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The Impact of First Language on EFL Students' Writing Skill

The Case of First Year LMD Students of English at
Biskra University

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work :

To the pillars of my life : my dear mam who always remembered me in her prayers and expected the best

out of me,

my sympathetic mother "ZOHRA" and my thoughtful father "LAKHDER" whose love and support

guided me all the way to success.

To all my sisters and brothers: MALIKA, SOUAD, HOURIA, YAZID, ADEL, HOUSSEM, YACINE,

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DOHA.

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support, for his trust and his unconditional love I dedicate this simple work.

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ABSTRACT

The current study was designed to investigate the impact of first year EFL students' native language on their L2 writing skill in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, at the Department of Foreign Languages, Division of English Studies in Biskra University. In fact, we choose writing skill since it is an essential and complex skill not only for non-native speakers but even for native ones. In order to confirm or refute the hypothesis which states that first year EFL learners' writing skill in Biskra University will be enhanced if they do not use L1 interference, to know the linguistic aspects that are transferred negatively, and to discover reasons behind first year EFL poor writing productions, we adopted a descriptive method and we opted to use a quantitative method of research. This study has been carried through a questionnaire that was designed for first year EFL learners and which was administred to a sample of fourty (40) students who were selected rendomly from 885 first year EFL learners. The questionnaire aims to discover students' attitudes towards writing skill and it seeks to know more about the influence of L1 on their writing ability. Besides we try to analyze some written paragraphs to discover errors that are related to L1 negative transfer. Findings revealed that participants faced many difficulties when they wrote in EFL because they refered to their L1 to overcome their deficiencies in L2. Furthermore, results indicated that most EFL students made semantic, grammatical, syntactic, phonological and lexical errors. Such errors resuledt from both L1 interference and lack of L2 profeciency. Finally, findings illustrated that in order to improve their writing skill EFL learners should avoid, or at least, decrease their L1 negative transfer. Moreover, EFL teachers should give more attention to this phenomenon since that studies reveal that the more EFL learners' linguistic competence is high the more their writing ability and performance is well, in other words when they do not use L1 interference and when they do not have enough vocabulary, this helps them to write well and to communicate effectively and vice versa.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ESL : English as a Second Language

CDS : Child-direct Speech

L1 : Native language

L2 : Second Language

LAD : Language Acquisition Device

LASS : Language Acquisition Support System

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

UG : Universal Grammar

ZPD : Zone of Proximal Development

W. E. : Written Expression

n.d : No Date

n.p : No Page

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Many Algerians have the desire to learn English as a foreign language since it is the world's most widely used language. In fact, interference between native language and foreign one has been the subject of many researches. Therefore, many scholars discuss the transfer of L1 in L2 productive skills (writing, speaking) and receptive ones (listening, reading). First year EFL students at Biskra University face many difficulties during their learning process especially when they write. These difficulties are mainly related to native language interference. Furthermore, Skiba (1997) claims that « Interference is the transfer of elements of one language into the learning of another. Elements may include phonological, grammatical, lexical, and orthographic. ». Moreover, Lott, (1983) defined interference as : « Errors in the learner's foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue ». In EFL classes, students rely on their mother tongue while they compose, and since that they are not fluent enough in the target language they struggle. In fact, L1 influence occurs frequently in all skills and at all levels, however in this study we are only interested in writing skill as an essential and significant skill to judge the students learning process in spite that all other skills are important for good and effective communication.

1-1 Statement of the Problem

Language interference occurs in all language skills. Writing is an essential skill in both personal and professional lives, according to Harmer (2005) « Being able to write is a vital skill for 'speakers' of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language » (p.03). Due to many reasons, writing in foreign language is a complex productive skill for learners, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) supports this idea when they state « Probably half of the world's population does not know how to write adequately and effectively. » (p.87). Generally, EFL students face many problems when they write because they refer to their mother tongue and they apply its rules during all writing's stages (planning, drafting, editing, and final draft). Thus, the effects of native language (L1 interference) in noticeable in both SLA / FLA. For EFL students, both L1 interference and lack of mastering the target language may

cause problems, errors and may result poor pieces of writing which worries both teachers and students. In order to prevent or at least reduce these errors, improve EFL students' writing skill and to make teaching operation more effective, teachers as well as students should be aware to the impact of first language on L 2 learners' writing skill.

1-2 Significance of the Study

I see my research as an important issue to be discussed, because it deals with L1 interference in L2 skills specially EFL students' writing skill. Also, it is needed in teaching- learning operation and it allows us to discover how does native language (L1) influence the different aspects and skills of foreign language especially writing skill, and how does these aspects transfer from the mother tongue to the foreign language.

1-3 Aims of the Study

The study aims to :

- To know the nature of L1 influence among EFL learners.
- To discover the writing errors caused by L1 transfer and trying to reduce them.
- To make both EFL teachers and learners aware of L1 transfer and to select the appropriate learning strategies and methods.

1-4 Research Questions

- What does make EFL students' writings poor ?
- Why do EFL learners make negative transfer ?
- What are the linguistic aspects that are transferred negatively ?

1-5 Hypothesis

First year EFL learners' writing skill in Biskra University will be enhanced if they do not use L1 interference.

1-6 Research Methodology

In this study, we are looking for a connection between two variables ; L1 interference and EFL students writing skill. The method that I will be adopted is a descriptive method, furthermore our current study aims to investigate the impact of first language on first year EFL learners writing skill, so we will opt to use a quantitative method research. In other words, nature of my topic –errors analysis-should be identified, quantified and analyzed, hence a quantitative method imposed itself. De facto, because a quantitative method is use when we need to investigate a very special element in language learning and obtain specific data for specific analysis. In fact, a quantitative method research will be the suitable one for this study since that it is based on concepts of descriptive statistics method which refers to the type of research questions, designs and data analysis that will be used in that study. Moreover, in order to describe how first language can influence EFL learners' writing skill and to present some most important elements that are related positively or negatively to this influence, a questionnaire will be designed for first year EFL learners, then we will analyze some of their written paragraphs.

1-6-1 Population

The population of this research will be limited to first year LMD EFL learners. Thus, the population of students for this study is 15 groups that are divided into three sections, which form the equivalent of 885 students in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, at the Department of Foreign Languages Division of English Studies in Biskra University.

1-6-2 Sampling

Time limitation and the huge number of first year EFL students make the work very hard because we can not deal with all population in a few months. For that reason, the study will be concerned with a limited number of participants and we randomly select only one group as a sample (group 4, from section one) that consists of 40 learners out of the whole number of first year LMD students in English Department at the University of Biskra. Our participants are Algerians, most of them nearly have : the

same age, the same social background 'they are from the Algerian South', they have gone through the same steps in learning English 'learning English in the secondary school then in the high school' but in fact they do not have the same linguistic background 'each learner has his/ her own level'.

1-6-3 Data Gathering Tools

In this study, we will only use one tool which is a questionnaire, it is administered for the first year students besides that, we will analyze some paragraphs of first year EFL learners to discover errors that are related to L1 interference. The questionnaire that will be designed for first year EFL learners aims to know their attitude towards writing skill in general as well as the impact of their L1 on their L2 writings. Moreover, in order to know more about the influence of L1 on EFL students writing skill an errors analysis of first year EFL students' written paragraphs will help us to know the nature of students' errors.

1-7 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study may has some limitation, it will be limited in time ; two or three months are not enough to follow and to analyze all the written pieces of all the first year EFL learners. In fact, we have to take in consideration that this work will only deal with EFL learners not teachers. Furthermore, we will only analyze some pieces of writing (only one group) at Biskra university ; because it is difficult to treat all EFL learners written paragraphs due to their huge number. Results may be changed from one university to another due to the differences in courses, modules and students' levels.

1-8 Structure of the Study

This research follows the APA methodology for that reason it will be divided into five main chapters, the first chapter will be a research proposal ; in which we will introduce the topic, state the problem, and clarify the aims of the study. The second chapter will be a related literature ; it will be divided into two main parts, the first will be about first and second language acquisition (definitions and theories), while the second part will be concerned with writing skill as a productive skill in SLA/ FLA. Whereas, the third chapter will be devoted to the methodology that it will be used to conduct the work. The fourth chapter

will be my fieldwork in which I will try to analyze the findings that I will be obtained from the questionnaire that is designed for first year students as well as from the analysis of some of their written paragraphs, in fact the analyses will be aimed to clarify errors that are related to L1 interference. The fifth chapter, which is the last and the concluded one ; it will be concerned with the discussions and recommendations that we may offer to both teachers and learners to reduce L1 interference and to improve EFL learners' writing skill.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with general issues about our research problem (L1 transfer among EFL students'). It discusses the history of this phenomenon, its background and the importance of its research area. Moreover, it sheds light on the impact of native language on non-natives writing ability, and it provides us with the main aims and significance of this study. Chapter one also presents the research questions, hypothesis and the research methodology that is suitable for this type of question. Furthermore, it clarifies the main boundaries and limitation of this work.

CHAPTER TWO : RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

« Human language appears to be a unique phenomenon, without significant analogue in the animal world » Chomsky (n.d.). Hence, God distinguishes us as human beings with language, and as active members both adults and children communicate effectively via language(s). O'Neill (1998) believes that children acquire their mother language which can be one, two, or three languages naturally and unconsciously to fulfill their biological needs, whereas adults are able to communicate with more than one language ; besides their native language they use a second one (it may also be two, three, or four languages), and in contrast to children adults learn L 2 consciously and for several reasons for that learning a second language needs a formal setting. This second chapter will provide an extensive review of literature and research related to first language, L 1 acquisition and learning, second language, L 2 acquisition and learning, different learning theories, language transfer and interference, as well as writing skill as a crucial and complex productive skill for EFL students.

2-1 First Language

Many scholars define the terms native language, primary language, L 1, first language and mother tongue and consider them as synonym terminologies. For example, Gass and Selinker (2008) claim that : « Native language refers to the first language that a child learns. It is also known as the primary language, the mother tongue or the L 1 (first language) » (p.07).

Meanwhile, Sinha, et al (2009) believe that several terms are used to name the first language that any individual learns or acquires during his infancy this idea means that we can use different terminologies to refer to the native language. Moreover, the same idea has been stated in the online Free Dictionary by Farlex (" Native Language ", n.d.) that states *« one's native language ; the language learned by children and passed from one generation to the next. »*

Moreover, the term mother tongue is often used, according to Nordquist (n.d.) –a grammar and composition expert- who states that *:* «Mother tongue is a traditional term for a person's native language that is, a language learned from birth. Also, it is called a first language, dominant language, and native language (although these terms are not necessarily synonymous) ». In this definition the phrase 'mother tongue' refers to the language one has started acquiring from birth, but in contrast to the previous definitions this one consider that these terms : mother tongue, native language, first language and dominant languages are not necessarily synonyms.

Another definition was stated by Baloch (2013) who defines mother tongue as *:* « the first language a child which he / she has learned as the native or primary language » (p. 227). This means that, the term is used to refer to the first language of a person, and since that children are exposed to language directly after birth and they start acquiring it, then with the passage of time they become able to communicate with this language.

Furthermore, Long man online Dictionary of Contemporary English (" Native Language ", n.d.) defines native language as : ' the language you spoke when you first learned to speak'. Also, online Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language dictionary defines native language as « Native language is a general term often used synonymously with mother tongue (" Native Language ", n.d.). Thus, the two previous definitions share and refer to the same idea (the language first learned by an individual).

 However, online Collins English Dictionary (" Native Language ",n.d.) defines native language as « The language of the country that someone is born in or native to ». Hence, the three terms 'first language, native language and mother tongue' refer to the same idea and they are used interchangeably (Wenying, 2009). In short, linguists and scholars consider that the previous terminologies (first language, mother tongue, and native language) as synonyms.

2- 2 First Language Acquisition

Cruz-Ferreira (2011) states that : « 'First language acquisition' commonly means the acquisition of single language in childhood, regadless of the number of languages in a child's natural environment» (n. p). In other words, the term first language acquisition refers to the natural acquisition of single language that children hear from birth. Furthermore, Troike (2006)   points out that children acquire at least one language without making many efforts and often without being aware or conscious of that.

Moreover, Gass and Selinker (2008) emphasize that the process of first language acquisition has six universally accepted facts that are :

- Children go through the same developmental stages, although not necessarily at the same rate.
- Children create systematicity in their language and develop rules to govern their language knowledge and language use.
- The rules that are developed do not necessarily correspond to the rules of the adult language.
- There is over generalization of grammatical morphemes.
- There are processing constraints that govern acquisition and use.
- Language acquisition is not determined by intelligence (p.37).

Furthermore, Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, and Harish, (as cited in Salim and Mehawesh, 2014) indicate that different linguistic studies shows that to acquire and master first language children should pass through a series of stages, these stages seem to be the same for all children. Besides, Gass and Selinker (2008) support the previous idea and they divide the stages of first language acquisition into the following: pre-speech stage, onset of babbling, first words, onset of the two-words stage and telegraphic speech, and they explains them as :

1. Pre- speech stage - from birth to about 6 months : infants pay attention to different sounds before they begin to speak, at this stage babies respond to speech as well as any sounds, they pay attention to sounds, intonation and the rhythm of speech. Thus, babies learn to recognize the distinctive sounds and phonemes that they hear from birth before being able to produce them.

2. Onset of babbling (first manifestation of phonology) - at around 6-8 months : this stage starts at different months of age, it is noticeable that many native speech sounds may be absent because at this period a small set of sounds is used mainly few consonant clusters, also bubbling commonly consists of consonant-vowel sequence like the production of (bababa) and other sequences.

3. First words (holophrastic) stage – at around 10 - 12 months : at this stage mainly as early as nine months infant may utter his first word, usually mama and dada.

4. Onset of the two-words stage (first manifestation of syntax / combining words)- at around 20- 24 months : by the age of two and a half years most children start to speak an to produce sentences of several words, that far from complete grammar.

