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THE INFLUENCE OF L1 WRITING PROFICIENCY  
ON THE L2 WRITING ABILITY OF SAUDI COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Badar Almu hailib

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Applied Linguistics

The University of Memphis

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## Abstract

Almuhailib, Badar. Ph.D. The University of Memphis. December, 2018. The Influence of L1 Writing Proficiency on the L2 Writing Ability of Saudi College Students. Major Professor: Emily A. Thrush, Ph.D.

This study investigated the influence of first language (L1) writing proficiency on second language (L2) writing ability among Saudi college students. The research was built on Cummins' common underlying proficiency theory and linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which advocate the L1's effect on L2 learning. Participants consisted of 38 students in the Department of English at Qassim University representing English Levels 6, 7, and 8. A mixed-methods approach was employed. For the quantitative section, the researcher obtained students' Qiyas test scores to gauge their Arabic language skills and gave an English prompt test adapted from the written portion of the Oxford Placement Test. For this test, they had to write an argumentative essay for 30-45 minutes. Two raters graded the writing samples following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Then, the researcher used Pearson correlation coefficients to determine any potential correlation between the Arabic and English test scores. In the qualitative section, the researcher provided a questionnaire containing 11 questions to explore three variables that may correlate with L1 writing proficiency's influence on L2 writing ability. These variables were parents' education level and role, participants' educational background, and the first-year participants were introduced to English. The analysis of the qualitative data followed Corbin and Strauss's (2008) thematic and inductive approach. The findings revealed a significant correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency. However, the three variables showed no significant influence. The study recommends L2 instructors and program designers keep in mind the importance of L1 influence and introduce it in practice, and future studies may investigate reading, speaking, and listening skills in addition to writing to find further correlations between L1 and L2 proficiency.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The influence of first language (L1) on second language (L2) acquisition has been a source of extensive research in recent decades. Some studies have investigated both the positive and negative effects of the L1 on L2 learning (e.g., Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990; Ellis, 1989; Odlin, 1989), while others have focused on negative L1 interference (e.g., Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Dweik, 2000). In contrast, the present study investigated potential positive effects of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing proficiency among 38 Saudi university students. The theoretical framework was based on Cummins' (1991) linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which highlights the importance of the L1 in learning an L2.

In this study, participants' L1 Arabic writing proficiency was assessed by obtaining their standardized Arabic Qiyas test scores for writing. Students who enroll in university in Saudi Arabia must take this test as an admission requirement. To assess their L2 English writing proficiency, participants wrote a 250-word essay in English. They were then surveyed and assessed holistically according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

### **Problem Statement**

Writing is one of the most difficult skills to master among the four basic language skills (writing, reading, listening, and speaking). In academia, instructors often prefer evaluating learners according to their writing proficiency; therefore, lower writing proficiency can lead to more limited success in formal education (Tan, 2011). This is especially a problem for students with limited practice with the L2, such as English in Saudi Arabia.

Cummins' (1991) linguistic interdependence hypothesis posits that any skill (e.g., writing) that has already been learned in the L1 does not need to be relearned when acquiring an

L2. Instead, the learner only needs to apply these skills in the new context. Under this theory, literacy skills involving knowledge concepts are easier to learn in the L2 if those concepts have already been learned in the L1 (Arefi, 1997). For these reasons, according to Cummins (1991), the L1 should be the basis of L2 acquisition.

Although taking advantage of cross-language transfer can ease the L2 learning process, this field has not received sufficient attention from English as a second language (ESL) course designers. This study thus sheds light on the influence of the L1 on L2 writing proficiency, which could be used to inform L2 materials and curricula.

### **Significance of the Study**

Although many studies have explored the impact of the L1 on L2 proficiency, they tended to be either related to another skill, such as L1 reading proficiency and its impact on the L2 (e.g., Jiang, 2011; Koda, 2007), or were conducted with languages other than Arabic, such as Chinese, Japanese, and French. English is the most common language investigated regarding this issue as an L1 or L2. Hence, this study contributes to the literature by examining the influence of L1 Arabic on writing ability in L2 English. In addition, it seeks to raise awareness among curriculum designers and instructors regarding the critical role of the L1 on L2 writing proficiency. Instructors would benefit from surveying their students' L1s at the beginning of a course. This would allow them to make adjustments to the lessons and topics to fit students' needs according to their L1 writing proficiency. This study surveyed other factors that may affect L2 writing ability or correlate with the L1, such as parents, education level, years of exposure to the L2, and L2 proficiency level. The study may also bring attention to other studies on the relationship between L1 and L2 skills transfer, especially writing, and encourage curriculum designers and course developers to consider the influence of language transfer (Javadi-Safa, Vahdany, & Sabet, 2013).

## **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to raise awareness of how L1 writing proficiency is important in L2 learning, particularly writing skills. Another reason for conducting this research is to encourage curriculum designers to consider the L1's role in learning an L2 and to build L2 curricula that draw upon students' L1 knowledge and abilities. A third reason is to encourage L2 instructors to take L1 style and proficiency into account when assessing student outcomes.

## **Research Questions**

This study explored the effects of the L1 on L2 writing proficiency, surveying such factors as parents, educational background, years of exposure to the L2, and L2 proficiency level.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does L1 Arabic writing proficiency influence the L2 English writing proficiency of Saudi university students?
2. Does a learner's educational background affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?
3. Does parents' educational background or role affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter gives an overview of theories and studies related to the role and influence of the L1 on L2 writing proficiency. The role of L1 writing proficiency in easing the process of learning L2 writing has been a major concern for many researchers in the past two decades (e.g., Ahmadian, Pouromid, & Nickkhah, 2006; Ahmadian, Pouromid, & Nickkhah, 2015; Dweik & Abu Al Hommos, 2007; Ionescu, 2014; Woodall, 2002; Ziahosseini & Derakhshan, 2006). However, many of these studies have used the same tools when measuring proficiency in a given language, e.g., the composition profile for evaluation or prompt test to obtain results. This practice raises several important questions. First, the composition profile instrument originated in 1981 and is relatively outdated, calling into question its validity. It thus needed to be reviewed to determine how well it fit the assessment needs of the present study. Second, these tools as used in other studies in some cases might not fit the intended context of the present study. Finally, other important variables that could affect L2 writing proficiency might not have been considered by previous researchers, including parent education, learner education, and age of exposure to the L2. This study sought to determine whether there was a correlation between learner L1 and L2 writing proficiency and these factors.

### **Theoretical Framework**

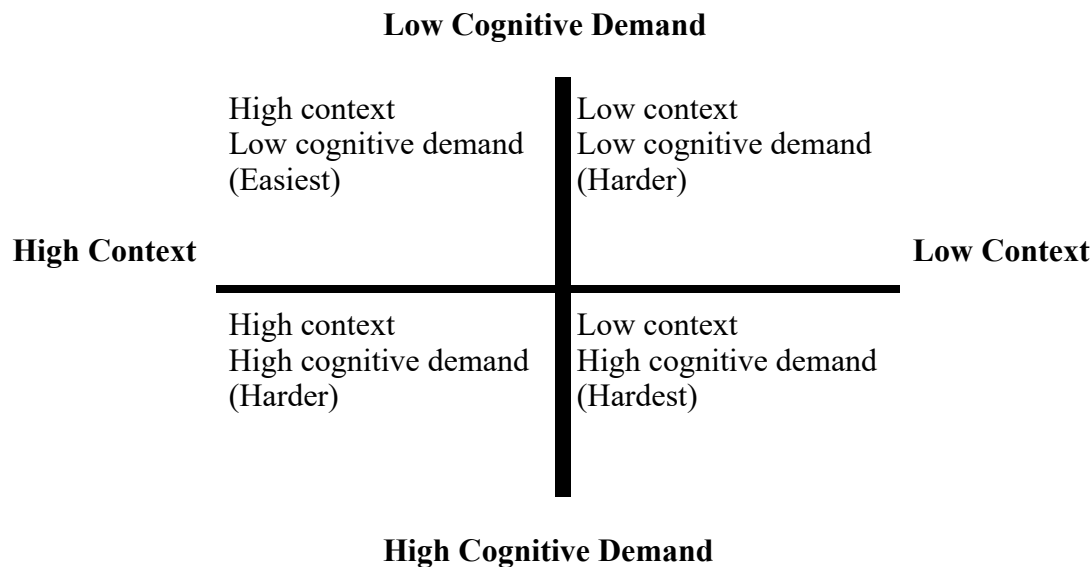
In recent decades, L1 knowledge and its impact have been a focus of many studies from different perspectives. In particular, the theories established by Cummins (1979, 2000) have shaped the relationship between the learner and the language. Cummins' (1991) linguistic interdependence hypothesis clearly shows how the L1 can impact the L2 learning process. Cummins (1979) suggests that "language skills will transfer from L1 to L2 if there is a sufficient exposure to the L2 and a motivation to learn the target language" (p. 233). Cummins called this

the underlying cognitive/academic proficiency in 1984, referring to a common feature among languages allowing cognitive or academic literacy skills to be transferred; however, language transfer needs to be clearly defined since it is a crucial element when writing about the relationship between L1 and L2 (Javadi-Safa et al., 2013). Language transfer is frequently defined as cross-linguistic influence, particularly when a learner has two languages or more that influence each other (Cummins, 2007, 2008; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

Many researchers have been drawn to the concepts of language transfer and cross-linguistic influence, which have been a critical variable in numerous studies (Odlin, 1989), although this notion remains controversial (Agustín Llach, 2010). According to Javadi-Safa et al. (2013), educators started to consider the relationship between L1 and L2 in the 1980s. One may argue that educators had considered the L1's relationship to the L2 as early as the 1950s and 60s, when international students' L1s had to be evaluated in order to predict their potential achievement. For that reason, an aptitude test was utilized, examining verbal memory, sound and its relation to symbol, grammatical basics, and vocabulary (Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009).

