

Cross-linguistic Issues and Compatible Strategies for Teaching English

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Abstract

Cross linguistic approach of teaching English as a foreign language occupies an essential place in a bilingual context. The present paper is an attempt towards exploring some crucially significant pedagogic issues that a pedagogue or an instructor is supposed to know in order to develop an understanding and evolve a compatible strategy to yield best possible results. It also explores the possibility of interference of L1 (Arabic) grammatical rules in the writing of L2 (English). This study investigates one of the most common issues namely the cross-linguistic influence of the L1 in learning L2 grammar, specifically those aspects which are likely to be the subject of negative transfer. A detailed analysis was made of the acquisition of certain grammatical items which mostly affect the skill of writing. Apart from the test, feedback of the respondents, written exercises were analysed in order to arrive at the findings and conclusions. Qualitative analysis shows the cross-linguistic influence of L1 (Arabic) in learning the grammatical items of English in general. This study is the outcome of the researcher's personal experience as an instructor working in KSA. It was found that the target students always had difficulties in learning the features of the target language as a possible outcome of negative transfer of learning. Most of the learners have the tendency to respond in Arabic. Most often they don't even understand the questions unless made easy. While trying to understand or answer, they usually are found using the translation from mother-tongue to the target language and the vice versa. The study aims to focus on the cross linguistic influence especially in the process of L2 writing. The paper suggests certain innovative strategies for the teaching of English in general and writing in particular. The recommendation of e-strategies deserves special mention.

Keywords: cross linguistic, L1 interference, grammatical rules, inter-lingual effects, e-strategies

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1. Conceptual Framework

Learning in general can be viewed in many ways. The theories such as the 'innatism', 'cognitivism' and behaviorism can be summarized in many ways. A child possesses innate qualities, but he doesn't have a specific language capacity. However, he can practice and develop in a conducive environment. The gist of the three theories is a precious idea, but it is difficult to implement in the process if the learner is an adult, it is far sure that he has acquired a culture, and a language that is the product of a culture. In this connection, Odlin (1989, p. 6), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 5) mentioned that "the study of transfer, or crosslinguistic influence, is peculiar among language acquisition and the phenomenon of language use". In particular, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008, p. 4) argued that crosslinguistic influence refers to the influence of one language on another in an individual mind. They noted several areas of meaning and crosslinguistic influence which had not been carefully looked at before such as an analysis of the relationship between language transfer and SLA.

'Interference' as a concept was first held by Newmark (1966): 'interference' is not the first language 'getting in the way' of second language skills. Rather, it is the result of the performer 'falling back' on old knowledge when he or she has not yet acquired enough of the second language. In the words of Lado (1961,19), 'This theory opens the way to a comparison of the grammatical structure of the foreign language with that of the native language to discover the problems of the students in learning the foreign language.

The findings of researchers like Dulay and Burt (1982) created a sound and logical basis for upcoming researches in the area of 'Contrastive Analysis' as a method of studying, comparing and analyzing the structure of any two languages with a view to evaluate the similarities and differences of their systems. Such issues are very important to consider as these positively or negatively affect the learning of a foreign (target) language. There is no denying the fact that the first language/first language has an effect on the new learning: be in a society, a culture or in institutional setting. That negative or positive effect is sometimes called a positive/negative transfer. If it is negative it is better known as interference.

1.1. Status of L1 and L2 in Saudi Arabia

Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia like Iraq, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Morocco etc.

Arabic is also the language of the holy Qur'an, so Muslims of other nationalities such as Indonesians, Malaysians, Pakistanis etc are familiar with it. Arabic grammar is completely different from English. There is a huge possibility of committing errors due to L1 interference. The status of English in KSA is limited to the foreign language simply because that it serves limited and specific purpose. English is used in higher institutions and for certain specialties especially medicine, engineering, computers, marketing, e-commerce etc. Outside the classroom, English is used in day to day communications only in certain places such as hospitals, medical centres, clinics and international companies/ markets.

1.2. L1 Interference

Transfer of learning is a naturally occurring pedagogic phenomenon in a psychological setting of a classroom. The transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar - in that case we get 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation' - or it may prove unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different - in that case we get 'negative transfer' - or 'interference'.

Most of the difficulties in the learning of English as a second/foreign language are caused by mother-tongue interference. (Khan, 2011a, b, c, d). In this regard, Corder (1981) argues that the 'mother tongue' facilitates acquisition. He refers specifically to what he calls 'performance phenomenon-borrowing.' When a second language learner is under pressure, the learner will 'borrow' or substitute words from the mother tongue (p. 26). And, not only the target second language learners who take the benefit of the mother-tongue, but the concerned teachers even exploit the facility of the mother-tongue in the learning of second/foreign language.

1.3. Better Understanding of TEFL

Teaching of first language is different from the second/foreign language. There is a great deal of difference between the teaching of Second and foreign language also. The major difference in practice is basically caused by the conceptual differences in the teaching methodology. A native speaker may fail in a foreign language classroom, but a second/third language teacher may excel in the teaching, however, such teachers may not be recommended by most curriculum developer and policy makers

2. Research Context

Though the area of L1 interference is not of recent origin, it is still quite relevant for those learners whose background of English is almost zero, and the target language (English) is not used more frequently as in the case of *lingua franca*. The beginning of research started with the contrastive approach put forth by Robert Lado (1957:2), however only nomenclatures kept on changing. Some people called it mother-tongue-interference while others coined a term like inter-lingual errors. And more recently it is used as cross linguistic features with the emergence of a concept like 'world Englishes' and 'TESOL'. Contrastive linguistics will continue to be an area of research till English is taught as a foreign language with limited scope and purpose.