5. Telegraphic speech – till about 36 – 40 months : at this stage child's analytical skills progress and his sentences of several words with developed grammar that approximates adult's one.

Moreover, Bowen (1998) – a speech language pathologist- points out that at the level of the first stage the child will be able to produce sounds randomly ; that sounds are used to express pleasure or pain while others have no function at all, at the second stage the infant can at least utter mainly bilabial sounds as 'p', 'b', 'w', and 'm'. Accordingly, at the third stage phonemes or singular words have appeared, specially by imitating parents, then at the fourth stage words becoming clearer and the infant will be able to produce more complex phrases and multiple words. Finally, and during the fifth stage the child's analytical skills progress and he will be able to form complete sentences (Bowen, 1998).

2-3 - Second and Foreign Language

2-3- 1 Definition of Second Language

The two terms second language and L2 refer to the language that is acquired after the first language(s). Gass and Selinker (2008) define it as : « The phrase second language, L2 can refer to any language learned after learning the L1, regardless of whether it is the second, third, fourth, or fifth language » (p. 07). Likewise, Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines second language as « a language that is learned in addition to the language a person first learned as a young child » (" Second Language," n.d.). Consequently, second language is a non- native language that is used by the person in his local to reach important purposes such as : learning, communicating or traveling.

Additionally, Troike (2006) gives another definition to the term second language : « A second language is typically an official or societal dominant language needed for education, employment and other basic purposes. It is often acquired by minority group members or immigrants who speak another language natively » (p.04). Also, she points out that a second language (L2) is an additional language that is commonly called a target language (TL) and it refers to any language that its aim or goal is learning, and in this case second language may have an official status.

2-3- 2 Definition of Foreign Language

According to Richard and Schmidt (2002) foreign languages are taught in classrooms as school subjects in order to achieve a successful communication with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language. However, Troike (2006) supports this idea when she claims that : « a foreign language is one not widely used in the learners' immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other cross-cultural communication situations, or studied as a curricular requirement or elective in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application » (p. 04). This definition means that the foreign language learner does not use this language in his social context but he studies it as school subjects to fulfill different aims of communication when he travels or when he meets foreigners.

In the same way, Moeller and Catalano (2015) define the term foreign language when they claim that : « A language is considered foreign if it is learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society where the teaching occurs » (p. 327). To put it more simply, a foreign language is not spoken in the learner's native country but it is typically learned in schools to realize several assigned purposes like : communicating with foreigners, working or immigrating. For example, in Algeria English is learned as a foreign language and it is not used in the learners' social context but it might be used for studies, future travel, or other cross-cultural communication situations.

2-3- 3 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

According to Troike (2006) :« Second language acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individual and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language » (p.02). In other words, the phrase 'second language acquisition' means the learning of a second language after the existence of a first one that is already established.

Moreover, Gass and Selinker (2008) point out that *: « SLA refers to the process of learning another language after the native language has been learned » (pp. 06- 07) In this sense, the process of learning a second language comes after a person's previous existing knowledge of his native language ; that is already established during his childhood. However, this term is sometimes refers to the learning of a third or fourth language, also it may refer to the process of learning non- native language in the environment of one's native language.

Referring to Hong (2008) the process of second language acquisition has been developed through five main stages which are : 1-preproduction stage, 2-early production stage, 3-speech emergence stage, 4-the intermediate language proficiency stage and 5-the advanced language proficiency stage. This means that the second language learner has to pass through five stages to be fluent speaker of the second language. Furthermore, Hong (2008) explains the second language acquisition stages as :

1. The receptive or pre-productive stage that is the first stage in the process, in this phase that may last from ten hours to six months learners may reach 500 receptive words and they may understand but they may not use them comfortably because they have minimal comprehension and as a result this stage may involves a silent period.

2. The next stage is the early production stage that may last six months (after the first one); at this level the learner will be able to understand some simple concepts, also he will produce simple one or two phrases since that he reaches close to 1000 receptive/active words.

3. During the third stage 'speech emergence' that may take up another year the learner comprehension will be greatly enhanced comparing it with his production, because at this level he may reach 3000 words and he may communicate basic ideas via dialogues, simple questions as well as simple phrases, yet teachers may notice some grammatical errors.

4. In the fourth stage 'intermediate proficiency stage' that can be last up to another year (after the third one) the learner may develop approximately 6000 words thus he will be able to produce complete thoughts, sentences and he often asks for clarifications.

5. The final stage that can take from five to seven years is the advanced language proficiency stage, at this level the learner can speak using correct grammar and vocabulary, also he will be able to communicate fluently with native speakers since that his comprehension becomes excellent (Hong, 2008).

2-4 Theories of Language Acquisition and Learning

As humans we are not born talking but we learn how to recognize, receive and produce language during our first years of life, and to answer the question of 'how do children acquire language ?', several theories have arisen and researchers look to first language acquisition phenomenon from three different approaches : behavioral, nativist and functional, thus some scholars claim that language is an innate ability while others assume that language acquisition is a learned behavior (Aljoundi, 2014). In the other hand, and to answer questions such as what does adult acquire ? and how does he/ she acquire it ?

scholars deal with the study of SLA from three different perspectives : linguistic, psychological and social (Troike, 2006).

2-4- 1 Behaviorist Theory (Imitation)

According to Shaffer et al. (2002) ' The Learning Perspective', behaviorist studies both in psychology and linguistics originate in the beginning of the 20th century. Historically, this theory is traced back to J.B. Watson's work « habit formation hypothesis 1924 », then B.F.Skinner(1957) tries to explain language acquisition scientifically and he accounts for language development by means of environmental influence. Skniner argues that adults shape the speech of children by reinforcing the babbling of infants that sound most like words (cited in "Theories of Language Development", n.d).

Furthermore, Ambridge and Lieven (2011) claim that Skinner relates children's language learning to behaviorist reinforcement principles because for him they associate words with meaning. In addition to that, Rivers (cited in Mehrpour and Forutan, 2015) argues that behaviorist theory of stimulus- response learning- is developed in the operant conditioning model of Skinner, with taking in consideration that all learning forms are the outcomes of habits as well as of reinforcement or reward.

According to Demirezen (1988) Skinner explained his theory as that : children come as blank slate then they learn to speak by imitation and reinforcement, hence children imitate the different sounds and utterances they hear around them and even they copy what they see, at this stage adults and especially parents try to strength children's responses by corrections and reinforcements mainly positive reinforcement. Thus, our children learn from imitation, reinforcement as well as punishment. Moreover, this means that according to this view, children acquire language in an organized process through imitating what they hear particularly several sounds and utterances (referring to stimulus- responses hypothesis), then parents correct their errors and provide them with correct structures (positive reinforcement), finally children repeat and practice the correct structures and thus language acquisition is a habit formation.

However, Chomsky's intelligent review of Skinner's verbal behavior idea and his criticism to behaviorism theory since that he argues that it contains many objections, such as children's mistakes that refer to their intelligence specially when they over-applying a rule instead of copying what they hear as when they deal with irregular verbs and add « ed », besides observations which confirm that the majority of children pass trough the same sequence of steps and stages of language acquisition, but in certain cases the sequence seems to be unaffected by where the child grows up or his environmental factors and by what he /she receives (Kimazarslan, 2002).

2-4-2 Nativism Theory (Innateness)

In the late 50ies of the 20th century nativistic approach originated as a direct antipode to behaviorism, it argues that behaviorism perspective can not provide sufficient explanation for language acquisition Chomsky who is perhaps the best known nativism theoretician ; suggests that humans are biologically designed to gain knowledge, moreover he asserts that language ability is innate in humans, furthermore he states that babies have an inborn device that help them to acquire language ; mainly they have an innate knowledge about the different patterns of language, and he names this set of rule 'Universal Grammar' ("A Summary of First Language Acquisition Theory ",2012). In other words, children are biologically programmed for understanding the rules of whatever   language they are listening. Additionally, Linden (2007) supports the previous idea when he points out that the child's brain is able to interpret what she / he hears according to the underlying principles or structures already contains. This is to mean that children have the ability to identify different patterns of a language due to an existing knowledge of patterns of that language.

Furthermore, Chomsky believes that children's ability to learn language is due to a genetically programmed organ that is located in the brain, and he names this programmed organ as 'language acquisition device' or (LAD), also he suggests that LAD contains knowledge of grammatical rules common to all languages (Shaffer, et. al, 2002' The Learning Perspective'). In other words, this device contains all the principles that are universal to all human languages or what he calls

« Universal Grammar ».   Moreover, several studies tried to explain the relationship between the process of language acquisition and the effects of age for instance, Lenneberg (as it is cited in Johnson & Newport, 1989, p.61) states that language acquisition must occur before the onset of puberty. This means that age affects language acquisition in one way or in another. Hence, there is a sensitive and critical period or a cut-off point for both L1 and L2 acquisition. In contrast, Lightbown and Spada (2006) claim that finding an evidence to confirm or reject existence of the critical period hypothesis is not a simple thing since that from birth almost children expose to language.

Scholars criticize Chomsky's theory because his works were more theoretical and he did not study real children, he simply describes the phenomenon of language acquisition and he did not address the issue of environment besides that, he gave complex explanations to grammatical rules and he did not care to different interactions occur between a child and his/ her parents (Kimazarslan, 2002).

2- 4-3 Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory proposed by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896- 1980), and it focuses on investigating the links between human cognitive development and different linguistic skills, according to Piaget these links appear from the earliest period of language learning mainly up to 18 months, at this age a child has a cognitive ability and a certain amount of intelligence that makes him able to construct a mental picture of world of object that have independent existence and he called it 'sensory motor intelligence', and during the later part of this period the child develops a sense of object permanence and he will begin to search for the objects that he has seen hidden (Clark, 2009). Moreover, Clark (2009) argues that the cognitive theory indicates the following :

Children develop cognitively at about the same rate in similar societies all over the world, this

in turn suggests that they should go through the same stages in cognitive development at the

same rate and grasp similar ideas at about the same age (p.05).

This means that children over all the world and whatever their language pass through the same stages of cognitive development in mastering language although that some children may master some aspects of language before others because they find them easier to acquire (McLeod, 2009) .

In spite the fact that, cognitive theorists relate all aspects that any person learns as results of his cognitive thinking as well as his own mental process and not via an observable behavior, but they have some insight differences ; for example Piaget believed that the direction of human cognitive development is from individual to social which describes learning from people around, unlike Vygotsky who considered that language acquisition as a cognitive and mental process starts from social environment to individuals because when individuals engage in social interaction their language and thinking will be developed (McLeod,2007).

However, this theory is criticized because at an early age we can not show clear links between language and intellect because during the first year to 18 months we can not make a clear correlation between linguistic features and specific cognitive behaviors, furthermore Piaget focused on the relationship between cognitive development and biological maturation and neglected the role of social interaction on cognitive development (McLeod, 2009).

2-4- 4 Social Interactionist Theories (Input Theories)

The idea of studying interactions between a mother and his child may reveal not only how the L1 is learned but also the L2, however both Bates (1993) and Tomasello (1995) point out that interactionists believe in the following « children are born with a powerful brain that matures slowly and predisposes them to acquire new understandings that they are motivated to share with others » (cited in "Theories of Language Development", n.d). Hence, this theory is a compromise between behaviorists and nativists, moreover it leads interactionists recognize that biological and environmental factors are two main important factors in language development.

Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) believes that social interaction is an important element in the learning process when he clearly states that « participation in culturally organized activities is essential for learning to occur » (Moller& Catalono, 2015, p.328). Besides this idea, Vygotsky distinguished between what an individual can achieve independently and what he can realize with others' help ; especially those who are more skilled than him, thus proposed a zone of learning where learners construct the new language via social interactions and he called it the zone of proximal development 'ZPD' (McLeod, 2007). In other words, interactionists believe that language acquisition is a result of social interaction.

In addition to Vygotsky, Bruner(1983) claims that children acquire and develop language through social interaction, also he adds a new term to refer to a new system where parents support their child's linguistic development in several social situations, and he names it ' Language Acquisition Support System' or (LASS) in response to Chomsky's (LAD) 'Summary of the Language Acquisition Theories', he also suggests that parental behaviors and their direct speech should be simple to help children's development, and he calls that 'child-direct speech' (CDS) (" Smith",2013). In other words, in order to support the child's acquisition process adults adopt a certain way when they talk to their children.

Moreover, Krashen's theory (1985- 1994) influences both second language acquisition and teaching as well as later theories, and although that he distinguishes between the two terms 'acquisition' and 'learning', but both he and Vygotsky stress on the role of interactions and inputs in SLA, besides Krashen (1985) Dulay and Burt(1974) argue that adult L2 acquisition is very similar to child L1 acquisition (Karim & Nassaji, 2013, p.118). According to Krashen's input hypothesis, language acquisition takes place during human interaction in the target language environment, in which the learner is exposed to rich comprehensible input (as cited in Muho & Kurani, 2014, p.45).

2-4-5 Connectionist Models

In 1980s, Connectionism appears as a new framework for the study of SLA, this new framework considers language learning as a result of strong associations and connections between stimuli and

responses (Troike, 2006). However, Bergmann, Hall, and Ross (2007) state that « Connectionist theories assume that children learn language by certain neural connections in the brain » (p.317), this is to mean that that individuals develop such connections when they expose to language and when they use it. In other words, these connections which occur in the brain make individuals able to learn and to understand relationships between sounds, words, meaning, sequences, and so on.

Moreover, McLeod et al. (1998) support the same idea when they point out that connectionist models simulate learning and so their application to linguistics implies claims about the nature of language acquisition in children (cited in Cockyane, 2008). Furthermore, according to Cockyane (2008) connectionist models work as networks of artificial neurons and synapses that aim to simulate low-level processing in the brain. Thus, the main objective of connectionist models is to explain language processing acquiring, as well as developing low-level processing in the brain.

In fact, we should not look to each theory as an alternative to the previous one but we should consider that each one offers another explanation of the processes (acquisition and learning).