Cummins' theory supports those of Chomsky and Krashen in some respects (Malone, 2012). Cummins claims L2 learners can access their common underlying proficiency in language learning, an idea derived from Chomsky's theory about the existence of a language acquisition device in children when acquiring their L1 (Malone, 2012). L2 learners have the same inner competence as when they acquired their L1. In fact, although surface features of languages differ, the learner is already occupied by an underlying knowledge about how languages work. Cummins (2000) categorized learning a language into two domains. The first consists of basic interpersonal communication skills, which take one to two years to acquire. The second is cognitive-academic language proficiency, which takes up to seven years to fully acquire. The

amount of context and task difficulty play an important role in how a learner understands a concept or acquires a skill (Cummins, 2000). Figure 1, taken from Cummins (2000), shows how these aspects correlate.



*Figure 1.* Illustration of Cummins’ theory of language learning domains.

The significant role of L1 is clearly taken into consideration in Krashen and Cummins’ approaches; hence, mastering the four basic language skills in the L1 will help one transfer these skills to the L2 (Malone, 2012). In line with this hypothesis, Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002) conducted a longitudinal study on 42,000 participants enrolled in a bilingual program. They confirmed Cummins’ prediction as their findings showed the most accurate indicator of ESL proficiency was the length of participants’ L1 education.

**Nine theories.** This section discusses nine theories that advocate the L1’s role in L2 learning, with each offering a different rationale. These theories attribute different functions of the L1 when explaining how the L2 is acquired (Ionescu, 2014). Six of these theories posit the L1’s role is crucial in SLA, including Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, Chomsky’s universal grammar theory (UG), Krashen’s monitor theory, the concept-oriented approach, associative-cognitive CREED theory, and processability theory.

Krashen’s monitor theory and Chomsky’s UG consider the L1 the basis for acquiring an L2 (Ionescu, 2014). Many researchers who believe in these two theories think the L1 plays a significant role in L2 acquisition, particularly in the first years of L2 learning. However, Ionescu stated that many important questions should be asked to determine the role of such theories in SLA; for example, does UG theory help L2 learners in the same manner it helped them acquire their L1? Some studies have examined how L2 is acquired by individuals with different L1 backgrounds, e.g., Chinese-English bilinguals, French-English bilinguals, Spanish-English bilinguals (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). Hence, the role of the L1 in monitor theory and UG is notable not only at the theoretical level but in empirical research as well.

According to the associative-cognitive theory, the L1 controls the learning process of the L2, especially in the early years of L2 learning, when the brain’s neurons are modified to fit the L1’s neural commitments (Ionescu, 2014). This theory claims people use their inner L1 learning habits and transfer L1 features, functions, and forms to the L2. However, there will be some features only contained in the L2 that a learner needs to acquire after sufficient exposure to the L2. Sociocultural theory, processability theory, and the concept-oriented approach claim the L1 plays a useful role in L2 acquisition (Ionescu, 2014).

Table 1—adapted from DeKeyser, VanPatten, and Williams (2007, p. 236)—summarizes major differences and similarities between these nine theories. Linguistic factors of input, output, and the L1’s role in L2 acquisition are taken into account.

Table 1

*The Role of the L1, Input, and Output in Nine SLA Theories*

Theory	The L1’s Role	Input	Output
Krashen’s Monitor theory	Initial state Privileged role	The only required element	Developed on frequency of comprehensible input
Chomsky’s UG	Initial state	Activates deduction of	No theoretical status

theory	Privileged role	knowledge	
Associative-cognitive CREED theory	L1-tuned learned attention Privileged role	Associative learning is input-driven	Subconscious tallying leads to automatization
Skill acquisition theory	Taken for granted	The only required element necessary but not sufficient	Frequencies of practice and exposure is important in automatization Raise awareness of input misinterpretation
Input processing theory	L1 ambivalent	How learners process input during comprehension is essential	Frequency and meaningfulness of output very important in order to be processed
Processability theory	Implicit knowledge on the effect of L1	Developmental or functional constraints determine what can be processed, which is revealed in production	Grammatical knowledge is extremely important Communication is intended meaning driven by acquisition
Concept-oriented approach	Implicit knowledge on the effect of L1	Developmental or functional constraints determine what can be processed, which is revealed in production	Form-function mapping of L2 communicates thoughts that are already present in L1
Interaction approach	Taken for granted	The only required element necessary but not sufficient	Significant in combination with other factors
Vygotsky's sociocultural theory	Mediating role Cognitive tool for learning	Zone of proximal development	Prior knowledge drives new knowledge In-through-beyond important as social interaction (collaborative dialogue and private speech)

## Empirical Research

This section explains different issues in the literature related to this study, ultimately showing the gap this study has sought to address.

**Relation between L1 and L2 literacy.** Abundant research has been conducted on the cognitive underlying proficiency hypothesis. Most studies have confirmed a moderate but consistent relationship between L1 and L2 literacy (Cummins, 2016). In 2006, a comprehensive study by Dressler and Kamil (2006) concluded that all reviewed research confirmed the evidence of cross-language transfer in the reading ability of bilinguals. Context often determines the



degree of transfer and the opportunities and motivation to develop the two languages in school (Cummins, 2016). Prevoo, Malda, Emmen, Yeniad, and Mesman stated that the interdependence hypothesis did not consider other factors, such as contextual variables, which may reduce the L1-L2 relationship (as cited in Cummins, 2016). However, Cummins asserted this claim was false.

**Positive influence of the L1.** Some studies have focused on the positive effects of the L1 on L2 learning and built their assumptions, tools, and research questions around the notion that the L1 enhances and develops L2 writing proficiency.

Torres and Fischer (1989) conducted a study on 4,700 Hispanic students from kindergarten to seventh grade who were relatively different in terms of their English and Spanish proficiency levels. The researchers analyzed writing samples in English and Spanish to investigate their L1 influence on their L2 (English). The outcomes showed that proficiency in Spanish made it easier to master the L2. Although this research was conducted on Spanish and English, Torres and Fischer claimed the findings may apply to other language pairs.

However, L1 influence can differ from one language to another due to variables such as L2 proficiency, L1 and L2 education experience, and cultural practices. Carson et al. (1990) investigated Chinese and Japanese students' writing samples and their reading ability in their L1 and L2 to examine the L1's influence on L2 reading ability. The findings revealed no significant relation between L1 and L2 proficiency in terms of writing ability, but in reading, there was a clear L1 influence. These findings demonstrated how L1 influence could differ from language to language or skill to skill, and more research is needed to explore the influence of L1 proficiency among different languages and skills. For example, in Torres and Fischer (1989), the findings showed the L1 Spanish's role in learning the L2 (English), while in Carson et al. (1990), the L1 writing proficiency of Chinese learners did not affect their L2 (Japanese). Therefore, more variables might need to be considered.

In addition, the L1's role is not limited to a direct influence; other influences, such as its role in the writing process, have been investigated as well, with promising implications for L2 learners (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

**The L1's role in the L2 writing process.** The goal of the present study was to investigate the influence of the L1 on L2 writing proficiency; however, investigating other research on the writing process yielded important information about the different roles the L1 could play in L2 writing. Examples of this role would be the instructor or students facilitating a task in an ESL classroom, using the L1 to generate ideas before starting a writing task, and letting students discuss a problem in their L1 when performing an activity. Antón and DiCamilla (1998), Brooks and Donato (1994), and Swain and Lapkin (2000) in particular found that students using their L1 showed improvement in task outcomes and greater understanding of a given activity.

Antón and DiCamilla (1998) conducted a seminal study on adult native Spanish speakers. The researchers asked participants to collaboratively produce three informative paragraphs using their L1. The results showed the L1 played an important role when students worked on a task together since it helped them fully understand the task. By using their L1, students were able to provide each other with scaffolding assistance, which allowed their inner speech to be heard. Otherwise, some students might hesitate to speak in the L2 at the beginning of an activity. In a study conducted by Brooks and Donato (1994), the conversation of eight native Spanish speakers was observed during a task, and the findings indicated that the L1 had three roles: to find a common understanding of the task, to explain the aim of the task, and as meta-talk, which means that learners used their L1 to comment on their L2 usage.

Swain and Lapkin (2000) examined stories written by L1 English eighth grade students in an L2 French immersion classroom working in 22 pairs. The stories came from Dictogloss and

jigsaw activities where students worked together to find solutions. The results revealed that learners used their L1 for three main reasons: to get attention, to interact with each other, and to move forward in the task. Students also used their L1 to ask about vocabulary, explain the task, and manage how to solve the task. In another study, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) examined 24 university ESL learners with similar results. Participants were asked to engage in joint composition and rearrange a task. The results showed how students could better control the task through their L1 and work at a higher cognitive level. The study called for a reevaluation of the ban on using the L1 in L2 learning in pair or group activities.

Villamil and De Guerrero (1996) also examined three aspects: the activities students picked during pair work, the techniques they used to ease the revision process, and what social behavior they exhibited when revising their writing. The participants were all enrolled in a university-level writing course. The results were divided into three themes: social cognitive activities, mediating strategies, and social behaviors. Under mediating strategies, it was clear students used their L1 to facilitate the revision process. The researchers confirmed that the L1 was an important device used to recall language, illustrate and explain the content, guide students to finish a task, and maintain active conversation.