Since then extensive researches have already been carried out in the area of native language interference on the target language. Dulay and Burt (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Ellis (1997: 51) refers to interference as 'transfer' which he says is 'the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2'. He argues that transfer is governed by learner's perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. In learning a target language, the learners construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1972, Seligar, 1988 and Ellis, 1997) with the use of their L1 knowledge, but only when they believe it will help them in the learning task or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible. Such is the view expressed by Khan (2004, 26)

Several models describing the relationship, the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 acquisition have been outlined in SLA research (for example, Krashen, 1981; Gass & Selinker, 1994). Recent findings suggest that L1 or a previously learned language transfer can occur in all linguistic subsystems of both comprehension and production in the target language, and can have a facilitating/inhibiting/ modifying effect on L2 acquisition.

A lot of technology-enhanced tools are available and used to motivate students and stimulate their interest in the learning process (Mereba, 2003). Modern teachers have many ways to create and encourage writing ability with the help of technology oriented web material for e-learning environment. Most modern and innovative language teachers/educators can have web based material as one of the most powerful tools for improving writing in the classroom.

With the development of these innovative and technology based programs, the target writers are able to finish their tasks in much less time, and in easier way. In fact, most research in this area indicates that the use of word processors in writing programs leads to better writing outcomes than the use of paper-and-pencil or conventional handwritten material. In many cases, the language which language learners face in the Internet atmosphere is designed in a way that the majority of people understand it easily. This is what can highly increase the attitude toward the use of this technology. Moreover, in other studies (Asan & Koca, 2006) focused on the integration of the Internet tools into language learning activities, and blended learning design and its effect was also studied and recommended (De George, Walker & Keeffe (2010).

2.2. A shift in the Trend of Contrastive Research

Transfer, interference (Lado, 1957), contrastive analysis, interlingual errors (Dulay and Burt, 1982), Kachru's Word Englishes (1992), and cross linguistic (the present terminology). The concepts as mentioned above have been used differently from time to time, but the base was provided by Lado which received pedagogic considerations after contrastive hypothesis was formulated.

If one goes deeper, one may explore the fact that the terms and concepts did not differ much, however developed and understood in different ways in a given context. I may not be misunderstood if I state that the wine remained the same but the bottles were frequently changed. However, one thing may be seriously noted that in the distant past, contrastive analysis was done to ascertain the degree of interference of L1 in the process of writing, speaking or learning English, and these days, the focus is on the pedagogy considering the fact that there must be an interference which is quite natural. Thus, the researchers are striving quite hard to evolve a compatible strategy for teaching of English to those whose first language is not English.

2.3. The Crucial Issue of Transfer

Language transfer has always been an important issue in the area of language pedagogy, foreign language learning and English language teaching for more than 50 years.

As mentioned above, different terms and phrases have been used by researchers to refer to the phenomenon of cross-linguistic influence¹: language mixing (language transfer) by Lado (1957), linguistic interference (Schachter and Rutherford, 1979; Ringbom, 1987; Selinker, 1972; Kellerman, 1983; Odlin, 1989), the role of the mother tongue and native language influence (Master, 1987; Mesthrie and Dunne, 1990; Jarvis, 2000).

Some linguists proposed different terms such as: interlingual errors related to L1 and intralingual errors related to L2 (Richards 1974, p. 173), and in-between errors which may originate in L1 and/or in L2 as well, (Mourssi, 2012a, and 2012c). The case of writing in particular in the present context can't be ignored. It is genuinely conceived that the process of writing leads to conceptualisation which is quite significant in the entire process of learning and education (Manchón, 2011). Later, writing can be used in teaching as a tool to develop the target language proficiency in foreign language contexts (Reichelt et al., 2012). Further, it receives attention in the field of research and innovation at the interfaces between L2 writing and second language acquisition (Ortega, 2013) .

Mourssi (2013a, 2013b) mentioned that prescriptive Arabic grammarians think that grammar is the only element which shows how language is used. They also view the traditional grammar of any language as a set of rules, and the major concept in learning language is to learn its grammar first. According to them, the most common and appropriate learning strategy of learning is memorization, which is reflected in the way they learn L2.

2.4. An Overview

The above review of studies/literature indicate that cross linguistic features in general and L1 transfer in particular is an essential aspect of foreign language teaching/learning. In this regards, Schmiédtova (2011) studies if L2 speakers think in the L1 when speaking in the L2. Another pertinent study undertaken by Kupisch & Dagmar (2013) explored as to how 'Bilinguals' cope with variation, however the area of the study was not related to the Arabic-English context. Unsworth (2012) further supported the hunch that the Crosslinguistic Influence and Exposure Effects in the Bilingual Acquisition is a naturally occurring phenomenon. It can finally be summed up that bearing the fact and supporting studies in mind, there is always a need to undertake studies in the micro areas of ESL/EFL learning context so that the process of instruction becomes easier, effective and result oriented.

