
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Arabic-to-English Transfer in EFL Writing: Interlingual Influence on Linguistic Structure and Style

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| ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of Arabic on the English writing by Palestinian EFL students. It focuses on linguistic structure, style, and cultural elements. A qualitative analysis was conducted on 60 essays written by 30 students at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, Palestine. The findings reveal that Arabic has a significant impact on the English writing of EFL students. Patterns of Arabic-to-English transfer featured in syntax and style. Arabic grammar seemed to shape sentence structure, while rhetorical traditions affect argument organization. The study identifies challenges for students and suggests teaching strategies. It enhances understanding of interlingual influences in EFL contexts and offers guidance for educators to improve writing instruction.

| KEYWORDS

Interlingual influence, Arabic-to-English transfer, EFL writing, Linguistic structure, Stylistic features, Cultural transfer

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1. Introduction

A learner's first language (L1) influences second language acquisition (SLA) (Ellis, 1994). Interlingual transfer occurs when L1 patterns are applied to L2, affecting writing (Bi & Tan, 2024). Arabic-speaking EFL students face challenges and opportunities in English writing (Junina, 2019; Junina, 2022). Arabic and English differ in grammar, structure, and rhetorical norms (Sdiq, 2021). Focusing on L1 influence is vital for improving EFL teaching. This causes Arabic students to use L1 features in English writing, which leads to unnatural sentence structures and unsuitable cohesive devices. It can also cause rhetorical styles to deviate from standard English. These influences complicate the writing process, making it difficult for students to express themselves fluently and accurately.

1.1 Research objectives

This study examines how Arabic linguistic structures affect the English writing of Arabic-speaking EFL students. A sample of 60 essays was analysed to identify specific areas of Arabic influence on L2 writing. The focus is on sentence structure, cohesive devices, and rhetorical strategies. By doing so, the research addresses the following questions:

1. How does Arabic syntax and grammar affect EFL writing's linguistic structure?
2. To what extent do Arabic rhetorical norms shape EFL writing's stylistic features?
3. How do Arabic cultural values influence idea organization, argumentation, and pragmatic strategies in EFL writing?
4. What pedagogical strategies can be developed to address these challenges and enhance EFL writing instruction for Arabic-speaking students?

Using contrastive analysis (Lado, 1957) and error analysis frameworks (Corder, 1974), the study highlights challenges faced by Arabic-speaking EFL students. It also provides insights for developing targeted instructional strategies.

2. Literature review

The influence of a learner's L1 on EFL writing has been widely studied. Research emphasizes the challenges Arabic-speaking EFL students face in writing (Alkasah & Eltaleb, 2024; Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Alhaysony, 2012). Studies on grammatical structure identify subject-verb agreement as a frequent difficulty encountered by Arabic-speaking EFL students (Junina, 2019). The simple past tense is particularly challenging for Arabic-speaking students (Swan & Smith, 2001). Errors in articles and prepositions are also common, reflecting direct influence from Arabic (Al Harthy et al., 2024). Research also found that Arabic-speaking students often literally and directly translate phrases from Arabic, which results in awkward or incorrect English expressions (Junina, 2019). In addition, lexical errors were found to pose a major challenge for Arabic-speaking EFL students. Such errors include incorrect collocations and inappropriate vocabulary choices (El-Dakhs, 2015), which are a result of reliance on L1 for word selection. Students' unfamiliarity with English collocations and their correct usage in context results in awkward phrasing (Al Khateeb, 2023; Mahmoud, 2019).

Furthermore, syntactical errors are another key issue in Arabic-to-English transfer (Abdelmohsen, 2022). Differences in syntactic structures cause confusion in word arrangement. Arabic's preference for long, complex sentences often results in run-on English sentences (Ezza & Almudibry, 2014). Arabic lacks direct equivalents for English articles "a," "an," "the", which leads to frequent omissions or misuse (Alhaysony, 2012). Cohesive devices are also used differently in Arabic and English texts. Arabic texts favour oralized structures, reflecting collectivist and high-contact communication styles, while English texts adopt a more literate, individualistic, and writer-responsible approach (Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010; Mohamed & Omer, 2000). This difference can make Arabic speakers' English writing seem disorganized or repetitive (Ezza & Almudibry, 2014; Reynolds, 1995).