More recent research has likewise supported the influence of the L1 on L2 writing (e.g., Ahmadian et al., 2015; Kibler, 2010). Kibler (2010) focused on the oral interaction between learners when working on a writing task. Kibler concluded that the L1 provided significant opportunities for learners to interact when performing a writing activity and eliminated the constraints that might appear between advanced L2 writers and lower-proficiency learners. Ahmadian et al. (2015) also examined the L1's role in collaborative activities involving L2 writing. The 36 participants were native Persian-speaking ESL students who had to write argumentative paragraphs and were divided into 12 groups with three in each group. Six groups

had to use their L1 and the other six had to use their L2 when performing the writing task. The findings indicated that the experimental (L1) groups focused more on managing the task, explaining it, and questioning the grammar, while the control (L2) groups were more interested in understanding vocabulary and content. Thus, using the L1 made the experimental groups more focused on the important elements of the task. This in turn affected task outcomes and helped students focus on the task itself rather than the content or unknown vocabulary, as happened in the control groups.

The L1's role in language learning and influence on L2 writing outcomes have been demonstrated by numerous studies. Some teachers have recommended L1 usage to facilitate writing tasks or establish ideas, particularly with limited-proficiency learners. In an empirical study, Stapa and Abdul Majid (2009) investigated the role of the L1 (Malay) in generating ideas while writing an essay in the L2 (English). The participants were divided into an experimental group, where students had to use their L1 for brainstorming before writing, and a control group, which had to use only their L2 in all writing processes. Two independent raters graded the students' writing samples. Students who used their L1 showed significant improvement in L2 writing performance. The study recommended that teachers let limited-proficiency learners utilize their L1 in the prewriting process in order to generate ideas and organize their thoughts.

**The relationship between L1 and L2 writing skills.** Arefi (1997) explored the relationship between Persian-speaking EFL learners' writing in their L1 and L2. Participants had to write two different essays in English and Persian; one was descriptive and the other comparative. Their writing samples were assessed according to three categories: linguistic creativity, holistic schema, and technical skills. For linguistic creativity, the assessment was based on the number of words employed, use of simple and complicated sentences, T-unit, and essay length. Holistic schema assessment was based on how ideas were connected and

developed, coherence, and how many ideas were introduced. For technical skills, the assessment was based on punctuation, spelling, grammar, capitalization, vocabulary usage, and the ability to form a complete sentence. Findings revealed that linguistic productivity and holistic schema had been transferred to the L2, although Persian and English grammar and writing systems were different. In addition, there was a positive correlation between length of residence in an English-speaking country and the positive influence on writing techniques.

Ziahosseini and Derakhshan (2006) examined the relationship between the L1 and L2 of Persian college students studying English to obtain a bachelor's degree in English in Iran. The participants were asked to write narrative and argumentative essays in Persian and English. Then the writing samples were assessed based on the ESL Composition Profile evaluating the writing's coherence, organization, and development. The researchers found a considerable relationship between the L1 and L2 as well as systematic differences indicating that the transfer direction was from the L1 to the L2. However, Javadi-Safa et al. (2013) criticized their study, referring to the weakness revealed by the writing performance mean and the moderate significant results of the students' argumentative essays in both Persian and English. Javadi-Safa et al. also stated that the participants wrote the essays at home, which put the internal validity of the measurement in doubt as well. They concluded that a replication study might be needed to provide stronger evidence in this regard.

In line with previous studies, Kamimura (2001) investigated the relationship between the L1 and L2, targeting four aspects: participants' attitude toward writing, written texts, writing process, and writing proficiency. The participants consisted of 30 Japanese university students. First, participants wrote an argumentative essay in the two languages, Japanese and English. Then, they had to respond to a questionnaire in the two languages regarding their behavior when writing. After that, they filled out a questionnaire exploring their perceptions toward their L1 and

L2. The findings showed a significant relationship between L1 and L2 in all four items analyzed. Participants tended to write in a general-to-specific pattern in their L1 and L2 and showed comparable writing quality in both as well. The steps they followed during prewriting also corresponded. Nevertheless, there were some differences between the two languages. For example, participants had more concerns about grammatical mistakes in their L2 (English) than their L1 (Japanese). In addition, they held some negative views of their writing in English, especially the topics provided in the class to write about in English.

**L1 transfer in L2 writing.** According to Liu (2008), there are three schools framing language transfer in writing. First is Cummins' common underlying proficiency theory, which emphasizes the deep structure between L1 and L2, each depending on the other, with greater positive than negative effects. In this sense, writers usually rely on their L1 when writing in the L2 (Wen & Wang, 2004). The second school was established by Kaplan (1966) depending on contrastive analysis. In this school, James believed negative transfer was much greater than positive transfer in L2 writing (as cited in Kaplan, 1966). This theory believes in the importance of the L1 culture model and its effects on L2 text organization patterns. The third school is the creative construction hypothesis by Dulay and Burt (1974), Corder (1982), and Norrish (1983). This hypothesis claims that learners acquire the L2 by going through the steps of UG. In the writing process, L2 learners do not rely on their L1 and use the same techniques and processes when writing even if they have different L1 backgrounds (Liu, 2008).

**Code-switching in the writing process.** Many studies have referred to the L1's role in the L2 writing process and how frequently an L2 writer uses the L1 strategically for different purposes (e.g., Arndt, 1987; Boshier, 1998; Cumming, 1990; Raimes, 1987; Sasaki, 2000; Uzawa, 1996; Wang & Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002; Zamel, 1983). Many studies showed that an L2 writer utilized the L1 to generate a text, plan writing, assess the final product (e.g., Cumming,

1990), transfer knowledge from the L1 into L2 contexts, and create content and organization (e.g., Lay, 1982). In addition, Cummins (1991) and Lay (1982) asserted that mastering an L2 may affect different aspects of how individuals write and their L2 quality, thus differentiating beginners from advanced writers.

In Wang and Wen (2002), the results revealed that L2 writers depended on their L1 to control the writing process, generate ideas, and organize their thoughts, while L2 writers depended mostly on their L2 in examining and text-generating tasks. Participants in the lower level attempted to translate from their L1 when trying to produce the text, while advanced participants used their L1 for strategic purposes, such as generating ideas and making appropriate lexical choices; however, in general, even advanced learners strongly depended on their L1. According to Liu (2008), these findings may be used to determine L2 proficiency depending on the strategy chosen within an L2 writing context. The strategies L2 writers transfer from their L1 are determined by L2 proficiency, as confirmed by various researchers (e.g., Uzawa, 1996; Woodall, 2000). As L2 learners progress in their writing proficiency, they will be less likely to use the L1 unless the task has difficulties that require it (Woodall, 2002). In a mixed-methods study, Wang (2003) affirmed that L2 proficiency would be a good predictor of which approach L2 writers utilized as well as their writing quality.

**Positive L1 influence.** Most studies covering the L1's positive influence on the L2 investigated the relationship between L1 and L2 writing abilities. These studies questioned the relationship between different languages to support the idea that learners' linguistic and cognitive awareness would be positively transferred and correlated (e.g., Carson et al., 1990; Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Jun, 2008). Carson et al. (1990) claimed that L2 writing competence was strongly correlated with L1 writing competence. To determine the relationship between L1 and L2 writing and reading ability, Carson et al. compared the L1 and L2 reading and writing ability

of adult Chinese and Japanese ESL university students, who had to write an essay and read a passage for the reading test in both languages. Although the findings confirmed that literacy was transferable from L1 to L2, the degree and type of transfer differed between the two languages. For example, reading ability transferred more easily than writing ability. In addition, L2 literacy was complicated since many variables could be involved, such as L1 and L2 educational background, cultural practices, and L2 proficiency.

Carson and Kuehn (1992) revealed similar outcomes to those of Carson et al. (1990). The participants were native Chinese speakers, with some enrolled in an American English language institution and others enrolled in a university. The researchers found that good L1 Chinese writers became good L2 English writers, but as the good writers obtained higher proficiency in English, their Chinese writing proficiency might decline. In another study, Ma and Wen (1999) compared Chinese as an L1 with English as an L2 and found that L1 writing proficiency could be a predictor of L2 writing ability among writers with different L2 proficiency levels. They claimed that L1 proficiency affected other skills, such as oral expression and vocabulary comprehension, while L2 writing was influenced indirectly by L1 writing proficiency.

Wang and Wen (2002) investigated the influence of L1 Chinese literacy on L2 English writing. The participants were EFL Chinese learners. The findings showed that vocabulary comprehension and writing ability had a direct impact on the L2, while Chinese discourse had an indirect influence on L2 writing. Among those with lower L1 proficiency, Chinese discourse had a direct effect on L2 writing, while Chinese vocabulary had an indirect effect on it.

**Negative L1 influence.** Far fewer studies (e.g., Cook, 1988; Dunkelblau, 1990; Kamel, 1989) revealed a negative or weak correlation between the L1 and L2. Cook (1988) investigated native Spanish speakers, Kamel (1989) Arabic speakers, and Dunkelblau (1990) Chinese speakers. None of these studies advocated the idea that written discourse features could be



transferred from the L1 to the L2. For example, in Cook's (1988) study, L1 paragraphs were more unified than L2 paragraphs in students' writing samples. Similarly, Kamel (1989) and Dunkelblau (1990) found that students' L2 writing samples were shorter, less complex, and less elaborate than their L1 writing samples. Kamel (1989) further commented on the rhetorical competence shown in the L2, claiming it went beyond culture or language transfer patterns; instead, a learner's exposure, experience, and linguistic knowledge together determined how the target language was affected, according to Kubota (1998). In agreement with these findings, Aliakbari (2002) stated that L2 writing ability was not affected by L1 writing proficiency. He believed that L2 writing was a different task from L1 writing and should not be seen as a writing problem; hence, L2 writing ability is not necessarily influenced by L1 writing transfer. He concluded that many factors could play a role in L2 writing ability other than L1 writing proficiency and transfer (as cited in Jun, 2008). However, the majority of studies advocated that L1 proficiency had an influence on L2 proficiency, especially in writing.