3. Methods

This section discusses the subjects of the study, the research question, data collection techniques and the methods used in the analysis of the written texts

2.1. Statement of the Problem

There have been many debates on the performance of students in Saudi Arabia. But the problems of Arab students have not been addressed adequately as felt by many. There may be many factors such as cross-linguistics and teaching methodologies. Since the Arab learners have to study two languages (Arabic and English) at the same time, the chances of mother tongue interferences occurring in the learning is highly likely to take place. Therefore a thorough study in this area is pivotal. This study is hoped to address the issues stated above.

2.2. Significance of the Study

Sincere efforts are being taken to design an effective English curriculum, to improve the teaching and learning of the English language especially in higher institutions. English being the world's lingua franca and an upcoming medium of higher education in Saudi Arabia is becoming inevitable.

This contrastive study seeks to find out aspects and features of L1 (Arabic grammar and writing style) that students use frequently in their purposive writing of L2 (English). This paper seeks to study the theoretical issues of mother-tongue's interference in general and grammar in particular. The study is expected to be highly useful for English teachers of Saudi institutions as they will be able to understand the influence of L1 features in the writing of L2. The pedagogues will be able to evolve an innovative pedagogy and novel strategies to yield much better results in the target language classrooms

2.3. Justification of the Study

The study is highly relevant in the Arabic-English context of learning a foreign language, it is not of recent origin, though. With the change in the learning scenario of foreign/second language, the cross-linguistic features also kept on changing.

The studies started with transfer, L1 interference, 'error' and 'contrastive analysis', and finally reached the level of cross linguistic analysis that includes inter cultural effects as well. The study is expected to facilitate both the teachers and learners in the area of curriculum development, methodology and assessment.

2.4. Objective of the Study

The following are some of the main objectives of the present study:

- 1- to identify the interference of L1 grammatical rules (Arabic) in the writing of L2 (English),
- 2- to identify and study such interferences, and their causes,
- 3- to evolve a compatible strategy for the teaching of English, based on the diagnosis,
- 4- to assess the relevance of strategies of English for Saudi learners.

2.5. Hypothesis

- 1- L1 (Arabic) interference is the main cause of most of the mistakes in the writing of the target learners.
- 2- There is a need to evolve and use teaching strategies,
- 3- Modern teaching strategies are relevant in the EFL classrooms.

2.6. Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the Saudi learners of English at tertiary level, however, the finding and results will be equally useful to the institutions of the same type.

2.7. Methodology

This study is strictly of descriptive type, and the main research approach is qualitative, however, quantification facilitates the data analysis. The qualitative survey research design aims to find out the influence of mother tongue linguistic items in the writing of English (L2) on the sample: first year students of Jeddah Community College (JCC). It further seeks to uncover the types of 'transfer' that takes place in the process of writing and probable causes.

2.8. Instruments and Sample

The instruments utilized in this research are questionnaires with the samples: the concerned teachers and 40 randomly selected students (only 5 students from 8 sections). The analysis of students' writings from notebook, workbooks and assignment will be the main focus of the study.

2.8.1. Questionnaires (Appendix: A &B)

As mentioned, two questions were used to elicit data. The content validity of both the questionnaires was assured before the administration.

3.7.2. Analysis of Sample's Exercise Books (Appendix-C: samples 1,2,3)

The researcher read and analyzed the written exercises of the samples to identify the errors made by the samples in their daily writing activities. The source of the written work will be from the students' classroom activity (note/exercise books), workbooks and assignment given by the concerned teacher. The results of the errors made were tabulated and graphically presented. The sample's exercise books, workbooks and assignment are expected to show the types of mistakes committed by the sample learners possibly due to mother-tongue interference.

2.8.2. L1 (Arabic) interference in the process of writing

Writing is said to be a productive skill. It may be acquired by listening, reading, speaking. All these activities lead to the product-writing. Writing as a skill includes many sub-skills such as thinking, reading, watching, recollecting words and finally putting in black and white. Writing also includes handwriting, however, with the emergence of computers, handwriting is not that much important as it used to be in the past.

2.8.3. Areas in which L1 causes interference

- 1- Vocabulary
- 2- Syntax
- 3- Morphology

The following is an attempt to show as to how the target learners are confused between or among some similar looking words. However, such words can be differentiated with suitable examples as presented below.

Table -1

Waist	Waste
Right	Write
So	Sew
Through	Throw
See	Sea

(Showing apparently looking similar words)

Some examples to explain:

- 1- Peter is better than Potter.
- 2- There are many cheap sheep on the ship.
- 3- I have a fan in my van.
- 4- Dogs usually bark.
- 5- I saw a park near car parking.

2.8.3.1. Grammar (Structure)

The grammar of second language poses great amount of problems for many reasons: L1 interference, over generalisation and undefined reasons. But, learners make mistakes especially due to the reasons that the habit of L1 is so strong that can't be changed easily. It happens mainly when the learners have humble background of the target language and solid and prolonged basis of L1 (Arabic). If one asks a simple question to the students, 'how many brothers do you have?' The following table includes some possible responses from the target learners.

