

**The Effect of L1 Arabic Proficiency on the L2 English Writing Skills of  
Emirati Grade Nine Male students**

أثر إتقان اللغة العربية على مهارة الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية على طلبة إماراتيين بالصف التاسع – ذكور

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### Title

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## ***Dedication***

*This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and my dead father (May Allah accept him in the paradise), my wife, my brothers, my daughters and my son. I appreciate their everlasting love, patience, encouragement and support and without them, I would not have been able to accomplish my Master dissertation.*

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# The Effect of Arabic Proficiency on the English Writing Skill of Emirati Grade Nine Male students

## Abstract:

This study explores the correlation between Arabic proficiency and English language performance in the writing skill of grade nine Emirati male students. A distinction between two styles of Arabic (MSA and Colloquial) was necessary to specify the source of negative transfer. Despite the fact that Arabic is the students' mother tongue, they still making errors in writing in their mother tongue due to the interference of their colloquial language style. This low proficiency in MSA (Fus`ha) caused ample errors in writing in English as a second language. Having higher proficiency in MSA (Fus`ha) attributes to positive transfer into the target language (English). The study was held in four stages in which the researcher examined the students' performance in the first two stages through controlled task of sentences translation, and a free writing of a short paragraph. Stage three included semi-structured interviews with three Arabic language teachers who are teaching the same grade in the same school, and finally grades analysis in both subjects. The students' grades in writing composition in both subjects were collected and analyzed. This analysis revealed that those who score high grades in MSA performed better in writing in English. The findings of the study agreed with Cummins Interdependence Hypothesis about the correlation between L1 and L2 with the hope to assist the ESL teachers and the Arabic language teachers in designing the appropriate materials that enhance students' writing skills in both subjects.

## Key terms:

MSA = Modern Standard Arabic (Fus`ha)

Non-MSA= Colloquial Arabic (spoken and dialect)

L1= Arabic in general

L2 = English as a second language



## أثر إتقان اللغة العربية على مهارة الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية على طلبة إماراتيين بالصف التاسع – ذكور

### الملخص:

تكشف هذه الدراسة عن العلاقة بين إتقان اللغة العربية وأداء طلاب الصف التاسع الإماراتيين/ الذكور بالكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. لقد كان من الضروري توضيح الفرق بين شكلين من اللغة العربية (المستوى الفصيح والمستوى العامي من اللغة عينا) وتحديد مصدر النقل السلبي. على الرغم من كون اللغة العربية لغة الطلبة الأم إلا أنهم ما زالوا يرتكبون الأخطاء أثناء الكتابة باللغة العربية نتيجة لتداخل اللغة العامية في كتاباتهم باللغة العربية الفصحى. ضعف إتقان اللغة العربية الفصحى كان سبباً في إحداث كم كبير من الأخطاء أثناء الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. إتقان اللغة العربية الفصحى يساهم في نقل إيجابي بين اللغتين. أقيمت الدراسة على أربع مراحل حيث قام الباحث باختبار أداء الطلبة في أول مرحلتين: الواجب المقيد وأخذ شكل ترجمة للجمل وواجب آخر على شكل كتابة حرة. المرحلة الثالثة من البحث تضمنت مقابلة قصيرة مع ثلاثة أساتذة للغة العربية الذين يدرسون الفصول نفسها في المدرسة عينا. وفي النهاية تم جمع العلامات وتحليلها في كلتا المادتين. أظهرت نتائج التحاليل أن الطلبة الذين كانت درجاتهم باللغة العربية مرتفعة قاموا بأداء أفضل بالكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. توافقت نتائج الدراسة مع نظرية الترابط لكيومنز أملاً أن تساعد النتائج مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية ومدرسي اللغة العربية على حد سواء في تصميم المواد الملائمة التي من شأنها تطوير مهارة الطلبة بالكتابة باللغتين.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Several studies have shown the fact that similarities and differences are two indicators for the degree of transfer (positive or negative) in L2 acquisition. Positive transfer occurs when similarities between the two languages meet together in forming an utterance in the L2, whereas, negative transfer reflects a gap in learners' perception of the L2. It reflects the differences between the two languages. The learner would be searching on a similar rule in his/her L1 to apply it in his/her L2 and his/her failure would cause the error. (Saville-Troike 2006)

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of error analysis which revealed wider description of errors. Errors were classified into two types: Interlingual and Intralingual (Richards and Sampson 1980). Interlingual errors are those errors that occur due to L1 interference into L2 acquisition. Learners transfer previously learned structures in their L1 while learning their L2. On the other hand, intralingual errors are errors that take place as a result of misapplying of certain learned rules due to lack of instructions. Most of the studies dealt with Arabic as MSA, no studies dealt with it as colloquial. They considered the Arabic language that is spoken and taught at schools as already developed MSA. Therefore, this study will explore the effect of proficiency in MSA on writing performance in English by Arab Emirati bilinguals grade nine male students. Knowing more about the correlation between English and MSA (the official language of the Arab world) and colloquial Arabic (the spoken language in the Arab world) would reveal the degree of a positive/negative transfer that might occur in terms of proficiency in the writing skill in English. Having a level of proficiency in the MSA would be positively beneficial while transferring some elements of the L1 into the L2 (English). This urges the researcher to investigate and find more

about the sources of errors that cause poor writing in English and whether low proficiency in MSA would negatively affect writing in English language. Moreover, this study will focus mainly on the impact of Colloquial Arabic (Spoken language with the Emirati dialect) on writing in English as a second language.

For the purpose of this study, Arabic language will be dealt with in its two versions; The MSA and the Colloquial. The MSA will be referred to as “**Fus`ha**” and the Non-MSA as “**Colloquial**”. English will be referred to as a second language “**L2**”.

### 1.1. Research Questions:

This study examines students` writing skills in English. The study tries to elaborate the reasons behind the failure in writing in the second language (English) by Arab Emirati male students by addressing the following questions:

- 1- What is the role of L1 MSA and Colloquial Arabic on the learners` writing performance in L2 English?
- 2- At which linguistic level can MSA (Fus`ha) and Colloquial be traced?

As the purpose of this study is to examine students writing in English, then Academic English is the area of investigation of this study. Therefore, the focus will be on the role of MSA and Colloquial in writing performance in English. Colloquial Arabic might be one of the reasons behind the failure in writing in English.

## 1.2 The Status of English in the UAE

The Emirati society is a combination of diverse nationalities. A high percentage of 88.5 per cent of expatriates are living and working in the United Arab Emirates (Emirates 24/7 news). The country's official language is MSA (Fus`ha). The Modern Standard Arabic is almost the only official language in all Arab countries. MSA in the UAE, similar to all other Arab countries, is not the language used in everyday communication but it is only used in formal speeches or in reading and writing. The importance of the MSA comes from the fact that it is the language of the sacred book "The Holy Quran". The UAE as all other Arab countries has its own dialect (**Colloquial Arabic**) which is used as a mean of informal spoken communication.