**Translation.** Only a few studies have investigated translation strategies used by L2 learners. For example, Gosden (1996) interviewed Japanese junior researchers preparing to publish their first paper in an English-language journal, asking them about the practices they followed when writing a scientific paper. Some wrote the whole paper in their L1 and translated it into English phrase by phrase. However, Sasaki's (2000) findings showed that advanced L2 learners were less likely to translate than L2 beginners. In that study, participants were given multiple data sources, such as written texts and videos. The researcher divided participants into three groups: novice, intermediate, and advanced. The results revealed that intermediate learners paused often to translate their thoughts into English, while advanced learners paused to refine their English expression.

**Arabic language studies.** When reviewing the literature, only two recent studies could be found focusing on the relationship between Arabic as the L1 and English as the L2 (i.e., Alsamadani, 2010; Dweik & Abu Al Hommos, 2007). Alsamadani (2010) not only investigated a possible relationship between students' L1 and L2 writing proficiency but also explored the possibility of a self-regulatory influence on L1 and L2 writing competence. The participants consisted of 35 students majoring in English at Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia. They were asked to write argumentative essays about the same topic in Arabic and English in different sessions. Students also had to fill out the metacognitive awareness inventory, created by Schraw and Dennison in 1994, to provide information about their self-regulatory abilities. The evaluation system followed the ESL composition profile created by Jacobs et al. in 1981 (Alsamadani, 2010). The correlation between students' cognitive knowledge and writing competence in both languages were assessed, and their writing ability in the L1 and L2 was compared. The findings showed a considerable correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency. Furthermore, the students who scored highly in both languages had higher cognitive knowledge, referring to the self-regulatory abilities variable and its influence on developing writing ability in the L1 and L2.

Similarly, Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007) investigated the relationship between L1 Arabic writing competence and its effect on L2 English writing ability; however, participants were in high school. Another difference was the number of participants. Dweik and Abu Al Hommos had 20 male participants, while Alsamadani (2010) had 35, who had to take the composition prompt test in both languages. According to Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007), the setting was a leading high school in Amman, Jordan. In this case, one should take education background as a variable and look into its influence on L2 writing proficiency. The participants were picked according to their achievement in the previous academic year. The results aligned with many studies previously discussed, as a significant relationship between L1 and L2 writing

ability was found. Students who performed well in L1 writing also did well in their L2 writing in terms of organization, coherence, development, and connecting ideas. For example, the Arabic writing sample scores had a mean of 69 ( $SD = 6.84$ ), while the English scores had a mean of 69.06 ( $SD = 7.80$ ). This meant that even participants doing well in their L1 writing could still exceed their L1 performance when writing in the L2. However, these findings might require further investigation, especially considering the elite high school the participants came from.

### Methodology-Based Research Classification

Surveying previous research methods gave a clearer picture for how to obtain the results of this study. Previous research on the L1's influence on the L2, particularly in writing, employed several instruments, such as prompt tests, student records, composition profile, and various standardized tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

#### *Summary of Methodologies Employed in Previous Research*

Author	Methodology	Limitations and Comments
Ahmadian et al. (2006)	<b>Written prompt</b> started collaboration with participants prepared to respond with <b>argumentative essay</b> . Used L1 in control group, with four men and two women in each group. Analysis employed <b>Paulus (1999) rating scale</b> , and Pearson's correlation test was run through <b>SPSS</b> to calculate rater reliability.	Used one genre (argumentative). L1 use in drafting, planning, and revising may yield promising results.
Marzban and Jalali (2016)	Evaluation based on <b>Composition Profile</b> . Correlation based on <b>Pearson's correlation</b> . Participants' proficiency was lower and advanced intermediate. There were two instruments. <b>Oxford Placement Test</b> was used with two writing exams in Persian and English. An <b>expository prompt</b> was used in exams. <b>Composition Profile</b> was the evaluation model.	Expository prompt.
Mirahmadi (2001)	Participants consisted of 25 <b>junior</b> English high school students. <b>Two compositions</b> were given to examine their proficiency in two languages. <b>Pearson Product-Moment Correlation</b> was utilized for evaluation and analysis.	
Alsamadani	<b>Thirty-five college students</b> were asked to write two	Self-regulatory variable

(2010)	<i>argumentative essays</i> in English and Arabic. Schraw and Dennison's <i>Metacognitive Awareness Inventory</i> was used to assess their abilities. University professors graded the writing samples based on <i>Composition Profile</i> criteria.	considered. Argumentative essay introduced.
Javadi-Safi et al. (2013)	<i>Fifty upper-intermediate</i> students in an English Department in Iran were asked to write on two topics in Persian and English. Their essays were evaluated based on <i>Composition Profile</i> and <i>Pearson Product-Moment Correlation</i> .	Persian-English.
Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007)	Study used <i>composition prompt</i> instrument. One test was in Arabic and the other in English. Participants were <i>20 male</i> students chosen based on their <i>prior academic achievement</i> .	Participants were from an <i>elite</i> high school.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter describes the data collection, research design, participants, setting, and data analysis of the present study. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of L1 proficiency on L2 writing quality. The study was built on Cummins' (2000) common underlying proficiency theory, which advocates the importance of the L1 as a basis for learning another language. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher employed a mixed-methods approach, following previous studies about the effects of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability that employed this methodology and analyzed student writing samples. These studies include Alsamadani (2010) and Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007), which explored how Arabic writing proficiency influenced L2 English writing. In addition, Torres and Fischer (1989) utilized qualitative methods to find potential connections between Spanish and English. Persian as an L1 has also been studied using qualitative methods (Ahmadian et al., 2015; Marzban & Jalali, 2016).

### **Research Design**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability. Data were collected from Qiyas test results, students' English writing samples, and a questionnaire. Students' L1 writing sample scores were obtained from their Qiyas test results and compared to their English writing samples. The independent variable was the students' L1 Qiyas writing scores, while the main dependent variable was their L2 writing scores obtained from a prompt test. The other dependent variables were parents' education, students' education, and length of exposure to the L2, which were investigated through a questionnaire.

### **Participants**

Participants consisted of 68 students enrolled in the Department of English at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. Their ages ranged from 18 to 25, and all were native speakers of Arabic with relatively the same social background. To explore their L1's influence on their L2 (English), the researcher chose advanced students (Levels 6-8). Although these levels had more students (68 in total) than the chosen sample of 68, the researcher randomly chose three classes to serve the research goal.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted at Qassim University, in the central region of Saudi Arabia. Qassim University was established in 2004, and its main campus is located in the northwest side of Buraydah (Qassim University, 2018.). Qassim University has 38 different colleges offering 741 bachelor's degrees, 62 master's programs, and 17 PhD programs. The study was conducted in the Department of English at the main branch. This department consists of eight levels leading to a bachelor's degree in English. In order to graduate, a student has to complete 127 credit hours, mostly in English-related fields, such as English phonetics, syntax, and literature. An example of courses that first-level English students take at the main branch is given in Table 3.

Table 3

#### *Sample of Courses in the Department of English, Main Branch*

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
Isl 101	Intro to Islamic Culture	2
Ara 101	Linguistic Skills	2
Eng 111	Basic Linguistic Skills	3
Eng 112	Listening & Speaking	2
Eng 113	Reading Comprehension	2
Eng 118	Arabic-to-English Translation	2
Eng 120	Vocabulary Inventory	2
Total		15

### **Instruments**

This study employed three instruments. The first was the written portion of the Qiyas, an Arabic-language exam students took before entering the department. The second was the writing section of the Oxford Placement Test. The third was a questionnaire containing 11 questions.

**Qiyas standardized test.** The Qiyas Center is a major educational assessment center in Saudi Arabia that provides a variety of assessments, such as the Arabic Assessment, which examines Arabic proficiency, and the Standardized Test of English Proficiency (STEP), which tests English proficiency. The Arabic Qiyas test measures listening, reading, and writing according to Standard Arabic. Academic language skills make up the biggest part of the test. The test content is aligned with the general culture and language of the Arab world. The score is divided into three components: reading comprehension (40%), writing skills (35%), and listening comprehension (25%). A test taker has 150 minutes to finish the test, which is divided into six sessions. The researcher asked participants to provide their Arabic Qiyas test results, which each student must take before enrolling at the university level in Saudi Arabia.

**Oxford placement test.** The second instrument was a prompt test adapted from the Oxford Placement Test to ensure validity and reliability. The writing test consisted of a prompt for a 150-to-200-word essay, which participants had 30-45 minutes to complete (see Tables 4).

Table 4

*Sample Prompt for English Argumentative Essay*

<b>Level:</b> <b>Age:</b> <b>Qiyas Test Results (Verbal Section):</b>
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**Q:** Write a well-organized paragraph of 150-200 words to describe your reasons for choosing Qassim University to fulfill your academic goals. Support your reasons with specific examples.

---

**Questionnaire.** Participants were given a questionnaire containing 11 open-ended questions to explore variables that may correlate with L1 influence on L2 writing ability. The

questions asked students about their educational background and their parents' role in their learning Arabic and English. The instrument was translated into Arabic to be easier for participants to understand and avoid any difficulties they might face if it were presented in their L2. To ensure accuracy, the translation was revised by a native Arabic-speaking professor who held a PhD in Applied Linguistics at the Department of English. The professor sent some comments back, and the questions were modified accordingly. Examples of questions include "In your opinion, what are the reasons behind your L2 writing proficiency?" and "How old were you when you first started learning English or were exposed to English?" In addition, the researcher collected demographic information and family educational background of the participants. Table 5 shows the relationships between the issues identified above and the questionnaire items.

