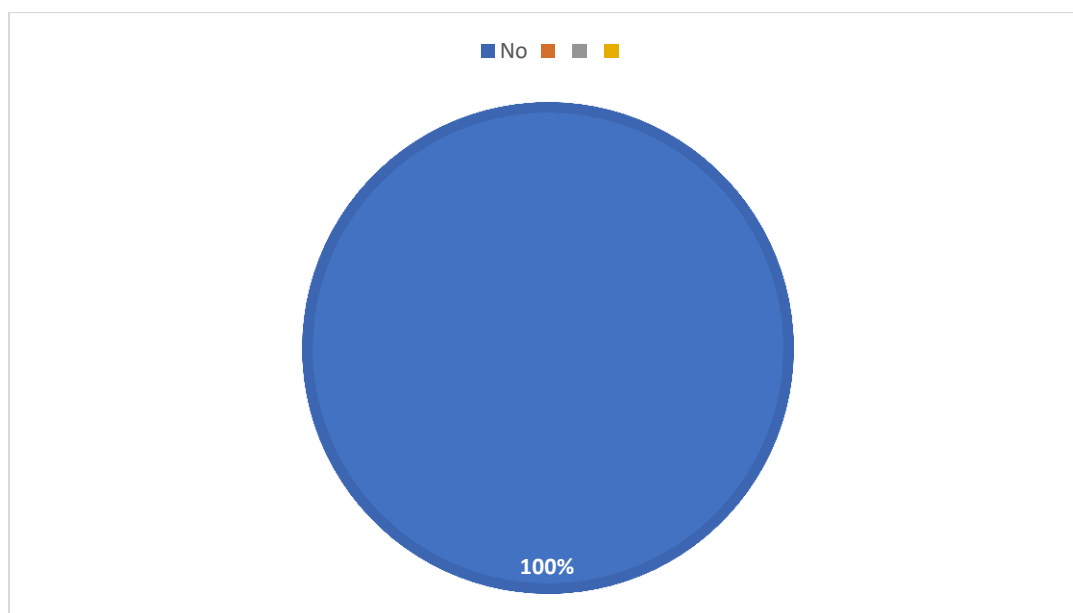


Figure 3.24: Teachers Perceptions of Using English-Arabic Dictionaries

Discussion of the Findings

After carefully examining the data provided by both surveys, the findings showed that L1 "negative transfer" refers to the impact of the first language on the acquisition of the second, which may have an impact on the writing skills of EFL students. According to research, negative transfer may negatively affect a number of writing-related factors. Inaccuracies and mistakes can result from students transferring grammatical constructions, vocabulary choices, and sentence patterns from their native language to the target language.

This may have an impact on the effectiveness, coherence, and clarity of their written EFL expression.

Students frequently make mistakes in grammar, vocabulary use, sentence construction, spelling, and punctuation when writing in the EFL language. These mistakes can be attributable to a number of things, including poor language skills, a lack of thorough grasp of grammatical rules, and problems applying the conventions of the target language. Inconsistencies in verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word choice, improper sentence construction, spelling, and punctuation are examples of specific faults. Depending on the language background and ability level of the learners, the frequency and kinds of errors may change.

It's interesting to note that a variety of measures can be used to minimize the detrimental effects of L1 transfer on the writing skills of EFL students. According to research, overcoming transfer problems necessitates specific education, error analysis, and feedback. Raising students' awareness and assisting them in preventing transfer errors can be accomplished by clearly describing the distinctions between the target language and their native tongue. Additionally, students' proficiency in the EFL language can be improved by targeted vocabulary training, writing practice, and revision activities. Cultural and pragmatic writing errors can be reduced by raising cultural and pragmatic awareness through education and exposure to real-world language resources.

Interestingly, the hypothesis that the L1 negative transfer has a notable impact on the writing skills of EFL students is confirmed. The study found that EFL students frequently use their mother tongue (Arabic) when writing written texts in English, which results in grammatical, vocabulary, sentence-structure, spelling, and punctuation mistakes. EFL students' writing ability increased by reducing the use of L1 negative transfer. These findings underline how important it is to address L1 transfer and to support methods that encourage independent and precise writing in the target language.

Conclusion

This chapter is devoted to test hypothesis. Questionnaire for both students and teachers are suitable for that . The results of our questionnaire show that students make mistakes/ errors when they write and they attend to refer back to their L1 .

General Conclusion

At Taref University, a sample of 30 first-year students was selected from a population of 150 students to participate in a quantitative research project. There were three EFL teachers in the study as well. The study's objectives included determining the effects of L1 "negative transfer" on EFL students' writing skills, identifying the most typical mistakes they make while writing in the target language, and considering appropriate preventative measures. The study's conclusions showed that L1 negative transfer did affect EFL students' writing skills in a discernible way. Grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation mistakes were present among the students. Their native language, which was thought to have influenced these mistakes, caused their written expression to be inaccurate and inconsistent.

