


Exploring Cross-Linguistic Transfer in Writing Proficiency: The Influence of Arabic (L1) on English (L2) Among Libyan University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the correlation between Arabic (L1) and English (L2) writing proficiency among Libyan EFL university students. A comprehensive writing test in both languages was used to assess how proficiency in L1 influences written outputs in L2. Scores were analyzed across five themes, revealing a positive relationship between L1 and L2 writing abilities. The research also identified transferable language features evident in both Arabic and English compositions, highlighting the impact of L1 on L2 skills and specific linguistic elements transferred between languages. These findings underscore the interconnectedness of first and second language writing capabilities among bilingual learners.

Keywords: correlation, first language, second language, writing.

المخلص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة العلاقة الترابطية بين اللغة العربية (L1) واللغة الإنجليزية (L2) في مجال مهارات الكتابة بين طلاب جامعات ليبيا الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أستخدم اختبار شامل للكتابة باللغتين لتقييم كيفية تأثير مهارات اللغة الأولى على الإنتاجات الكتابية في اللغة الثانية. تم تحليل النتائج بناءً على خمسة محاور، مما كشف عن علاقة إيجابية بين مستوى مهارات الكتابة في اللغتين الأولى والثانية. كما كشفت الدراسة عن سمات لغوية قابلة للنقل تظهر في كتابة الطلاب بالعربية والإنجليزية، مما يسלט الضوء على تأثير اللغة الأولى على مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الثانية والعناصر اللغوية المحددة التي تنتقل بين اللغتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ؛ العلاقة الترابطية، اللغة الأولى، اللغة الثانية، الكتابة.

Introduction

It is generally argued that the correlational relationship between skills in (L1) and (L2) usually exhibits a positive trend. According to Freeman (2000), as cited in Karim and Nassaji (2013), students with a strong educational background in L1 are expected to perform well in L2 and progress at a similar pace. This suggests that L1 can have a beneficial and positive correlation with L2, enabling writers to produce higher-quality written work. Students often transfer similar strategies, language patterns, and even cognitive processes from one language to another (Karim & Nassaji, 2013).

Numerous studies have delved into the crosslinguistic transfer of language properties in second language acquisition research, also known as cross-language transfer or crosslinguistic influence. Among these properties, language skills are the most thoroughly researched because they are the easiest to observe and assess. However, when compared to reading, speaking, and listening, writing is considerably more challenging to test and evaluate. Consequently, many researchers have shied away from studying the crosslinguistic influence of writing skills (Gonca, 2016). Given the complexities involved in evaluating writing, it remains a less explored yet crucial area in understanding the full scope of crosslinguistic transfer.

Despite these challenges, the existing body of research underscores the importance of understanding how L1 skills can positively influence L2 writing abilities. By examining the transfer of writing skills, educators and linguists can better support L2 learners in leveraging their L1 strengths, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient language acquisition. This article will explore the various dimensions of L1 to L2 transfer in writing, highlighting its implications for educational practices and future research in the field of second language acquisition.

Research Problem

Cross-linguistic influence, the interplay between a learners's (L1) and (L2), can function in both positive and negative directions. Positive transfer, as defined by Selinker (1983) and cited in Karim & Nassaji (2013), involves the facilitation of L2 learning through the application of L1 knowledge. Conversely, negative transfer occurs when L1 knowledge obstructs and hinders the acquisition of L2 skills. This dual nature of cross-linguistic influence is particularly pertinent in the context of Arabic and English language learning, given their different linguistic structures and origins from separate language families—Semitic and Indo-European, respectively.

The contrast between Standard and Colloquial Arabic adds another layer of complexity. According to Qaid and Ramamoorthy (2011), as cited in Elshahawy (2021), the significant linguistic differences between Arabic and English often result in a negative relationship, complicating the learning process for Arab students.