### **Data Collection**

Since the researcher was sponsored by SACM, many steps were required to obtain permission to travel to the research site. For example, permission from the target university and IRB approval were required before applying to the sponsor. After these were obtained, the researcher travelled to Qassim University to collect the data, while a professor agreed to distribute the questionnaires to participants. All personal information collected was kept confidential and destroyed after finishing the analysis process.

### **Raters**

Two expert raters evaluated participants' English writing samples. Both held master's degrees in TESOL and had experience teaching English for non-native speakers. The raters followed the CEFR to grade the samples. Their ages were 30 and 33. They were not familiar with the students to make the grading fair and reliable, and students' names were blind-coded in order to be objectively evaluated.

Table 5



### *Relationship of Questionnaire Items to Research Issues*

No.	Question	Research Issue
1	In general education, have you studied in public or private schools?	Educational background
2	Have you studied English in a private institute? Where and When?	Educational background
3	In general education, did you study in a village or a city?	Educational background
4	Would you like to add anything about your educational background?	Educational background
5	What is the highest degree your parents have earned?	Parents' education
6	What is your parents' role in your learning your first and second language?	Parents' role
7	Do your parents encourage you to read in your first or second language in your free time or during holidays?	Parents' role
8	In your opinion, what are the reasons behind your L2 writing proficiency (e.g., mastering your L1, your parents' encouragement, enrolling in a private institute, an inspiring teacher, etc.)?	Other factors, such as L1, parents, private institutes, teachers
9	How old were you when you first started learning English or were exposed to English?	Exposure to L2
10	Have you noticed any change in your Arabic writing as you progress in mastering English? Please give examples.	L1 change during L2 progress
11	Do you think that your good writing in Arabic would help make your English writing good too? How so? Please elaborate and/or give examples.	Role of L1

### **Validity and Reliability**

The research instruments were adapted from reliable sources. Students' L1 scores were obtained from the Qiyas Center, a widely recognized testing center in Saudi Arabia. The L2 writing prompt was adapted from the Oxford Placement Test, the reliability and validity of which are tested periodically. In addition, the questionnaire was piloted and modified to fit the participants' context and serve the research questions. Regarding data analysis validation, the researcher utilized SPSS and Pearson correlations to find any potential influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing proficiency.

### **Data Analysis**

Since the study employed a mixed-methods approach, the results have been presented in two sections: one for the English writing samples and Qiyas test results, where the researcher

compared students' L2 writing samples to their L1 test results, and one for the questionnaire analysis. The writing samples were graded by professional instructors with master's degrees and over three years of experience teaching English. In addition, the researcher gave the raters a model to follow when grading that was adapted from the CEFR. The research utilized Pearson correlation coefficients to examine the potential impact of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability and Cronbach's alpha scores to investigate the reliability of the results.

**CEFR.** The CEFR has solid guidelines to assess a person's achievement in a language on a six-score scale (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), where A1 means 1, and C2 means 6. In this study, this writing scale was adapted (see Table 6) to assess students' writing samples. The researcher gave the raters a copy of this assessment scale to assess the samples accordingly.

**Pearson correlation coefficient.** The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to examine the strength and direction of certain variables (Kent State University Libraries, 2017). It reveals if there is an evidential correlation for a linear relationship among the target variables in certain populations and can be used to measure pairs or groups of variables. When the Pearson correlation is run on certain data, the results will indicate the significance of the linear relationship between certain variables, the strength of the relationship, and the direction of the correlation with the target population. Table 6 (taken from Laerd Statistics, 2018) illustrates the correlation coefficient and the strength of association.

Table 6

*Correlation Coefficient and Strength of Association*

Strength of Association	Coefficient, $r$	
	Positive	Negative
Small	.1 to .3	-0.1 to -0.3
Medium	.3 to .5	-0.3 to -0.5
Large	.5 to 1.0	-0.5 to -1.0

**Cronbach's alpha.** Cronbach' alpha is the anticipated correlation between two tests that examine the same construct, and "It is implicitly assumed that the average correlation of a set of items is an accurate estimate of the average correlation of all items that pertain to a certain construct" (Nunnally, 1978, p. 176). This measurement was used to ensure the correlation reliability between students' L1 writing proficiency and L2 writing proficiency.

**Questionnaire analysis.** The questionnaire was discussed in a thematic model, with the researcher assigning themes to analyze the results. The themes were parents' educational background, students' educational background, length of L2 exposure, and the L1's influence on the L2. To analyze the questionnaires, the researcher followed the inductive approach established by Corbin and Strauss (2008), where common themes were categorized according to the patterns revealed from reviewing participant responses. The researcher reviewed these responses many times to obtain accurate data. Although the researcher created the themes according to the research questions, some categories were modified when needed to fit participants' responses. The researcher also quoted the responses in different categories for accuracy. The quotes were written in parentheses to be clearly separated from the discussion and analysis.

## Chapter 4

### Quantitative Results

This chapter presents the quantitative results of the study to address the first research question: Does L1 Arabic writing proficiency influence the L2 English writing proficiency of Saudi university students? To address this question, the researcher first obtained students' Arabic test scores from the Qiyas Center. Then, the researcher had participants write an English passage of 150-200 words in response to a prompt adapted from the Oxford Placement Test: "Write a well-organized paragraph of 150-200 words to describe your reasons for choosing Qassim University to fulfill your academic goals. Support your reasons with specific examples."

Their English writing samples were scored holistically by two professional English teachers according to the CEFR grading scale of 1 to 6, where 6 means students "can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style with a logical structure that helps the reader find significant points" and 1 means they "can write simple isolated phrases and sentences." Thus, the higher the score, the greater their mastery of English writing (see Table 7).

Table 7

#### *Overall Written Production*

C2	Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style with a logical structure that helps the reader find significant points.
C1	Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons, and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.
B1	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within field of interest by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and," "but," and "because."
A1	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

*Note.* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was adapted from Council of Europe (2001).

After that, the researcher compared the results for both languages to find any potential influence or correlation between L1 and L2 writing abilities. Table 8 compares the Arabic (A) and English (B) test results. There were 68 participants in total; however, the researcher chose only those who provided their Qiyas test scores and took the English prompt test ( $N = 38$ ) to be able to compare the results. To explore the potential correlation between English and Arabic writing proficiency, the researcher utilized Pearson correlation coefficients for both tests. The following sections discuss the Pearson correlation coefficient, the highest scores, the lowest scores, Cronbach's alpha, and the mean and standard deviation.

### **Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

The main goal of this study was to find a potential correlation between L1 writing proficiency and L2 writing. In order to find such a correlation, the researcher ran a Pearson correlation coefficient through SPSS (Version 25). This measurement has a value from -1 to +1, showing the degree of a linear relationship between two variables. Four participants scored the lowest on correlation between target variations. For a correlation to be considered significant, the value must be  $r \geq .5$ . The variations in this research were the Arabic test scores and the English test scores. This process yielded a significant correlation ( $r = .617$ ), indicating a clear L1 influence on L2 writing ability. This result supported Cummins' (2000) theory of underlying cognitive proficiency, referring to a common feature among languages allowing cognitive or academic literacy skills to be transferred. For example, students who scored high on the Arabic writing test mostly scored high on the English writing test and vice versa.

Table 8

*Comparison of Arabic and English Test Results*

Item	Arabic Sample Score	Item	English Sample Score
A1	5	B1	6
A2	4	B2	4
A3	4	B3	3
A4	5	B4	4
A5	4	B5	4
A6	4	B6	4
A7	5	B7	3
A8	4	B8	3
A9	5	B9	5
A10	4	B10	3
A11	5	B11	6
A12	5	B12	5
A13	5	B13	4
A14	4	B14	2
A15	4	B15	3
A16	4	B16	4
A17	4	B17	3
A18	5	B18	5
A19	4	B19	3
A20	3	B20	2
A21	4	B21	3
A22	4	B22	3
A23	5	B23	4
A24	3	B24	2
A25	4	B25	3
A26	4	B26	4
A27	4	B27	3
A28	4	B28	3
A29	4	B29	2
A30	4	B30	3
A31	5	B31	4
A32	4	B32	5
A33	5	B33	5
A34	4	B34	5
A35	4	B35	5
A36	5	B36	6
A37	4	B37	5
A38	4	B38	5
Total	38		38

**Highest Scores**

Seven participants scored 5-6 on both tests, representing 18% of the 38 tested and showing an exemplary correlation between L1 and L2 writing ability. In fact, each participant scored the same or higher in the L2 than in the L1 (see Table 9). This evidence may lead to identifying a direction of language influence, but the other participants showed different directions, which is discussed in greater depth later.

Table 9

*Highest Scores in Both Writing Tests*

Item	Arabic Sample Score	Item	English Sample Score
A1	5	B1	6
A9	5	B9	5
A11	5	B11	6
A12	5	B12	5
A18	5	B18	5
A33	5	B33	5
A36	5	B36	6

*Note.* To have a high score, a student had to have scored a 5 or 6 on both tests.

**Lowest Scores**

Four participants scored the lowest on the given test. Although the criteria for choosing the lowest included participants who scored low on either test, all the lowest scores came from the English writing test. However, the biggest differences between Arabic and English scores were in two out of these four scores (14 and 29), as shown in Table 10. The differences between Arabic and English scores in the other two scores were the same (20 and 24). The lowest score results represented 10.5% of the 38 participants tested.

Table 10

*Lowest Scores in Both Writing Tests*

Item	Arabic Sample Score	Item	English Sample Score
A14	4	B14	2
A20	3	B20	2
A24	3	B24	2
A29	4	B29	2

*Note.* To have a low score, a student had to have scored a 1 or 2 on either test.