2-5 Other Related Terms

2-5- 1 Linguistic Competence and Linguistic Performance

Scholars separate between the two terms performance and competence, Chomsky (1965) for example, separates between competence and performance when he describes 'competence' as an idealized capacity which located as a psychological or mental property or function, while he describes 'performance' as the production of actual utterances (Sag and Wasow, n.d.). In other words, competence means knowing the language while performance means doing something with the language.

Furthermore, McNeil (1966) defines competence as « the knowledge of linguistic rules, categories, etc., that accounts for native speaker's intuitions about his language… » (Cited in Taha and Reishaan, 2008, p. 37). However, the online Free Dictionary by Farlex defines linguistic performance as : « a speaker's actual use of language in real says, including grammatical errors and other non-linguistic

features such as hesitations and disfluencies ; contrasted with linguistic competence » The online Free Dictionary by Farlex ("linguistic performance", n.d.).

2-5- 2 Monolingualism, Bilingualism, and Multilingualism

According to Nordquist (n.d.) –a grammar and composition expert- who states that « Multilingualism is the ability of an individual speak or a community of speakers to communicate effectively in three or more languages. Contrast with monolingualism is the ability to use only one language ». Moreover, Cenoz & Genesee (1998) people who speak more than two languages in their every day life due to historical, social, or economic reasons are considered as multilingual (cited in Kang, 2013, p. 55). However, Kivinen, (2011) states that « bilingual refers to an individual who uses two or more languages or dialects in his or her everyday life ».

Furthermore, Troike (2006) defines multilingualism as « the ability to use two or more languages » (p.08), also he adds that some linguists and psychologists may use bilingualism for the ability to use two languages and multilingualism for more than two, while he defines monolingualism as the ability to use only one language.

2-5- 3 Monolingual Competence vs Multilingual Competence

Cenoz and Genesee (1998) define the two terms 'multilingual competence' and 'monolingalism competence', according to them monolingual competence means the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in oral and written forms through using only one language. However, they define multilingual competence as « the capacity to use several languages appropriately and effectively for communication in oral and written language » (p.17). Furthermore, Cook (1991) introduces the two concepts, however he prefers to use two other terminologies 'mono-competence' and 'multi-competence', consequently he defines multi-competence as the compound state of a mind with two (or more) grammars, while he refers to the knowledge of only one language to define mon-ocompetence (Troike, 2006, p.08).

2-6 Language Transfer

Language transfer is one of the crucial and main important issues in Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Language Teaching Operation, in fact studies on language transfer started with the works of Charles Fries and Robert Lado, also it is noticeable that this phenomenon occurs in language learning process naturally, because learners may transfer some elements from their native language to the L2 (Al-Khawalda and Al-Oleimat,n.d.).

Moreover, Scholars used several terms to refer to language transfer, for example : Selinker (1972) and Kellerman(1983) called it language mixing, while Schachter & Rutherford (1979) besides Ringbom (1987) named it linguistic interference. In the other hand, Lado (1957), Selinker (1972), Kellerman (1983) and Odlin (1989) prefered to use the term Language transfer, however Master (1987), Mesthrie & Dunne (1990), Jarvis (2000) and Torryos (2009) used the expression 'The role of mother and native language influence' and ' Cross-linguistic influence' is another term used by Kellerman & smith (1986) (cited in Liu, 2001, p.01).

Furthermore, transfer may occurs in all L2 language skills ; productive and receptive ones as well as in all language levels : phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic, for instance Beardsmore (1982) points out that when he suggests that an EFL learner may face many difficulties in phonology, vocabulary, and grammar as results of the interference of habits from L1 (cited in Bhela, 1999 , p . 23). This is to mean an EFL student may have problems related to L1 interference in any language's levels (phonological, grammatical and syntactic, lexical besides semantic level).

2-6-1 What Is Language Transfer ?

Many terms are used to express language transfer as : L 1 interference   linguistic interference and cross meaning, all these expressions are used when speakers or writers apply knowledge from their native language to a second language, for example Webster's Third New World International Dictionary (1986) defines transfer as : « transfer derived from the Latin word transfere means to carry, to bear or to print,

impress or otherwise copy from one surface to another ». In addition to that, Long man Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1988) defines language transfer as « the effect of one language on the learning of another ».

In one hand, and from a behaviourist point of view transfer is explained in terms of habit formation, for example Lado (1957) shows that clearly when he states the following :

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meaning, 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 (cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008, p. 89).

In the other hand and in contrast to behaviorist, Odlin (1989) claims that : « when individuals know two languages, knowledge of both may affect their acquisition of a third/ …/ knowledge of three or more languages can lead to three or more different kinds of source language influence. » (p.27). In other words, Odlin do not believe that transfer is merely a result of habit formation, also he thinks that the term transfer is not simply a matter of interference since that word 'interference' implies only negative transfer, and as a consequence positive transfer was neglected. Besides that, he claims that transfer is not always a native language influence since that previous acquired languages may also affect the target language.

Furthermore, Ellis (1997) points out that language transfer is a real and central phenomenon which must be considered in the second language process, moreover Dulay et al. (1982) argue that the phenomenon of interference is an automatic transfer that occurs due to habits of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. In other words, EFL learners rely on their mother tongue structure whenever they response or produce in the target language (cited in Khan, 2016, p.135).

Likewise, Corder (1975) explains transfer saying that: « […] the learner is carrying over the habits of his mother-tongue into the second language » (p.20). Hence, Corder believes that when there are similarities between L1 and a target language, learning that target language becomes easy through positive transfer, but if there are differences between L1 and L2, learning that language (target language) becomes difficult and it leads to negative transfer where the errors occur (cited in Yang, 1992,p.135). Furthermore, Lott (1983) supports Corder's idea when he defines interference as « errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue » (p.256).

Similarly, Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer'and he defines it as « the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2 » (p.51). Moreover, he supports Corder's and Lott's ideas when he claims that the further apart the two languages (L1 and L2) are structurally the higher the instances of errors made in L2 that bear traces of L1 structure. Additionally, Ellis argues that transfer is governed by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning (cited in Bhela, 1999, p.23). In other words, in EFL classes learners may use rules according to their L1 knowledge if they think that these rules will be helpful for them and thus the transfer occurs.

Moreover, Troike (2006) the behaviorist view affect both language acquisition and language learning. Behaviorists consider language acquisition as a habit formation in which any certain learned behavior is a result of positive or negative stimuli, and in a similar way they describe the second language learning. Thus, scholars distinguish two types of transfer ; positive transfer (facilitating) and negative one (interference).

2-6-2 Types of Transfer

Ellis (1994) explains the different kinds of transfer in this following quotation:

Transfer is to be seen as a general cover term for a number of different kinds of influence
from languages other than the L2. The study of transfer involves the study of errors

(negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms

andtheir over-use (p.341).

Consequently, we distinguish four main types of transfer : positive transfer, negative transfer (interference), avoidance and the over-use of some forms in the target language.

2-6-2-1 Positive Transfer

According to Allen and Corder(1975) « positive transfer helps new learning, for instance, it is easy to learn to pronounce aspirated voice less stops in a second language if the language also has also aspirated voice less stops » (cited in Alsharafi,n.d, p.04). This is to say that when there are similarities between L1 and L2, learning will be easy and the transfer of L1 on L 2 will be fruitful.

In the same way, a study of Romon Torrijos(2009) supports this idea, when he asked Spanish students to give him the meaning of certain English words that supposed to be unknown for them. The results showed that the students did well with words that had identical spelling (similar to Spanish language) while they did not answer or they gave wrong answers to words that their spelling were not similar to Spanish (their native language). Thus, positive transfer is a fruitful in second language learning; especially when two languages (L1 and L2) share the same characteristics, which means that prior language knowledge (first language) facilitates new learning (L2 learning). In the fact that, not all languages share the similar characteristics, positive transfer occurs rarely.

Moreover, when researchers compare the positive transfer with the negative transfer which takes all the parts of transfer, positive transfer was neglected, for instance Yu (2004) claims that « …since cross-linguistic similarity which may generate positive transfer is an integral part of the whole cross-linguistic influence set » (cited in Yu & Ren, 2013, p. 46). This means that to focusing on negative transfer and ignoring the other one 'negative transfer' is not a good thing.

2-6-2-2 Negative Transfer (Interference)

Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary ("Negative Transfer", n.d.) defines negative transfer as « the impeding of learning or performance in a situation by learned responses carried over from another situation ». This is to mean that difficulties in learning may be occurred because EFL learners may resort to their prior knowledge and to the structures and rules of their first language (previous situation) to help them in learning L2 (another new situation).

Furthermore, some linguists may use the term negative transfer to refer to interference, for example Weinreich (1953) describes both sides of transfer in the following quotation :

When a process of second language learning takes place, those linguistics phenomena which are similar in form, meaning and distribution are regarded as facilitating theprocess, and transfer is seen as positive, if they are dissimilar, the transfer is considered negative and acquisition is viewed as distorted because the two structures differ. The phenomenon involved in these difficulties called interference. (p.01).

This is to say, that EFL learners may face some difficulties lead them to make errors in their productions of the target language because they rely on their mother tongue; these difficulties appear as a result of differences between L1 and L2, and thus old habitual behavior (L1) that differs from the new behavior (L2 or language being learned) may cause errors or what is so- call interference.

2 7-1 Writing Skill

Being competent in a language requires having the four basic language skills : reading ; listening, speaking, and writing, in fact experts classify foreign language skills into two main categories : productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skill (reading and listening), since that learners receive inputs when reading and listening, these two skills belong to receptive language skills, while they produce outputs when they write or speak, thus writing and speaking are productive language skills (Ivanic and Mandic, 2014). Moreover, individuals acquire listening and speaking naturally thus, oracy is

acquired in informal situations, however literacy requires formal settings because individuals must learn to read and writing in schools, institutions, and universities (Gallagher, 2015).

According to Nunan(2000) « language directed at the learner (in speech or writing) is referred to as productive » (p.48). In other words, productive skills involve producing language in its two forms i.e., the oral form which is speaking and the written form which is writing. Likewise, Harmer (2001) claims that « the productive skills of writing and speaking are different in many ways » (p.246), this is to say that, although that writing and speaking belong to the same category (productive skills) but in fact they are differed.

Writing is the productive skill in the written mode, in fact it seems to be the most complex and difficult skill not only for EFL learners but also for native speakers, indeed Grabe & Kaplan(1996) stress this idea when they claim that « probably half of the world's population does not know how to write adequately and effectively » (p.87). Furthermore, Nunan (1989) argues that learning to write is most difficult than learning to speak in both first and second language, actually both EFL learners and teachers have an agreement on the difficulty and complexity of writing skill comparing it with other skills.

2 7-2 A Brief History of Writing Skill

Several historical studies show that human beings recently started writing, and this is the reason behind having too little knowledge about the history of early man, for instance Yule (2010) states that « human beings started to write some 20,000 to 25,000 years ago » (p.212) (cited in Ghothbene, 2010, p.13). Moreover, O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba(1996) summarize the development of writing in the following quotation :

The development of writing has been one of the humanity's greatest intellectual achievements. From pictograms and logograms, the graphic representation of language has developed through syllabic writing to the alphabet. This was achieved through the discovery that the sounds of language can be associated with arbitrary graphic symbols.Eventually,

this was followed by another discovery that a fairly small number of symbols is sufficient to represent language in written form (p.620).

Crystal (1999) claims that naturalistic paintings of animals and people are the earliest forms of writing, since that in ancient cultures different pictures 'pictograms or picture-writing' were used to present different symbols, then different symbols were used to present ideas 'ideograms or idea-writing', afterwards the ideograms were represented different words 'logograms or word-writing' (cited in Ghothbene, 2010, p.11).

2 7-3 Definition of Writing

Flower and Hyes (1981) define writing as « writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing » (p.366), this is to say that writing as a productive skill needs specific sub-skills, in order to make writers in general and students in particular able to translate their ideas, views, and thoughts into clear and well organized words.

Likewise, Harris (1993) believes that writing as a creative process allows learners to show how do they think and it delivers them to the readers (their teachers, classmates or others) and he emphasizes this idea when he states that « it is almost as the act of writing makes thoughts visible, this in turn, provides the opportunity for revision and refinement because the thoughts are there on the page to be worked on » (p.12).

 Additionally, Richards & Schmidt (2002) point out that « writing is viewed as a result of complex process of planning, drafting, reviewing, and revising » (p.529), in other words, they believe that writing is a process in which the writer follows certain steps and stages in order to produce meaningful things in its final form.

In one hand, Nunan (1989) considers writing as a mental activity and as a complex cognitive process which demands the mastery of many competences as well as enough knowledge (vocabulary, grammar and structure, spelling , punctuation, and content) when he claims that « writing is an extremely complex,

cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously » (p.36). While in the other hand, Burke (2010) believes that writing is an act and a practice that related not only to individuals, but also to society when he argues that « writing can be understood only from the perspective of a society rather than a single individual » (cited in Al Fada, 2012,p.124).

Moreover, Lado (2000) states that « we mean by writing in a foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter-of-fact writing » (p.248), hence writing in a foreign language means having the ability to use this language via its graphic symbols and to produce correct and meaningful structures and ideas.

2 7-4 The Importance of Writing

In our lives, writing plays an important role at both levels personal and professional, Mc Arthur, et al. (2008) points out that « writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression » (p.01). Besides that , Hyland (2003) considers that writing as a communication tool maintains and strengthens ties between individuals, also it allows persons express ideas, thoughts and views specially those who can not express themselves orally, thus enables them to convey meaning (cited in Ghothbene, 2010, p.35) .

Furthermore, in EFL classes writing has many aims perhaps the main clear one is to improve learning, this idea was supported by Hedge (2000) when he points out that « these purposes are to enhance learning and to consolidate structures and vocabulary » (p.300), in other words writing helps learners to think in an observable way, also it makes them discover their manner of reflection instead of keeping it in their minds, in addition to that writing helps learners when they try to convince their teachers through translating their knowledge in their own words and styles, in general writing has several purposes as getting future jobs, especially the ones that need writing skill such as : teachers, translators, administrators, and journalists.

