Third Year English Students' and Their Teachers' Attitudes towards the Impact of Culture on Writing English as a Foreign Language - A case study

توجهات طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية للسنة الثالثة ومعلميهم تجاه تأثير الثقافة على كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية - دراسة حالة

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Abstract:

Writing is a complex process of language communication. Thus, teaching writing is a tough task for most teachers. This paper aims at discussing the cultural impacts on Academic Written Expression in the perspectives of both students and teachers. The case study includes 60 third year students at the English department-Batna 02 university. In this descriptive study, a mixture of research instruments was implemented; a students' questionnaire and an Academic Written Expression task; in addition, a structured interview was carried out with 06 teachers. Data were analyzed and results were displayed. The results showed that mother language transfer, religious conformity, cultural resistance to self expression, and the learning background embedded in the students' native culture are the major impacts of culture on the students while writing.

Key words:

Academic writing; Culture; Cultural Elements; Thinking

ملخص:

الكتابة عملية معقدة لتحقيق التواصل اللغوي الناجح. وبالتالي فإن تدريس الكتابة يعتبر مهمة صعبة بالنسبة لمعظم الأساتذة. يهدف هذا المقال إلى مناقشة تأثير الجانب الثقافي على أسلوب الكتابة الأكاديمية في نظر كل من الطلاب وأساتذتهم. إن هذه الورقة البحثية تعد دراسة حالة والتي شملت 60 طالب سنة ثالثة ليسانس في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة باتنة -2-. في هذه الدراسة الوصفية تم الاعتماد على أدوات بحثية وهي: استبيان للطلاب، إضافة إلى كتابة مقال أكاديمي باللغة الإنجليزية. و أيضا تم إجراء مقابلة منظمة مع 06 أساتذة في القسم نفسه. أظهرت النتائج أن نقل أفكار اللغة الأم (اللغة العربية)، و الخيارات الدينية، والمقاومة الثقافية للتعبير عن الذات و بالإضافة إلى خلفية التعلم المحتواة في الثقافة الأصلية للطلاب هي العناصر الأساسية للثقافة والتي لها تأثير سلبي على الطلاب أثناء محاولاتهم للكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الكتابة الأكاديمية؛ الثقافة؛ عناصر الثقافة؛ التفكير

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I.   Introduction

Writing is a complex process of language communication and an elaborated process of thinking Literature Background (Zue, 2002). The process of writing calls for a very sophisticated mental organization of lexis, language structure and content. A good piece of writing involves the organization of content and form; thus, the realization of a native-like piece of writing is not an easy task for both learners and their teachers. Discourse organization in English language for foreign language learners is organized in ways that presents interpretive difficulties for language users. Scientists related that present phenomenon to the low level of English language proficiency in terms of writing organization, accuracy, range of vocabulary, complexity and directness, and the differences between English and the learners' mother language. However, scholars attempted to understand this phenomenon through comparisons of different thought patterns which are made distinct via cultural belonging and identity (Wang, 2000).

Many studies in the field of writing sought to figure out the origins of academic writing difficulties for foreign language learners. This study sheds light on the perceptions of English foreign language learners and their teachers concerning the major difficulties that may face Algerian learners throughout writing in English. Moreover, the study focuses on some cultural elements assumed to be the source of generating Written Expression difficulties for students at the English Department of Batna 2 University. Therefore, they lead to a low level of academic writing performances.

1. Literature Background
1- The Complexity of the Writing Skill

According to Kramsch (1993), the writing skill is a complex process for learners of English as a second language including the Arab students. The difficulties faced in writing in L2 are related to the difficulties faced in learning the language in addition to the interference of L1 skills. In another study similar to the previous one, Wang (1999) states that errors in writing are committed due to thinking in the native language then doing translations to L2 or another foreign language. Al-Khatib A. M. (2000), in his research on writing errors among Arab students, found that the major problematic areas were irregular past forms, subject and verb agreement, emphasis on certain tenses, paragraph unity, coherence and cohesion.