English language on the other hand has invaded the education system in the UAE as a result of the massive development of the UAE's economy and the need for more employees from all over the world, this need brought different ethnics to the country which demands finding a mean of communication among all residents of the UAE (Randall&Samimi 2010). Therefore, English became not only the lingua franca language but also the second official language of the country. The stakeholders included English Language to be taught as a second language in its public and private schools, colleges, and universities.

Emirati students may have the ability to speak short or even long dialogues. They are able to converse in English with the shopkeepers or the cashiers in malls. In private schools, students are able to run longer conversations and formal talks sometimes due to longer exposure to the English language especially at the private international schools. On the other hand, writing is considered as the toughest part of the English language components. One can notice a remarkable weakness in their

writing style. Some students do not like to write and they do not prefer this part of the English class, when they are forced to write, as it is one of the requirements to pass the subject, one reads through their writing with a feeling that they are speaking with a colloquial tone and style. They only write down their everyday spoken speeches in written form, this use of everyday spoken style contributes to the production of a weak, inconsistent piece of writing, sometimes vague and hard to be understood. This is one of the main issues that this research paper will attempt to find answers for. This paper will investigate the reasons and sources of errors that appear in writing by Emirati bilingual grade nine male students.

Every Arab country has its own dialect at lexical level and in terms of pronouncing and naming the things; sometimes it is very hard for two Arab people to understand each other's dialect. People of the Gulf area such as KSA, UAE, Kuwait...etc. share many lexical items which make the understanding much easier, whereas, the Middle East Area, such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon...etc. have different dialects and might not be able to understand every single word said by the Gulf Area's Arab speakers and vice versa. Therefore, and in order to be understood by all other Arabs from North Africa to the Middle East one must speak the MSA (Fus`ha) once the communication got lost. This difference in dialects is known as diglossia, (Ferguson, 1971).

### 1.3 Types of bilinguals

Arab students in general and Emirati students in particular are considered as late bilinguals. They learn English as a second language after the age of six or seven in the public schools. Their childhood language (the Dialect or colloquial Arabic) is already developed. They start learning the MSA at the age of 6 or 7 along with their English as a second language;

this turns them to be additive bilinguals who have acquired the two languages (MSA and English) in a balanced manner. At a certain time of learning, Emirati students are considered as subtractive bilinguals who learn the second language to the detriment of the first language (MSA). This is reflected through the fact that Arabic language classes are given as 5-7 lessons per-week in the public schools and sometimes 3-4 in some international schools. On the other hand, English language is taught as nine lessons per-week. Therefore, the mastery of the first language might decrease, while mastering the other language usually dominates and increase. Lamber (1977).

This urges the researcher to explore and investigate about how important it is to have the L1 in its (MSA) version already developed so that learners can use their experience in their first language to learn the second language. On the other hand, as Arabic have two versions (MSA and Colloquial); the study will attempt to find more about the effect of colloquial in learning a second language (English). As mentioned earlier, the Academic Arabic that is used in the Arab world in general, and the UAE in particular is the MSA. English on the other hand, does not have that many differences between its Academic and Colloquial style in terms of sentence structure, the differences are only at the lexical level, therefore, MSA as Arabic and Academic English are being taught simultaneously at schools. Therefore, a proficiency in MSA Arabic is necessary in learning English as a second language.

#### 1.4 Language Variation

In distinguishing between the Academic and the Colloquial English, scholars considered the academic as the language used by educators and educated people and is required in universities level and beyond, whereas,

colloquial or conversational English is the everyday spoken language. As a result, some schooled people and educators strike understanding an academic paper in their first language. This situation is also applicable for Arab learners reading high academic article written in MSA. This is very frustrating when learners fail to recognize the Academic language of their first language. (Wong Filmore & Snow, 2000; Ferris, 2002; Ferris & Hedgecock, 1998).

Having more than one dialect spoken in Arabic and one MSA makes the label Arabic as a general term. MSA is the language used by educators throughout the Arab world. It is the language that is written and used in formal communications. It is the language used in media, universities, and courtrooms. Colloquial Arabic with its various dialects, however, is more likely spoken on everyday situations at a local level. This diglossia contributed to the weakening of Arabic literacy (MSA). MSA is only used in writing and reading or formal speeches. Badry (2004) described the Arabic speaking countries` linguistic situation as being characterized by diglossia where literate speakers varies their speech from several sources of Arabic depending on the setting, interlocutors, and the occasion of the communication. Mourani (2004) on the other hand, considered the classical Arabic (MSA) as a lingua franca for most Arab speakers. Arab educators are concerned about the future of the MSA; they consider the low proficiency in literacy is due to the diglossic situation in the Arabic speaking countries. Arab students in general and Emirati students in specific are studying their mother tongue classical version (MSA) along with English as a second language. Therefore, MSA is taught as a second language. Abu-Rabia (2000) stated that Arabic children are studying literary Arabic in school. This literary Arabic differs from their colloquial spoken language in terms of vocabulary, phonology, syntax and grammar. Therefore, children are learning a language which they have relatively

slight contact with and which they are not going to use outside the classroom. This leads to conclude what type of language acquisition the children in the Arabic speaking countries in general and in the UAE in specific have. It is a simultaneous acquisition, where they are learning two languages at the same time.

The Language teaching system in the Arab world in general and in the UAE in specific lacks efficiency due to the old fashioned and inflexible method of teaching that is based on lecturing especially in the public schools; the teaching style is based on memorization more than practical usage of the language in its real life situations. Mourani (2004) considered the reason behind this deficiency to the absence of language laboratories, limited resources such as technology and the absence of pedagogical attractive materials. On the other hand, schools and the stakeholders are paying more attention to English language teaching than Arabic; ignoring the fact that not only MSA is as important as English but it also contributes to the acquisition of the English language. Cummins (2001) interdependence hypothesis reveals that there is a relationship of the first language to the learning of another language. Therefore, proficiency of the L1 would contribute to the acquisition of L2.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the academic language in the Arab world. All schools all around the Arab world are teaching the MSA at their schools, but unfortunately, Arab speakers rely more on their colloquial Arabic, they hardly communicate with each other using the MSA. Moreover, teachers of Arabic language are using colloquial Arabic in teaching the MSA in classes. Also, other subjects that are taught in Arabic, their teachers do not use MSA, they use Non-MSA and most of the time they speak the dialect of the country. Therefore, the exposition to the MSA occurs along with the English language that is taught as a second language. Writing on the other hand, whether it is in the first or



second language is a difficult process. Writing in the first language is not less complicated than writing in a foreign language. Arab learners of English as a second language in general and Emirati learners in particular tend to interfere their L1 (Arabic) in their writing in L2 (English). This phenomenon of interfering has been indicated by many studies (Benson et.al 2002).