This point is underscored by Mahmoud (2000), who identified numerous interlingual errors in the English writings of Sudanese university students. Mahmoud's analysis revealed 35 interlingual grammar and vocabulary forms in their free writings, illustrating the varied aspects of

Standard and non-Standard Arabic that students transferred into English. This literal translation into L2 highlights the reliance on L1 as the most readily available

Linguistic resource to solve learning and communication challenges. However, this view is not universally accepted. Some researchers, including Elshahawy (2021), Dweik, and Abu Alhommos (2007), argue that there are beneficial similarities between Arabic and English that can positively influence the L2 learning process. These scholars assert that certain advantageous linguistic features can be transferred from Arabic to English, aiding rather than obstructing the acquisition of L2 skills.

Given these conflicting perspectives, the research problem centers on understanding the conditions and factors that determine whether the cross-linguistic influence is positive or negative. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate the mechanisms through which L1 (Arabic) affects L2 (English) writing skills, considering the dual nature of Arabic and the significant structural differences between the two languages. By examining both the beneficial and detrimental impacts of L1 transfer, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Arabic-speaking students navigate the complexities of English language acquisition.

Research Questions

1. Is there an interrelationship between (L1) and (L2) writing proficiency?
2. Does the proficiency level in L1 writing exert a significant impact on students' performance in L2 writing?
3. Can the written output elucidate transferable writing skills between Arabic and English?

Research Terms

Correlation: a relationship between two or more variables. (L1 and L2 in this case).

Writing Proficiency: a proficient writer demonstrates a grasp of writing skills that are essential for success in most occupations.

Positive Correlation: A positive correlation exists when one variable decreases as the other variable decreases or one variable increases while the other increases.

Positive Transfer: an immediate or rapid acquisition or use of the target language that is led by the influence of the native language .

L1: First language (Arabic)

L2: Second language (English)

Related Studies

Research indicates that L1 transfer can assist L2 learners in the writing process. When L2 writers are guided in various writing skills in their L1, such as organizing, planning, revising, and editing, they may use these skills in L2 writing (Karim & Nassaji, 2013). Kubota (1998) evaluated Japanese and ESL essays of graduate and undergraduate students and found that nearly half used similar patterns in both languages, suggesting L2 writers can transfer organizational and rhetorical patterns from L1 to L2 without negative cultural transfer.

Karim and Nassaji also noted that crosslinguistic transfer in L2 writing serves as both a learning tool and a means to resolve communication issues. High proficiency in L2,

Especially knowledge of rhetorical structures and experience in L1 writing facilitates the transfer of skills (Beare, 2000).

L1 transfer can help L2 writers manage tasks better by planning and organizing essays in their L1 through self-communication, making the task more manageable and improving writing quality. However, effective transfer requires adequate L2 proficiency; less proficient students may struggle to apply L1-based strategies due to insufficient linguistic knowledge (Berman, 1994).

Additionally, employing L1 in the L2 writing process aids in maintaining the writing process and simplifies writing in English. Less proficient writers tend to use their L1 more than proficient writers (Rashid, 1996). According to Albakai & Elshawish (2016), L1 plays a crucial role in L2 writing, with L2 writers often switching to L1 for strategic purposes. L1 helps recall new vocabulary, think about the subject, and ensure the intended meaning of words or statements. In Arab learners, L1 (Arabic) has positively influenced their English writing in academic contexts. Elshahawy (2021) hypothesized a positive transfer from Arabic to English in writing, speaking, and reading skills. His study on

Saudi English majors, where English was taught half-time in Arabic and half-time in English, supported this hypothesis. Participants provided qualitative data revealing the experiment's effectiveness. Similarly, Abu Al Hommos and Dweik (2007) explored the effect of L1 proficiency on L2 writing proficiency in middle school Jordanian English students. Their quantitative study required students to write compositions in both languages, evaluated by high-standard criteria. Results showed a significant correlation between proficiency in Arabic and performance in English writing, confirming Bialystok's claim (1983) that positive transfer can occur even with vastly different languages. Their study revealed that skilled L1 writers exhibited more proficiency in L2 writing than less skilled ones. The writing mode (narrative or expository) also influenced the strength of this relationship, indicating other factors at play. Further exploration of positive cross-language transfer of writing skills in various environments and identifying the effects of L1 level and L2 proficiency on written products is necessary.