Al-Khatib, A. M. (2000) reports that students faced problems in writing essays, in terms of thesis statement, topic sentences transitioning, and sequencing of ideas. Besides, the study highlighted the origins of the low writing performances of the Arab students which reside in the weakness in mastering the writing skills in Arabic.

In his error analysis studies, Ridha (2012) investigates the effects of EFL learners' L1 on writing in English. The results showed that the errors in English

language use could be attributed to L1 transfer; that is, a high reliance on the mother language to express ideas in English. A similar perception is suggested by

Therefore, for better understanding of the mechanisms of the interference of the mother tongue, it is necessary to understand the cultural background of L1.

2- Definitions of the Term Culture

The forth coming compilation of definitions to the term culture provides different views of sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists to the concept "culture".

"Culture …is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (Tylor, 1870) as cited by Avruch 1998:6)

'Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.'

'... the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next.'

Matsumoto 1996: 16

'Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour.'
Spencer-Oatey 2008: 3

The above definitions of culture range from very complex to simple ones. However, the common definition is that culture is a set of patterns that shape thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted by symbols, which constitutes the nature of a social group and its achievements in artifacts, traditions and values.

In fact, it is up to the scholars' interests to define culture pragmatically. According to Hofstede (2001), it is worth to concentrate on the researcher's interest in studying culture to determine the required elements for measurement. Yet, the researcher could not be interested in culture as a whole, but rather in values, beliefs or behaviours as expressions of culture. Hofstede (2001), proceeds, deciding upon the boundaries of culture is very necessary for research clarity and avoidance of

confusion. According to Fischer (2009), defining culture in research is compulsory for there is no need exploring agreement of members in a national culture if the researcher does not focus on the common aspects of culture. Fisher pinpointed that the researcher is not interested in culture as a variable, but only in specific context variables that can interpret observed differences or similarities on a certain dependent variable. Thus, the solution is a matter of subjective choice of cultural elements.

3- Classification of the Concepts of Culture

This classification of the different concepts of culture does not reflect an order of merit; rather it reflects diverse perspectives common in some points of view which vary according to the purpose of the research.

3.1 Subjective Culture, Mental Software

The idea of subjective culture was first coined by Hofstede, (2001) where culture is viewed as an invisible thing that resides in individuals' minds. He called it a mental programming or software of the mind. Yet, not all mental elements are considered as culture. Personal identities, for example, are excluded; for Hofstede, groups with the same cultural values may fight if they adopt different identities.

3.2 Objective Culture, Institutions and Artifacts

Instruments that people use in their daily life such as dressing and art objects are visible instances that represent cultural artifacts that have an objective existence. Laws and relations among members of the same society are created and governed by manmade rules such as marriage systems and inheritance system. Objective culture is created by members and is kept outside them.

3.3 Culture as a System of Behaviours

Brown (1991), pinpointed that "culture consists of the conventional patterns of thought, activity and artifact that are passed from generation to generation" (p.40). Therefore, if a society manifests a certain behavior such as, thanks giving, it is considered as part of its culture. In fact, there is no clear agreement about this view. Many anthropologists share the same point of view of Haviland, (1990).

"Recent definitions [of culture] tend to distinguish more clearly between actual behaviors on the one hand, and the abstract values, beliefs, and perceptions of the world that lie behind that behavior on the other. To put it another way, culture is not observable behavior, but rather the values and beliefs that people use to interpret experience and generate behavior, and that is reflected in their behavior". (p. 30)

Whether behavior is included as part of culture or not is a matter of conception and interest of the researcher.

3.4 Culture as a Set of Meanings

The view that meanings constitute culture was first introduced by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Anthropologists while studying preliterate societies tried to give meanings to the set of practices of certain communities and came to a definition to culture as "shared meanings that are encoded into the norms that constitute it" (Pepitone and Triandis, 1987, p.485)

Certainly, culture is not just a set of meanings. However, for academic reasons, a given behaviour is interpreted to a specific meaning. Another reason resides in the example of depression provided by Cheung and Leung (1998) where most Chinese score high in the American depression scales; yet this does not mean that they have psychiatric problems or they need help. Simply, the items that suggest the level of depression in America are not the same in China.