Arabic discourse styles can create challenges in adapting to English conventions. Ezza and Almudibry (2014) note that Arabic-speaking EFL students often struggle with English rhetorical structures. This is due to the transfer of Arabic discourse patterns, which are often shaped by cultural norms (Almassry & Said, 2025; Ying & Soh, 2019). Arabic rhetoric employs elaborate, persuasive styles, often using metaphorical language and rhetorical questions (Khedri et al., 2022; Derki, 2023). In contrast, English writing favours logical and straightforward argumentation (Connor, 1996). This difference can make Arabic writers' English texts seem overly ornate or indirect (Al-Ali, 2004; Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic, 1983). In addition, educational background influences Arabic speakers' English writing. Many Arabic-speaking students lack exposure to English rhetorical conventions, which leads to reliance on native discourse patterns (Ahmad, 2020; Bacha, 2017). This issue may be worsened by instructors' limited training in addressing Arabic-speaking students' needs (Ramadan, 2024; Mallia, 2015).

Although existing research explores interlingual errors in English writing by Arabic-speaking students, studies focusing on the Palestinian context are still limited. Most studies emphasize issues at the linguistic level, while more attention is needed to highlight the socio-cultural factors that influence the process of writing in English. The present study aims to contribute to a better understanding of these issues from a Palestinian perspective and to provide practical pedagogical strategies to support EFL students in the writing process.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2013) to explore the influence of Arabic on EFL writing. It identifies linguistic structures and stylistic features transferred from Arabic to English. The analysis focuses on essays written by Palestinian EFL students to examine interlingual and intercultural transfer, including syntactic, lexical, and rhetorical patterns. In the context of the present study, the qualitative approach seemed effective for revealing how Arabic shapes EFL writing as it addresses both micro-linguistic and macro-stylistic levels.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 30 EFL students enrolled in a Writing II course at Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, Palestine. All participants were native speakers of Arabic, representing a CEFR intermediate to upper-intermediate level. The participants, aged 18 to 25, were selected to reflect a range of writing abilities, ensuring a diverse sample for analyzing interlingual transfer. This demographic was chosen because they are at a critical stage in their EFL development, where the influence of their L1 on their English writing is most pronounced.

3.3 Data collection

The study collected data from 60 essays written by participants. Each participant produced two essays.

1. A descriptive essay on the following topic: *"The Role of Technology in Education."* This essay was meant to assess stylistic features, including repetition, elaboration, and Arabic rhetorical patterns.
2. An argumentative essay on the following topic: *"Should Technology Replace Traditional Teaching?"* This essay was meant to evaluate idea organization, cohesive devices, and Arabic-influenced argumentative strategies.

Participants wrote the essays under timed conditions (60 minutes per essay). This ensured consistency and reliance on their linguistic knowledge without external help. Prompts were designed to minimize external influences and capture natural writing samples. These samples reflected participants' interlingual transfer patterns in their writing.

3.4 Research tools

This study used a writing task protocol with two guided essay prompts. These prompts, descriptive and argumentative, were created to collect writing samples. The samples aimed to show interlingual influences. A contrastive linguistic analysis framework was a secondary tool. It assessed syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements in students' writing. An essay evaluation rubric helped coders identify transfer features consistently.

3.5 Data analysis

The essays were examined using contrastive analysis to compare Arabic and English linguistic features (Lado, 1957). This approach enabled the researcher to identify areas of transfer in linguistic and stylistic elements of both languages. The linguistic analysis targeted syntactic features such as sentence length, coordination, and subordination. It revealed patterns such as run-on sentences and excessive coordination influenced by Arabic. The stylistic analysis explored how Arabic rhetorical norms affect EFL writing and assessed register consistency. Furthermore, the cultural analysis examined how Arabic values shape English writing. Thematic coding categorized recurring patterns of interlingual influence. Patterns were interpreted using prior research on Arabic-to-English transfer. This method enabled a structured examination of linguistic, stylistic, and cultural influences.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Participants were informed about the study's purpose before data collection, and consent forms were obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, with essays used only for the purpose of this research. Participants could withdraw their essays at any time during the study.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Two EFL educators with Arabic and English writing expertise independently analyzed essays. Discrepancies in categorization were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. Validity was improved by selecting diverse essays across proficiency levels. This ensured a comprehensive understanding of interlingual transfer patterns.