On the light of this introduction, this study aims at exploring whether colloquial Arabic is more responsible than MSA in producing errors in writing in English.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Writing in a second language

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill by a significant number of studies because of not being used on daily life and the need for constant practice for its maintenance (Clyne, Fernandez, Hen, & Summo-O`Connell, 1997; Oriyama, 2001). MSA is the language used in formal speeches, and writings, whereas, Colloquial Arabic is the dominant language used by Arab speakers all over the Arab world with its different dialects (Diglossia). This diglossia differs in its structure with the MSA that is often closer to the academic English. Therefore, using unacceptable structures of the spoken Arabic might be negatively reflected in students' writing in English. On the other hand, using correct structure of the MSA would be positively reflected in the students' writing in English.

Writing is considered as the toughest task that students face in learning English language. Some students' level of spoken English is useful enough to communicate, they have competent lexical levels and are still unable to write in an academic style and prefer not to write and to be evaluated according to their writing. According to (Wachs, 1993), students memorize a good amount of vocabulary and grammar rules that do not appear in their writing. They rarely use this knowledge in practical writing. Therefore, one can read their writing with a tone of spoken daily conversation due to literary translation of the words from Arabic to English, or a random choice of vocabulary that makes their writing difficult to be understood. On the other hand, some students translate sentences from their Non-MSA (Colloquial Arabic) with strange words of their own dialect to English. This use of colloquial Arabic in writing is

one of the issues that Arabic language teachers suffer from while teaching writing in Arabic to their students. According to some Arabic language teachers, students make many mistakes in their writing due to the use of their colloquial Arabic that differs sometimes in meaning and structure that leads to a strange result with a vague meaning. Therefore, ESL teachers need to have a better understanding of the influence of the learners L1 in general and the (MSA) in particular in the process of writing in L2 (English). Improving students' L1 writing skills would be a skillful strategy to improve their writing in the L2. This awareness would enhance students' proficiency in the use of both languages in terms of writing strategies, techniques and skills. Moreover, it would enable learners to produce an error-free text with the expectation of becoming more proficient writers in the L2.

Al-Buainain (2009) in her case study of Students' Writing Errors in EFL came up with a conclusion that students' performance errors are systematic and classifiable which required both teachers and learners to see errors as a key to understand and solve accuracy problems occurred in English writing courses. She stressed on the need for brief grammar rules that help learners to realize their errors that caused due to overgeneralization and wrong analogy. On the other hand, Al Tahaineh (2010) found that the majority of prepositions usage errors committed by Jordanian EFL learners were due to mother tongue interference (MTI) especially at the territory level. Al Tahaineh stated that students rely on their mother tongue as a strategy when they fall back due to insufficient number of lessons which is limited by few hour of exposure to the language in formal contexts.

Despite the fact that Emirati students are exposed to the English language since early ages at primary schools, students by the end of the secondary level are still unable to produce a text free errors. They continue failing to

master the basics of English writing skills. This situation is not only in writing in the L2 but also in writing in L1. This leads to the interpretation that there is no focus on writing as a skill/strand regardless in which language. Therefore, having a weak performance in writing in Arabic might be a reasonable reason behind failing in writing in a second language (English).

According to Hughey et al. (1983), there are three stages in teaching writing, pre-writing, free writing, and re-writing. Zamel (1983) stated that writers try to write meaningfully by generating ideas and thoughts; they start thinking of a topic, set a plan and collect their data. Then, they revise and draft before rewriting and editing. This process is dynamic and follows no sequence. As learners of a second language, learners usually think using their mother tongue then they translate these ideas into the target language. Therefore, if this process of thinking and planning using the mother tongue followed a similar structure that is required in the L2, the result would be a clear comprehensible piece of writing. On the other hand, planning and thinking using a non-standard (colloquial) language that differs in its structure with both MSA and English leading consequently to an inappropriate output that contradicts the target language. To state that clearer, one cannot transfer what is non-academic into academic without making mistakes, so an academic writing in the target language must go through an equivalent academic language used in planning in the mother tongue. This use of Arabic colloquial style in writing in Arabic makes any specialists guess that this writing belong to an Arab speaker learning English as a second language. They could tell that through knowing their learners mother tongue and their learners' process of talking.

Many studies reflected in their results that the weakness of Arab learners writing performance in English is due to limited number of vocabulary,

idioms, cultural knowledge and less practice. Other studies came up with the conclusion that Arab ESL learners are responsible about their weakness in writing skill (Ezza, 2010). Writing classes are given in most of the schools all around the Arab world only once or twice a week in comparison with nine English lessons a week, not only that, but also they do not practice writing in their mother tongue (Arabic) as they do in English. They study the writing in Arabic in one lesson out of 3-5 Arabic lessons per week. Therefore, the skill of writing is not taking a priority at schools. Abu Rass (2010) revealed in his study of cultural transfer by Arab learners that most of the problems Arab learners of English are encountered is on cultural transfer origin. Arab writing is circular rather than cumulative; they deliver the same idea from different angles. This repetition of the same idea causes the lack of coherence and cohesion.

Unfortunately, most of the studies of Arab ESL learners writing in English such as Kharma et al.(1987) have focused on error analysis in terms of grammar at the sentences level relying that on L1 interference. They always considered the Arab learners L1 as MSA that is already developed. No studies focused on the deficiency of L1 which is caused also by the interference of Colloquial style within the MSA conventions and its effect on writing on the L2. Arabic language researchers have written about diglossia and the differences among Arabic speakers' dialects but this was never considered as a reason for failing in writing in English as a second language. Therefore, this study will focus on the impact of having undeveloped MSA language on writing in English language by Arabic Emirati bilinguals. Al- Khatib (2001) examined Arab students' personal letter writing and found that Arab learners used lengthy and indirect ideas, they use lengthy introductions with too many questions that reflects Arab cultural thoughts rather than being precise to straightforward to the point. These lengthy and not straight ideas

contradict with the English writing style which is more precise and direct to the point.

## 2.2. Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis

Previous studies indicated that there is a relationship between the mother-language and the mastery of the majority language. L1 could not only support the proficiency of the majority language but also would help those children with proficiency in the home language to achieve more academic success in comparison to those who have not had such solid foundation (Barac & Bialystok et al. 2011)

Cummins (1978) argued that some aspects of the first language L1 knowledge could be positively transferred while acquiring a second language. The mother`s tongue linguistics knowledge and skills that are obtained would contribute and play a significant role in developing learners` abilities in the target language. Al Sulmi (2010) stated a clear example of using the ordinals such as first, second, and third, this usage of ordinals in Arabic is very similar to their usage in English. In both languages ordinals involve articles. Therefore, learning the ordinals with the articles for Arab learners would be easy and consume less time in learning them.