Through the idea that native language affects negatively or positively EFL learners' written productions, teachers can determine the nature of writing according to language transfer, hence some researchers believe that EFL students will transfer their writing abilities and strategies whatever they are i.e., good or not while others do not, for example Friedlander (1997) points out that « writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second (or third) language » (p.109). In contrast to the previous idea, Blanchard & Rood (2004) believe that conventions of writing can differ from one language to another, and they explain their opposite point of view in the following quotation :

It is like driving a car. If you have ever driven in another country, you know that some rules

of the road may be different (…), the conventions for writing may change from language to

another (p.01).

All in all, Harmer (1998) tries to clarify the most important reasons for teaching writing and he believes that students need to know the following points :

- How to write letters.

- How to put written reports together.

- How to replay to advertisements.

- How to write electronic media.

2- 8 The Product and the Process Approaches

According to Harmer(2001) « there are a number of different approaches to the practice of writing skills both in and outside the classroom » (p.257). In other words, teachers may use several ways to approach writing skills. Moreover, he claims that « In the teaching of writing we can focus on the product of the writing or on the writing process itself » (p.257). This is to mean that, in teaching writing skill there are two main popular approaches which are product approach and process one.

The table below presents the main differences between the two approaches.

Process Writing	Product Writing
• Text as a resource for comparison • Ideas as starting point • More than one draft • More global, focus on purpose, theme, text type, i.e., reader is emphasized • Collaborative • Emphasis on creative process	• Imitate model text • Organization of ideas more important than ideas themselves • One draft • Features highlighted including controlled practice of those features • Individual • Emphasis on end product

Table 01 : Comparison between The Process and Product Approaches

Source : http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/product-process-writing-a-comparison

We notice that there are two main approaches in teaching writing, the first one is process approach and the second one is product approach, each of these approaches has its features and procedures. Moreover, both approaches use texts but differently ; in the process writing approach texts are sources of comparison while in product writing approach students use texts as models. Furthermore, concerning the ideas ; in process writing approach ideas are considered as starting points whereas their organization is more valued in the product writing approach. Besides that, in the process approach students produce more than one draft because they may revise and rewrite their productions in collaborative group work thus this approach asserts creativity as well as global purposes. In the other hand, in the product approach learners produce only one draft since that they work individually, thus they focus on the end work.

2- 8-1 The Product Approach

The product approach is defined by Steele (2004) as « this is a traditional approach, in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text ». Thus, this approach is focused on what is produced rather than on the process of writing. Moreover, Nunan (1991) gives another definition to the product approach, he claims that « a product oriented approach, as the title indicates focuses on the end result of the learning process, what is expected from the learner is to do as fluent and competent uses of the language » (cited in

Kay and Dudley, 1998, p.311). Hence, this approach focuses on the end product and it gives more attention to correctness because its main aim is to make learners more competent and fluent in the target language, via producing coherent, relevant, and correct written productions.

Furthermore, Thulasi A/P Palpanadan, Bin Salam, and Bte Ismail (2014) conduct a study that was published in (MEJSR) to compare the effects of product and process approach on Malaysian students' written productions, they state that « This writing approach encourages students to produce an end product which may be likened to a model essay or to essay normally provided by teachers » (p.790), in this way teachers who support this approach provide their learners with model types' texts which helps students to construct sentences and to develop ideas in order to produce paragraphs and essays. This means that in product approach learners imitate certain given models then they transform them into new written productions.

According to Steele (2004) the product approach involves four main stages :

1. The first stage occurs when students read the model texts and they highlight the main features of the genre, so the model is discussed and analyzed.
2. The second stage names controlled practice, at this stage teachers ask their students to practice the language used and the structure in the discussed model.
3. At third stage, learners are asked to organize their ideas because the proponents of product approach believe that the organization of ideas is important as the control of language.
4. At this final stage teachers ask students to produce the final product individually.

In fact the product approach was criticized, Choubane (2014) claims that « its main objective is accuracy in writing, neglecting students' own freedom to write or to communicate » (p. 17). Hence, another new approach has emerged which is called ' process approach' ; this new approach focuses on the development of language use rather than the product itself.

2-8-2 The Process Approach

Nunan (1991) states that « It was recognized that competent writers do not produce final text at their first attempt, but writing is a long and often painful process, in which the final text emerges through successive drafts » (p. 87), this is to say that in order to produce a final text students should pass through a hard process and they should follow certain steps, consequently the process approach has appeared as a reaction against the product approach which considered learning to write as imitating what is given as model texts in the classrooms.

In contrast to the product approach the process approach needs a series of stages to get the final product, Tribble (1996) supports this idea when he points out that writing according to the process approach involves four stages : pre-writing, composing / drafting, revising and finally editing (cited in Choubane, 2014, p.17). In other words, when learners write according to the process approach first of all, they generate ideas, then they extend and plan them, after that they organize their thoughts and they write their first drafts, finally they revise their productions via proofreading to make essential improvement because at this stage students may add or move words and then their final drafts are written.

Furthermore, according to the process approaches give more importance to the different classroom activities that aims to enhance the development of language use : brainstorming, group discussion, re-writing. In fact, these activities make the students more creative, more responsible and they learn from each other via interactions besides collaborative work which motivates them to produce Steele (2004). In addition to that, the process approach focuses on the content rather than the form and Harmer (2001) clearly states that « process approach aims to get the heart of the various skills that should be employed when writing » (p.257).

2- 9 Writing Difficulties

Abu Rass (2015) claims the following :

Generally speaking, writing is a difficult skill for native speakers and nonnative speakers alike

because writers must balance multiple issues in their writing such as content, organization,

purpose, audience, vocabulary and mechanics which means using the rightpunctuation, spelling and capitalization (p51.).

In other words, in writing activities both native and nonnative speakers may face many challenges and difficulties in terms of language use, content and organization.

According to Kroll (1997) writing in English for both ESL and EFL learners is a hard skill to be achieved since that students should acquire several sub-skills in order to combine their ideas into coherent written pieces, and he clarifies his idea in the following quotation :

For English as a second language, (ESL) students, it seems fair to say that writing is particularly difficult. ESL students must learn to create written products that demonstrate mastery over contextually appropriate formats for rhetorical presentation of ideas as well as mastery in all areas of language…… It is partially the multiplicity of skills involved which contributes to the overall difficulty of writing (p.140).

Furthermore, Nanun (1989) believes that any writer should control two main levels of his written production which are the sentences level and beyond the sentence level, e .i, the writer should control content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation also he should integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

2- 9-1 Grammar

Grammatical knowledge is a crucial issue and important element in writing, Harmer (2001) defines the grammar of language as « the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language » (p.12). Likewise, Abbot (2007) states that « a clear thinking could not be written clearly without using words according to definite rules (cited in Muslim 2014,p.107), this means that grammar is a very important for making clear and correct meaning.

2- 9-2 Sentence Structure

EFL learners may find many problems in producing long sentences as well as in linking different syntactic structures and they may produce run-on, incorrect and even fragmented sentences, according to Kharma (1986) students who have problems of writing good sentences structures are unable to produce longer sentences that require subordination and coordination, and in the same way Zamel (1983) argues that cohesive devices are crucial in writing (cited in Muslim 2014, p.107).

2-9-3 Vocabulary and Word Choice

EFL students may face a problem of word choice when they use inappropriate words in inappropriate places, White (1980) points out that EFL learners may use big words to impress their readers, moreover Norish (1983) and Alamirew(2005) believe that a good written production should contain appropriate and varied range of vocabularies that are combined with proper grammar as well as with varied range of sentence structures (cited in Muslim 2014, p.107).

2- 9-4 Punctuation

Al Fadda (2012) points out that learners have to be familiar with punctuation marks such as the period, comma, semicolon, colon, dash, hyphen, and capitalization. This means that punctuation is very essential in writing since that it plays a vital role in getting the correct meaning ; when the punctuation marks are used, or when they are used in different places the meaning may differ as in the example below :

He went with Ahmed Ali and Salim. (Two persons).

He went with Ahmed, Ali and Salim. (Three persons).

Moreover, Betham (2011) supports the same idea when he argues that « punctuation is more important than spelling » since that it gives meaning to word as pauses and change in tone of speech do (cited in Muslim 2014, p.107).

2- 9-5 Capitalization

EFL students may have problems in using right capitalization, according to Kroll (1991) capital letters are useful for sentence initials, the beginning of important words, in topics, headings, etc, however Gowere et al. (1995) state that the reason behind students' impoper capitalization is that classifying proper and common nouns is a difficult matter for EFL students, also capitalization rules are not universal rules (cited in Muslim 2014, p.107).

2- 9-6 Spelling

Spelling is one of the problems that EFL learners encounter when they write, Moats (2005) points out that spelling is very essential for writing, according to him some writers restrict their writing to words that they know (cited in M. Muslim 2014, p.107). Furthermore, Gowere et al. (1995) claims that EFL students consider that the English spelling system is an inconsistent and complex one, and this is a result of the influence of other languages, differences in pronunciations besides other historical reasons (cited in Alfaki, 2015, p.45).

2- 9-7 Content

Clifford (1987) claims that both ESL and EFL learners may find difficulties in exploring their ideas, and for that reason teachers should encourage learners to focus on the ideas that they want to convey rather than grammar and spelling (cited in Alfaki, 2015, p.46).

2- 9-8 Organization

Learners may have several problems in organization such as : the problem of structuring paragraph, topic development of paragraph, structuring the whole discourse and a theme in a discourse (Kharma, 1986) (cited in Alfaki, 2015, p.46). In other words a student may develop a paragraph which is not limited to one topic or he / she may develop one single topic inadequately.

Conclusion

To conclude, and since that writing skill is considered as the most important and effective language skill, the ultimate objective of EFL learners is being able to write correctly as well as effectively. However, most of EFL students and even natives see writing as the most complex and difficult skill to master when they compare it with the other language skills. Indeed, this idea is not only a result of the difficult and complex nature of writing skill but also it is a consequence of L 1 interference that occurs frequently in all language skills and at the level of all its different aspects. In the fact that these two main factors affect students' productions, it is noticeable that EFL students at the university level, especially first year students of Biskra University rely on their native language when they produce because they are not aware of that interference and because they are not fluent enough in that foreign language. For that

reason, in this chapter we try to give a brief vision of first, second and foreign language, besides the several theories of language acquisition and learning. Also, we recognize the different types of language transfer as well as writing skill since we are interested in it as a significant skill in effective language learning.

CHAPTER THREE : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to explain the method that is used to carry out this study. Moreover, it defines the population, the sample, the tools that are used to collect data. Besides that, this chapter gives us a detailed description of first year students' questionnaire, also it provides us with the analyses of some of first year EFL learners' written paragraphs. Finally, the results that are collected from the previous tools are analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

3- 1-Research Design and Methodology

To fulfill our objectives we have to rely on a certain method, Cohen, Manion, and Marrison (2005) define methodology as « we mean that a range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basic for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction » (p.44), this means that methods are techniques and procedures that used to gather data.

Since that, the current study aims to investigate the impact of first language on EFL learners writing skill, we opted to use a quantitative method research. In other words, nature of my topic –errors analysis-should be identified, quantified and analyzed, hence a quantitative method imposed itself. De facto, because a quantitative method is use when we need to investigate a very special element in language learning and obtain specific data for specific analysis. Thus, to fulfill the purposes of this study, a quantitative research tool 'a questionnaire' allows us to describe our results statistically. Moreover, in order to discover as well as to describe students' errors that are related to L1 interference, we analyze some written productions of first year EFL students. This facilitates the gathering of information and data and assists in achieving study goals, because this study is based on concepts of descriptive statistics method which refers to the type and the nature of research questions, designs and data analysis.

 As a first step, we tend to administer a questionnaire to first year LMD students in English Department at the University of Biskra ; mainly to know their attitudes towards writing and to recognize

the impact of their first language on their written production. Then, in order to identify the students' errors that are related to L1 interference we analyze some of their written paragraphs.

3-1-1 Quantitative Research

According to Creswell (2014) there are three research approaches in social sciences, which are : qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, also he adds that differrence between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words in qualitative research rather than numbers in quantitative one, or using close-ended questions in quantitative hypotheses rather than open-ended questions in qualitative interview questions.

Besides that, Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) distinguish two main types of researches qualitative research and quantitative one, also they argue that quantitative research needs formal and systematic measurement, and in order to obtain findings, researchers use statistical analyses and numerical data, while they claim that qualitative research does not require formal measurements. However, Creswell (2014) defines qualitative reseach as « an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning undividuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. » (p.02).

Furthermore, according to Mouton and Marais (1996) (cited in Choubane, 2014, p.106) the quantitative approach displays the following characteristics:

➢ It displays a higher level of formalization and control.

➢ The range is defined in a more exact manner.

➢ It is relatively close to physical science.

➢ It is relatively close to physical science.

Thus, in terms of research methodology researchers can employ the two methods qualitative as well as quantitative method. Depending on the nature of the study the researcher may use either qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both the qualitative and quantitative methods because the two are complementary approaches, and Creswell (2014) supports this idea when he defines mixed methods research as « an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data » (p.02).

3- 2-Population

Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) define population as « all individuals of interest to the researcher » (p.18). The population of this research will be limited to first year LMD EFL learners. Thus, the population of students for this study is 15 groups that are divided into three sections, which form the equivalent of 885 students in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, at the Department of Foreign Languages Division of English Studies in Biskra University. Official numbers show that there are 59 students in each group, but in reality we do not find this number, may be because some of them were absent and others delayed their studies.

3- 3-Sampling

According to Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) a sample is « a subset of the population » (p.18). Furthermore, Polit (2001) (cited in Ghodbene, 2010, p. 89) claims the following :

> Sampling involves selecting a group of people, events; behaviors or other elements with which to conduct a study. When elements are persons, they are known as subjects selected from the delineated target population in a way that the individuals in the sample represent as nearly as possible (p.235).