The example of democracy in Muslim countries is highly valued; yet Muslim societies are less democratic. (Maseland and van Hoorn, 2011) Thus, the meaning of democracy is misleading unless it is derived from what people say about it. The Pew Research Center (2010) revealed some statistics about the Muslim people and their attitude towards the working women outside their homes. Results showed that these populations have very different ideas about the concept democracy compared to Americans and Europeans. Now, the question is how do we make sense of the observed phenomenon? Is it about looking for the original meaning? Or look for a new meaning to it in the modern time? For instance, pigs are banned in Muslim states, be it due to the cost or the religious reason? Now it can be seen as a means to test self control or as group identity reinforcement.

3.5 Culture as an Independent Existing Phenomenon

Culture is an independent existing phenomenon means that scientists can study it away from the individuals that hold this culture. Anthropologists supported this conception for it allows a supra-individual study to culture. They focused on markers of the culture such as institutions, religions, languages, taboos, and others. The fundamental conception of culture nowadays encompasses values, beliefs, and attitudes. From this conception, many other disciplines and sub-disciplines are studied separately in an objective way.

4- Culture and Writing

There is no common consensus about the definition of culture though in social sciences it refers to the lens with which we evaluate everything around us (Barakat, 1993); we evaluate what is proper or improper, normal or abnormal, through the culture. Culture includes the shared social vision, beliefs, customs, traditions, norms and values. It embeds artistic achievements and the knowledge or thoughts of a certain society. If we are immersed in a culture that is unlike our own, we may experience cultural shock or become disoriented when we come into contact with a different culture (Barakat, 1993).

According to Hyland (2003), writing differences are due to the cultural factors. People who lack knowledge about other cultures will face difficulties in writing in the second language. Therefore, for mutual understanding, we need to learn about each other first, and adopt actions involved in intercultural dialogue. This cross-cultural understanding helps perceive the source of writing difficulties which reside in the cultural factors, but are not inherent in the students themselves. Thus, comparing rhetorical styles between students' L1 and L2 writing raises awareness for better understanding to the Arab learners' performances in writing.

Culture, for Hofstede (1980), is a set of thinking habits in a sort of mind programming which causes people to react differently in similar situations. In his research, he proposed four cultural framework dimensions namely "power distance", "collectivism vs individualism", 'feminity vs masculinity" and "uncertainty avoidance". This model is applicable to the Arab learners due to the tribal nature of the Arab society (Ridha, 2012).

Harklau (1999) stated that throughout teaching the second language, some cultural issues are tackled in order to enhance the pragmatic competency in L2 learning process. Frequently, the L1 manner of performance is transmitted to L2 writing. Therefore, it is necessary to socialize L2 learners with the cultural norms of the target language in the academic texts used. Therefore, the EFL classroom serves as a medium where the culture of the English language is transmitted implicitly to help improve the writing courses. Teachers play the role of instructors, explainers, and mediators of cultural norms.

5- Patterns of Cultural Thinking

Robert B.Kaplan is one of the representative figures of research on writing L2, he pinpointed that ESL students do not write the way they are expected to do which should be native-like. This does not reflect that the writing was wrong in terms of grammar, but in terms of the discourse requirement and the writing reasoning (Robert B.Kaplan, 1966). In his research paper "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education" published in 1966, which investigated the rhetorical practices of non English students, Kaplan contrasted the linear development of writing by native writers with other non-native writers. He came up with five major thought patterns shown in the figure below:
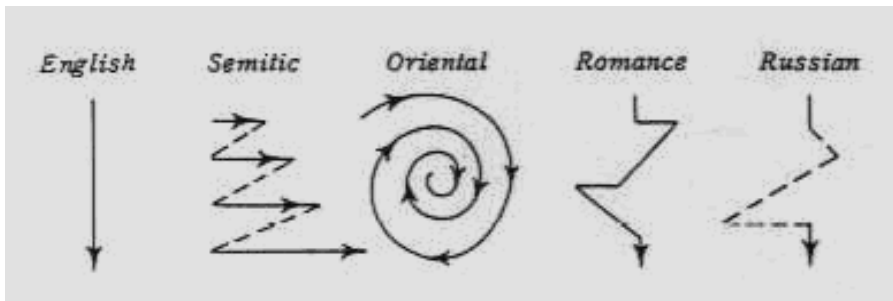
Figure 01: Kaplan's Presentation of the Ethnicity-Based "Cultural Thought Patterns"
Figure 01 represents Kaplan's Presentation of the Ethnicity-Based "Cultural Thought Patterns".