Table -2

Written structure	Expected one(s)
I go yesterday.	I went yesterday.
He eat breakfast.	He eats breakfast.
Boys plays football.	Boys play football.
Go college at 8.	I go college at 8.
Name is X.	My name is X.

(Showing the learning difficulties in structure of English)

2.8.3.2. Teaching of the Simple present tense

1) I teach English at Community college. I am an English teacher.



2) My brother plays football in the evening. He is a football player.



The teachers can teach English structure in the following manner, and explain the position of subject-predicate and subject-verb-object combination as per the need:



Such an approach may minimize the chance of committing errors such as doubling of subjects as under:

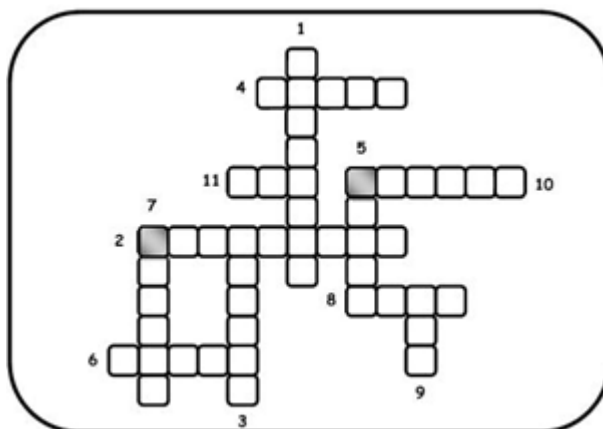
- 1- My brother he is a bank manager.
- 2- My father he is 50 years old.

In order to cope with the difficulties faced by the target learners (who can't differentiate different types of tenses, and commit errors as under), strategies should be evolved in order to teach and practice as much as possible.

- 1- I go yesterday.
- 2- I go tomorrow.
- 3- I going now.
- 4- I go now.

The teacher can teach different tenses based on certain strategies. The following is an example:

Teaching past simple through crossword puzzles



- 1- First he.....his homework then he slept.
- 2- Last night I.....to music.
- 3-My brother.....home. He didn't go out today.
- 4- My family.....in London 2 years ago.
- 5- Alidown and got fractured.
- 6- Yesterday, my father.....a letter to his childhood friend.
- 7- The children.....a loud noise while playing.
- 8- My sisterher bag in school a day ago.
- 9- My friends.....their music teacher in the market.
- 10- My driver..... a bag on the street.
- 11- My neighborextremely upset so he shouted.

A teacher can teach different tenses and their types in innovative and strategic manner.

2.8.3.3. Teaching of Capitalization and Learning Difficulties

Most students don't care about even names. Even if the letter is in the beginning of a sentence they don't care. Some students try to write sometimes, yet the size is too small to discriminate between the small and the capital letter. It is found that the students make excess use of 'and', and ignore using full stops and commas. In a piece of simple composition such as a paragraph on a family, the students most often don't use full stops and commas until they come to an end. (see Appendix: C)

A teacher can explain the rule and practice through worksheets. Online practice may be further useful in dealing with the difficulties.

The following are a few rules of capitalisation:

Rule: 1 (The first letter of every new sentence is capitalized).

Example: **M**y friend is from **E**ngland.

Rule : 2 (The subject pronoun is always capitalized).

Example: Ali and **I** are going to play football.

Rule: 4 (Proper names of places, rivers, mountains, and other geographic locations are capitalized).

Example: The **N**ile **R**iver, which runs through **A**frica.

Rule: 5. (Proper names of people)

Example: My friend's name is **J**asmine.

Rule: 6 (All proper names of: companies, religions, and languages).

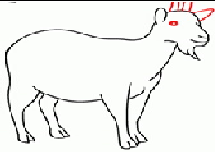




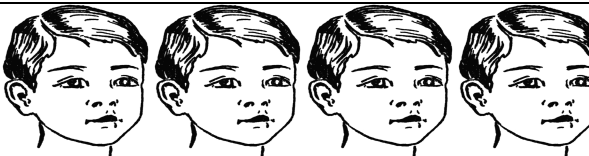




Example: Most Egyptians speak **A**rabic and **F**rench.

Rule: 7. (the days of the week, and months).

Saudi National Day is on **S**unday, **F**ebruary 18th.

2.8.3.4. Teaching of Plural Formation

The target learners face difficulties in the making of the plurals as well. The reason behind is the varied sort of rules in English which are very much different from their mother-tongue (Arabic). It has been found that the following technique has yielded satisfactory result in the process of learning/teaching.

<p>Singular</p>	<p>Plural</p>
<p>a/ One goat</p>	<p>Two goats</p>
	
<p>a/one sheep</p>	<p>two/many sheep</p>
	
<p>a/one boy</p>	<p>two/three/ many boys</p>
	
<p>a/one man</p>	<p>two/three/many men</p>
	
<p>one/a fish</p>	<p>two/many fish</p>
	

2.8.3.5. Confusion of 's' as Noun and Verb Suffix

It has been noted that most of the learners are confused with the suffix 's'. They need to be clarified as to which kind of addition of 's' as suffix is used in different situations.