In other words, a sample is a representative of the whole population.

Because of the time limitation and the huge number of students, it is very hard to deal with all population. For that reason, the study is concerned with a limited number of participants and we randomly select only one group as a sample (group 4, from section one) that consists of 40 learners out of the whole number of first year LMD students in English Department at the University of Biskra. Our participants are Algerians, most of them nearly have : the same age, the same social background 'they are from the Algerian South', they have gone through the same steps in learning English 'learning English in the secondary school then in the high school' but in fact they do not have the same linguistic background 'each learner has his/ her own level'.

3- 4-Data Collection Procedure

In this study, we will only use one tool which is a questionnaire, it is administered for the first year students besides that, we analyze some paragraphs of first year EFL learners to discover errors that are related to L1 interference.

3-4-1 A questionnaire

In order to know the students' attitudes towards writing skill in general, and to know more about the influence of L1 on EFL students writing skill, a questionnaire with closed-ended questions is distributed to one group of the first year LMD, Brown (2001) claims that « Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or

selecting from among existing answer » (cited in Dornyei,2003,p.06) , this means that the questionnaire is a tool which consisted of a series of questions and distributed to respondents and it aims to know their reactions about certain issue. Besides that, questionnaire as pointed out by Anderson (1990, p. 207), « Allow the gathering of reliable and valid data, relatively, in a short time » (cited in Ghodbene, 2010,p.90), in other words questionnaires have many advantages since that we can collect a huge amount of information in a short time, thus they require less time and fewer efforts and even less financial resources, moreover we can use questionnaires successfully with a variety of people and in a variety of situations.

In addition to that, a questionnaire may yield three types of data :

- Factual data in which a classification questions are asked to respondents in order to identify them,

- Behavioral data in which the researcher asks questions about people's actions, life-styles, habits and personal history,

- Attitudinal data in which questions are asked to recognize respondents' different attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests, and values (Dornyei, 2003).

3- 4-1-1 Description of the Students' Questionnaire

Our questionnaire consists of three sections, almost of questions are close-ended questions. In general the questionnaire requires from the student to answer by **"yes"** or **"no"** or **"pick out "**the right answer from a number of options. The sections of the students' questionnaire are :

✓ Section One: General Information (Questions1 to 4) :

The first section contains four (04) questions, and its objective is to get general information concerning our respondents, In this section, the students are asked to specify their age range (q1), which may help us to determine whether all EFL students have the same feedback and the same academic background about the impact of L1 on their writing skill. As far as gender (q2) is concerned, we expected that the impact of L1 on EFL learners writing skill is not the same among male and female students since that learning languages is a universal tendency for females, may be because they are job-seekers or because of some psychological factors as motivation. Also, we expected that differences among nature of students' baccalaureate may affect the L1 interference on their writing skill.

✓ Section Two: Attitudes towards Written Expression Module (Questions1 to 6) :

The second section contains six (06) questions and almost of them are close-ended questions that aim to discover the students attitudes towards Written Expression Module.

❖ The first question **(**Do you like writing in English ?**)** aims to know the students' attitudes towards writing in English Language.

❖ The second questions **(**Are you interested in W.E. Module ?**)** aims to discover the different attitude towards W.E. Module.

❖ Q3 **(**Do you think that W.E. Module helps you to improve your writing ability ?**)** is asked to recognize the students' opinions towards the benifits of teaching W.E Module in enhancing their writing ability.

❖ Q4 **(**What is the most difficult learning skill fo you ?**)** is designed to discover the most difficult skill for EFL learners.

❖ Q5 (Are you weak/ average/ good/ very good at writing ?), the respondents are asked about their levels in writing.

❖ Q6 (Is the time allocated to W.E. enough to improve your writing skill ?) is asked to identify whether the time allocated for teaching written expression is sufficient.

✓ Section Three:The Impact of First Language on EFL Writing Skill (Questions1 to 8) :

The third section aims to recognize the impact of first language on EFL learners' writing skill and it consists of eight (08) questions.

❖ The first question (Do you think that it is essential to refer to your L1 when you write in English ?) is designed to know whether EFL learners tend to use their L1 when they compose in English.

❖ Q2 (How often do you refer to L1 when you write in English ?) is aimed to the frequency of using L1 when composing in L2.

❖ Q3 (When do you use your L1 ?) is asked to discover at which stage do EFL learners use their L1.

❖ Q4 (Do you think that using L1 make you produce poor/ good written productions ?) is designed to know the respondents' opinions towards their productions when they use their L1.

❖ Q5 (Do you find difficulties when you write in English ?) is asked to know whether the respondents are aware of the different difficulties that they face when they compose in English.

❖ Q6 (At which level you often make errors ?) is aimed to discover at which language aspect EFL learners produce errors.

❖ Q7 (Why do you think you make such errors ?), this question is designed to know whether the respondents are aware their errors' source.

❖ Q8 (It is good to make errors while writing in English ?) is asked to know whether the students are aware that we learn through errors and trials.

3- 4-1-2 Pilot Study

Concerning piloting, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005, p.260) States that « a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire ». This

means that piloting is an important step in any study since it evaluate the reliability, validity and practicability of any questionnaire. Moreover, Sudman and Brudburn (1983) clarify the same idea when they claim that « If you do not have the resources to pilot-test your questionnaire, don't do the study » (cited in Dornyei, 2003, p.64). Therefore, before administering any questionnaire, we have to pilot it.

Furthermore, according to Dornyei (2003) we pilot a questionnaire through confirming the following points:

- ✓ If the instructions are clear and easy to follow,
- ✓ If the questions are clear for the students,
- ✓ If the respondent find any difficulties in the questions,
- ✓ If the time that allocated for the questionnaire is sufficient.

For that reason, we pilot our questionnaire to confirm that its items are clear for EFL learners. The validity of the questionnaire was achieved by conducting a pilot study, the questionnaire was piloted during four days before administering it to the whole sample through distributting it to ten (10) first year EFL learners who we selected them randomly. During this period, the learners are given the opportunity to ask for some clarifications if they do not or they misunderstand any item. In deed, only eight (08) of them turned it back because the other two students were absent. The eight students answered all the items of the questionnaire the data was collected and all the questionnaire's items were reported as valid.

3- 4-2 Data Analysis

In order to discover the students' errors that are related to L1 interference we collect some written paragraphs of first year EFL students then we analyze them to know the nature of students' errors.

The teacher asked first year students to write paragraphs in which they define themselves, their hobbies and the reasons behind their choices to learn English, thanks to the teacher's help students wrote the paragraphs without knowing that their productions will be part of a research and that they will be studied and analyzed. Then I analyzed these written productions in order to identify students' errors that are related to L1 interference.

3- 4-2-1 The Data Analysis Procedure

In order to proceed to data analysis, we follow two steps. First of all, we identify learners' errors and later on we describe them.

3- 4-2-1-1 Identification of Errors

According to Brown (1980) an error is « a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the Interlanguage competence of the learner » (p.205). In other words, an error is a deviant utterance which is resulted from the adult grammar of a native speaker and that is reflected his target language competence (L2/ FL). Furthermore, Ellis (1990) suggests two ways to distinguish between errors and mistakes : the first way is to check the consistency of a learner s' performance, i.e. if he /she always uses an incorrect form the deviant utterance is an error, while if he /she sometimes uses a correct and sometimes use a wrong form, it is a mistake. The second way is asking a learner for a self-correction, if he/she is unable to do the deviant utterance is an error, while if he/she correct it successfully, it is a mistake.

3- 4-2-1-2 Description of Errors

Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between learners' utterance and the reconstructed version, moreover he states that « difference of this sort can he classified into four categories. Omission of some required element, addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements, selection of an incorrect element, and disordering of elements » (p.277).

The table below presents Corder s' (1973) classification of errors.

	Phonology/Orthographic	Gramatical	Lexical
Omission			
Addition			
Selection			
Ordering			

Table 02: Matrix for Classification of Errors.

Source : (Corder, 1973, p.272).

According to Corder s' table, we can distinguish three main types of errors : orthographic, grammatical, and lexical errors. In addition to that, we notice that under each type of error we may classify four categories : omission, addition, selection, and ordering.

Conclusion

In short, this chapter has devoted to clarify the research design in terms of the method as well as the means that used, and the participants who involved in our study, and then a detailed description of the students' questionnaire and the written productions' analysis 'the students' error analysis', however the next chapter will involve a deep analysis of findings of both the students' questionnaire and the analysis of the students' paragraphs to prepare a series of recommendations when justified.

CHAPTER FOUR : FIELD WORK

Introduction

In this chapter we attempt to analyze and discuss the data gathered from students' questionnaire and from the analysis of students' written production. Hence, this chapter is divided into two sections : the first section deals with the analysis of students' questionnaire while the second section deals with the analyses of the students written paragraphs .Thus, this chapter is devoted for the analysis and interpretation of the collecting data to fulfil the main objective of this work which is to identify, describe, and explain the impact of L 1 on EFL learners writing skill.

4 Section One : The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

4-1 General Information

1) Age range

Age range	18+	25+	30+	Total
Number of students	38	02	00	40
Percentage%	95%	05%	00%	100

Table 03: Students' Age Range

The findings show that there are two age groups. We have a majority of 18+ years of age in the first place which represented (95%), i.e. 38 students out of 40. Whereas the minority are 25+ years of age and they represented 05% (2 out of 40students), while we do not have students who are of 30+ years of age, so the age range of 30+ presents 00%. Our aim is therefore to see if all EFL learners who nearly have the same age have nearly the same academic background, and whether those who have the same academic background make same errors; particularly in their written productions, moreover we aim to know if these errors are related to L1 interference. In fact, results indicate that all people who nearly have the same age range, i.e. who nearly have the same academic background make errors related to L1 interference.

2) Gender

55

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Number of students	09	31	40
Percentage%	22.5%	77.5%	100%

Table 04: Students' Gender

As we can see, female students are out number male students. We recorded nine(09) male students out of forty (40), i.e. 22.5%; whereas the rest is female, that is 31 (i.e.77.5%). This means that females tend to learn EFL more than male students. In fact, this adds nothing except to the issue of motivation and attitudes, since we expect that females love learning languages more than males do, this is a universal tendency and it may have a relationship with psychological reasons such as motivation, or with social and economic factors since that females to days are job-seekers. All this, may reduce the amount of errors that are related to L1 interference.

3) How long have you been studying English ?

Years of studying English	07	08	09	Total
Number of students	31	07	02	40
Percentages %	77.5%	17.5%	05%	100%

Table 05: Students' Years of Studying English

Among the 40 students questioned, who all have been studying English for at least 7 years, we find that the majority (31 students out of 40) have been studying it for 7 years which represented 77.5% while others (7 learners out of40) have been studying English for 8 years and they represented 15.5% however, the remaining ones, (2 students) who have been studying English for 9years representing 5%. Through this question, we aim to know if the period of studying English affects the students' written productions and the amount of L1 interfernce. In other words, we aim to discover whether EFL learners who have passed via the same steps in learning English, i.e. who have the same feedback as well as the same academic background, make errors. Results reveal that all EFL students ; who nearly have the same

feedback make errors related to L1 interference, even those who have been learning English for nine (09) years they still made errors related to L1 interference.

4) The baccalaurete stream

Baccalaurete stream	Scientific	Arts	Languages	Total
Numbers of students	13	08	19	40
Percentages %	32.5%	20%	47.5%	100%

Table 06: Students' Baccalaureate Stream

The findings reveal that some first year students (19 out of 40 students) are bachelors in Languages stream and they represented 47.5%, because in this stream time allocated for learning English language is more than the time allocated in other streams. While, in the second place we find that students who had Sciences' baccalaureate formed 32.5%, i.e. 13 learners out of 40. Whereas the minority are bachelors in Arts' stream since that they represented 08 of 40 students. Through this question, we want to know which baccalaureate stream's students make errors in their written production (errors related to L1 interference). The results show that all students, whatever their baccalaureate nature, make errors related to their L1 interference although that the time allocated for learning English language in languages stream is more than the time allocated for English in other streams.

VI 1-2 Attitudes towards Written Expression Module

1) Do you like writing in English ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	33	07	40
Percentage %	82.5%	17.5%	100%

Table 07: Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English

Results show that the majority of first year students (82%) i.e., 33 students out of 40 have opted for a "**yes**" answer, those students are interested in writing either for personal or academic purposes. While,

only25% have declared that they do not like writing (07 students out of 40). The reason for this negative attitude could be the lack of background knowledge about the conventions of writing in English language. Also, it may be a result of the fact that writing in English is a complex skill that involves many other sub- skills , moreover it may be a boring and a time-consuming task, while some students may prefer writing in their mother tongue to express their ideas and feelings since that expressing ideas with L1 is easier than doing that in foreign language because students have not experienced EFL academic writing before and they are unfamiliar with its structure. Likewise, Yasuda's study (2004) indicated that EFL/ ESL, students struggle to accomplish their writing tasks.

2) Are you interested in Written Expression module ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	30	10	40
Percentage %	75%	25%	100

Table 08: Students' Attitudes towards Written Expression Module

The finding identifies that 75% of first year students, i.e. 30 out of 40 learners like Written Expression Module, may be they just like the module or the teacher, also because some of them look to it as a motivating course which allows them to express their ideas and feelings. Furthermore, some of them may believe that if they like Written Expression Module this may lead them to success since that most exams are in written forms. Whereas 10 students out of 40 which represents 25% of the whole sample do not like it; perhaps they are not motivated enough or because they face difficulties in writing or they prefer other modules or skills such as: speaking (Oral Expression Module). Thus, different attitudes towards Written Expression Module is related to students' different learning styles since that some of them like to express themselves via writing while others prefer to do that via speaking, reading or listening.