Contrarily, some recent studies suggest a negative relationship between Arabic-English writing skills, considering L1 a source of errors in L2. Abu Ghwaileh (2014) examined Emirati grade nine male students' writing abilities, showing a correlation between Arabic and English writing skills. The study emphasized the importance of MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) writing competency but discovered that colloquial language styles in Arabic could introduce errors in English writing. The analysis indicated that students' strengths and deficiencies in L1 writing impact their L2 writing skills.

Numerous studies on crosslinguistic transfer in writing proficiency have investigated various factors, including culture, L1 proficiency, and the effect of colloquial Arabic. However, there are gaps in the literature, notably a lack of studies on Arab adult learners. Studies like El-Aswad (2002) and Albakai & Elshawish (2016) on Libyan university EFL students focused more on writing

strategies than the written product. Future research should analyze transferable language features such as vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and organization to understand the key tenets of writing proficiency correlation for Libyan EFL university students better.

It is generally argued that the correlational relationship between skills in one's first language (L1) and second language (L2) usually exhibits a positive trend. According to Freeman (2000), as cited in Karim and Nassaji (2013), students with a strong educational background in L1 are expected to perform well in L2 and progress at a similar pace. This suggests that L1 can have a beneficial and positive correlation with L2, enabling writers to produce higher-quality written work. Students often transfer similar strategies, language patterns, and even cognitive processes from one language to another (Karim & Nassaji, 2013).

Yang (2019) also reviews the impact of negative language transfer on English writing among Chinese learners. It highlights how Chinese students often encounter errors in English due to the influence of their native language, known as "Chinglish." Negative transfer manifests in areas like grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, and is prevalent in Chinese students' writing. Several studies examined in the review emphasize how Chinese thinking patterns lead to errors. The paper suggests pedagogical interventions, such as enhancing language input and encouraging thinking in English, to mitigate the negative effects of L1 interference.

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Despite these challenges, the existing body of research underscores the importance of understanding how L1 skills can positively influence L2 writing abilities. By examining the transfer of writing skills, educators and linguists can better support L2 learners in leveraging their L1 strengths, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient language acquisition. This essay will explore the various dimensions of L1 to L2 transfer in writing, highlighting its implications for educational practices and future research in the field of second language acquisition.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The current study adopted a qualitative approach, as it is the most applicable method for the problem under investigation, because it provides a thorough description and analysis of the research topic without restricting the scope of the study or the type of participants, and it is most generally suitable for small samples. The correlational method of research was used to identify the type of relationship between L1 and L2 in writing proficiency, using a composition-writing test.

Participants and Setting

The participants were Misurata University English students enrolled in the English Department of the Faculty of Arts in Misrata city, Libya, from the 7th to the 8th semester of the academic year 2022-2023. A number of 10 students (4 males and 6 females) were chosen to take part in the research test to serve the research objectives.

The participants had experienced different forms of writing and a great deal of writing instructions in their previous academic subjects. Also, they were reasonably more aware of the importance of participating in empirical research than their freshmen colleagues.

Research Instruments

The researcher adopted a composition writing test. This test was inspired by and similar to the test used by Abu Al Hommos and Dweik (2007) in terms of its design and the criteria used for evaluation and analysis; the researcher designed a particular model to evaluate the writings of the students and accredit them according to the marks assigned for each criterion of evaluation. The model consisted of 4 criteria; cohesion and coherence, grammatical and spelling accuracy, word choice, and task response. The first two were given 3 marks, and the second two were given 2 marks.