### **Cronbach’s Alpha**

The researcher ran Cronbach’s alpha to examine the reliability of the results. Cronbach’s alpha examines how different sets of items are related in a certain group. This measures reliability since it measures the internal consistency of the data (Cortina, 1993). Table 11, taken from Cortina (1993), shows one way to interpret Cronbach’s alpha scores. Although the Cronbach’s alpha is between acceptable and questionable criteria, the alpha value is affected by many other factors, such as number of items—only two in this study—interrelatedness, and dimensionality (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, many scholars have reported acceptable alpha values from over 0.6 to 0.95 (e.g., Bland & Altman, 1997; DeVellis, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A low number of questions, weak interrelatedness, and heterogeneous populations may also lower the alpha value. The Cronbach’s alpha found for this dataset was 0.651, and the Cronbach’s alpha based on standardized items was 0.763.

Table 11

#### *Cronbach’s Alpha Internal Consistency*

Cronbach’s Alpha	Internal Consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

Although the Cronbach’s alpha results seemed to be categorized as “questionable” according to the internal consistency criteria, the results were still considered significant for several reasons. One is that Cronbach’s alpha is influenced by the number of items (Tavakol &



Dennick, 2011), which in this study was only two. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha results were likely influenced by the low number of items. Another reason is that the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a significant correlation between participants' L1 and L2 writing scores. Any Pearson correlation coefficient above 0.5 is considered significant and was 0.617 in this study. Cronbach's alpha is also influenced by the length of the test (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In this research, the time given to the participants were from 30 - 45 minutes which could affect the Cronbach's alpha score.

### **Mean and Standard Deviation**

The means of the Arabic ( $M = 4.26$ ) and English ( $M = 3.84$ ) test scores were close to each other (see Table 12). Participants generally performed better on the Arabic writing test than the English test, although the difference between the mean results was only 0.42. On the other hand, the standard deviation between the Arabic ( $SD = 0.55$ ) and English ( $SD = 1.15$ ) test results was slightly higher. The score distribution showed more stability in the Arabic test. However, the difference between the Arabic and English standard deviation results was 0.60, which was still within an acceptable range.

Table 12

*Sum, Mean, and Standard Deviation for Writing Test Scores*

Item	<i>N</i>	Sum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Arabic	38	166	4.26	0.55
English	38	143	3.84	1.15
Difference			0.42	0.60

## Chapter 5

### Qualitative Results

This chapter presents the qualitative results, analyzing the questionnaires to address the second research question (Does a learner's educational background affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?) and third research question (Does parents' educational background or role affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?). These questions were intended to explore various factors, based on the literature, that may interfere with the potential influence of L1 writing on L2 writing proficiency.

The researcher adapted the qualitative results analysis approach from Corbin and Strauss (2008). The inductive approach was used, where the researcher reviewed the interviews in order to find suitable themes and categories. This approach gave the option to modify some categories if required by the responses. The themes found include the influence of students' educational background, parents' education level and role, students' L2 exposure, and students' L1. Table 13 summarizes the questionnaire results. Note that the number to the left of the table indicates the number assigned to each participant. Current English level means the level in which a participant was enrolled in the Department of English at Qassim University at the time of the study. GE stand for general education, which in Saudi Arabia includes Grades 1-12.

#### **Students' Educational Background**

The researcher assigned three questions to investigate participants' educational background. These questions were about their current English level, type of schooling, and age they were first exposed to English (see Table 14). A total of 18 out of 23 participants filled out the questionnaire. The researcher chose these 18 since they provided the Arabic and English test scores needed to compare them to the other factors investigated.

Table 13

*Questionnaire Summary*

No.	English Level	Age	Parents' Education Level	Parents' Role in Learning L1 and L2	Schooling	Age of Expose to English
1	7	22	Bachelor's	Not much, although my father speaks English. But they encourage me to read in my free time.	First three years in village, GE	10
2	6	21	No answer	I give my parents 10/10 in Arabic but 0/10 in English.	GE	15
3	8		Father: PhD	My parents keep telling me about the importance of Arabic and English.	GE	22
4	7	22	Advanced diploma	My father played an effective role in mastering Arabic.	GE, private English Language Institute (ELI) 3 months	19
5	7	23	High school	Not worth mentioning.	GE	9
6			Bachelor's	They encourage me to learn Arabic and English and to read in my free time.	Private school in Grades 1, 10, and 12; private ELI 1 month in elementary school	7
7	7	22	High school	In Arabic only. They encourage me to read in my free time.	Private ELI 6 years ago	9
8	7	23	Bachelor's	My parents inspired me to learn my L1 and L2, especially my mother with learning my L2 since she's an English teacher with a bachelor's in ELT.	Grades 11-12 in private school, studied English in Ireland 4 years ago	11
9	8	23	High school	Effective and active. Encourage reading in free time.	ELI	17
10	7	23	Father: high school, Mother: advanced diploma	My mother played an effective role, especially in elementary school.	GE	7
11			High school	Not at all.	GE	18
12	7	23	Father: high school	Not worth mentioning.	ELI 2.5 months, GE	18
13	7		Elementary school	In Arabic, yes, a big role, but none in English.	Private high school	10

Table 13 (Continued)

*Questionnaire Summary*

No.	English Level	Age	Parents' Education Level	Parents' Role in Learning L1 and L2	Schooling	Age of Expose to English
14	7	23	Did not know	Good role and encouragement.	GE	15
15	7	22	Advanced diploma	Conversational communication but nothing else.	GE	12
16	6	22	Bachelor's	They played an important role. They encouraged me to read in my L1 and L2.	GE	18
17	7	22	Did not know	Support me and encourage me to read in L1 and L2.	GE	17
18	6	21	High school	A big role, taught me about the importance of learning for myself and my future, sometimes encourage me to read in my free time.	GE	16

**Type of schooling.** A total of 11 participants out of 18 had studied only in general education and had not enrolled in a special English institute. The researcher investigated their Arabic and English scores to see if this had an impact (see Table 15). Their Arabic scores ranged from 4 to 6, while their English scores ranged from 2 to 6. The difference between the scores for the two languages was only one grade, except in three cases, which showed a difference of two grades (14, 16) or three (17). Educational background may play a role in these cases, especially given the age of exposure to English for Participants 15, 17, and 18, which was later than the overall student age range ( $M = 13.89$ ).

Table 14

*Participants' Educational Background*

No.	English	Schooling	Age of Expose	Arabic	English
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	Level		to English	Score	Score
1	7	First three years in village, GE	10	5	5
2	6	GE	15	6	5
3	8	GE	22	5	6
4	7	GE, ELI 3 months	19	5	2
5	7	GE	9	5	6
6		Private school in Grades 1, 10, and 12; private ELI 1 month in elementary school	7	5	3
7	7	Private ELI 6 years ago	9	4	5
8	7	Grades 11-12 in private school, studied English in Ireland 4 years ago	11	5	3
9	8	ELI	17	4	2
10	7	GE	7	4	3
11		GE	18	5	5
12	7	ELI 2.5 months, GE	18	4	4
13	7	Private high school	10	5	3
14	7	GE	15	4	6
15	7	GE	12	4	3
16	6	GE	18	4	2
17	7	GE	17	5	2
18	6	GE	16	4	3

Table 15

*Participants without Special Schooling*

No.	English Level	Schooling	Age of Expose to English	Arabic Score	English Score
A1	7	First three years in village, GE	10	5	5
A2	6	GE	15	6	5
A3	8	GE	22	5	6
A5	7	GE	9	5	6
A10	7	GE	7	4	3
A11		GE	18	5	5
A14	7	GE	15	4	6
A15	7	GE	12	4	3
A16	6	GE	18	4	2
A17	7	GE	17	5	2
A18	6	GE	16	4	3

In contrast, six of the participants (see Table 16) had enrolled in an English institute, while one had studied in a private school. As a result, their scores were expected to be higher; however, only two participants scored a 4 or higher in both languages, while the other five only scored a 4 or higher on the Arabic test.

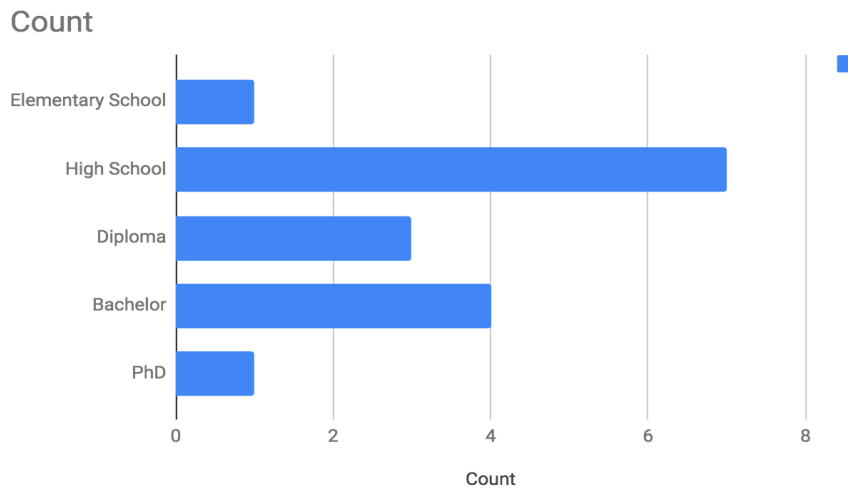
Table 16

*Participants with Special Schooling*

No.	English Level	Schooling	Age of Expose to English	Arabic Score	English Score
A4	7	GE, ELI 3 months	19	5	2
A6		Private school in Grades 1, 10, and 12; private ELI 1 month in elementary school	7	5	3
A7	7	Private ELI 6 years ago	9	4	5
A8	7	Grades 11-12 in private school, studied English in Ireland 4 years ago	11	5	3
A9	8	ELI	17	4	2
A12	7	ELI 2.5 months, GE	18	4	4
A13	7	Private high school	10	5	3

**Parents' Education Level and Role**

Regarding parents' education level and role in participants' language learning, the researcher asked three questions: What is the highest degree your parents have earned? What is your parents' role in your learning your first and second language? Do your parents encourage you to read in your first or second language in your free time or during holidays? (see Figure 2 and Table 17).