Interestingly Al-Jamhoor (2001) in his cross-cultural analysis study that was applied on Arab-speaking learners of English examined the writing problems that face Arab EFL learners at one of Saudi universities concluded that Saudi university students use fewer conclusions, t-units, yet more discourse unit in comparison with a group of American students who wrote the same essay at Michigan State University. Another study was conducted by Al-Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) to investigate the relationship between poor writing in English and Arabic. The results

attested what Cummins stated in his Interdependence Hypothesis, their results showed that poor writing in the mother tongue usually correlates with poor writing in L2. Moreover, Daoud (1989) examined the effect of culture on Arab learners writing in English in an attempt to change their attitudes towards the target language culture. His participants were asked to write essays to exchange with their American counterparts. The results revealed a lack of appropriate vocabulary and expressions. .

In the Arab world in general and in the UAE in specific, learners are exposed to their L2 (English Language) at the same time of learning their MSA. Their developed Colloquial language is considered insufficient to develop and increase their abilities in L2. In other words, Colloquial Arabic with diglossia and its different dialects that are spoken among Arabic speakers all over the Arab world cannot be sufficient to improve their English language that is taught at the academic institutions in. Therefore, a negative transfer from the colloquial Arabic into English would take place at a higher percentage than the negative transfer from MSA into English. In other words, some aspects of the colloquial Arabic are accepted or even equal to the MSA structure and they are also equivalent to English, therefore, translating those colloquial aspects or structure into English would be sometimes acceptable. As there are some acceptable aspects from the colloquial into the MSA, there are also some other unacceptable, those unacceptable aspects consequently would not be matched with the English sentence structure.

In order to develop the mother tongue, scholars need to call for the need of using the mother tongue (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 1999, 2000). Therefore, In order to enhance students' learning a second language (English) stakeholders need to promote teaching Arabic in its MSA version in the primary stages of education. This would also improve the quality of education as well as to preserve the MSA language. According

to Cummins (1984) a need to recognize two levels of proficiency in bilingual development, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to the skills required to the development of the conversational fluency in the second language, the language that is needed at a communication level among people on everyday situations. CALP, on the other hand, refers to the use of the language in an academic situation such as in school, universities ....etc. This included the four skills in language proficiency, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, learners` ability to converse in a second language (BICS) is not an indicator of their academic skills (CALP) in the second language. This interprets the weakness of many educators in understanding contexts written in their Academic Mother Tongue Language (AMTL). In this study, Arab learners could communicate using their colloquial Arabic and failed sometimes to decontextualize an academic text. This is also applicable to English language speakers in understanding and decontextualizing an academic piece of writing written in English.

Figure 1: Cummins' Iceberg Model -from ELL Lesley University

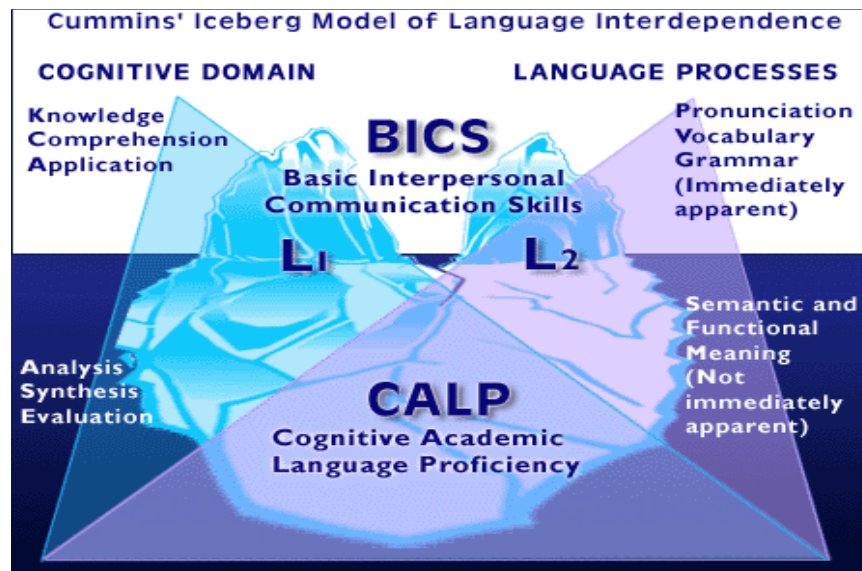




Figure 1 adopted from ELL Assessments for linguistics Difference vs. Learning Disabilities illustrates the two levels of proficiency in bilingual development (BICS) and (CALP). Cummins (2001) stated in his Interdependence hypothesis that there is a relationship between L1 and L2 development. He elaborated that cross lingual proficiencies promotes the development of cognitive and academic skills. According to Cummins, if a minimum of L1 cognitive and academic development is achieved in L1, then this literacy skill will be transferred across languages. In other words, writing in L1 can be a source of positive transfer through the development of knowledge and literacy in L2. This means that if the L1 is not reasonably developed and learners did not reach a level of proficiency, then they would face difficulties achieving proficiency in L2. Writing skills is an appropriate indicator of language proficiency as usually only academic language is used in writing, unlike speaking or conversation; this is what makes bilingual Arabic speakers sometimes better in conversing in English but a worse writer as they did not reach a high proficiency in their L1.

Learners who are exposed to L2 at early ages of their school years and those learners who are raised in an English speaking community within their international schools would acquire the second language along with their first language (simultaneously). They would have a higher opportunity to achieve proficiency in both languages. Whereas, those who are exposed to L2 after the development of their colloquial L1 and exposed to the L2 at late age without sufficient L1 (MSA) literacy would face difficulties acquiring the second language. Cummins (2001) interpreted this in his Threshold Hypothesis considering the need of linguistic competence level in both languages in order to take advantages and benefits of bilingualism. He stated that bilinguals' chances to attain high level of competency in the L2 are conditioned to being exposed to

their L2 after reaching a level of proficiency in L1. Based on Cummins interpretation, Arab learners in general and Emirati students in specific who have not reached a level of proficiency in their MSA are classified within the state of “**semilingualism**” who are not proficient in either language.

Cummins (2000) envisions the two languages as two icebergs when they overlap they share a common ground or operating system. This theory of overlapping has been supported strongly by many researchers. Krashen (1996) confirmed Cummins theory by gathering results of various surveys from many studies and came up with results that support Cummins theory. He indicated that the common underlying proficiency among languages exists, and that proficiency in one language contributes in the development of any other language.