- The simplest linear diagram represents the English group. It is a straight vertical line which represents the logical development of the English paragraph. The writing style is direct and to the point, with a clear thesis statement at the beginning followed by well arranged supporting arguments. Therefore, the English writing is linear, direct, clear and logical. These features of English writing are considered as patterns of good English writing for natives.

- The second diagram represents the pattern of thoughts of Semitic language group (Jewish, Arabic, Armenian) represented through zigzagged lines to present the parallel proposition. Semitic paragraph development consists of complex series of parallel constructions. In other words, arguments are embedded in stories not in hierarchical progression. For native readers to the Semitic paragraph, it is hard to decipher the focus of a written composition mainly a fairly long one owing to the parallel construction of arguments.

- The oriental pattern group includes Asian argumentative writing. Oriental writing in English approaches the argument in a circular, respectful, indirect, and authoritative way. The spiral line suggests the indirection. Contrary to the linear writing, the organization of the oriental writing is out of the point and focus and sometimes awkward for the English natives. Oriental people are accused to be incapable of being straightforward as westerners.

- The Romance language group takes the shape of back and forth zigzag. Languages in this group favor a digressive style that requires readers to follow the argument to its conclusion. That is, "much freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material" (Ding, 2004:230).

- Russian argumentative writing follows the Romance model, but with more freedom in dividing the arguments throughout the essay writing to the conclusion.

Kaplan's model of "contrastive rhetoric" is a generic typology of cultural writing patterns. This model is considered as too general and simple. It is critiqued for its failure to reflect the broader multiculturalism and linguistic diversity of international students when they write in English language.

6- The Rhetoric Arab Way of Writing

According to Al-Khatib (2000), Arab speech communities are known of the two language forms they perform, colloquial and classical. In all Arabic speaking countries, colloquial Arabic is the vernacular language used in everyday interactions. However, Modern Standard Arabic (a simplified form of Classical Arabic) is the language used in the written form as an official language for administrations and institutions.

At the universal level, English has become an international means of communication in different fields including education (Smith, 2001). However, learning English as a foreign language is still struggling in a rote-learning process where students provide modeled written passages. Therefore, this kind of production hinders the progress of the students' level of writing abilities as creative writers and undermines the learners' autonomy. Rugh (2002), pinpointed that rote memorization is a central feature of educational system in many Arab countries mainly Islamic religious texts through memorization.

The Arab students prefer the teacher centered approach where they do exactly what they are asked (Richardson, 2004). Thus, the shift towards the competency approach annoyed them because of the active learning and the extreme indulgence in the learning process. This situation is basically due to the passive learning and memorization throughout the previous levels (primary, middle and secondary). In this concern, the Arab students are more dependent than being autonomous learners, and find it difficult to get accustomed to the new modes of learning at university (Richardson, 2004).

7- Writing in English as a Foreign Language - Cultural Influence

According to Kramsch (1993), culture and language are two sides of the same coin. The main reason is that the foreign language learner faces the different features of culture such as beliefs, societal norms and different ways of life throughout learning the FL. This inseparable nature of language and culture leads learners to be part of a new culture different from their own cultures. Therefore, cultural awareness while learning the second language is an important strategy that fosters FL learning process. Kramsch adds that by consequence, foreign language learners become learners of another culture for language cannot be learned without understanding the cultural context in which it is performed.