3.8 Data availability

The anonymized student essays from this study are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements. Ethical constraints also restrict access to the data. De-identified samples may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Analysis notes may also be available upon reasonable request.

4. Findings

Analysis of 60 essays by Palestinian EFL students showed clear Arabic-to-English transfer in linguistic structure and stylistic features, aligning with prior research. Findings highlight challenges for Arabic-speaking EFL students and are grouped into four categories, including linguistic structure, stylistic features, cultural transfer, and lexical-pragmatic transfer.

4.1 Linguistic structure

4.1.1 Sentence structure and syntax

A strong influence of Arabic syntax is featured in the essays. The use of long, complex sentences and run-on structures was particularly evident. Since Arabic often follows a verb-subject-object (VSO) order and favours interconnected clauses, transfer from Arabic into L2 writing leads to sentences that are syntactically correct but semantically and stylistically awkward. For example:

"Technology has become an integral part of our lives, and its presence has made many difficulties easier, especially in the field of education, as it has made it easier and more effective, and contributed to its access to all individuals from anywhere in the world."

While the sentence above is coherent, it reflects a tendency toward over-coordination and lack of conciseness, which is characteristic of Arabic rhetorical style. Arabic often uses paratactic structures (clauses joined by conjunctions) rather than hypotactic structures (clauses linked by subordination), leading to sentences that feel overly long and less focused in English (Saigh-Haddad, 2005). This finding is consistent with previous studies that have noted similar syntactic transfer in Arabic-speaking EFL students (Al-Jarf, 2005).

Another example of syntactic transfer is the use of subject-verb agreement errors, which are common in Arabic-influenced English writing. For instance:

"Technology play an important role in education because it help students learn better. It give access to many resources and make learning more interactive."

Here, the verbs 'play,' 'help,' and 'give' lack the third-person singular '-s,' which reflects influence from Arabic syntax. This is because verbs in Arabic do not consistently change their form to reflect the subject's number and person in the same way English verbs do. This aligns with findings by Al-Khasawneh (2010), who noted that Arabic-speaking EFL students often struggle with English verb tense and agreement due to differences in the two languages' grammatical systems.

4.1.2 Article usage:

Arabic and English differ in the usage of articles (Kharma, 1981). Arabic has the definite article "ال" (al-), which means "the." It is attached to the noun it modifies. For example, "الكتاب" (al-kitab) is equivalent to "the book." However, Arabic does not have an equivalent for "a" or "an." Indefiniteness is implied by the absence of the definite article and is often marked by tanween (ّ , ٍ , ً), a diacritical mark added to the end of a noun (Ryding, 2005). For example, "كتابٌ" (kitabun) is equivalent to "a book." Such differences in how definiteness and indefiniteness feature in Arabic and English seem to be challenging for Arabic-speaking EFL students when writing in English. Some of the essays showed that students omitted articles in English because Arabic does not require an indefinite article ("a" or "an") and uses "ال" differently. For instance, example (A) below is missing "the" before "health," and example (B) is missing "a" before "great impact."

A: *"Physical activity is important for health of the body and mental health."*

B: *"Technology has great impact on our education and our lives."*

Another aspect in terms of article usage is the overuse of the definite article. In Arabic, the definite article "ال" is used in some contexts where English would not use "the." Also, Arabic uses "ال" with generic nouns to refer to a general concept, while English often omits "the." For example, *"The technology is important plays an important role in our life."*

These errors highlight the students' struggle with the concept of definiteness in English, a common challenge for Arabic-speaking EFL students. This finding is supported by Al Harthy et al. (2024), who found that Arabic-speaking EFL students frequently omit articles in their writing due to the lack of equivalent structures in Arabic.