The most common errors found in the writing of EFL students were inconsistent verb tenses, subject-verb agreement issues, word choices that were poor, poor sentence structures, poor spelling, and poor punctuation. These findings are consistent with earlier studies on typical writing errors in EFL. The study advocated using specific education, error analysis, and focused feedback as mitigation strategies for negative transfer. These methods can increase students' understanding of the distinctions between their native language and the target language, assisting them in avoiding transfer errors. Furthermore, techniques like vocabulary education, writing practice, revision exercises, and cultural/pragmatic awareness could be useful in enhancing students' writing abilities.

Limitation of the Study

It is essential to recognize some of the study's shortcomings. The findings' generalizability may be constrained by the study's small sample size of 30 students and the participation of only three EFL teachers. Additionally, depending simply on questionnaires as a means of data collection may not adequately reflect the complexity of writing skills exhibited by EFL students as well as the effects of negative transfer. Therefore, for a more thorough understanding, future research should take into account greater sample sizes, different participant groups, and the use of additional research methods including writing assessments and qualitative interviews.

Recommendation For Further Research

For the purpose of improving our knowledge and offering more thorough recommendations, future study in the area of EFL writing abilities might concentrate on a number of different issues. First off, increasing the sample size would boost the generalizability of the results by including a broader and more diversified population of EFL students from various universities or educational settings. Additionally, using qualitative research techniques, such conducting interviews or analyzing written samples, could offer deeper understandings of the unique linguistic characteristics and difficulties experienced by EFL learners. Investigating the efficacy of various instructional interventions or teaching methods designed to lessen L1 negative transfer and enhance writing proficiency may also be beneficial. Studies that follow the development of EFL students over an extended period of time are useful for gaining insight into the long-term effects of L1 transfer on writing skills. Finally, a more thorough understanding of L1 transfer in EFL writing would benefit from examining the significance of individual characteristics, such as language skill levels, language learning practices, and cultural considerations.

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Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students;

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

Thank you

Section one : background information:

- 1) How long have you been studying English?
Primary school years
Middle school..... years
Secondary school..... years
University..... years
- 2) What is your level in English?
Very good
Good
Average
Bad
- 3) Are you interested in written expression module?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, because

- 4) Do you think that written expression' session helps you to improve your writing Ability?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoExplain.....
.....
- 5) How do you considered your writing skill?
 - a. Weak
 - b. Average
 - c. Good
 - d. Very good
- 6) Which kind of writing you prefer?
 - A. Stories
 - B. Novels
 - C. Articles

Section two: the first language negative transfer

2. Is it important to refer back to your L1 when you write in L2/FL?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 If yes why

3. How often you refer back to your L1?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

4. When you use it?
 - a. Collecting data
 - b. Thinking
 - c. Planning

5. Do you feel that L1 improve/hinder your writing in EFL ?

6. Do you face difficulties when you write in EFL ?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. In which level you are often make mistakes/errors?
 - a. Lexical level (vocabulary)
 - b. Semantic level (translation)
 - c. Syntactic level (grammar)
 - d. All of them

8. Do you think that the 1st Language (Arabic) has an impact on the writing proficiency?
 - A .yes
 - B . No
 How can you reduce the L1 interference?

Thank you for cooperation !

Appendix B

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work on “ The effect of L1 negative transfer on EFL learners writing abilities” . We will be grateful to you if you could share with me your considerable ideas , opinions and experience about this subject matter.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate answer or give a full statement when necessary.

Thank you for your academic collaboration and guidance.

Ghemari Houda

Master two

Section One : General Information

1 Gender :

Male (....)

Female (...)

2 Qualification :

License (.....)

Magister (.....)

Doctorate (.....)

3 years of experience (.....)

Section two : Writing proficiency:

4 In your opinion do you think that writing is an easy skill ?

Yes (.....)

No (.....)

Justify your answer, please:

5 when you teach writing module which approach do you follow?

- a the product approach (....)
- B the process approach. (....)
- C the genre approach. (.....)
- d all the three approach. (.....)

Please, justify :

6 How you considered your students level in writing ?

- a Good (.....)
- b very good (....)
- c average (....)
- d bad (.....)

7 what are the reasons of the low of your learner's in writing skill ?

- They do not like writing (....)
- The first language interference. (.....)
- Other reasons (.....)

8 For teaching" written expression" module how many hours you think are sufficient?

- 2 hours (....)
- 3hours (.....)
- 4 hours (....)
- More than 4hours (...)

Section Three : The first language (negative transfer) .

9 Did you find that your students use the L1 to express ideas ?

- Yes (.....)
- No (.....)

Justify your answer, please:

10 How often do your students refer back to their L1 in writing?

Always (.....)

Sometimes (....)

Rarely (....)

Never (.....)

11 do you think that L1 negative transfer has an effect on the writing proficiency ?

Yes (...)

No (....)

In case of yes , justify your answer:

12 Is the English – Arabic dictionary effective for the EFL learners?

Yes (...)

No (...)

In case of yes justify your answer, please :

Thank you for your kind collaboration!