3) Do you think that Written Expression module help you improve your writing ability ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	35	05	40
Percentage %	87.5%	12.5%	100%

Table 09 : Students' Thoughts towards Written Expression in Improving Writing Ability

In one hand, the findings reveal that 87.5% of the first year students believe that written expression module helps them to improve their writing ability. In the other hand, only 12.5% of them do not think so ; may be because some of the students do not act and do not interact with their Written Expression's teachers and with other classmates, for that they do not think that Written Expression module helps them to improve their writing ability. Moreover, may be because of the students' different learning styles, i.e. some of them prefer Oral Expression Module while others like reading or listening. Also, may be because some W.E. teachers do not motivate their learners to interact with them for several factors such as : types of activities, teaching methods that do not feet their learners' levels and their learning styles.

4) What is the most difficult learning skill for you ?

Skills	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	Total
Number of students	04	04	12	20	40
Percentage%	10%	10%	30%	50%	100%

Table 10 : The Most Difficult Skill

The finding illustrates that students have experienced more difficulties in writing skill, this represents 50% of the whole sample, i.e. 20 students out of 40; this occurs may be due to two main reasons : the first is because first EFL learners' do not master English well since that they face many problems when they write such as : sentence structures and grammar, lack of vocabulary, inappropriate words choice, incorrect words' spelling, lack of organization, and misuse of punctuation marks, the second reason is the interference of their first language.

Whereas in the second place, the results reveal that learners find difficulties in speaking skill since that 12 students out of 40 which represents 30% ; this is a result of the previous causes as well as because of the lack of self- confidence, so all these obstacles make students feel shy to speak or make them feel anxious to speak in L2/FL.

While in the third place, findings show that 10% of the learners have experienced difficulties in reading may be because they are not previously deal with such language, also some teachers ; who are considered as a unique source, do no practice reading in front of the students.

Moreover, results reveal that the same percentage 10% of the whole sample, i.e. 04 students out of 40 have experienced difficulties in listening. In fact, these difficulties are results of the nature of the foreign language itself as well as its culture, also the way in which native speakers talk (quick speakers) may affect EFL students' listening skill.

5) How are you at writing ?

	Weak	Average	Good	Very good	Total
Number of students	06	12	18	04	40
Percentage %	15%	30%	45%	10%	100%

Table 11: Students' Consideration of their Writing Ability

Results indicate that 45% of the first year students (18 students out of 40) considered their writing ability as a 'good ability', may be they evaluate their written production just from one angle which is the angle of marks. However 30% of them, i.e. 12 student out of 40 opted for their consideration of writing ability to be 'average ability'. May be those learners discovered some errors in their written production for that they feel that their writing ability is an average one. Whereas, 15% of the whole sample, i.e. 06 out of 40 students opted for   ' weak ability'; those students have chosen this level because they faced obstacles in the foreign language itself. While, 04 out of 40 students which representes 10% of the students considered their writing ability as a 'very good ability'; those students maybe have a good idea, style, and use good language.

6) Is the time allocated for W.E module enough to improve your writing skill ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	13	27	40
Percentages %	32.5%	67.5%	100%

Table 12 : Students' Thoughts about the Time Allocated for Written Expression in Improving their Writing Skill

The findings reveal that 27 students out of 40 who represent 68% of the whole sample opted for 'No' this is a result of the complexity and the difficulty of writing skill, for EFL learners writing needs much time to master and practice it. While, only 32% of the respondents opted for 'Yes' maybe because of the individual diffferences and psychological reasons such as : intelligence, personality, feedback and linguistic background as well as several learning styles ; i.e. students who have more capabilities ; they are more intelligent, they have sufficient linguistic background and they are quick learners for that they do not need much time in Written Epression Module to improve or master the writing skill.

VI 1-3 The Impact of First Language on EFL Writing Skill

1) Do you think that is essential to refer to your L1 when you write in English ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	18	22	40
Percentage %	45%	55%	100%

Table 13: The Essential of Referring to L1 when Writing English

The results show that, in one hand 22 students out of 40 students that represented 55% of the whole sample believe that referring to their L1 when writing in L2 is not an important thing, in other words those students are capable to write in L2 without referring to their L1 since that they some how master the target language, i.e. they have sufficient amount of vocabulary, understanding of grammar 's rules…etc. While in the other hand, 45%, i.e. 18 students out of 40 reported that it is essential to do that because they think that L1 help them to write well, and some of them use translation from L1 to L2 ; i.e. they write their productions in their L1 then they translate them to L2.

2) How often do you refer to your L1 when you write in English ?

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Number of students	06	23	08	03	40
Percentage %	15%	57.5%	20%	7.5%	100%

Table 14 : Students' Times of Referring Back to their L1 when Writing in L2

Results indicate that 58%, i.e. 23 students out of 40 first year EFL learners sometimes refer back to their L1 when they write in English, this may occur in several writing's stages as planning or thinking. However, 15% of the whole sample (06 learners out of 40) opted for always since that they often find difficulties when they write in L2. While, 20% of them opted for rarely; this is something natural because any EFL learners and even EFL teachers are rarely referred to their native language. In fact, the thing which is noticeable here is that 03 students out of 40 or what represents 08% opted for never, i.e. they are never referring back to their L1; perhaps they are good EFL learners, they have sufficinet linguist background and they master English well.

3) When do you use your first language ?

	Thinking	Collecting ideas	Planning	Total
Number of students	26	08	06	40
Percentage %	65%	20%	15%	100%

Table 15 : Students' Use of their L1

The findings reveal that 65% of the student, i.e 26 out of 40 learners stated that they use their L1 when thinking since they believe that thinking in L1 help them to find as well as distinguishing related and useful ideas from irrelevant ones. The answers of this question clearly showed that the students thought and visualized things in their native language before they started writing in the target language. In the second place, 20% of the respondents (06 students out of 40) claimed that they use their L1 when they collect ideas; it means that they gather information in their mother tongue then they try to translate

them into English. However, in the third place we find that 15% of the whole sample stated that they use their L1 in planning because they think that using L1 at this stage helps them to organize their ideas.

4) Do you think that using L1 makes you produce poor or good written productions ?

	Poor written productions	Good written productions	Total
Numbers of students	27	13	40
Percentage %	67.5%	32.5%	100%

Table 16: Students' Thoughts towards their Written Productions when they Use their L1.

The results show that the majority of first year EFL learners that represented 67% believe that the use of their L1 makes them produce 'poor written productions', this means that 27 students out of 40 think that the use of their L1 hinders their writing, since that some of their errors come from their native language. Thus, L1 interference leads to the production of poor pieces of writing. However, 33%, i.e. 13 learners out of 40 of the EFL students think that the use of their L1may improve their writing because they believe that it simplifies, facilitates as well as paves the way for them to produce good written productions.

5) Do you find difficulties when you write in English ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	17	23	40
Percentage %	42.5%	57.5%	100%

Table 17 : Students' Thoughts towards Difficulties when Writing in English

The finding illustrates that the majority of first year EFL students that represented 57.5% of the whole sample do not face difficulties when they write in English, ma be because students at this level deal with simple tasks for that they do not face difficulties. Whereas, 42.5% of them stated that they have difficulties when writing in English, may be they have difficulties in different levels as vocabulary, grammar, meaning or even all of them.

6) At which level do you often make errors ?

	Lexical level	Syntactic level	Semantic level	All of them	Total
Number of students	12	12	09	07	40
Percentage %	30%	30%	22.5%	17.5%	100%

Table 18 : Levels' in which Students often Make Errors

The findings reveal that 30% of first year EFL learners make errors at syntactic level; may be because they feel that grammar is hard to learn, and even in their L1 students may make such errors. Moreover, results show that 30% of the respondents reported that they made errors at lexical level, this means that lack of vocabulary makes them produce poor written production. In fact, may be this is due to the lack of reading because experts believe that the more we read the more we reach our lexical knowledge, i.e. "good readers are good writers". While, results show that 22.5% of the EFL students stated that they make errors in the semantic level, may be because they translate some words, proverbs incorrectly which makes their writing lose its real sense. Finaly, findings indecates that 17.5% of the respondents make errors in all of the levels because they experience a new language, new rules, and even new culture.

7) Why do you think you make such errors ?

	Difficulties of English itself	Interference of first language	Other reasons	Total
Number of students	18	17	05	40
Percentage %	45%	42.5%	12.5%	100%

Table 19 : Sources of Students' Errors

The results indicate that, nearly half of first year EFL students and exactly 45% of the whole sample make errors due to difficulties come from English language itself (L2), may be this is a result of several grammatical rules as : problems of grammar, lack of vocabulary, irregular verbs as well as differences between British and American pronunciations and lack of practice inside and outside the classroom, in fact such problems are mainly due to lack of exposure to authentic material. Whereas 42.5% of the EFL

learners stated that they make errors due to the L1 interference, particularly those who use translation from L1 to the target language or those who are not proficient in L2, as what was concluded by Liu, Sung, and Chien (1998) who found that learners who have less English proficiency make more errors related to L1 interference in their English writings. Finally, results show that 12.5% of the respondents claimed that their errors are results of other reasons, as what was concluded in Javidan 's study (1980), which aimed to investigate the sources of errors made by Iranian students, where he claimed that students' errors are not only results of L1 interference but also they are results of other factors such as teaching and testing materials and techniques, type of language exposures available to the learner, transfer from a third or more languages known by the learner, and so on.

8) It Is good to make errors while writing in English ?

	Yes	No	Total
Number of students	17	23	40
Percentage %	42.5%	57.5%	100%

Table 20 : Students' Thoughts about Making Errors

The results reveal that 42.5% of the first year EFL learners think that making errors while writing in English is a good thing, maybe they believe that humans being learn better through errors and trials, i.e. when they made an error their teachers or even their classmates may correct it to them or they may make them aware of it, thus students will avoid that error, they will learn and their writing ability will be enhanced. In other words, making errors and mistakes while learning any new language or skill is something natural, and it helps learners to reach a good level of professionalism. However, 43% of the respondents, do not believe that making errors while writing in English is a beneficial thing, since that they may feel frustrated, also producing paragraphs full of errors may make students feel anxious or it may lead them to get bad marks.

VI 2 Section Two : The Analysis of Students' Paragraphs (Identification and Classification of Errors)

Type of Error	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Phonological / Lexical Errors	1. …in my *futur*. 2. ...my *hoppies*....	1. ….in my future. 2. …my hobbies….

	3. ...*facbook,...*	3. ….facebook,…
	4. ...my *degre.*	4. ….my degree.
	5. .... to *succed.*	5. ….to succeed.
	6. My hobby is *practising* sport.	6. My hobby is practicing sport.
	7. I chose…	7. I choose…
	8. …watching football *matchs.*	8. …watching football matches.
	9. My *choise…*	9. My choice…
	10. ...good *marke.*	10. …good mark.
	11. ...*to succse.*	11. …to succeed.
	12. ...is my *hoppy.*	12. …is my hobby.
	13. ...*effects me...*	13. …affects me…
	14. ...*beutifeul* language...	14. …beautiful language…
	15. ...from the other *said*	15. …from the other side
	16. ...*writtin poitry*	16. …writing poetry
	17. ...reading o lot of *boks*	17. …reading a lot of books
	18. …to *chare* my *idias*	18. …to share my ideas
	19. ...to be *succeful persen*	19. …to be a successful person
	20. ...my *gol*	20. …my goal
	21. ...like *shating on faccebouk*	21. …i like chatting on facebook
	22. ...*my hobis*	22. …my hobby
	23. I *whent* my objective to be…	23. I want my …
	24. ..to be *the majorite*	24. ..to be the major
	25. I am 20 years *ago*	25. I am 20 years old
	26. My *object is...*	26. My objective is…
	27. ....to be a *doctour of ...*	27. …to be a doctor
	28. ...my *objectif...*	28. …my objective
	29. I will *finde....*	29. I will find….
	30. I like *waching T.V*	30. I like watching T.V
	31. ....*of corse...*	31. …of course…
	32. This *languige...*	32. This language…
	33. …teacher *suported* me to....	33. …teacher supported me to…
	34. …one of my *problemes...*	34. ….one of my problems…
	35. ....a world *wid....*	35. …a world wide…
	36. ...*wich is...*	36. …which is…
	37. ....*grammare...*	37. ….grammar…
	38. ...listening to *musique.*	38. ….listening to music.
	39. …the *mean* reason is…	39. …the main reason is…
	40. …is singing *opira.*	40. …is singing opera.
	41. I want to *reed chicspir's* books.	41. I want to read Shakespeares' books.
	42. …cooking some *dishs.*	42. …cooking some dishes.
	43. ....*historique...*	43. …historic…
	44. I like it *to* much.	44. I like it too much.
	45. ...from the *beging...*	45. …from the beginning…
	46. This *branche....*	46. This branch
	47. ...or a *translation...*	47. …or a translator…
	48. ...my ancles *their....*	48. …my ancles there…
	49. I love its *prenonsiation...*	49. I love its pronunciation…
	50. ....*neither then...*	50. ….more than…
		51. …my choice…

	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
	51. ...my *choose*...	52. …speak English fluently…
	52. ....speak English *frauntly*...	53. I am interested in writing stories
	53. I am interested in *writin sotries*.	54. My hobbies are…
	54. My *hobies* are…	55. ….childhood…
	55. ….child hod…	56. I love English as language, as a study…
	56. I love English *us* a language, us a *studi*…	57. I choose English language…
	57. I choose *inglish* language…	58. ….you may be…
	58. …you *my be*…	59. …when i was…
	59. ....*whene i waz*…	
	60. …coming *frome*…	60. …coming from…
	61. …to be *mor*	61. …to be more…
	62. ….in my *live*…	62. …in my life…
	63. …write a *peom*…	63. …write a poem…
	64. ....*chating*….	64. ….chatting….
	65. …in my *socity*…	65. …in my society…

Table21 : Students' Phonological/ Lexical Errors

Findings reveal that 67 errors out of 152 errors are phonological/ lexical errors. EFL learners may substitute a letter for another, as substituting the *z* for the *s* in *'was'* (*waz*). Also, they may omit some letters (one or more), as omitting the 'e' in the word futur (future). Moreover, EFL students may add an extra letter or letters to a word, as adding an *'e'* to the word problemes (problems), and they may disorder some some letters in a word, such as writing 'peom' instead of 'poem'.