Written Expression analysis to pieces of writing jotted down by second language learners revealed the existence of cross-cultural differences. Native writers

do write differently from foreign language learners. The differences were not just in terms of grammar or any structural matters, but in terms of underlying rhetorical differences including the order of ideas (Kaplan, 1987). Kaplan has conducted a comparison between ESL cultural practices and typical western ones which led to important results related to rhetorical trends. Results showed that students with Anglo-European languages prefer linear developments. On the other hand, students with Asian languages used an indirect approach in writing in English.

Kramsch (1991) admits that the learner's cognitive ability is fundamentally affected by his or her cultural backgrounds, beliefs and world views. He stated that the understanding of the knowledge is shaped by the cultural factors that the learners have inherited which has a considerable impact on their written performances. Alaraby (1983) noted that in Islamic nations, writing topics are restricted to those that do not exceed the Islamic culture boundaries. That is to say, writing topics are culturally limited that is why some topics cannot be discussed in the classroom.

II. Methodology
1- Statement of the problem
Students at the English department, Batna-2 University are commonly classified as poor writers of English according to their own claims and the ones of their teachers too due to many factors namely; L1 transfer, the writing system of the Arabic language, religious conformity, cultural resistance to self expression and the learning background embedded in the students' native culture. Therefore, students in the English department encounter cultural difficulties and challenges while writing in English language.

2- Aims of the Study
The focus of this paper is to explore English FL writing difficulties and challenges that face third year students at the English department, Batna-2 University according to the students and their teachers. It also aims at investigating the cultural challenges embedded in third year students' written performances in English language.

3- Research Questions
- What are the students' perceptions of the academic English writing difficulties?
- What are the teachers' and the students' perceptions of the academic writing strategies?
- To what extent are the students aware of the interference of their native culture in their performances in writing?
- What are the cultural obstacles encountered while writing in English?

4- Hypotheses
- The academic writing difficulties faced by students are mainly due to the cross cultural differences.

- Students and some of their teachers are not aware enough of the cultural effects on the academic writing.
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5- Research Design

The main thrust of the current study is to shed light on both students' and their teachers' perceptions of the impact of culture over writing academically. Thus, the descriptive method is the most suitable in this investigation. In order to accomplish this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to 60 third year students consisting of 20 items related to difficulties encountered while writing in English mainly related to cultural issues. Besides, participants were invited to produce an academic essay as extra information to our questionnaire. The students' produced writings were assessed analytically and holistically by the researcher focusing on the cultural difficulties mentioned in the theoretical part. Data were also collected from the interviews held with 06 permanent teachers at the same department. Data were presented in tables for quantitative results.

6- The Population and Sampling

The study was carried out at the English Department at Batna 2 University, Algeria. The participants were 60 third year students, aged between 21and 25 years old. The sample consisted of 17 males and 43 females who were randomly selected from the 7 groups of the whole population (461). The sample makes 13% of the population under investigation.

Additionally, the study includes six (6) permanent teachers of Written Expression at the same department with more than 10 years experience of teaching at the university level.

7- Research Instruments

For the quantitative data, a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire was administered to investigate students' attitudes towards the impact of their native culture on their writing performance in English. 60 students responded to the questionnaire. Students were asked to decide to what extent they agreed with the following statements (ranging from 1= totally disagree to 5= totally agree). For the qualitative data, the students were asked to write an essay expressing their points of view vis-à-vis the positive and negative cultural effects on their written performances, in addition to a structured interview which was carried out with six purposefully selected teachers. The researcher tried to investigate the teachers' opinions about the influence of the culture on the written performances in the target language.

8- Findings and Discussion

	Agree	Disagree
The Algerian culture does not correspond with the English culture	90%	10%
There are common beliefs and attitudes between the Algerian culture and the English culture	15.32%	84.68%
There are few differences between the Algerian culture and the English culture	12.52%	87.48%

*Table 01***: Students' Perception of their Culture**

Concerning the students' perceptions of their native culture, our study revealed that most students (90%) agreed on the non correspondence between the Algerian culture and the English culture as demonstrated in *Table 01*.