*Figure 2. Parents' education level.*

Three of these participants said that “their parents had no role” and that their role was “not worth mentioning.” However, the other four reported their parents playing a role in learning their L1 and/or L2. Participant B18 said they played “A big role, taught me about the importance of learning for myself and my future, sometimes encourage me to read in my free time.” Participant B1 said, “Not much, although my father speaks English. But they encourage me to read in my free time.” Participant B10 emphasized his mother rather than his father playing a role: “My mother played an effective role, especially in elementary school.” Participants B7 and B13 mentioned their parents playing a role only in learning their L1.

Out of the 15 responses about participants’ parents, the most common education level was high school ( $N = 7$ ), while the least common were PhD ( $N = 1$ ) and elementary ( $N = 1$ ). The four participants whose parents held a bachelor’s degree varied in their responses. Three of them mentioned their parents playing a major role in their L1 and L2 learning. For example, one reported, “My parents inspired me to learn my L1 and L2, especially my mother with learning my L2 since she’s an English teacher with a bachelor’s in ELT.” However, one of them reported that his parents had not played a big role, although his father spoke English.

Table 17

*Summary of Parents’ Educational Background and Role*

No.	Parents’ Education Level	Parents’ Role in Learning L1 and L2
B13	Elementary school	In Arabic, yes, a big role, but none in English.
B5	High school	Not worth mentioning.
B7	High school	In Arabic only. They encourage me to read in my free time.
B9	High school	Effective and active. Encourage reading in free time.
B10	Father: high school, Mother: advanced diploma	My mother played an effective role, especially in elementary school.
B11	High school	Not at all.
B12	Father: high school	Not worth mentioning.
B18	High school	A big role, taught me about the importance of learning for myself and my future, sometimes encourage me to read in my free time.

B1	Bachelor's	Not much, although my father speaks English. But they encourage me to read in my free time.
B6	Bachelor's	They encourage me to learn Arabic and English and to read in my free time.
B8	Bachelor's	My parents inspired me to learn my L1 and L2, especially my mother with learning my L2 since she's an English teacher with a bachelor's in ELT.
B16	Bachelor's	They played an important role. They encouraged me to read in my L1 and L2.
B4	Advanced diploma	My father played an effective role in mastering Arabic.
B15	Advanced diploma	Conversational communication but nothing else.
B3	Father: PhD	My parents keep telling me about the importance of Arabic and English.

The participant whose father had a PhD mentioned that his parents kept telling him about the importance of the two languages, Arabic and English. On the other hand, those whose parents held a diploma stated that their parents played an effective role, as Participant B4 mentioned his father being an important part of his mastering Arabic, while Participant B15 mentioned that his parents had no role except for conversational communication, and he wondered if this would count as a role his parents played in his language learning.

### **Influence of the L1 on the L2**

To determine the influence of participants' L1 on their L2, they were asked, "Do you think that your good writing in Arabic would help make your English writing good too? How so? Please elaborate and/or give examples." There were 18 responses to these questions, summarized in Table 18. Twelve participants agreed L1 writing helped their L2 writing, while five denied it had an influence. Only Participant C2 failed to give a straight answer, saying, "I don't write much ... I don't like my English writing."

The 12 participants who believed in the influence of their L1 mentioned different reasons for this belief. For example, Participant C3 said, "Yes, when I find it difficult to write a certain expression or meaning in English, I usually write it first in Arabic then translate it into English."



Although he was in Level 8 and was thus graduating the semester this questionnaire was taken, he still used his L1 to translate whenever he found it difficult to write directly in English.

Participant C14 stated that if a learner had an abundant word inventory in the L1, writing in the L2 would be easier. Two of the participants thought mastering L1 grammar would influence L2 grammar positively in sentence structure (C7) or grammatical understanding (C11). Only Participants C9 and C16 answered with a “yes” without elaborating or giving any examples as the question asked. The rest of the participants (C8 and C10) who believed in the influence of their L1 varied in their responses. They thought that writing was a skill that if one mastered in Arabic, he/she would master in English as well. Participant C15 said, “Certainly, it helps reveal academic content and scientific language to some extent, which reflects the writer’s education level.”

Table 18

*Summary of 18 Participants’ Responses to Question 11*

No.	The Influence of L1 Writing on L2 Writing
C3	Yes, when I find it difficult to write a certain expression or meaning in English, I usually write it first in Arabic then translate it into English.
C5	Yes, I feel learning one language helps me use the other, especially in writing. This goes back to my passion to recognize the linguistic differences between the two languages, Arabic and English.
C7	Yes, for sentence structure.
C8	Sure, because writing is a skill, so if you master writing in Arabic, you would master it in English.
C9	Yes.
C10	Yes, I think so. Mastering Arabic will influence your performance in English. For example, when you read a word in English for first time, the instructor will try to give you the meaning by providing examples in Arabic, so if you don’t understand the Arabic word, that means the learner does not fully understand Arabic.
C11	Of course, since there are a lot of proverbs, sayings, and expressions common in both languages, it’s one of many skills to use those expressions when needed. When people use them in the L1, they will be able to use them in the L2 too. Using them will make your writing stronger. I must say this issue will be relative. Most of those who find L2

	grammar difficult often have not mastered their L1 grammar. I noticed this during my own learning experience. Also, when learners have considerable L1 linguistic knowledge, they will be motivated to learn the synonyms meaning in the L2 for each L1 word. This is a motivator in my experience.
C12	Yes, if you meant writing skills, writing ability in Arabic helps in English, except Arabic has a lot of synonyms compared to English that make it hard to express some ideas in the L2.
C14	Yes, when you have a much bigger word inventory, writing will be easier.
C15	Certainly, it helps reveal academic content and scientific language to some extent, which reflects the writer's education level.
C16	Yes.
C18	Yes, whenever your knowledge in your L1 increases, writing and reading will be easier in addition to being able to understand the texts in other languages.
C2	I don't write much ... I don't like my English writing.
C1	No.
C4	I don't think so since English has a totally different system compared to Arabic.
C6	No.
C13	No, I do not think so.
C17	I don't think so since each language has its own unique grammar and style.

On the other hand, five participants disagreed that their L1 writing influenced their L2 writing. Three of them only mentioned “yes” without given any additional information. One participant who did give a reason mentioned that English had a totally different system from Arabic, while the other stated, “I don't think so since each language has its own unique grammar and style.”

However, the majority believed in the L1's influence, although their reasons varied and explained that influence from different angles, such as the effect of word inventory and how understanding grammar could influence L2 writing when building sentences or finding the appropriate meaning. One could argue that the L1's influence could be correlated with other variables. Therefore, this study investigated variables other than L1 writing influence, such as students' educational background and parents' education level.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter discusses the study findings in relation to the research questions:

1. Does L1 Arabic writing proficiency influence the L2 English writing proficiency of Saudi university students?
2. Does a learner's educational background affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?
3. Does parents' educational background or role affect the L1 Arabic writing influence on L2 English writing proficiency?

To answer these questions, the study employed a mixed-methods design. The first question was addressed through the quantitative and qualitative data, while the other two questions were answered through the qualitative data. After discussing these findings, the chapter explains the limitations of the study, notes potential implications, and offers suggestions for future research.

#### Quantitative Findings

This study investigated the potential influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability. To this end, the researcher collected participants' Arabic standardized test scores, which they had taken before enrolling in the university, and compared them to participants' English prompt test essays. Two independent raters graded participants' English writing samples following CEFR criteria. To determine the degree of any potential correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency, the researcher applied a Pearson correlation coefficient, followed by Cronbach's alpha to examine the reliability of the correlation.

**Pearson correlation coefficient.** The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.617, showing that the correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency was significant. Thus, if learners' L1

writing skills were high, they could be expected to perform well in their L2 writing. The findings of this research were in line with those of Ahmadian et al. (2015), Alsamadani (2010), and Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007). These studies likewise showed a relationship between L1 and L2 writing proficiency, although they implemented different methodologies with different participants and/or target languages. However, Cronbach's alpha revealed questionable results according to some criteria.

**Cronbach's alpha.** Cronbach's alpha has been used to indicate the reliability of a correlation between L1 and L2 writing proficiency. However, there is much debate about how to measure Cronbach's alpha scores. In addition, the number of items, length of the test, and other factors may affect Cronbach's alpha accuracy (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The Cronbach's alpha score for this study was 0.651. According to one of many criteria that the research picked to follow, this score is considered questionable. This means the correlation reliability between L1 and L2 writing proficiency was questionable; however, Cronbach's alpha should be used with caution since having a large number of items could inflate the score, while a small number could deflate the score (Cortina, 1993). In this case, since there were only two items, it was clear the Cronbach's alpha was lower than it should be.

### **Qualitative Findings**

The qualitative part of the study explored L1 writing proficiency influence on L2 writing ability in addition to two factors that could interfere with this influence: 1) parents' education level and role and 2) learners' educational background. The findings are divided into two sections: 1) parents' education level and role and 2) the influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing proficiency.

**Parents' education level and role.** Participant responses revealed that parents' education level could interfere with their role in guiding or teaching their children in learning their L1 or

L2. For example, four participants reported that their parents held bachelor’s degrees, and their roles largely converged, as three mentioned their parents playing a major role in their L1 and L2 learning. One reported, “My parents inspired me to learn my L1 and L2, especially my mother with learning my L2 since she’s an English teacher with a bachelor’s in ELT.” However, one reported that his parents had not played a big role in this regard, although his father spoke English.