In addition to that, these results are due to phonological differences between L1 and English in the first degree, so differences in L1 and L2 structures may lead to such errors. Also, as a second degree these errors may be a result of students' lack of reading in L2. Thus, differences between L1 and L2 are considered as serious cause for such phonological/lexical errors.

Type of Errors	Incorrect Form	Correct Form
Grammatical and Syntactic Errors : **A. Subject-Verb Agreement**	1. My hobbies is… 2. …the most reason *make* me… 3. ...and it *mean*… 4. …you may be *not beleved*… 5. *I thinked*… 6. …and the teacher of English *respect* the students. 7. I wish to *became*… 8. …to make my dreams *came* true. 9. I *fined*…	1. My hobbies are… 2. …the most reason that makes me… 3. ….and it means… 4. …you may be do not believe… 5. I thought… 6. …and the teacher of English respects the students. 7. I wish to become… 8. …to make my dreams come true. 9. I found…

	10. I do not had…	10. I did not have…
B. Prepositions	1. …sing *with* English 2. …talk *with* English 3. ...a perfect teacher to my students. 4. I am a first year student *in* university of Biskra. 5. …and travel *in* the world. 6. I am interesting *on* swiming. 7. ….to be good *on* English language. 8. I wish *in* the end of this year… 9. …in the university *de* Biskra. 10. …connecting *at* facebook. 11. The goal *from* studying…	1. …sing in English 2. …talk in English 3. …a perfect teacher for my students. 4. I am a first year student at Biskra university. 5. …and travel to the world. 6. I am interesting in swiming. 7. …to be good in English language. 8. I wish by the end of this year… 9. …in the university of Biskra. 10. …connecting via facebook. 11. The goal of studing…
C. Articles	1. …to be* teacher… 2. …a English language. 3. I was *child… 4. It is * international language. 5. To lean my favorite language in *university. 6. If *the* GOD wants. 7. English is* world wide language.	1. …to be a teacher… 2. ….English language. 3. I was a child… 4. It is an international language. 5. To learn my favorite language in the university. 6. If GOD wants. 7. English is a world wide language.
D. Omission of the copula	1. …its exam* simple. 2. My age *19 years old. 3. I* interesting in ….. 4. It * considered as an important language. 5. It * not suficient.	1. …its axam was simple. 2. My age is 19 years old. 3. I am interesting in… 4. It is considered as an important language. 5. It is not suficient.
E. Singular vs plural	1. ....in this *years*… 2. I like cooking, reading and singing ; *this is some of my many hobby*. 3. …my problem is how writing *many word*… 4. I choose English because i love *them*. 5. My hobby is chatting with *new friend* ... 6. …some of my *objective*...	1. ….in this year… 2. I like cooking, reading and singing ; these are some of my many hobbies. 3. ….my problem is how to write some words … 4. I choose English because i love it. 5. My hobby is chatting with new friends… 6. …some of my objectives …

F. Punctuation	1. I am from Biskra i choose to learn English… 2. I like reading books writing poems and practicing sport. 3. I like reading and singing in English, Also i like to speak in different languages. 4. You maybe need it. 5. I decide to learn English. and i hope to succeed. 6. Finally i wish…	1. I am from Biskra, i choose to learn English… 2. I like reading books, writing poems, and practicing sport. 3. I like reding and singing in English. Also i like to speak in different languages. 4. You may be need it. 5. I decide to learn English, and i hope to succeed. 6. Finally, i wish…
G. Capitalization	1. *my* name is…. 2. *english* 3. ..from *algeria.* 4. *my* hobbies are... 5. *i* like... 6. ...to know more about *This* language. 7. …more than *french* language. 8. …thi is my *Dream.* 9. My *Name* is... 10. *fnally...* 11. *this year....* 12. ...and in the *End...* 13. *my* objective is... 14. ..watch *american* movies. 15. *Im* 19 years old.	1. My name is… 2. English 3. …from Algeria. 4. My hobbies are… 5. I like… 6. …to know more about this language. 7. …more than French language. 8. …this is my dream. 9. My name is… 10. Finally…. 11. This year… 12. …and in the end… 13. My objective is … 14. …watch American movies. 15. I am 19 years old.
H. Word order	1. I choose *language English*… 2. …year end… 3. My wish *was simly* learning English. 4. I free feel… 5. I am an English student language. 6. There are always people who encouraged me. 7. I am prowed of my self in this year.	1. I choose English language… 2. …end of this year… 3. My wish simply was learning English. 4. I feel free… 5. I am a student in the English language devision. 6. Always there are people who encouraged me. 7. This year, i am prowed of my self.
Total of Grammatical Errors' Number	67	67

Table 22 : Students' Grammatical and Syntacti Errors

Type of Errors	Sub-Verb Agreement	Preposition-s	Articles	Omission of Copula	Singula-r vs Plural	Punctuatio-n	Capitalizatio-n	Wor-d order
Number of Errors	10	11	07	05	06	06	15	07
Percenta-ge%	14.92%	16.41%	10.44%	7.46%	8.95%	8.95%	22.38%	10.44%

Table 23 : Classification of Students' Grammatical Errors

Classification of Grammatical Errors reveals that a total of 67 grammatical errors were found. The distribution of the students' grammatical errors were as follows:

- Subject- verb agreement (14.92%), a big amount of errors in EFL learners' paragraphs is a strong indicator that EFL students do not have a basic understanding of subject-verb agreement, in a study conducted by Al Fadda (2012) findings showed that reviewing grammar including subject-verb agreement is one of the main challenges which ESL students encounter.

-Prepositions (16.41%), this means that EFL students failed to practice prepositions correctly, they misused the correct preposition, or they redundantly used a preposition where it is not needed. May be this is a result of the big difference in using prepositions in both languages(L1 and L2).

-The use of the articles (10.44%), some students dropped articles when they should have sued them, or they added a redundant article, also a substitute of the right article with the wrong one was done by some students.

-Omission of copula (07.4%), this perhaps due to L1 interference, also because of differences in grammatical rules in L1 and L2. For instance, both verb to 'be' and auxiliary 'do' do not exist in the rules of Arabic grammar.

-Singular vs plural (08.95%), this is also a result of the differences between L1 and L2. These results indicate that EFL learners may have some difficulties in determining whether words are in plural form or in singular, for example in stead of writing « many hobbies » some students write « many hobby », and others write « some of my objective » instead of writing « some of my objectives ».

-Punctuation (08.95%), EFL students suffered serious problems in applying the punctuation system correctly. It is also noticeable that students neglect one of the most important rules in writing, which are :

writing in a shape of paragraphs, intending each new paragraph and starting each new sentence with a capital letter. In our study, the students' punctuation errors maybe categorized as follows :

- Misuse of the colon, and some students do not use it at all.

- Omission of the semicolon.

- Run-on sentences, with no full stops at the end of sentences.

- Poor or no revision of what is written and not enough spaces between words.

- The omission of the comma after introductory elements.

-Capitalization (22.38%), results show that in the EFL written productions there is an absence of the capital letter at the beginning of new sentences, or there is a rare capitalization of proper nouns.

- Word order (10.44%), perhaps this is a result of L1 interference because students refer to translation from L1 to L2, for example someone wrote 'language English' instead of 'English language'.

Type of Errors	Inccorect Form	Correct form
Semantic Errors	1. I wish be work teacher. 2. ...my dream came truths. 3. I have 20 years old. 4. I have very wishes. 5. I am in the age of 18. 6. I think that English the better for me. 7. ...to can speak English. 8. This language is easy and enjoy. 9. I choose English because i have a long story with him. 10. ...play guitar... 11. I interesting about learning English. 12. Iam choises English language... 13. I wish to take dood markes. 14. ...is a choice not oblige. 15. My hobby is write poems. 16. I will near from my dreams. 17. I will improve in English. 18. ...to be more rich in vocabulary. 19. ...i want talking about	1. I wish to be a teacher. 2. ...my dream comes true. 3. I am 20 years old. 4. I have many wishes. 5. I am 18 years old. 6. I think that studying English is the best choice for me. 7. …to become able to speak English. 8. This language is easy and enjoyable. 9. I choose English because i have a long story with it. 10. …playing guitar… 11. I am interested in learning English. 12. I choose English language… 13. I wish to get good markes. 14. ..is a choice, it is not an obligation. 15. My hobby is writing poems. 16. I will realize my dreams. 17. I will improve my English language. 18. ..to enrich my vocabulary.

	my feeling.	19. …i express my feeling.
	20. *I prefer to talking with different languages.*	20. I prefer using different languages.

Table 24 : Students' Semantic Errors

Findings indicate that semantic errors' occur when EFL learners translate their ideas, words and expressions directly from their L1 to English, in order to convey their readers (teachers). Another reason for making such errors is due to the learners ' limited English vocabulary, because mastering any language needs to read a lot in that language in order to acquire the much possible amount of vocabularies.

	Lexical errors	Gramatical and syntactic errors	Semantic errors	Total
Number of errors	65	67	20	152
Percentage %	42.76%	44.07%	13.5%	%100

Table 25 : Recapitulation of Students' Errors

To conclude, the analysis of students' paragraphs, reveals that the majority of first year EFL learners make a lot of errors in both levels : grammatical and syntactic level as well as lexical level ; findings show that the number of errors in both levels is nearly the same. Whereas, the students tend to make fewer errors at the semantic level. Consequently, these findings and the students' answers of the questionnaire are nearly the same, especially the question number six (06) in section three « At which level do you often make errors? ». Moreover, we find that EFL learners make some errors which are related to L1 interference mainly in using prepositions. Also, at the semantic level students make errors because they sometimes translate word and even sentences from their L1 to the target language. Furthermore, there are other errors which they have nothing to do with L1 interference but in fact they are results of the non- mastering the target language ; as errors in punctuation, incomplete implication of different grammatical rules (irregular verbs), or in spelling. To conclude, first year EFL students produce poor written productions which are full because of errors resulted from L1 negative transfer (L1 interference).

4-3 Testing Hypothesis

Our hypothesis which states that first year EFL learners' writing skill in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, at the Department of Foreign Languages, Division of English Studies in Biskra University will be enhanced if they do not use L1 interference is confirmed. From the analyses of both students' questionnaire and written paragraphs, we find that first year EFL students make some errors related to L1 negative transfer, mainly grammatical errors such as : using prepositions and articles, omission of copula, singular vs plural and word order. Moreover, finding reveal that first year EFL learners produce semantic errors because some of them tend to translate words and even sentences from their native language to the target one.

Conclusion

This chapter is devoted to test our hypothesis which states that « Writing skill of first year EFL learners in Biskra University will be enhanced if they do not make L1 interference ». In order to reach our objectives, we use two tools : a questionnaire administered to first year EFL learners and analysis of some of their written production. The questionnaire's statistical findings revealed that students make errors in different linguistic levels (lexical, grammatical, and semantic), and to support these results, the analysis of first year EFL written production showed that they produce pieces of writing that are full of errors. In fact, our findings indicate that the learners' errors are not only results of L1 interference but also are consequences of non-mastering the target language as well as lack of practicing writing in side and outside the classrooms.

CHAPTER FIVE : SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This last chapter is devoted to summarize the whole study mainly L1 negative transfer, also it aims to discuss the findings of the students' questionnaire and the paragraphs analysis in order to discover the impact of L1 on first year EFL learners writing skill in Biskra University. Moreover, this fifth chapter aims to conclude results and to give some solutions to the problem of L1 negative transfer, besides that it is devoted to suggest some recommendations to both EFL teachers and learners to avoid or at least to reduce L1 interference while writing.

5-1 Summary

This study was designed to examine the impact of first year EFL students' native language in Biskra University on their L2 writing skill. For EFL learners the process of writing in L2 is a challenge because of many reasons, mainly L1 interference. In this study we try to investigate the impact of L1 interference on first year EFL learners writing skill. EFL students' should follow an only way to avoid or, at least, to reduce L1 negative transfer and to enhance their writing which is to keep thinking, and practicing writing in L2 rather than using L1. In this way, they would eventually acquire the fundamentals, or at least the essentials, needs of producing effective written paragraphs. To sum up, the findings reveal that native language negatively influences EFL learners written production and leads them to compose poor paragraphs in English language at first year university level. De facto, there are other reasons contributing to learners' poor written production in English language. These other reasons are related to both EFL learners and EFL teachers, for instance insufficient exposure to good authentic materials, lack of practicing writing tasks, lack of L2 linguistic background and some inadequate teachers' methods. Finally, first year EFL learners produce poor written production due to L1 negative transfer besides non-mastering of L2 linguistic besides cultural knowledge.

5-2 Conclusions

The main objective of the current study is to investigate, identify and describe the influence of mother tongue on first year EFL learner's writing skill in the Faculty of Letters and Languages, at the

Department of Foreign Languages Division of English Studies in Biskra University, we have chosen the writing skill since that it is the most difficult skill not only for EFL learners but also for native speakers. This study supports and highlights the findings that EFL students' errors and poor writing could be related to native language interference. Because of the differences between English and learners' native language in phonological, lexical, grammatical and semantic systems, EFL students face real difficulties when writing in English. Moreover, this research supports the assumption that knowing and analyzing students' errors can provide some insights about EFL learners' learning development, and can enable EFL teachers to build the appropriate educational methods and techniques that help their students to avoid or ,at least, to reduce their L1 negative transfer as well as to improve their levels.

Our research is divided into five chapters; the first chapter was about general introduction to our research. The second chapter was an extensive review of literature and research related to first language, L 1 acquisition and learning, second language, L 2 acquisition and learning, different learning theories, language transfer and interference, as well as writing skill as a crucial and complex productive skill for EFL students. However, the third chapter devoted to explain the method that is used to carry out this study. Moreover, it defined the population, the sample, the tools that were used to collect data. Besides that, it gave us a detailed description of first year students' questionnaire as well as it provided us with the analyses of some written paragraphs, and in order to answer the research questions we analyzed the data that were collected from the previous tools. However, in the fourth chapter we attempted to analyze and discuss the data gathered from students' questionnaire and from the analysis of students' written production. Whereas, in this final chapter, we attempt to summarize, and conclude the whole study, also we try to discuss our findings and according to it we give some recommendations for both teachers and EFL learners.