4.1.3 Preposition usage:

The essays also revealed prepositional errors stemming from differences between Arabic and English prepositional systems. For example:

"Technology has contributed massively on the way both schools and universities now run their educational process."

In the example above, the student incorrectly used the preposition "on" instead of "to." Another example of negative transfer is:

"She is responsible about organizing the school event."

The error in the example above seemed to arise because the Arabic preposition "عن" ('an), which commonly translates to "about," is often used with expressions of responsibility in Arabic. However, in English, the adjective "responsible" is followed by "for," not "about."

Such errors suggest that students may be directly translating Arabic prepositions into English without considering the contextual appropriateness of English prepositions. This aligns with findings by Alhammad (2023), who noted that Arabic-speaking EFL students often struggle with English prepositions due to the lack of one-to-one correspondence between Arabic and English prepositional systems.

4.2 Stylistic Features

4.2.1 Formality and register:

The analysis of the essays showed students' tendency to mix formal and informal registers. This seems to reflect an attempt by the students to navigate the nuances of English writing while influenced by Arabic discourse patterns. For example, formality was evident in some scripts:

"In the name of progress and the pursuit of knowledge, it is of great significance to recognize that technology has become a fundamental pillar in the educational sector."

In addition, adopting an informal register in writing was clear in some of the essays, for example:

"Let him start practicing any of the physical activities and enjoy it and encourage his friends and family to practice any of the physical activities in life."

The register variation stems from Arabic, where formal and informal styles are less distinct. This aligns with Al-Jarf (2005), who noted Arabic-speaking EFL students struggle with consistent English register. Their challenges arise from differing rhetorical norms between the two languages.

4.2.2 Repetition and redundancy:

The essays often used repetition to highlight points, which is common in Arabic rhetoric. For example, "health" is repeated unnecessarily:

"Physical activity is important for health of the body and mental health."

Similarly, redundancy appears in:

"Education plays a vital role in the development of education systems worldwide."

This repetition reflects students' reliance on Arabic rhetorical strategies, emphasizing elaboration over brevity. Kaplan (1966) noted Arabic rhetoric uses repetition and parallelism, often causing redundancy in English.

4.2.3 Direct translation of idiomatic expressions:

Some essays contained phrases that appear to be direct translations of Arabic idioms, resulting in expressions that sound unnatural in English. For example:

"We must exploit it correctly and benefit from it in a balanced manner."

In the example above, the phrase *"exploit it correctly"* appears to be a direct translation of the Arabic expression *"نستغلها على النحو الصحيح"*, but in English, "exploit" may carry a negative connotation. Another example of direct translation from Arabic is:

"The impact of technology on education has increased to an extent that it changes the methods of teaching and learning."

This mirrors the Arabic structure *"زاد تأثير التكنولوجيا على التعليم إلى درجة تغير طرق التدريس والتعلم"*, where the phrase *"to an extent that"* is a literal translation of *"إلى درجة"*. A more natural English phrasing would be: 'The impact of technology on education has increased so much that it changes the methods of teaching and learning.'

These examples highlight the challenges students face in navigating the cultural and linguistic nuances of idiomatic expressions in English. This finding is supported by Nadeem & Almolwad (2022), who found that Arabic-speaking EFL students often struggle with idiomatic expressions due to the lack of equivalent phrases in Arabic.

4.3 Cultural and conceptual transfer

4.3.1 Cultural references:

The essays often included Arab-specific cultural references, reflecting students' unique experiences. For example, one student wrote:

"In Gaza, despite challenges like internet outages and bombed schools, we value education."

This shows education's importance despite adversity, a theme rooted in students' context. However, these references may challenge English-speaking or international readers. They may lack familiarity with Gaza's political, social, and infrastructural issues. Adding context or explanations could improve understanding for a global audience. This aligns with Kachru (1992), noting EFL students' cultural references may not translate easily. Kachru emphasized that while these cultural insertions are valuable expressions of identity and context, they can pose interpretive challenges for readers outside that culture, especially when the references rely on assumed knowledge or shared experiences not common in the target language's dominant cultures.