Seven of the participants’ parents were high school graduates (see Table 19). Their responses about their parents’ role varied from “not worth mentioning” or “not at all” (as in B5, B11, and B12) to playing a major or effective role (as in B9 and B18) to their role being limited to Arabic (as in B7) or one parent (as in B10). Almost half the parents reportedly had no role in their sons’ L1 or L2 learning, and these parents often had an education level lower than a bachelor’s degree. This indicated that parents’ education level could interfere with the influence of their children’s L1 writing proficiency on their L2 writing ability. The influence of parents’ education could be seen more in the Arabic results than in the English results. The greatest influence in the English results was seen from elementary school graduates and PhD holders (see Table 20).

Table 19

*Parents with a High School Degree*

B5	High school	Not worth mentioning.
B7	High school	In Arabic only. They encourage me to read in my free time.
B9	High school	Effective and active. Encourage reading in free time.
B10	Father: high school, Mother: advanced diploma	My mother played an effective role, especially in elementary school.

B11	High school	Not at all.
B12	Father: high school	Not worth mentioning.
B18	High school	A big role, taught me about the importance of learning for myself and my future, sometimes encourage me to read in my free time.

Table 20

*Comparison of Parents' Education Level and Participants' Arabic and English Test Scores*

Education Level	N	Mean Arabic Score	Mean English Score
Elementary	1	5	3
High School	7	4.28	4
Diploma	2	4.5	2.50
Bachelor's	4	4.75	3.25
PhD	1	5	6

**Influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability.** The majority of participants (12 out of 18) agreed their L1 writing helped their L2 writing. Only Participant C2 failed to give a straight answer one way or the other, saying, "I don't write much ... I don't like my English writing." These responses confirmed the hypothesis raised in the beginning of the study that L1 writing proficiency has a positive influence on L2 writing proficiency. The 12 participants who believed in this influence mentioned different reasons for their position. For example, Participant C3 said, "Yes, when I find it difficult to write s certain expression or meaning in English, I usually write it first in Arabic then translate it into English." Although he was in Level 8 and was thus graduating the semester this questionnaire was taken, he still used his L1 to translate whenever he found it difficult to write directly in English. Participant C14 stated that if a learner had an abundant word inventory in the L1, writing in the L2 would be easier.

On the other hand, five participants disagreed that their L1 writing influenced their L2 writing. Three of them only said, "yes," without given any additional information. One participant who did give a reason mentioned that English had a totally different system from Arabic, while the other stated, "I don't think so since each language has its own unique grammar and style." Overall, the qualitative findings confirmed the influence of L1 writing proficiency on

L2 writing ability and discussed additional factors that could interfere with the correlation found in the quantitative data.

### **Summary of Findings**

The quantitative results showed a large correlation according to a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.61. Although the Cronbach's alpha results in the scale shown were questionable, they were still acceptable since most of the other scales agreed that if the score was 0.6 or above, it would be reliable (Lewis & Loewenthal, 2015). Participants' educational background may not correlate with the L1's influence on L2 writing ability, and parents' educational level did not have a significant correlation. However, according to the qualitative results, most participants agreed that L1 writing could influence L2 writing ability.

### **Conclusion**

**Limitations.** This study investigated three variables (parents' education level and role, participants' educational background, and the first-year participants were introduced to English), which limited the generalizability of the findings since other factors could have interfered with the influence of L1 writing proficiency. To accurately examine correlation reliability, the researcher implemented Cronbach's alpha; however, since there were only two items, L1 writing scores and L2 writing scores, this limited reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, the study was conducted on advanced learners, which could have affected the findings since having learners at different levels might provide different results. Furthermore, although all the participants were native Arabic speakers, they all spoke Saudi Arabic; hence, investigating other native Arabic speakers may reveal more or different findings.

**Implications.** The aim of this study was to show the influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing proficiency. One of the implications of the results was that L2 teachers should know their students' L1 proficiency level to know how they might perform and to build the

curriculum accordingly. Moreover, policymakers should recognize the L1's role in L2 writing and literacy. Policymakers should focus on students' L1 proficiency since it could lead to better outcomes in their L1 as well as their L2. In addition, cooperation between the school and parents would help ease and increase students' chances to master the L2.

**Future research.** This study explored the influence of L1 writing proficiency on L2 writing ability. Future studies could therefore build upon these findings by investigating other skills, such as speaking, listening, and reading, and their potential influence. Studies could also explore the potential correlation between different language pairs or more than two languages. The resulting data might shift curriculum design to consider students' L1. Moreover, future research could address each linguistic feature that might be influenced by or transferred from the L1; for example, in writing, studies could examine word choice, writing style, grammar, and length of the text. This kind of research would open new doors to better understand the different types of positive effects the L1 could have on L2 learning.



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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

#### استبيان الطلاب

السلام عليكم، هذا الاستبيان هو استكمال لبيانات البحث والذي كان جزءه الأول عبارة عن نماذج من كتابتكم. للتذكير: في نهاية الاستبيان، هناك طلب بكتابة الاسم والعائلة وكذلك درجة القياس للقسم اللفظي: للمعلومية فإن جميع البيانات ستكون سرية وسيتم عرض النتائج من دون ذكر أسماء. سأكون شاكرا لمساعدتي في إتمام البحث. اكتب كل ماتعرفه عن كل سؤال.

١. هل درست الابتدائي والمتوسط والثانوي في تعليم عام أم خاص .
٢. هل سبق وأن درست في معهد لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية؟ متى وأين .
٣. هل درست جميع المراحل الدراسية في مدينة أو قرية .
٤. هل عندك أي إضافات أخرى عن خلفيتك التعليمية تود إضافتها .
٥. ماهي أعلى درجة علمية حصل عليها والداك .
٦. ما دور والديك في تعلم لغتك العربية والإنجليزية كذلك .
٧. هل والداك يشجعونك لأن تقرأ باللغة العربية و/ أو الإنجليزية خارج الصف أو خلال الإجازة أو في أوقات فراغك على سبيل المثال
٨. ماهي الأسباب بظنك التي تقف خلف مهارتك الكتابية بالإنجليزية؟ على سبيل المثال: إتقاني للكتابة باللغة العربية .
٩. تشجيع والديك، التحاقى بدورة للغة إنجليزية، معلم لغة إنجليزية كان له الأثر، إلخ
١٠. كم عمرك يوم أن بدأت تدرس الإنجليزية أو بدأت تستمع أو تشاهد أشياء باللغة الإنجليزية .
١١. هل لاحظت أي تغييرات في كتابتك باللغة العربية منذ أن تطورت لغتك الإنجليزية؟ كذلك؟ هل ممكن أن تفصل .
- أو تذكر أمثلة
- هل تشعر بأن كفاءتك الكتابية باللغة العربية تساعدك على الكتابة بشكل أفضل باللغة الإنجليزية؟ كيف ذلك؟ .
- هل ممكن أن تذكر أمثلة أو تفصل أكثر من فضلك
- الاسم الأول والعائلة
- درجة قياس - القسم اللفظي
- البريد الإلكتروني لمن ليس لديه مانع للتواصل بخصوص البحث مع الشكر مقدما

## Appendix B

### Prompt for English Argumentative Essay

**Level:**

**Age:**

**Qiyas Test Results (Verbal Section):**

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**Q:** Write a well-organized paragraph of 150-200 words to describe your reasons for choosing Qassim University to fulfill your academic goals. Support your reasons with specific examples.



## Appendix C

### CITI Certificate

#### COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM) COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\*

\* NOTE: Scores on this [Requirements Report](#) reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Badar Almuhalib (ID: 3742350)
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of Memphis (ID: 2176)
- **Institution Email:** bfmhlib@memphis.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Applied Linguistic
- **Phone:** 9013147991

- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

- **Record ID:** 22100065
- **Completion Date:** 25-Jan-2017
- **Expiration Date:** 25-Jan-2019
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score\*:** 92

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
University of Memphis (ID: 14523)	25-Jan-2017	No Quiz
Belmont Report and Its Principles (ID: 1127)	25-Jan-2017	1/3 (33%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	25-Jan-2017	1/5 (20%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	27-Sep-2013	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	27-Sep-2013	4/4 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	27-Sep-2013	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	27-Sep-2013	3/3 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections (ID: 14)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	27-Sep-2013	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	27-Sep-2013	5/5 (100%)

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

Verify at: [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kdab159f1-0405-43ae-b6da-a975859c69e3-22100065](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kdab159f1-0405-43ae-b6da-a975859c69e3-22100065)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)  
Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)  
Phone: 888-529-5929  
Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

# Appendix D

## IRB Approval

9/20/2018

SUNY Fredonia Mail - PRO-FY2018-311 - Initial: Approval - Expedited



Badar F Almu hailib <almu5862@fredonia.edu>

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### PRO-FY2018-311 - Initial: Approval - Expedited

1 message

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irb@memphis.edu <irb@memphis.edu>  
To: bflm hlib@memphis.edu, ethrush@memphis.edu

Fri, Feb 2, 2018 at 12:19 PM



Institutional Review Board  
Office of Sponsored Programs  
University of Memphis  
315 Admin Bldg  
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

Feb 2, 2018

PI Name: Badar Almu hailib  
Co-Investigators:  
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Emily Thrush  
Submission Type: Initial  
Title: The Influence of First Language Writing Quality on the Second Language Writing ability of the Saudi College Students  
IRB ID : #PRO-FY2018-311

Expedited Approval: Feb 2, 2018  
Expiration: Feb 2, 2019

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. This IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.
2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be submitted.
3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval.

Thank you,  
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.  
Institutional Review Board Chair  
The University of Memphis.