5-3 Discussion

According to both the analysis of different items in the students' questionnaire and the analyses of their paragraphs, we draw up the following discussion:

The analyses of the students' questionnaire enabled us to know the students' attitudes towards writing skill in general, and its different items gave us more clarifications about the influence of L1 on EFL students writing skill.

The analyses of students' paragraphs allowed us to conclude that EFL learners are facing a great problem to write correctly. Although that there are some learners who are competent in basic rules of English language, but their knowledge in this foreign language has some defects. These defects may be occur due to the negative effects of L1, as well as due to the lack of practice in writing in side and outside classrooms.

The findings reveal that 67 errors out of 152 errors are phonological/ lexical errors. EFL learners may substitute a letter for another, as substituting the *z* for the *s,* the *p* for the *b,* the *s* for the *c.* Furthermore, EFL students may omit some letters (one or more), as omitting the 'o 'in the word boks (books). Moreover, EFL learners may add an   extra letter or letters to a word, as adding an *'e'* to the word finde (find), also they may disorder some letters in a word, such as writing 'peom' instead of 'poem'. Due to the phonological differences between L1 and English and due to students' lack of reading and practicing in L2, EFL learners may make such errors. Hence, differences between L1 and L2 are serious cause for such phonological/lexical errors.

The distribution of the students' grammatical errors were as follows:
Subject- verb agreement errors present 14.92% of the whole errors, this percentage shows that a big amount of errors in EFL learners' paragraphs is due to the students' miss-understanding of subject-verb agreement. Moreover, errors in prepositions present 16.41% of the whole errors. In other words, EFL students failed to practice prepositions correctly. De facto, students misused the correct preposition, or they redundantly used a preposition where it is not needed. Due to the big difference in using prepositions between L1 and English language, learners make such kind of errors.

Furthermore, EFL learners may face problems in the use of articles, articles' errors present 10.44%. The results reveal that some EFL students dropped articles when they should have used them, while others added redundant articles, and some students substitute of the right article with the wrong one was

done by some students. Also, the omission of copula forms another type of EFL students' errors, and it presents 07.4% of the whole number of errors, this is due to L1 interference, particularly it is a result of differences in grammatical rules between L1 and L2. For instance, both verb to 'be' and auxiliary 'do' do not exist in the rules of Arabic grammar.

Besides that, singularity vs plurality errors' indicate another problem. Singular vs Plural errors' present 08.95% of the whole errors, also this is a result of the differences between L1 and L2, since that EFL students were confused to determine whether some words are plural or singular . Likewise, problems in punctuation present 08.95%, this means that EFL students suffered serious problems in applying the punctuation system correctly. Also, it is noticeable that students neglect one of the most important rules in writing as writing in a shape of paragraphs, or intending each new paragraph and starting each new sentence with a capital letter. In fact, the students faced many punctuation's problems such : misuse of the colon, and some students do not use it at all, omission of the semi-colon, run-on sentences, with no full stops at the end of sentences, poor or no revision of what is written and not enough spaces between words, and the omission of the comma after introductory elements.

Moreover, EFL learners faced problems in capitalization. Errors in capitalization present 22.38%, this result shows that in EFL written productions there was a rare capitalization of proper nouns and sometimes there was a total absence of the capital letter at the beginning of new sentences. In addition to the errors of capitalization, students faced some difficulties in word order. Errors in word order present 10.44%, may be this was a result of students' translation from their L1to English. All these findings confirm that the phenomenon of transfer is a reality in second language acquisition and production, which demands more efforts and procedures from both teachers and learners to diminish or, at least, reduce it.

5-4 Recommendations

On the basis on the findings of the study, we would like to make the following recommendations :

- In order to deal with transfer EFL teachers should take into consideration differences between languages (L1 and L2) and cultures (L1 and L2).
- EFL teachers should identify their students' needs and difficulties.

- EFL teachers should identify the differences between L1 and L2, this may make students aware of L1 interference.

- In order to minimize the influence of EFL learners' mother tongue as well as to improve their written production in the target language teachers should train students in the classroom about how to think in the foreign language.

- In order to help EFL students to improve their quality of writing in the future teachers should integrate activities in classes with grammar learning strategies.

- In order to reinforce EFL learners' understanding of several grammatical rules (prepositions, articles…etc.) teachers should present grammar in real context.

- EFL teachers should opt teaching methods that might motivate their students to be active, confident, to participate in the classroom, and attain high language proficiency.

- EFL teachers should provide their learners with appropriate cultural background via using authentic materials.

- EFL teachers should encourage peer corrections because it is observed that L2 students maybe more comfortable when they discuss their works with their peers.

- EFL learners should read a lot of English material and thinking in English.

- EFL students should practice writing inside and outside classrooms because nothing can enhance EFL students' written production than writing activities.

- EFL learners should be aware of the importance of learning vocabulary via the use of dictionaries, since that dictionaries provide rich information on what words mean, how they can be used as well as how they are pronounced.

- EFL students should be aware of the different writing strategies in L2.

Conclusion

This last chapter is devoted to provide us with a brief summary of the entire study and it allows us to get some conclusions that are related to the different findings and results of this current investigation. In addition to that, it presents discussions and explanations to some emerged findings and conclusions. Furthermore, this concluded chapter gives us opportunity to suggest number of solutions and recommendations to diminish or at least reduce L1 negative transfer for both EFL teachers and learners.

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First Year Students' Questionnaire

The Impact of First Language on EFL Learners Writing Skill

Dear students ;

We are conducting a study about the impact of first language on first year EFL learners writing skill at Deparement of Languages section of English Studies in Biskra University. You are kindly invited to answer the following questions, your answers are really appreciated.

Instruction : Please, tick the appropriate answer whenever necessary.

Section one : General information

1) Age range
    a. 18 + ☐   b. 25 + ☐   c. 30 +☐

2) Gender
    a. Male ☐   b. Female ☐

3) How long have you been studying English ?

    For………………………………………..years.

4) Are you bachelor in
  a. Sciences stream ☐   Arts stream ☐   Languages stream ☐

Section two : Attitudes towards Written Expression Module.

1) Do you like writing in English ?

    a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

2) Are you interested in Written Expression Module?

    a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

3) Do you think that Written Expresion Module helps you improve your writing ability?

    a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

4) What is the most diffucult learning skill for you ?
  a. Listening ☐
  b. Speaking ☐
  c. Reading ☐
  d. Writing ☐

5) Are you
a. Weak ☐   b. Average ☐   c. Good ☐   d. Very good ☐   at writing.

6) Is the time allocated to Written Expression enough to improve your writing skill ?

a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

Section three : The Impact of First Language on EFL Learners' Writing Skill
1) Do you think that it is essential to refer to your first language when you write in English ?

a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

2) How often do you refer to your first language (L 1) when you write in English?
a. Always ☐   b. Some times ☐   c. Rarely ☐   d. Never ☐

3) When do you use your first language ?
a. Thinking ☐   b. Collecting ideas ☐   d. Planning ☐

4) Do you think that using your first language make you produce ?
a. Poor written productions ☐   b. Good written productions ☐

5) Do you find difficulties when you write in English ?
a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

6) At which level you often make errors ?
a. Lexical level (vocabulry) ☐
b. Syntactic level (grammar) ☐
c. Semantic level (meaning) ☐
d. All of them ☐

7) Why do you think you make such errors ?
a. Difficulties of English it self ☐
b. Interference of first language (L 1) ☐
c. Other reasons ☐

8) Is it good to make errrors while writing in English ?
a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐

Thank you for your collaboration

. My name is ~~_____~~ . I'm 20 years ago. *old*

I live in Sidi Khalid.... you my be *Do not believe* not beleved That
I love play sport . Well I choice The English.

First becouse I love it . and I fell it's my Distime.
That I read it . when I start speake in English
I feel of ~~free~~ *feel free*

Second I enjoy to learn English . and I hope *learning*
That I will finde my self .

My object ing This years is to pass a good years *objective*
with ~~Great~~ great marks . and of The other years.

I wish I counten my stuady to be a Doctour of
University .

and in The (E)nd If allah wills I will work
hard to make it ~~trocth~~ trouth

Group n° 6

My name is .... I am
19 years Old, I came from Lidua.
I want to study English language
and I choese it as a branch at
University, to be a good English
language lerner, also to will
be a teacher "if Alah Will" and make
my parent proud of me. I have
some happies one of them is to
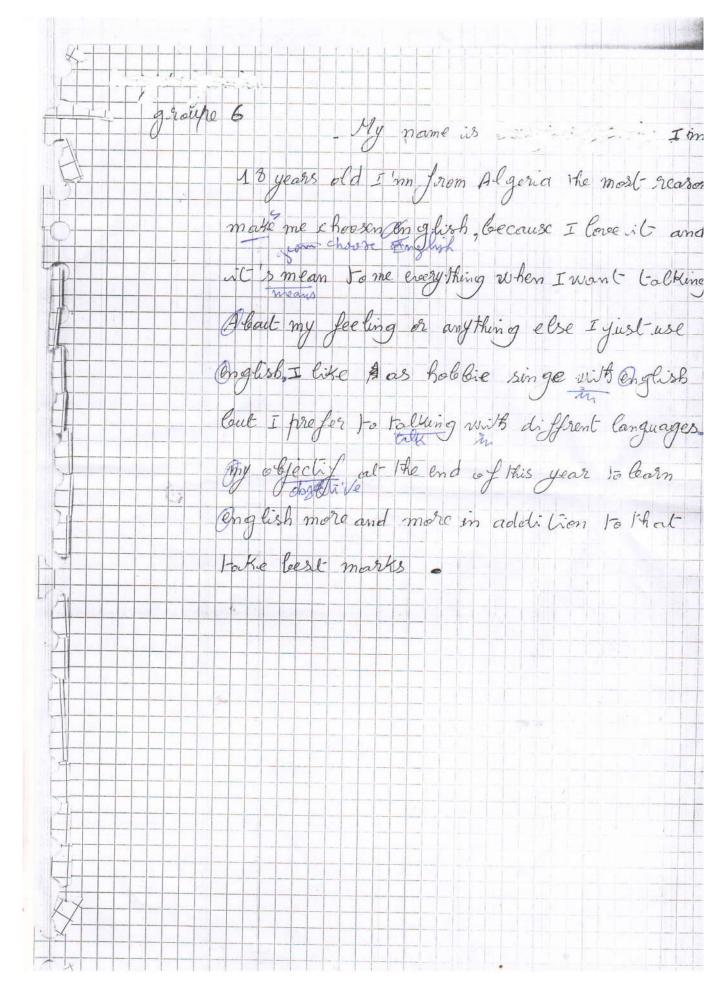write a peam in Arabic and
translated to English in order

I chose

hobbies

Poem

translate Them

to be mor riched in Voc.

(So (this is) At the end I want
to be a succesfull woman in this
live -

groupe 6

- My name is ~~~~~~~~~~~ I'm

18 years old I'm from Algeria the most reason

make me choosen English, because I love it and
  ~~~~~~ choose English

it's mean to me everything when I want talking
  means

About my feeling or anything else I just use

English, I like it as hobbie singe with English
                              in

but I prefer to talking with diffrent languages.
           talk   in

my objectif at the end of this year to learn
   objective

English more and more in addition to that

take best marks .

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث عن التأثيرات السلبية للغة الأم على مهارة الكتابة لدى طلبة السنة أولى جامعي تخصص لغة انجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة بسكرة و قد اخترنا دراسة مهارة الكتابة كونها مهارة مهمة و معقدة في نفس الوقت. لتأكيد أو دحض فرضية أن التعبير الكتابي لطلبة السنة أولى جامعي تخصص اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية سيتحسن إذا لم يستخدموا لغتهم الأم و لاكتشاف أسباب ضعف أدائهم الكتابي و كذلك لمعرفة المظاهر اللغوية التي تتأثر سلبا بهذا التدخل اخترنا المنهج الوصفي و طريقة البحث الكمي. أيضا و لغرض جمع اكبر قدر من المعلومات قمنا بتوزيع استبيان على طلبة السنة الأولى تخصص لغة انجليزية كلغة أجنبية. الاستبيان وزع على عينة مكونة من 40 طالب اختيروا اعتباطيا من مجموع 885 طالب وهذا لمعرفة مواقفهم من مهارة الكتابة بشكل عام و للاطلاع على التأثيرات السلبية للغتهم الأم على أدائهم الكتابي بشكل خاص. كذلك قمنا بتحليل مجموعة من تعبيراتهم الكتابية لنتمكن من تحديد الأخطاء المرتكبة التي لها علاقة باللغة الأم. أظهرت النتائج أن طلبة السنة الأولى يواجهون مشاكل كثيرة لأنهم يلجئون لاستخدام لغتهم الأم لتخطي بعض صعوبات الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية. عند تحليل النتائج تبين أن الطلبة يرتكبون أخطاء لفظية نحوية صرفية صوتية و معجمية لسببين رئيسيين الأول هو التدخل السلبي للغتهم الأم و الثاني هو عدم التمكن الجيد من اللغة الانجليزية. في الأخير من اجل تطوير و تحسين كتابات طلبة السنة الأولى تخصص لغة انجليزية و من اجل القضاء أو علي الأقل التقليل من التدخل السلبي للغة الأم وجب على كل من الطلبة و الأساتذة إعطاء اهتمام اكبر لهذه الظاهرة لان الأبحاث العلمية أثبتت انه عندما يتجنب الطلاب التدخل السلبي للغتهم الأم فإن أدائهم الكتابي يكون أعلى كما أنهم يتواصلون بفعالية اكبر.