### 2.3 Spoken versus Written Genres of Discourse

Regardless of learners’ proficiency, writing still may be considered a challenge, as there are certain differences between the spoken language and the written one. Researches clearly stated that writing is not only a spoken language written down (Biber 1988, 1992, 1995). Written language differs from the spoken language in terms of lexicon, grammatical and rhetorical structures depending on the genre. Arabic dialect, unlike English, is hard to be written as accents or pronunciation may create new sounds that will be hard to be written down in MSA. For example; Emirati people when asking someone “How are you doing?” addressing a female, they would say “كيف حالك”, the last sound “ch” cannot be written in MSA. This “k = ك” sound is replaced with “ch” in spoken Emirati Arabic dialect.

Goody and Watt (1968) considered the written discourse as superior to the oral discourse in terms of being more logical, formal, and complex. In other words, some phrases that are used in academic essays such as “the second point” or “in contrast”, are often used to link topic units together, whereas, conversation is more likely marked with discourse markers such as “ well”, “oh”, and “so” ( Schiffrin 1987) to indicate organizational structure. This is applicable to Arabic learners writing in English as a second language. The same highly academic phrases exist in MSA “ من ناحية اخرى ” “Mn Naheyatin ukhra” which means “the second point” also the equivalent spoken Arabic phrases are “حسنا” has is the equivalent of “Well” in English. Therefore, if Arabic learners are not proficient in L1 and aware of those high Academic MSA phrases, they will transfer from their spoken phrases into writing in the second language, and this would weaken the structure of their writing at the lexicon level. Even while writing in Arabic, some learners tend to use many spoken phrases that are not acceptable in MSA writing causing vague or unwell organized topic.

Torres and Fischer (1989) conducted a study on Hispanic-speaking students whose native language proficiency is correlated significantly with L2 (English language) development. The study showed that being fluent in native language increases the opportunity of becoming proficient in the target language. On the other hand, a research on the relationships between writing in L1 and L2 by Carson et al (1990) revealed the possibility of differences among languages. They found that the writing transfer is harder to be transferred across languages.

## 2.4 Contrastive analysis of English and Arabic writing systems

Contrastive Analysis was introduced as a part of applied linguistics that deals with the description of the structure of two or more different

languages. It was first introduced by Fries (1952) followed by Lado (1957) in his study of linguistics cross cultures. Contrastive Analysis shows differences between two languages in terms of sound system, grammatical structure and vocabulary. The differences between two languages determine the difficulty in learning a second language (Lado 1957). Wardhaugh (1970) stated two versions of contrastive analysis; a strong version and a weak one. The strongest one claimed that the source of all errors made by learners of L2 could be attributed to interference by their L1. On the other hand, this interpretation is not vital. Whereas, the weak version of contrastive analysis claims the teachers` ability to predict errors through observing difficulties in a second language learning. Errors cannot always occur because of L1 interference, it is also the learners` language behavior that is developed when they acquire their native language. Contrastive analysis on the other hand is useful in terms of explaining the errors committed by a second language learner. In order to learn a second language, one needs to accommodate to new linguistic behaviors that are required or featured the target language. In other words, the larger the difference between the two languages, the harder it becomes to acquire the habits of the second language and vice versa.

The written Arabic language has its own features and characteristics. First, it is written from right to left, its letters have no upper and lower case, letters are spelled phonetically. Second, being influenced by the “Holy Quran”, Arabic sentence structure and word order follows rhythmical balance and coordination, there is no distinction among coordinate and subordinate clauses, subordinating sentences often begin with “and, or, so”, the verb in MSA precedes the subject “V-S-O” whereas colloquial Arabic sometimes uses a structure similar to the English sentence structure which is “S-V-O” as colloquial follows no fixed pattern. Third, the third personal plural pronouns are attached to the

verb e.g. “*Thahabo ela al madrasah*” “They went to school”. Some learners aim at duplicating the subject in one sentence when translating this sentence into English, this type of error is rarely occurred in Arabic writing but often appear in their translation into English “*Thahabo hom ela Al madrasa*” “The students they went to school”. Third, the absence of verbs to be in the present tense sentences; For example; “Where is your book?” in Arabic it is enough to mention the question word and the subject to form a question “Where your book?” “*Ayna Kitabok?*” this type of error caused negative transfer into the target English language causing the ellipsis of the “verbs to be”. Fourth, unlike English language, Arabic adjectives follow the noun “*Kitabun Mumte`a*” = “An interesting book”. Finally, there is no indefinite articles “a, an” in Arabic language; “Howa doctor.” = He is a doctor (Sofer & Raimes, 2002).

## 2.5 Language Transfer and the Impact of L1 Interference

Learners of L2 benefit from their L1 knowledge through transferring some of their L1 components to learning the L2 (Leafstedt&Gerber, 2005). This transfer would be reflected through speaking and writing. In other words, having a highly developed vocabulary and a conceptual knowledge that are already supported even outside the school would contribute to a beneficial intensive immersion in L2 that results in better performance in L2. Students who started learning their L2 without having enough proficiency or competence in their L1 may not have that positive immersion in learning their L2; on the contrary, a negative transfer might take place. According to Cummins (1979), students who have low level L1 skills and who have been instructed in L2 at the beginning of being schooled might lose all knowledge of L1 and may have difficulties acquiring L2. On the other hand, students who begin school with higher L1 skills are expected to acquire L2 more easily and retain their L1 skills.

Lopez and Greenfield (2004) agreed with Cummins` argument for the necessity of students` L1 development before intense instructions in L2. They suggested in their study of the cross linguistic transfer of phonological awareness skill among Spanish speaking pre- school learners who were enrolled in Head Start Program. Their study came up with that learner`s Spanish proficiency level in terms of phonology contributed significantly to the variance in English phonological awareness.

Chiappe, Siegel, and Wade-Woolley (2002) based their study on two groups; one that is native English and the other one is studying English as second language at kindergarten level. The study resulted that both groups acquired the instruction relatively similarly when they were studying at an English immersion setting. This is why Emirati parents prefer enrolling their children in international schools, where English is the medium of instruction. Students who joined English speaking schools or International Schools at the age of kindergarten are performing better than those who entered the school at a later age. Many of the Emirati students who decide to enter international schools after being schooled until grade 6 at the public schools find difficulties to succeed the entrance exams that are based on English language proficiency. The same dilemma faces the Emirati students who finish grade 12 and would like to enter a college, they are expected to score a certain score in some international exams like the IELTS in order to enroll at their colleges` major. Many Emirati students who graduated their high schools from public schools fail to pass that exam, whereas Emirati student who came up from international English speaking schools, find no difficulties passing the proficiency English exams.