This distribution of scores was implemented based on the IELTS Writing Scoring Scheme, which uses the mean to calculate the task's total score; however, to facilitate the workload for the teachers who rated the students' writings, the aforementioned scoring system was applied by the researchers i.e. (a modified version of the IELTS scoring Scheme). Additionally, to ensure that the students would engage with the writing tasks; the two topics chosen for the test (one for Arabic and the other for English) were purposefully appropriate and engaging for the students' levels and their general knowledge.

Data Collection

The researchers distributed the English writing task followed by the Arabic writing task to the students in a timed session of one hour. The English topic required the students to write an opinion essay entitled "Learning the Culture of the Target Language is Important" where students presented their agreement or disagreement with the given statement. The Arabic topic

prompted the students to write an essay on the importance of the following statement "Setting Life Goals and Having Future Plans is Considered an Issue of Major Concern for Students". The reason for choosing the opinion essay type over other types of essays was; that the researchers considered it to be one of the most engaging types of writing so to guarantee the students would write texts that can be analyzed. Opinion essays do not require searching for data or providing scientific-based evidence, which will take longer time.

Upon finishing the writing session, the researcher handed over the English essays to one of the members of the teaching staff in the English Department, to rate them according to the evaluation criteria. The same procedure was followed for the Arabic essays which were evaluated by an Arabic language professor working in the same faculty. (see appendix 2).

Data Analysis

To verify the nature of the correlation in writing proficiency between L1 and L2; the researchers used themes to decode and compare the students' grades in both tasks using the results she obtained from the professors' assessment. Furthermore, she interpreted the findings and built on conclusions in light of the research questions and the literature reviewed.

Each theme was explained thoroughly in a separate section, where the scores of each criterion were presented in tables to examine the correlation between the students' writing proficiency in L1 and L2. The first section looked at the

overall scores of the students' writings in the two languages. The second section labeled the first criterion in the evaluation form (coherence and cohesion). The third section was set to provide information about grammatical and spelling accuracy. The fourth section coordinated the data gathered on the student's choice of words and lexical diversity. Lastly, another section delivered

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insight into the students' competence in task response. (see appendix. 2).

Results and Discussion

By employing a meticulous data analysis process, the study effectively addressed its research questions and identified themes that emerged during the analysis. The findings were thoroughly interpreted and cohesively presented. The researchers elaborated on these findings by incorporating their personal reflections and drawing comparisons with previous literature, thereby bolstering the conclusions of this research.

Analysis of the Students' Total Scores in the English and Arabic Texts

The core question of this study was to ascertain whether the L1 writing competence of Arab EFL students correlates with their writings in L2. Table 1 presents the total scores that the participants had in the research test for each language, which indicates the close relationship of writing proficiency between Arabic and English, where students scored a very close mark in the two tasks and some even got the same score as in the case of student NO. 6 and student NO. 10. It also shows that the general writing ability of the students is considered of high level in the two languages, except for student NO. 7 and student NO. 9 who received low marks due to their weak performance as the following analysis will demonstrate.

Table 1 Students' total scores in the English and Arabic writing tasks

Student's number	English Text	Arabic Text
1	5.5	9
2	8.2	9.5
3	9.1	9
4	6	7.5
5	7	5
6	9.8	9.5
7	3.3	3.5
8	9.2	8
9	3.7	5.5
10	9.1	9

Cohesion and coherence :

According to the table, more than half of the participants achieved high marks for their cohesion and coherence ability. These participants had well-organized paragraphs, connected ideas, and smooth progression in their essays. For example, student No. 6 started her English essay with a topic sentence, then built on that sentence with more details and explanation, and provided an example using simple yet effective transition techniques.