Table.3

Noun	Verb
Boys	-
Players	Plays
Teachers	Teaches
calls	calls

(showing confusion in 's' suffix)

Examples to differentiate:

- That boy usually plays football in the morning. (verb suffix)
- Boys usually play football. (noun suffix)

3.7.3.6. Prefixes

Such features also create many kinds of learning difficulties for EFL writers of English.

Table.4

Words	Words with prefixes
Legal	Illegal
Modest	Immodest
Proper	Improper
Lawful	Unlawful
Correct	Incorrect

(showing pattern of prefixes to make opposites)

In Arabic, there are two patterns of making opposites:

There is another opposite word with a new root, (*kabeer* - *sagheer*)

This specific feature is available in English also.

(Example: beautiful-ugly, big-small),

Prefix '*ghair*' (that means non or not) is used in Arabic as mother-tongue.

3.7.3.7. Silent Letters

English language is said to be quite un-phonetic. The feature becomes pivotal especially due to the silent nature of certain letters. Such problems can be minimized in the course of the target language learning by understanding the rules of silent letters that is applied to certain specific cases as under:

Table.5

Words	Silent letters
Tight	/gh/
Calf	/l/
Know	/k/
Edge	/d/
Walk	/l/

(showing important silent letters)

3.7.3.8. English Phonemic Features

The fact that English language is not as phonetic as Arabic, there are certain features of the target language that create serious problems for the learners. The following are some of them:

One letter different sounds (Examples)	
letter	Sounds
/a/	Cat, Apple, tall, Bathe, walk

Similarly, different letters in English interestingly produce one sound:

sound	Letters					
/sh/	/ti/		/ss/	/ss/	sh/	/s/
	station		Passion	Russian	Fashion	Sugar

The teacher should use charts and other proper strategies to develop understanding of some such features of the target language as under:

Letter(s)	Sounds/words
/sh/	Fish, cash, flash, blush, bush, wash, shell, ashamed, ship, wish
/ti/	Nation, station, notion, emotion, mention, lotion, patient, action, nation, mention, section, direction, information
/ce/	Ocean,
/ss/	Passion, Russian, issue, pressure
/ch/	chef, champagne, machine, brochure, parachute, moustache
/ci/	musician, special, racial, delicious, cautious, precious spacious financial racial facial official special superficial crucial.
/s/	Sure sugar (*American sound may vary)

Such pronunciation related issues may also be dealt online via certain websites such as [www. pronuncian.com](http://www.pronuncian.com)

There exists another category: One group different sounds. If we look at the following example, the confusion seems to be obvious for those who have already a background of a language (L1) that is totally different from the L2:


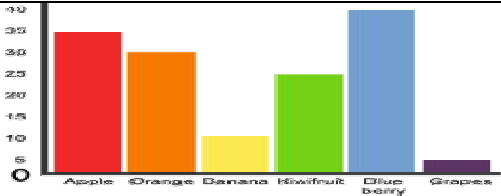




Rough (gh = /f/) and Though (/gh/ is silent)



Teaching strategies may involve a chart making and practicing online.

One group of letters	Different sounds produced		
/gh/	Rough, though, laugh	Spaghetti, Ghost	Ought, Naughty, Draught
/gh/	Baghdad		

Online videos can help the learners to different between the sounds of different words. In order to test the sound patter, a worksheet can be used. However, it is based on the vocabulary learning that includes sound patters as well.

Fill in the blanks with either /ph/ or /gh/ combination, and match the words with the images.

Worksheet	
1- Lau__ __	
2- __ __ ne.	
3- Cou__ __	
4- Gra__ __	
5- Ele__ __ant	
6- __ __tographer	

7- Al ___ ___ be	
8- ___ ___ arm	

4. Data Analysis

As the study is highly qualitative in nature, that too based on text analysis or the analysis of the sheets of the target learners. However, analysis of the research tools (questionnaires for the teachers and students) support the data analysis.

The main objective of this study is to examine the types of mother tongue transfer/interference in the writing of L2 (English) among the First year students of Jeddah Community College, Jeddah-KSA. The following is the analysis of data based on the tools of the study:

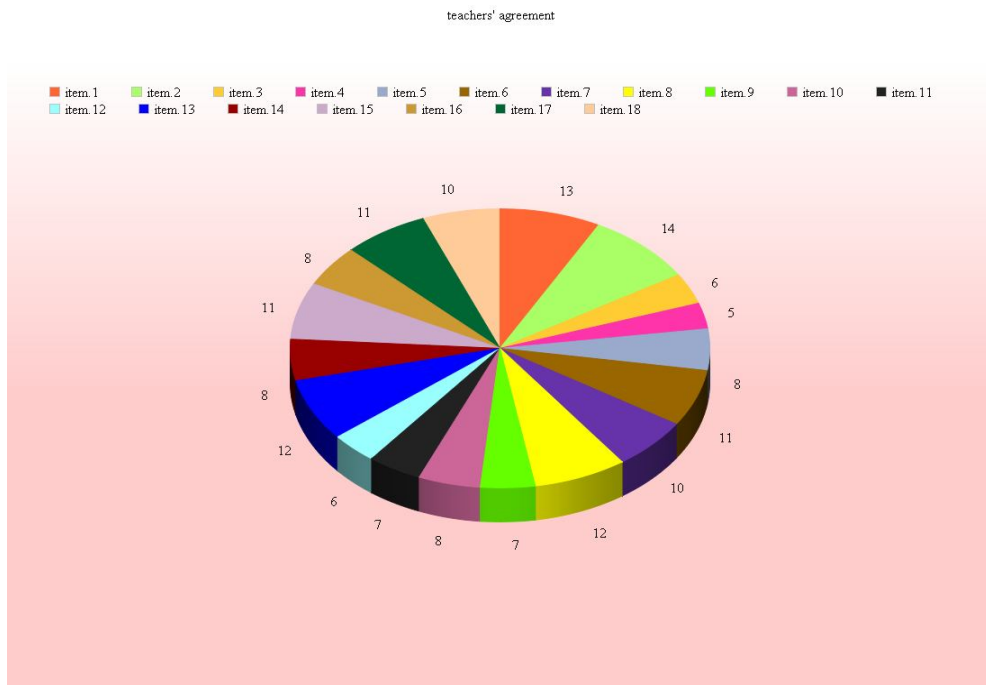
- a. Questionnaire (for teachers)
- b. Questionnaire (for students)
- c. Students exercise books, workbooks and assignment

4.1. Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The data based on the questionnaire were analysed as per the following: (see table-6 & graph-1)

Table.6
(Teachers' Responses)

S.N.	Statements	Agree	undecided	Disagree
1	I have been in this college for more than 2 years.	13(90.2%)	-	1
2	I specialize in teaching of English as a foreign language.	14 (100%)	-	-
3	I am aware of bilingualism (Arabic-English).	6(40.2%)	2	6
4	The students can understand lectures in English.	5(30.6%)	3	6
5	I usually translate difficult words.	8 (57.1%)	2	4
6	I explain difficult words with the help of online images.	11(78.5%)	-	3
7	Students don't usually understand questions in English.	10(70.1%)	2	2
8	They take time in making responses as they seem to translate.	12(80.8%)	1	1
9	The students know the answer but they can't communicate in English properly.	7 (50%)	2	5
10	The students ask me to translate into Arabic.	8(57.1%)	3	3
11	Mother-tongue negatively affects the L2 (English) learning.	7 (50%)	2	5
12	There are certain common features in L1 (Arabic) and L2(English).	6(40.2%)	4	4
13	The English teacher should understand the problems of the learners.	12(80.8%)	-	2
14	The handwriting and writing style is affected by Arabic.	8(57.1%)	3	3
15	Most students don't capitalize and punctuate.	11(78.5%)	1	2
16	Is e-learning always beneficial?	8(57.1%)	3	3
17	I usually integrate online learning in your class?	11(78.5%)	1	2
18	There is a ready and good portal for online resource?	10(70.1%)	2	2

Figure.1

(graph showing agreement of the teachers)

4.1.1. Item Wise Analysis (1-18)

- 1-The response of the sample came around 92% in agreement that shows that the concerned teachers are quite experienced in the sample college as well.
- 2-100 % teachers claim that they are from the field of teaching of English, and they can understand the issues related to teaching, however, it is not known as if they have bilingual perception as well.
- 3- Around 40% sample is in agreement with the statement that they are aware of the bilingual context of Saudi Arabia.
- 4-Some 30% teachers say that students can understand lectures in English. It is an issue to consider because if the students are able to understand the lectures in the target language, they won't always go for translation.
- 5- The responses from 50% teachers confirm that there is a need of translation from L2 to L1 and vice versa during the classrooms.
- 6- Around 70% of the teachers agree that they use images in order to make the learners understand difficult words and concepts.

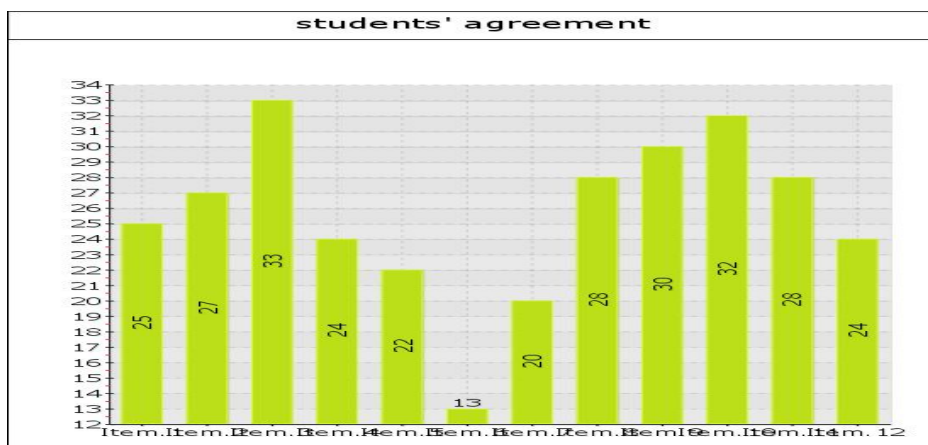
- 7- 70% teachers confirm that students don't usually understand questions in English. This shows either they don't understand the teaching or they are hesitant to ask questions for some reasons,
- 8-80% teachers are of the opinion that they students take time in making responses as they try to translate the target questions in their mother-tongue.
- 9- Some 50% teachers agree that the students know the answer but they can't communicate properly. This shows that there exists a language barrier.
- 10-The responses of around 50% teachers confirm that the students ask the teachers to translate English into Arabic. That shows the level of difficulties that the learners face during learning of English.
- 11-50 teachers accept that the learner's Mother-tongue negatively affects the L2 (English) learning.
- 12- Only 40 states that there are certain common features in L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English).It might be due to the reasons that the teachers are not the bilinguals and unable to make contrastive analysis.
- 13-80 % teachers agree that it is better that the English teacher understand the problems of the learners.
- 14- The idea that 'the handwriting and writing style is affected by Arabic' is accepted by 50% teachers.
- 15- Almost 70% teachers agree to the fact that most students don't capitalize and punctuate.
- 16- Nearly 51% opine that e-learning is always beneficial.
- 17-Almost 71% respondents accept that they integrate online learning in the class.
- 18-70% teachers agree that the local online portal is good enough.