The view towards the use of L1 while teaching a second language has been debatable by linguists. According to Wechsler (1997), students

cannot avoid using their first language in ESL classes. Many studies supported Wechsler in his view and consider that it is unavoidable for L2 learners to switch back and forth between their L1 and the target language. Linguists referred to this phenomenon as Code-Switching. This phenomenon could be beneficial if employed properly through taking the similarities between the mother tongue and the target language and recognizing the differences between the two languages. In other words, this code switching could be a strategy in acquiring certain concepts of skill in the target language. Pennycook (1994) enforced the Direct Method of teaching which excluded the use of the first language. On the other hand, Pennycook (1994) argued that there is no need to use the L1 in classroom of L2, the only medium of instructions must be the L2 and only the L2 as the aim of being in an ESL class is to learn L2 only. This supports the Direct Method where the target language is the only language and the other language is excluded. They consider monolingualism as an essential factor in learning L2 and that bilingualism weakens the L2 acquisition process.

Dweik (1986) stated that Arab aim at repeating their ideas in their writing. They use figurative language like alliteration whereas, English native writers aim at being more precise and straightforward. Khuwaileh and Shoumalia (200) examined students' errors in writing in English by Jordanian students in two written context of both languages (Arabic and English), they found that the most frequent error Jordanian students committed in their writing is the lack of coherence and cohesion in addition to errors in the use of tenses. Similarly, Lakkis and AbdelMalak (2002) conducted the similar study and found that most of the students' errors were due to language transfer from their mother tongue, they found that students rely more on their mother tongue especially in the use of prepositions.

## CHAPTER III: THE STUDY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the nature of the study with a description of the methodology used in implementing this study. This chapter will include a full description of the participants, their background, ages, and gender. Moreover, this section will identify the research instruments/tools in order to answer its questions that are:

- 1- What is the role of L1 MSA and Colloquial Arabic on the learners' writing performance in L2 English?
- 2- At which linguistic level can the Fus`ha and the Colloquial be traced?

### 3.2 Identification of Participants

The participants in this study are grade nine Emirati male students in a semi-private high school in Al Ain-UAE. The participants are 20 students out of 300 grade nine students. The students were selected randomly to avoid any bias and to obtain more reliable results. The named school is a boarding school, students go back home on weekends. The school provides two types of services; the first part is military and the second one is an academic that is run by one of the well-known private international schools in the region. The students join the school from the seven Emirates. They come from different Educational background (private and public schools). The nature of the participants might be beneficial to generalize the findings of this study as it covers various samples from most of the country's educational zones.



### 3.3 Data Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

In order to answer the study questions, the mixed method was adopted. The qualitative method was introduced through task one and task two followed by a semi-structured interview with three teachers of Arabic language who are teaching grade nine students. The quantitative methods was used in analyzing the students' grades in writing in both subjects (English and Arabic).

In order to examine the effect of colloquial Arabic on writing in English, two sets of sentence translation task have been prepared as task one. The first set consisted 10 sentences written in Colloquial Arabic while the second set was written in MSA (Fus`ha). Moreover and in order to obtain more reliable results a third task was introduced as a free-writing task where students were asked to write short paragraphs about a summer holiday that they had before. Finally, a grade collection of both subjects of Term-1 final exam were compared and analyzed.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

In this study, two independent variables might affect the students' performance in writing in L2 namely MSA and Colloquial. In order to find which variable would affect more on the students' performance in writing in L2, The data collection took place in four stages

Stage One:

Instrument 1: Controlled writing- Sentence Translation

Part one:

A random choice of 20 students were asked to translate the first set of 10 sentences written in colloquial Arabic. A week later the same students

were asked to translate another set of 10 sentences that are written in MSA (Fus`ha) (See appendix 1). The two sets were identical in terms of meaning. The reason behind giving a week time between the two tasks is to avoid any copying or repetition of the word choice.

Part two:

An analysis of the two sets was tabulated considering the number of the sentences translation of English sentences from colloquial Arabic as provided by the students; a description of the errors occurred with their frequency within the 20 papers. The errors were also categorized with accordance to what type of error that took place mainly (lexical and syntactic). More detailed tables were added with summary for comparison purposes.

Stage Two:

Instrument 2: Free writing task- Short Paragraph

A collection of 20 samples of free writing task (see appendix 2) from the same students who sit for task one. Students were asked to write a paragraph, once in English and at the same time to write about the same topic in Arabic. This procedure was taken to find whether the students are thinking and writing using only MSA (Fus`ha) or they are sometimes transfer their spoken colloquial into a written one. This stage was necessary to avoid any effect of the researcher's choice of words and sentences during the controlled task of sentence translation. The students were asked to write a short paragraph about a summer holiday they had been before. The essays were analyzed with the purpose of defining the error sources, whether these errors are due to the direct transfer from the colloquial Arabic or other types of errors. The main target of this task is the errors that cause due to the use of colloquial, ignoring all other source of errors. The results were also tabulated with examples from the

students' papers, each error was categorized into lexical or syntactic with regard to the produced English sentence.

Stage Three:

#### Instrument 3: Semi-Structured Interview

At this stage of task three, the teachers of Arabic who are teaching grade nine students were asked 10 questions concerning Arabic teaching in a written form. After the teachers were introduced to the subject of this study and the purpose of the study, they signed the required consent form (See appendix 3). The interview aimed at finding more about the status of teaching Arabic language to grade nine students, it looked mainly at the number of Arabic lessons per week, the use of MSA in classes, and the main challenges these teachers are facing in teaching writing in Arabic and whether colloquial Arabic is being reflected in the students writing.

Stage Four:

#### Instrument 4: Grades Collection and Analysis

This stage is considered as the quantitative part of the study. After taking the required permissions to access the students' writing grades in both subjects (English and Arabic). The results were collected and tabulated together to show the relationship between writing in Arabic grades and the grades of the same skill in English.

### 3.5 Ethical Consideration

The status of the named school that is subject to this study required the researcher to hide its name as per the school administration request. The samples of the students written tasks will not include any information that

leads to either the participants identification or the school`s name. The school will be referred to in this study as one of the semi-private school that is mainly a governmental school run by a private provider. On the other hand, the school approved the interviews and allowed its teachers to participate in the interview stage. The teachers were introduced to the purpose of the study and signed a consent form.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

Based on Cummins` Interdependence Hypothesis about the relationship between the home-language and the mastery of the L2, the study came up with the following findings that prove that some aspects of the first language L1 knowledge can be positively transferred while acquiring a second language. The mother tongue linguistics knowledge and skills that are obtained contributed to the development of the learners` abilities in the target language. The study examined the effect of colloquial Arabic on writing in English by Emirati grade nine students. The findings explored a new source of error in writing in English committed by Arabic bilinguals Emirati students. The study with its findings showed that low proficiency in MSA (Fus`ha) that was clearly shown through their collected grades weakened the students` proficiency in writing in English. In other words, the interference of colloquial expressions were more responsible about the errors found in the students` production in L2.