4.3.2 Conceptual framing:

The essays exhibited ideas which are framed in ways that reflect Arabic cultural values, such as the emphasis on community and collective well-being. For instance:

"Let him start practicing any of the physical activities and enjoy it and encourage his friends and family to practice any of the physical activities in life."

The student here does not present physical activity merely as a personal choice or goal. Instead, it is portrayed as an act that gains significance through social influence and collective participation. The idea that engagement involves "*friends and family*" reflects a preference for shared experiences. This contrasts with the Western individualist focus on personal self-improvement or fitness (Hofstede, 1980). Arab societies' collectivist nature shapes individual identity through family, peers, or community ties. Hofstede's (1980) theory describes Arab cultures as collectivist, emphasizing group norms and loyalty. In education, this collectivist lens influences EFL students' writing styles significantly. They often use inclusive language, focusing on communal benefits over individual action. Such tendencies may differ from Western academic expectations, valuing individual arguments. Western writing prioritizes personal agency and critical independence in expression.

4.4 Lexical and pragmatic transfer

The study found lexical transfer, a cross-linguistic influence, common in student essays. Lexical transfer occurs when students apply L1 vocabulary or rules to L2. This leads to literal translations that often sound unnatural in English. Abstract or technical ideas from Arabic academic contexts showed this issue. For example, a student wrote:

"Technology is a double-edged sword that can serve and destroy education."

The phrase "serve and destroy" in the example above appears to be a direct lexical transfer from Arabic. In English, however, the verb "serve" in this context sounds awkward. A more natural alternative would be "*enhance or hinder*."

Students use bilingual dictionaries or translation, ignoring English pragmatic norms (Odlin, 1989). Abstract nouns or idioms lacking direct equivalents often cause transfer (Ringbom, 2007).

This aligns with conceptual transfer as suggested by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008). Students transfer L1 conceptual frameworks, not just words. This produces grammatically correct but semantically odd phrases. Contrastive rhetoric and vocabulary teaching are vital in EFL settings.

In Gaza, Arabic rhetorical patterns strongly shape students' English writing.

4.4.2 False cognates:

Another prominent instance of interlingual interference observed in the student essays is the misuse of false cognates—words in two languages that look or sound similar but differ in meaning. These misleading lexical similarities often lead students to make incorrect assumptions about word usage in the target language. A salient example from the data is the sentence:

"Technology has facilities the education process."

In this case, the student erroneously uses "*facilities*" as a verb, likely due to its visual and phonetic similarity to "*facilitated*." This confusion arises from the Arabic root "سَهَّلَ" (sahhala), which translates into English as "*to facilitate*." However, the English noun "*facilities*" (e.g., buildings or equipment) is unrelated in function or grammar. This confusion demonstrates a classic false cognate error, where the learner transfers form without regard to grammatical category or meaning in the target language.

Such lexical errors are often the result of semantic approximation, a common second language (L2) learning strategy where students substitute an unfamiliar L2 word with one that appears similar either phonetically or orthographically. As explained by Ringbom (2007), this is particularly prevalent among students whose L1 employs a rich root-based morphology (as in Arabic), where one root can generate a family of semantically related words. In contrast, English separates lexical items more rigidly by syntactic and morphological rules.

4.4.3 Politeness strategies:

Arabic-speaking students often transfer not only grammatical structures and vocabulary into their English writing but also pragmatic norms, especially those related to politeness strategies. These culturally embedded ways of expressing ideas influence the tone, modality, and discourse organization in student essays. A recurring feature in the data is the use of indirectness, modesty, and deference, which are characteristic of Arabic rhetorical traditions and interpersonal communication. For example, the sentence:

"We must be aware of how to use it, and rely on ourselves in education to achieve development in our personality and life."

Here, the phrase *"rely on ourselves"* reflects a culturally resonant self-effacing modesty. Palestinian EFL students' writing reflects Arab-Islamic values, emphasizing collective responsibility and humility (Feghali, 1997). Unlike English academic writing, which values individual achievement, their style prioritizes solidarity. For example, "I hope you understand my position" seeks empathy (Al-Khatib, 2001). This deferential tone aligns with Arabic norms of respect and face-saving. In English, such phrasing may seem informal but it is persuasive in Arabic rhetoric.