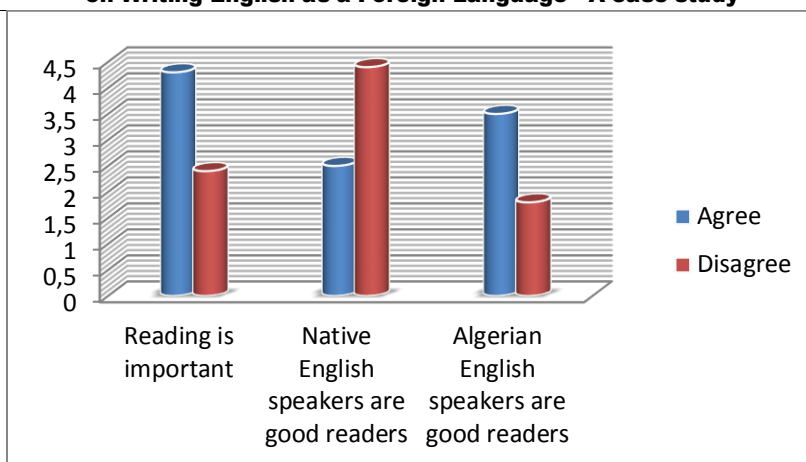|	Agree	Disagree
Reading is important to improve writing	95.50%	04.5%
Native English speakers are good readers	92.56%	07.44%
Algerian English speakers are good readers	16.60%	83.40%

*Table 02***: The Importance of Reading**

Figure 01: **The Importance of Reading**

As shown in *Table 02* and *Figure 01*, the majority of our participants claim that native English speakers are good readers. Reading is an important pre-writing strategy to enhance academic writing which is part of native speakers' culture.

	Agree	**Disagree**
There are differences between the English language and the Arabic language rhetoric patterns	92%	08%
Academic writing directness and explicitness come from a cultural heritage	85%	15%
Features of the English writing style differ from those of the Arabic style	89%	11%

Table 03: **Language Rhetoric Patterns**

Besides, results in *Table 03* reveal that the rhetoric patterns of the Arabic language are not similar to the ones embedded in the English language. Accordingly, explicitness and directness as important features of academic writing appear to be socio-cultural elements of academic style for the Algerian students.

	Agree	Disagree
Teaching writing requires using reader-centered communication techniques	72%	28%
Teaching writing requires using writer-centered drafting	32%	68%

Table 04: **Perceptions of Academic English Writing**

Concerning the students' perceptions of academic English writing (*Table 04*), the study showed that most participants (72%) agreed that effective teaching writing requires using reader-centered communication techniques; thus, making the shift from writer-centered drafting. That is, a good writer of English must develop analytical abilities for any written production. Critical reading enhances the students' abilities in writing before dealing with any written production in English language.

	Agree	Disagree
Writing process requires reviewing ideas before the final draft	86%	14%
Writing requires prior communication with teachers	83%	17%
Writing requires prior communication with classmates	35%	65%
On the exam papers, re-using the language on poly copies provided by teachers is better than summarizing and paraphrasing ideas	85%	15%

Table 05: **Participants' Perceptions of Strategies for Academic English Writing**

Our study also revealed that participants' perceptions of strategies for academic English writing are grouped into three categories: (1) writing process, (2) social interaction, and (3) writing from sources (*Table 05*). In terms of writing process, the participants might be more willing to revise ideas before editing. According to them, both revising and editing are components of the composing process that may be taught and learned. The academic writers employ social interaction in order to communicate effectively with their teachers to refine their ideas, but not with their classmates. When it comes to writing in exams, most participants (85%) re-use the language from source texts provided by their teachers (poly copies) and correct language-related issues only after revising ideas. Participants disagree that they summarize information in English; they simply reduce the source texts. However, very few participants (15%) seem more likely to have a tendency to summarize information by selecting and reorganizing course text.