### 4.2 The Findings

#### Stage one (Sentence Translation Task)

As mentioned earlier, this study focuses on errors occurred due to the negative transfer from colloquial Arabic while writing in English. The results were tabulated and categorized to identify the frequency of errors. Moreover, the tables included at what linguistic level every error occurs. The correct answers were excluded, as the goal of this study is to highlight the errors and their sources.

Table 1: Sentence Translation from Colloquial

Sentence	Colloquial Arabic	Translation	Frequency	Error type	Error caused in the English sentence
1-	سرنا دبي ويوم وصلنا رحنا الفندق	We went to Dubai <b>towday*</b> and we go to hotel	1	Lexical	Inappropriate expression
5-	اليوم ما شي امتحان	Today <b>no</b> exam	4	Syntax	Sentence structure
6-	تدري اني توهفت	<b>I-Do you know</b> I get myself in a problem.	3	Syntax	Sentence structure
9-	تميت بالعزبه لين الفجر	I sat in the farm <b>to</b> the morning	3	syntax	Preposition usage
* = Spelling error      red colour = error in usage					

Table 1 illustrates the errors occurred while translating sentences from the colloquial Arabic into English. All errors occurred are Interlingual errors due to negative transfer from the colloquial Arabic. The errors that were detected in sentences number (1, 5, 6,8,9) are also unacceptable in the MSA. The last column of this table shows at what linguistic level each error occurred. As it is shown clearly that most of the errors were occurred at a syntactic level. Sentence number (1) gives a clear interpretation to the negative transfer from the colloquial Emirati, the student translated the sentence in word-by-word translation. The word “يوم” “towday” \* is commonly used in the Emirati dialect to express time at any stage of the day, week, year. Emirati people use this expression to refer to the moment of arriving or any action of movement that took place. It is very important to mention that this expression of “today” to refer to anytime of things happening is incorrect even in the MSA (Fus`ha). We will notice later in the coming table that when this sentence

is given to students as an MSA version to translate it into English, no mistakes occurred and all the students got the translation 100% correct.

Sentence number six shows clearly a low proficiency in differentiating between the interrogative form and the declarative form of the sentence. This example required the speaker to declare that he is in trouble, but according to Emirati Dialect, they aim to use the word “تدري” in most of their speeches to attract the interlocutor attention and it means in English “Do you know?”, that is why when the student translated it into English, he transferred the sentence from declarative into interrogative. The sentence in either MSA or English requires no answer. And must be said in a declarative structure to show that one is in trouble.

Sentences number five and nine contain errors of syntactic type. In sentence number five, students translated the given sentence with the omission of the verb, as the colloquial sentence contains no verb as well. The word “ما شي” (*Ma Shay*) is highly common used by Emirati people to refer to negation in many occasions, sometimes they use it to refer to the absence of objects, for example: “there is no books” they would say “ما شي كتب” (*Ma Shay kotob*) = “no books”. In this example, sentence number five, students wanted to say that they do not have exam today, so they said “today no exam”. In MSA, this sentence must contain a verb just like in English. In MSA they would say “ليس لدينا امتحان اليوم”, “لدينا” which means “we have”, so the word-by word translation of the MSA would appear like “we do not have exam today”.

The last error is syntactic error that occurred in sentence number nine is in the use of the preposition “until”. According to Emirati`s dialect “لين” could be used to show distance and time. The preposition “to” which means in Arabic “الى” is used to show the distance between things, where as “until” which means in Arabic “حتى” is used to show span of time.

Therefore, the students found it easier to use “ to” instead of “ until” as they use it for both purposes in their colloquial.

Table 2: Sentence Translation from MSA

Sentence	MSA	Translation	Frequency	Error Type	Error caused in English sentence
6-	انا في ورطه	I am in problem	2	Lexical	Inappropriate expression
9-	بقيت في المزرعة حتى الفجر	I sat in the farm to the morning	5	Syntax	Preposition usage
*= Spelling error      red colour= error in usage					

The above table shows the errors occurred in the second set of sentences translated from MSA into English. It is obvious that the number of sentences decreased the half. Errors occurred in table one were in four sentences whereas; in table number two, the number decreased to 2 sentences. It is worthy to mention that the same error is repeated again in sentence number 9. This means that students could not use the correct preposition even when the sentence is written in the MSA. This would reveal the fact that the misuse of preposition by Arab learners is not of Intralingual level only, it is more classified as lack of instruction, insufficient knowledge in the use of preposition.

The error type in sentence number six has changed from syntax level to a lexical level. After giving students the MSA format of the sentence, they were able to add the required verb to the sentence unlike what happened when they had been given the sentence in their colloquial. They commit a less critical error in choosing the correct word to express their idea, instead of using “trouble” they used “problem” which still lead to the same meaning and would not affect the whole meaning of the sentence.



Table 3: Error Frequency and Types

Sentence number	Colloquial	MSA	Error type	Description
1	1	0	Lexical due to Word by word translation	In appropriate expression
5	4	0	Syntax due to Word by word translation	Sentence structure
6	3	2	lexical due to Word by word translation	Inappropriate expression
9	3	5	Syntax due to Preposition usage in both	Preposition usage
Total	11	7		

The above table shows a summary of the number of times each error occurred out of twenty tries by the participants in both Arabic versions. It is clear that the number of students who committed errors in translating sentences from the colloquial set of sentences is higher than those who commit errors while translating from MSA (Fus`ha). 11 students failed to translate the sentences (1, 5, 6, 9) from their colloquial format, whereas, 7 students only failed to translate the same sentences from the MSA (Fus`ha).

Furthermore, this table included how the students committed those errors in both sets. The students followed the same technique of word-by-word translation. This would lead to prove that following this technique would succeed and give a good result when the students use their MSA. Using their MSA while translating sentences from Arabic into English would reduce the probability of making mistakes especially with the patterns

that share the same characteristics of both languages. In other words, more positive transfer might take place when the L1 and L1 share a common structures (Lado 1957). On the other hand, the error committed in sentence number nine, revealed that neither colloquial nor MSA is responsible about student`s errors in using the prepositions. It is an Interlingual error as mentioned earlier which required more focus while teaching prepositions usage in English.