Table 2 Students' Scores in Cohesion and Coherence

Student NO.	Score in the English text (out of 3)	Score in the Arabic text (out of 3)
1	1.5	3
2	2	3
3	3	3

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4	1.8	1.5
5	2.2	1
6	3	2.5
7	0.5	0.5
8	2.9	2.5
9	0.5	1.5
10	2.8	3

"It is essential to know or have an idea about the culture of the target language that you are learning. One cannot understand certain concepts or complicated ideas of the target language without knowing the specific culture. Each language belongs to different people who have different beliefs and different points of view to certain behaviors, there are things that you could say in a culture and it would be ok, however, in another culture it would be inappropriate."

The above example illustrates the positive transfer of one key writing skill which is cohesion and coherence; the student scored almost the same score in both tasks, along with the other 6 students who had high marks as well. Even though her writing can still be improved, the example is still a piece of strong evidence to wipe out any doubt about a correlational relationship in writing proficiency; a positive relation in this case.

"تحديد الأهداف ورسم خطط مستقبلية من أهم الأمور التي تشغل بال الطلبة. اكتب عن أهمية هذا الموضوع في حدود 250 كلمة".

تحديد الأهداف ورسم خطط مستقبلية أمر مهم على كل طالب وطالبة الاهتمام به. فهذا الأمر سيساعد الطلبة في مسيرتهم الدراسية وسيجعل منهم مجتهدين. عندما يرسم الطالب خططا مستقبلية سيضعها دائما أمامه وستجعله مثابرا ومهتما بدراسته..... سيجتهد دون كلل أو ملل وكل خطوة صغيرة ستكون أقرب للهدف... إلخ".

The same student scored 2.5 out of 3 in cohesion and coherence in her Arabic essay. She paraphrased the question as her topic sentence, and then provided logical reasoning for her ideas; as the question asked the students to write about "the importance" of the given statement, the student was able to show this importance quite skillfully moving from one idea to another related idea. The rest of the participants who got lower marks bring forth that the contrary is true; If the students have poor cohesion and coherence competence in Arabic "the L1", the possibility of having a negative transfer will be higher i.e., less proficient performance in English. During the writing test, the researcher observed a common behavior by almost all of the participants while writing; none of them dedicated any time to brainstorm ideas or organizing points, instead, they started writing immediately, this observation may explain the reason for the poor performance in cohesion and coherence by some students. However, when considering their percentage in the total number of participants, the negative transfer only represents 30% of the total. All in all, whether negative or positive, correlation is found in both cases. The following themes will support all of the above results even more.

Grammatical and Spelling Accuracy:

Table 3 provides information about the participants' proficiency in grammatical accuracy, most students had varying high marks in both tasks, all were over 2 out of 3 approximately, which further confirms the given hypothesis in this study (there is a positive transfer from L1 to L2).

Table 3 *Students' Scores in Grammatical and Spelling Accuracy*

Student's number	English text score (out of 3)	Arabic text score (out of 3)
1	1.5	2
2	2.8	2.5
3	3	3
4	1.5	2
5	1.8	2.5
6	2.9	3
7	0.5	1.5
8	2.9	2.5
9	1	2
10	2.6	2

However, it is noticed that some of the participants scored low in grammar and spelling just as they did in cohesion and coherence in Arabic and English. Seeing that part of the research was to find out about transferable language skills across Arabic and English, it could be indicated from the results of Table 3 that not all of the writing skills are transferable to the same extent, although some other students gained high marks (the same mark or close) in both tasks, as in the case of students NO. 2, 3, and 6, etc.

This relates to Ghwaileh's study (2014) in which syntactic and lexical errors were traced, where the syntactic errors were double the number of lexical mistakes in both stages of the study. According to Abu Ghwaileh, grammar is the least transferable language feature. Nevertheless, the data continue to show the correlational link between the two languages; a weak performance in Arabic equals a weak performance in English and vice versa.