	Agree	Disagree
Mother language interference causes writing problems in English language	93%	07%
Word order, content and the organization of writing are affected by language transfer	89.23%	10.67%
Writing mechanics are influenced by language transfer	51%	49%

Table 06: **The Cultural Impact on the Academic Writing**

In relation to the cultural impact encountered throughout writing, *table 06* demonstrates that our participants confessed that the interference of the mother language in the process of writing is a major cultural problem while writing in English language. Teachers from their part noticed that there are so many errors in the students' language use and usage. Remarkably, all participant teachers stated that almost all of the students rely on their native language to transfer ideas to the target language. Word order, content and organization are frequently trapped by comparisons to the Arabic language.

	Agree	Disagree
Using transcribed Arabic using English alphabet is a good strategy for gap filling	60%	40%
Using abbreviations while writing academically is unconscious	87.5%	12.5%
Using such abbreviations (Net-lingo) is derived from social media use	93.6%	6.4%

Table 07: **Writing Using Abbreviations and Transcriptions**

Linguistically speaking, the Arabic system of writing differs from the English one; however, students use words transcribed into English and take the Arabic meaning leading to the creation of a new language called the "Net-lingo" which has been acquired from the frequent use of the internet and mainly social media web sites. In addition, the excessive use of the internet resources made of students accustomed to abbreviations in many words. The net lingo is unconsciously embedded in the students' academic writing making of it informal and incomprehensible to teachers in the academic writing.

	Agree	Disagree
Western ways of thinking most often differ from Islamic ones	89%	11%
I cannot write on and discuss topics considered as taboo in my culture	81%	19%
The English language connotes Western ways of thinking and beliefs	90%	10%

Table 08: **Religious Resistance to Openness**

Table 08 shows that the majority of students think that since English is a Western language, it may connote Western ways of thinking and beliefs. It is in contradiction with Islamic beliefs where they feel they are limited in the scope of discussions when it comes to topics that are considered taboo in their culture or even that are related to Islamic symbols. On the other hand, only a few of the participants expressed willingness to embrace new cultures without any resistance.

9- Conclusion

The contribution of this study is that students are shown in academic cultural context. When it comes to writing, students are faced with some restrictions like their traditions and their cultural resistance to certain western topics. Further, the impediments that are created by the interference of the mother language Arabic throughout the process of writing hinders the quality of writing in English. The study also reveals that the students learning background is Arabic based from the primary school; thus, thinking process and rhetoric way of writing are highly distinct from the English language native users as explained by Kaplan (1966). In this regard, writing in English for third year students is considered as a difficult task.

English university program directors need to be aware of potential differences in academic culture and in academic English curricula if they are to act responsibly as educators. Students do not have homogeneous cultural backgrounds for academic English writing, and their interaction with university program content is not related simply to English grammar or to ethics. That is, competence in intercultural communication provides a basis for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment in international higher education.

Many students seek to procede their higher education in English-speaking countries; therefore, students seeking advanced degrees in these countries should be aware of developing their intercultural competence (proficiency). Language use cannot be separated from culture, and this study shows that teaching writing should not be. International students bring with them diverse perceptions of academic English writing when they enter the English-speaking countries. If students do not learn to practice cultural tolerance they will not be receptive to learn anything new from any culture. Therefore, they will just appreciate all what is related to their own culture which will slow down learning the target language. Writing depends on the writer's individual learning and past experiences; thus, teachers must not stereotype students on their cultures.

Students in the English department- Batna 2 University- can achieve a higher level of competency in writing by being exposed to appropriate materials and adequate instructions. Shifting learners from their rote learning background towards creating strategies is an important decision. Students would be able to overcome their weaknesses in writing if they were made aware of them and were well supervised. Briefly, students are in need of profound guidance and support from their teachers. Writing in a second language is likely similar to exploring an unfamiliar territory. However, the teachers' commitment is required in helping students overcome their resistance to writing due to conflicting ideologies in a multicultural world.

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