4.2. Analysis of the Student's Questionnaire: (Appendix. B)

A questionnaire consisting of 15 statements was administered to 40 randomly selected students belonging to 8 different sections. Only 5 students were randomly selected from each section.

Table.7: Students 'Responses

S.N.	Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	I like learning of English.	25 (60.2%)	10	5
2	My teacher explains well.	27(60.7%)	6	7
3	The books are difficult.	33 (80.2%)	-	5
4	Our teacher knows our problems.	24 (60%)	8	8
5	My teacher gives examples from Arabic language.	22 (50.5)	7	11
6	I understand English spoken by British speakers.	13 (30.2%)	11	16
7	I prefer to read English story books.	20 (50%)	12	8
8	I like to learn my subjects in Arabic language.	28 (70%)	7	5
9	I consult dictionaries if English words are difficult.	30 (70.5%)	4	6
10	Online learning is interesting.	32(80%)	4	4
11	The college e-learning program is quite good.	28 (70%)	6	6
12	The teacher uses YouTube's in the class.	24 (60%)	6	10

Figure.2

(chart showing the student's agreement)

4.2.1. Item Wise Analysis (1-12)

- 1- The data show that 60.2 % students like learning of English.
- 2- The responses of 60.7% students confirm that their teachers explain well to the satisfactory level.
- 3- Around 80.% students agree that their teachers use Arabic to explain English.
- 4- Only 60% confirm that their teachers try to solve their problems.
- 5-50.5 are in favour that the concerned teachers give examples from Arabic language
- 6- 30.2% students claim they can understand English spoken by British (native) speakers. This shows that there exists a problem in the communication which might be caused by the L1 interference.
- 7- 50% of the students agree that they like to read Arabic story books rather than English story books.
- 8- 70% students are of the view that they like to learn their subjects in Arabic language.
- 9- 70.5% agrees that they consult dictionaries if there is any difficult word(s) in English.
- 10-80% students confirm that the online program is interesting.
- 11-70% respondents are of the opinion that college e-learning portal is good enough.
- 12- 60% students confirm that the teachers use YouTube videos.

The above data lead to the conclusion that mother-tongue is a powerful tool during the entire learning process of the target language (English). Thus, the interference is also obvious.

4.3. Analysis of the Written Sheets of Some Students (Appendices: Samples: 1, 2, 3)

If we look at the specimen sheets in the appendices mentioned. Some samples are very good, but still there are many points that the students need to be taught.

In the sample.1 most of the mistakes are related to spelling and just a few of punctuation.

In sample-specimen: 2, mother-tongue interference is obvious (e.g. I from Jeddah= verb missing).In addition, there are spelling and punctuation/capitalization mistakes.

While in sample.3, the popular mistakes are caused by lack of confidence (the responses are short), and the mistake like 10 year (mother-tongue interference). The mistakes in sample.4, the size of the letters seems to be the same for capital as well as small letters. This is an example of Arabic influence. But, in the sample.5, there are mistakes of tense, capitalization/punctuation, spelling etc. Mother-tongue seems to be the crucial factor for such mistakes.

5. Findings, Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

The data collected for this study were obtained by using 3 instruments: Questionnaires for the teachers, the students and the students' exercise books, workbooks and assignment.

The findings in the data showed that there was interference of mother tongue (Arabic) in the writing of L2 (English). The analysis of writing sheets clearly showed that majority of the sentences constructed in the writings had grammatical structure of the mother tongue. The specific mistakes that were found on the basis of the researcher's own experience as a teacher of English, questionnaires, analysis of the class work/homework of the students and the available literature review support the hypotheses that mother-tongue exerts influence. Right from the speech pattern of the sample learners, their writing style, hand writing, capitalization, punctuation, spelling system, sentence structure, doubling of subjects etc are clear indications of mother-tongue (Arabic) interference in the process of learning of the target language. Various teaching strategies can be evolved in order to deal with the learning situations and maximize the results.

5.2. Discussion

The analysis of the error pertaining to the elements of grammar committed by the Saudi learners logically appears to indicate that Arabic Language (L1) causes negative transfer in the learning of English (L2). It was quite phenomenal to notice that the cross linguistic features are prominent and go in accordance with the researcher's hunches. Though the errors found in the area of learning grammar in particular is not of recent origin yet it is the most crucial in the case of a bilingual context like Saudi Arabia.