Word Choice:

Upon examining the data presented in Table 4 it was noticeable that in general, participants showed high competence in phrasing their ideas using proper wording and formulation of sentences. For most students; there were a few more wording mistakes or deficiencies found in their L1 (Arabic) texts compared to spelling or cohesion and coherence mistakes, while on the other hand; there was an obvious lack of lexical diversity in the English texts; this lack can be labeled into 4 categories: literal translation, incorrect pronoun usage, as well as redundancy and repetition of words.

Table 4 Students' Scores in Word Choice

Students No.	Score in the English text (out of 2)	Score in the Arabic text (out of 2)
1	1.5	2
2	1.5	2
3	1.6	2
4	1	2
5	1.5	1
6	2	2
7	1.4	1
8	1.8	1
9	1.5	1
10	1.7	2

To illustrate, here are some examples; the literal translation is found in the majority of the students' writings. Student No.2 wrote "to learn a new language we should do some ways", the use of "ways"

here sounds odd in English, when talking about learning languages, English speakers normally use "steps, methods,

techniques, etc." But not *ways* in this context. Another student wrote, "*there are people who are very interested with this topic*". Both "*interested with*" and "*this topic*" are translated literally from Arabic. One of the Arabic equivalents of the preposition "with" is the preposition "ب" so "مهتم ب" becomes "interested with" creating a negative transfer from L1 to L2. Regarding student NO.4 who had this sentence in his essay, we conclude that his L1 affected his performance in L2 where he scored 7.5 in Arabic and 6 in English. "*The style that people talk in it*" is another example of transfer produced by student NO.7, a transfer of syntactic structure in this case. An equivalent sentence in Arabic would be *الأسلوب الذي يتكلم به الناس*. It appears that the student translated "يتكلم به" to "talk in it". The sentence should have ended with a preposition "*the style that people talk in*", however, stranded prepositions are not allowed in Arabic, therefore, the student unconsciously added a pronoun to compensate. The use of "it" here is an influence of L1 to L2. It is found again that the student's L1 affected her writing in L2 negatively, considering she only scored 1 out of 2 in word choice and a total of 3.5 in her Arabic text. In his study, Ghwaileh (2014) deduced the same type of negative transfer in which literal translation occurred in preposition usage as well.

Incorrect pronoun usage is also a common reoccurring feature in almost all of the ten written works analyzed by the researcher. Students kept using the personal pronouns "*you, we, and sometimes I*" in their writings. For instance, student NO.5 used the second-person masculine pronoun "you" 6 times in his English essay, in the same vein he used the attached pronoun "ك" as in "*عليك التفكير في مستقبلك*" and "*ستكون أفكارك واضحة وهدفك جاهز*". Correlation between the two languages is detected here again; the student transferred his L1 (Arabic) language style when writing in the L2. The second-person masculine pronoun is the default pronoun in

Arabic writing, however, in English, it is frowned upon and is usually avoided in writing for being politically incorrect.

Redundancy and repetition are other common mistakes found in the student's writings; more in English than in Arabic as noted earlier. For example, student NO.9 used the phrases "improve", "improving", and "to improve", rather

repetitively, which is a sign of lacking lexical diversity. In her Arabic essay, she also used the phrases "لحقيقتها"، "لحقيقتها" لتحقيق هذا "لرسم الأفكار"، "لرسم الأهداف"، "لرسم الأهداف" etc." in an overly repetitive manner. that resulted in an incomprehensible composition.

On the other hand, student NO.10 for example, scored 2 out of 2 for word choice in Arabic, and 1.7 in English, with an overall band 9 in both tasks. This shows her considerable high proficiency in L1 that had a positive effect on her L2 writing with regards to the overall performance, however for word choice in particular, it is her proficiency level in L2 that enabled her to employ the appropriate words and phrases. This observation is provoked after analyzing the other students' scores who got 2 out of 2 for word choice in Arabic, namely (1,2,3,4,6) but scored lower in English (1.5 and lower). This means that L1 proficiency can contribute to the L2 writing performance in certain aspects only. For the total written product to be highly proficient, writers are required to have an adequate level of L1 and L2 at the same time. This is consistent with the claims of (Berman, 1994). He argued that if the learners do not yet possess the linguistic ability necessary to produce a text in the target language, learners with lower levels of proficiency may not be able to properly transfer such L1-based techniques.