Pragmatic transfer occurs when L1 norms shape L2 writing (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1994). This affects how students form requests, suggestions, and conclusions in academic texts.

Arabic influences Palestinian EFL students' sentence structure, style, and word choice significantly. These findings stress addressing cross-linguistic influence in EFL teaching for Arabic speakers. Contrastive analysis and explicit instruction on English conventions reduce transfer. Cultural awareness training also helps students write more native-like English.

These insights clarify interlingual influence in EFL writing for Arabic-speaking students. They support developing tailored teaching strategies to address linguistic and cultural challenges.

5. Discussion

This study identifies Arabic-to-English interlingual influences in EFL writing by Palestinian students. It includes linguistic structure, style, and cultural elements. The findings align with prior research on cross-linguistic transfer, revealing specific difficulties for Arabic-speaking EFL students.

5.1 Linguistic and structural transfer

Analysis of the scripts found that the syntactic patterns the students followed in their writing were influenced by Arabic grammar. These included run-on sentences, missing articles, and preposition errors. These findings echo research by Alhaisoni (2012) and Al-Khasawneh (2010). Long sentences in the sample essays reflect Arabic's paratactic structure (Al-Jarf, 2008), whereby clauses are linked by conjunctions, not subordinated, leading to less concise English writing. Article omission stems from no definite or indefinite articles in Arabic, which is in align with research by Al-Khreshheh (2016).

5.2 Stylistic and rhetorical transfer

The study found that Arabic rhetorical practices shape EFL writing styles significantly. Repetition, used for emphasis, reflects Arabic strategies for reinforcing ideas. This aligns with Kaplan's (1966) framework, noting Arabic discourse's preference for repetition. However, repetition often causes redundancy in English, where brevity is valued. In addition, blending formal and informal language in Arabic seemed to be a feature of transfer (Al-Jarf, 2005), which can make EFL writing seem less refined. Arabic-influenced styles may reduce clarity in English writing.

5.3 Cultural and conceptual transfer

Arabic cultural values shape EFL writing structure and argumentation. Collectivism and modesty, key in Arab culture, appear in community-focused expressions. This aligns with Hofstede's (1980) theory, noting collectivism in Arab societies. According to Kachru (199), indirectness and deference reflect Arabic politeness. These may seem less assertive to English readers. In light of these findings, cultural factors seem to influence EFL writing's content, tone, and organization. Therefore, cultural sensitivity in EFL teaching is crucial.

6. Implications for EFL pedagogy

This study offers practical guidance for EFL instruction in Arabic-speaking contexts. It addresses Arabic-to-English transfer challenges. The study shows that Arabic significantly affects the English writing of Arabic-speaking EFL students at the levels of syntax, style, and rhetorical organization. Recognizing and addressing these influences is key to improving instruction.

6.1 Culturally responsive pedagogy

Effective L2 writing instruction should consider Arabic sentence structures, including verb-initial order and parataxis, as these shape students' English writing. Educators are encouraged to adopt contrastive analysis to emphasize differences in structure and rhetoric between Arabic and English, especially in terms of sentence complexity, cohesion, article usage, prepositions, and argument development.

Educators should also use culturally responsive teaching. While respecting Arabic rhetorical patterns such as circular or additive argumentation, educators are encouraged to guide students toward English norms, such as linear, thesis-driven essays. Through clear instruction, annotated examples, and guided revision, students can gradually move toward a more target-like English

writing. Students also need to receive clear, constructive feedback, sensitive to their cultural backgrounds, which encourages improvement without discouragement.

6.2 Scaffolding and practical approaches

A scaffolded writing approach which moves from sentence level to essay level could support students to gradually develop their writing skills and internalize English structures. Furthermore, educators could also use targeted exercises on English word order and cohesive devices. Peer reviews, model texts, and rhetorical workshops can clarify differences between Arabic and English writing and help students emulate English conventions.