The other contexts like English-Chinese, English-Singapuri, English-Malay, English-French, English-Hindi, English-Urdu, English-Punjabi are very much different because the countries are India, Singapore, France, China, Pakistan, or states like Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait etc have worked really hard to minimize or overcome such errors. There are many reasons for such improvement. One of those reasons is the status of English and the number of users in that particular nation. A researcher, linguists, pedagogue or an instructor can't ignore the real scenario in which the learning of English generally takes place. The case of institutions like King Abdullah University of Science and technology (KAUST) or certain other institutions are entirely different. But, at preparatory level of English education at tertiary level in most institution remains the same where cross-linguistics strategies are a must.

5.3. Conclusions

Based on the data collected from the writing analysis and questionnaires, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The items such as grammar rules in general, doubling of subjects, Arabic speech pattern, capitalization/punctuation are caused by the negative interference by the L1 in the writing of English.
- The kind of transfer that dominates the influence is the 'Negative Transfer' due to mother-tongue can mainly be found in the following aspects: spelling, structure, preposition, doubling of subjects, plural formation, synonyms, one word-different uses and similar looking words.
- The following issues were dealt with properly in the present study:
 1. What are the linguistic features that have been transferred from Arabic to English?
 2. What are reasons of such transfers?
 3. How can one tackle such issues?

To sum up, most of the grammatical errors committed by the subjects clearly appear to be crosslinguistic in nature as these indicate interference of L1 (Arabic) in acquiring grammatical elements of L2 (English) in the case of Saudi Learners of English at tertiary level. It also indicates however indirectly that e-strategies can be proved to be quite effective and interesting for teaching/learning of English grammar and then writing.

5.3. Recommendations

Quite recently, the scenario of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia has changed. New discussions have started, and pedagogues have started looking for novel strategies to cope with the existing situation of English language learning.

Contrastive approach to language teaching started long ago in mid-20th century with the work of Robert Lado, Dulay, Krashen and Burt and Kachru. In other words, the features of both the mother tongue of the learner and the target language are generally studied comprehensively and an attempt is made to teach the target language. On the basis of the comparison between the two languages, each aspect and skill of the target language can be compared with the features of the mother-tongue and possible effect. This way, one can develop a method that suits the exiting situation.

If a teacher makes comparisons between the two languages, the problem of target language learning may be solved to a great extent. He will understand the issues related to the students' learning difficulties. As a result, a compatible teaching strategy may be evolved for better teaching-learning experience.

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Appendix A

Questionnaires (for the Teachers)

S.N.	Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	I have been in this college for more than 2 years.			
2	I specialize in teaching of English as a foreign language.			
3	I am aware of bilingualism (Arabic-English)			
4	The students can understand lectures in English.			
5	I usually translate difficult words.			
6	I explain difficult words with the help of online images.			
7	Students don't usually understand questions in English.			
8	They take time in making responses as they seem to translate.			
9	The students know the answer but they can't communicate in English properly.			
10	The students ask me to translate into Arabic.			
11	Mother-tongue negatively affects the L2 (English) learning.			
12	There are certain common features in L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English).			
13	The English teacher should understand the problems of the learners.			
14	The handwriting and writing style is affected by Arabic.			
15	Most students don't capitalize and punctuate.			
16	Is e-learning always beneficial?			
17	I usually integrate online learning in your class?			
18	There is a ready and good portal for online			

Appendix B

Questionnaires (for the students)

S.N.	Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	I like learning of English.			
2	My teacher explains well.			
3	The books are difficult.			
4	Our teacher knows our problems.			
5	My teacher gives examples from Arabic language.			
6	I understand English spoken by British speakers.			
7	I prefer to read English story books.			
8	I like to learn my subjects in Arabic language.			
9	I consult dictionaries if English words are difficult.			
10	Online learning is interesting.			
11	The college e-learning program is quite good.			
12	The teacher uses YouTube's in the class.			

Appendix: C

(The following specimens are some of those sheets of some students who have made those mistakes that can be attributed to the mother-tongue interference.)

(Sample: 1)**Specimen Sample: Analysis of the student's sheets**

QUESTION:2- Look at the following **guidebook** about Vietnam, and **write about the country** you know:

Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia. It has a population of about XXX million people.....

Saudia Arabia is located in the medil of Asia.
It has 27 milion people. The official language in Saudia Arabia is Arabic, however most people talk English and Urdu. It has many beautiful places like, malls, beaches, Parks and cabins.

(Specimen: 2)

QUESTION:2- Look at the following **guidebook** about Vietnam, and **write about the country** you know:

Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia. It has a population of about XXX million people.....

~~It is a very good city.~~ I am from Jeddah, Jeddah city. City but Ful. It's big city in Saudia Arabia. He's the people very good. It's Al-islam He's the people in short I love my city I love Jeddah.

(Sample.3)

Q: What did you do yesterday?
A: I played P.S.I.P.
Q: How was your weekend?
A: it's so beautiful.
Q: Did you go shopping last night?
A: yes I do.
Q: Do you usually play football?
A: No I did not.