Task response:

The analysis of Table 5 displays a confirmed correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency, the same students continued to have high marks in both tasks, identically, students (5,7,9) also

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scored poorly in both tasks without a significant difference in their marks in the 4 themes analyzed earlier.

Table 5 Students' Scores in Task Response

Students no.	Score in the English text (out of 2)	Score in the Arabic text (out of 2)
1	1	2
2	1.8	2
3	1.5	1
4	1.5	2
5	1.5	0.5
6	1.9	2
7	0.9	0.5
8	1.4	2
9	0.7	1
10	1.7	2

All seven students responded to the task professionally and did not deviate from the main question. For example; student NO. 3 wrote a well-organized essay in which he clearly stated his opinion, proposed an introductory paragraph explaining the term "culture" that was given in the question, made a clear link between culture and language learning, and addressed the main points for his reasoning quite well then concluded his essay by briefly restating the main idea. On the same line, he responded to the Arabic task reasonably well. His essay was altogether leaning toward the main idea in the question (the importance of setting life goals). And the same applies to students (1,2,4,6,8,10).

However, student NO. 9 had a significantly poor answer to the compositions' questions. She received 0.7 out of 2 in English (which is the lowest mark scored for task response), and 1 out of 2 in Arabic. She had jumbled sentences that made it difficult to

highlight any main points in her essays. She completely deviated from the main topic and wrote whatever was in her mind without relating her ideas to the statements in the questions in both tasks.

What is remarkable, is that she used the same idea in the two texts, even though they had different topics. In the English essay; she stated an example about herself; her dreams and desires to learn English and the British culture since she was young. The same example was used in the Arabic essay, she also talked about her dreams of studying English since she was in school. Presumably, she just wanted to state an example and this was the one immediately available in her mind.

Student NO.7 received a low score too for task response, she wrote about the relationship between learning a language and learning its culture but placed little emphasis on the importance of it. Her essay was rather too general and a bit irrelevant. The Arabic essay was also chatty and contained clichés that made it sound like a motivational letter rather than a formal essay. The student did not respond to the question that was asking participants to write about the importance of setting life goals for *students* in particular. Generality and a lack of specification are present features in both of her essays. It could be said that this is a reflection of the L1 writing style which appeared in the L2 text.

Conclusion

The objective of this research was to investigate the correlational relationship between (L1) and (L2) writing proficiency, specifically examining the effects of L1 and L2 levels on written outputs and the crosslinguistic transfer between Arabic and English.

Through a qualitative analysis of students' writings in both languages, it was observed that there is a significant correlation between writing proficiencies in the two languages. Students who demonstrated higher proficiency in L1 (Arabic) produced well-written essays in L2 (English), while those with lower proficiency

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in L1 exhibited poorer performance in L2 writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that a positive correlation exists between L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English) writing proficiency.

Moreover, this correlation underscored notable transferable skills between Arabic and English. The research findings align with those of Dweik and Abu Al-Hommos (2007), Abu Ghwaileh (2014), Albakai and Elshawish (2016), Elshahawy (2021), and Wang and Wen (2002).

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Appendix 1

Student No.	Task Response (2)	Word Choice (2)	Grammatical & Spelling Accuracy (3)	Coherence & Cohesion (3)	Mark out of 10
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

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9					
10					

Appendix 2

الدرجة من 10	علاقة النص بالعنوان (2)	اختيار المفردات (2)	الدقة النحوية والإملائية (3)	ترابط الأفكار وتسلسلها المنطقي (3)	رقم الطالب
					1
					2
					3
					4
					5
					6
					7
					8
					9
					10