In addition, bilingual glossaries, process-oriented writing tasks (e.g., brainstorming, drafting, revising), and use of technology (e.g., grammar checkers) can aid understanding of English grammar and rhetoric and reduce reliance on direct translation from Arabic. They can also encourage students to become more autonomous and confident writers.

6.3 Motivational design using the ARCS model

A key pedagogical implication is integrating Keller's ARCS model (Keller, 2010) into EFL writing instruction. ARCS stands for attention (A), relevance (R), confidence (C), and satisfaction (S). Educators can use the model to raise transfer issue awareness. It also sustains student motivation. To stimulate students' attention, educators could show students real-life transfer error examples and encourage reflection on Arabic-English structure differences. Educators can ensure relevance by linking writing tasks to students' academic contexts. Tasks should align with students' personal or professional goals. Confidence grows through structured instruction and clear feedback. Supportive feedback helps students revise writing independently. To foster satisfaction, educators can celebrate students' progress and encourage them to showcase samples of improved writing, which boosts students' morale. Opportunities to present work enhance satisfaction. This approach supports cognitive and affective learning needs. It effectively addresses interlingual transfer challenges.

6.4 Broader curriculum and institutional considerations

Teacher training should address cross-linguistic influences and culturally responsive approaches. Additionally, materials should reflect students' backgrounds and consider Arabic-to-English transfer. Furthermore, formative assessments detect issues early, enabling tailored instruction and feedback. Consequently, these methods are expected to improve English writing while valuing linguistic identities, and ultimately encourage confident bilingual writers.

In addition, writing teaching should cover pragmatic norms, such as politeness, argumentation, and discourse structure, to enhance students' awareness of English writing conventions. Culturally informed instruction fosters deeper understanding and reduces the negative effects of L1 transfer.

Lastly, technology-enhanced and collaborative learning environments, such as flipped classrooms, inquiry-based writing tools, and peer interaction, can improve motivation and autonomy. Repeated writing tasks and collaborative activities have been shown to help students internalize new structures and conventions (Azizzadeh & Dobakhti, 2014; Biria & Jafari, 2013; Huang, 2024).

7. Limitations of the study

Although this study offers insights on Arabic-to-English interlingual influence, it is not without limitations. It uses an essay sample from one university, limiting findings' applicability. Future research could include larger, diverse samples from varied contexts for broader insights. The study examines only written data, leaving spoken English unexplored. The qualitative approach is thorough but could benefit from quantitative methods. Statistical analysis of error frequency could deepen understanding of the phenomena.

8. Directions for future research

This study suggests several paths for future research. Longitudinal studies could track EFL writing proficiency development, focusing on interlingual influence changes with more English exposure. Comparative studies might explore interlingual influence variations across different first-language backgrounds to better understand cross-linguistic transfer. Experimental studies could test teaching methods such as contrastive analysis and cultural awareness training to reduce interlingual influence and improve writing skills. These methods would provide insights into EFL writing challenges and opportunities for Arabic-speaking students. Future work could also investigate oral communication, focusing on pronunciation, fluency, and pragmatics.

9. Conclusion

This study explored Arabic's influence on writing by Arabic-speaking EFL students in Palestine, focusing on structure, style, and culture. Essays showed clear cross-linguistic patterns. Arabic grammar seemed to cause errors including article omission and preposition misuse in English. Arabic rhetorical practices, such as repetition, reduce clarity in English writing. Moreover, cultural

values, such as collectivism and indirectness, shape arguments in essays. Such differences between Arabic and English affect communication strategies.

The findings suggest that tailored EFL teaching methods are needed. Therefore, writing instructors should provide students with opportunities where Arabic and English grammar and syntax are compared in class. Direct instruction on articles and linking words improves writing skills. Cultural training helps students adapt their writing for English audiences. The study's small sample size and focus on written texts. Future research could include larger samples and spoken English analysis. Mixed methods may provide deeper insights into EFL writing. This study highlights linguistic, stylistic, and stylistic factors in EFL writing. Understanding Arabic's influence helps teachers improve students' English skills.

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