### Stage Two: Free Writing Task

Table 4: Free Writing Tasks` Errors

Student	Arabic sentence	Source of Errors	Translation	Error Type	Description
1	ذهبت بتكسي الى مطار دبي	Colloquial	I went <b>to</b> taxi to Dubai	Syntactic	Preposition usage
2	ثم رجعنا الى الفندق	MSA	Then we <b>back</b> to the hotel	Lexical	Inappropriate word
3	عندما انتهينا من الفندق ووضعنا امتعتنا	MSA	When we <b>finish</b> from the hotel and bot* my luggage.	Lexical	Inappropriate expression
4	وتوقفنا ...وسبحنا...وشعرنا بالسعادة	Colloquial	<b>And</b> we stop... <b>and</b> we swimming... <b>and</b> we feel happy	Lexical	Excessive use of “and” instead of punctuation marks

Student	Arabic sentence	Source of Errors	Translation	Error Type	Description
5	ذهبنا الى السوق والسوق الذي ذهبنا اليه قديم جدا واسم السوق " سوق واقف".	Colloquial	We went to the market and the market was very old the market's name "souq waqet"	Lexical	Sentence structure/word iness
6	في العام الماضي انا وعائلتي في عطلة الصيف ذهبنا الى اليونان	Colloquial	In the last year me* and my family in summer holiday went to Greek.	Syntactic	Sentence structure
7	ذهبت مع عائلتي الى دبي و حين كنا قد وصلنا كنا تعبانون وحينها ذهبنا مسرعين الى الفندق وبعد نحن نمنا وفي الصباح ذهبنا .....	Colloquial	I went with my family to Dubai then when we arrived we were tired then we go straight to the hotel then we slept in then in the morning we went to .....	Syntactic	Sentence structure
8	ذهبت انا وابي في اجرة تاكسي لكي نحضر لهما ريوق الصباح وعندما ذهبنا الى الفندق اكلنا وبعدها ذهبنا الى القطار لكي نذهب الى دبي	Colloquial	I wint* with my father to hving* for my family eat wit* taxi car win* I finish I came with my father to the hotel and I ate I finish eat I went to the train to go to Dubai.	Syntactic	Sentence structure
9	وعندما وصلنا ركبنا التاكسي	Colloquial	Arrived and go taxi	Syntactic	Sentence structure /absence of subject

Student	Arabic sentence	Source of Errors	Translation	Error Type	Description
10	وعندما ذهبنا....وعندما وصلنا....وبعدما ذهبنا....وبعدما	MSA	When we went....when I arrive.....when I went...when I went..	Syntactic	Excessive use of “when”
11	رمىنا الامتعه بالفندق	Colloquial	We throw the luggage in the hotel	Lexical	Inappropriate expression
12	None				
13	وصلنا الى عمان , ذهبنا الى الفندق	MSA	^Arriving we went to hotel.	Syntactic	Subject ellipsis
14	None				
15	أنا وعائلتي أخذنا أمتعتنا	MSA	Me and my family take ^ luggage	Syntactic	Pronoun usage
16	نمنا بفندق خمس نجوم	Colloquial	^ Slept in the hotel five stars.	Syntactic	Subject ellipsis / Adjective usage
17	None				
18	ذهبت ^ الجبل الأخضر	Colloquial	I went ^ green monten*	Syntactic	Preposition ellipsis
19	تمينا بمكة اربعة أيام	Colloquial	We stay in maka* ^for day	Syntactic	Preposition ellipsis
20	انا سعيد جدا	MSA	I ^very happy	Syntactic	Copula omission
*= Spelling error      red colour= error in usage      ^ = missing word					

The above table reflects the types of errors that caused due to negative transfer from the colloquial and the MSA as well. The error named “**inappropriate expression**” had occurred in both language styles; colloquial and MSA. Students (2, 3, 11) failed to give the appropriate word due to literal translation. The **subject ellipsis error** also occurred in both styles of language. Students (9, 13, 16) omitted the subject as the

subject in Arabic language (colloquial or MSA) is attached to the verb when the subject is a pronoun; “*لنا*”= “we slept “, the “*ل*” is equivalent to “we”. Attaching personal pronouns, object pronouns, and possessive pronouns to the verbs or the noun in Arabic language is responsible about the **ellipsis and the incorrect use of these pronouns** while translating Arabic sentences into English. Student number (15) omitted the possessive “our” due to lack of knowledge.

**Prepositions usage error**, on the other hand, took different ways and only occurred while translating from the colloquial style. Students (1, 18, 19) failed to use the correct preposition. Students number (1) used “to” instead of “by” in a literal translation from his colloquial, whereas, the preposition “by” for transportations has its equivalent in the MSA “*بواسطة*”. This preposition is one of the easy ones in use for ESL students as it is connected to transportation and it could be easily comprehended as in most of the ESL books, there would be a chapter talking about transportations aligned with the prepositions` lesson. Students number (18, 19) omitted the preposition again as a literal translation from their colloquial. Their sentences in colloquial with no prepositions are not acceptable in MSA but acceptable on a daily spoken conversation.

**The sentence structure error** is an expected error by Arab learners as the structure of the MSA sentence differs from the structure of the English language. The MSA sentence is a verbal sentence where the sentence usually starts with the verb (V+S+O), whereas, English sentence starts with (S+V+O). Colloquial sentences on the other hand, follow no rule regarding this structure; therefore, the expectations of negative transfer from the colloquial might be higher. Students (6.7.8.9) are highly affected by their colloquial, they produced unacceptable sentence structure at both levels (colloquial and MSA), therefore, they produced sentences with mistakes in many aspects like; spelling mistakes, sentence

structure, inappropriate word choice, and wordiness). Student number (5) produced an unacceptable sentence structure due to **wordiness**, the student kept on using the word “*market = سوق*” and he could not replace the noun by using pronoun antecedent strategy to refer to the noun.

**The excessive use of both “and, when”** reflects the students lack of knowledge in terms of linking devices. Students number (4, 10) used “when, and” in the place of other linking devices. Student number (4) used “and” in a literal translation from his colloquial to mention more than one activity. This use of “and” to mention more than one thing is acceptable in colloquial style but they are not accepted in a written language, in both MSA and English, mentioning more than one thing could be separated by commas or other linking devices. These linking devices of MSA have their equivalent in English, for example, (then = ثم) or (after that = بعد ذلك).

**Copula omission** is one of the most frequent errors Arab learners commit although at the deep structure of the Arabic language, the verbs “be” exist whereas at the surface structure they are not. Therefore, students with low proficiency in English might not use or delete the verbs “be” in their sentences. Student number (20) did not use the verb to be “is” despite the correct sentence structure in his MSA sentence. Therefore, this type of error could be attributed to lack of knowledge or insufficient instructions.

Finally, adjective usage in Arabic language differs from English language regardless of what style of Arabic the students are using. In English, Adjectives precede the noun they describe (Adj+Noun), whereas in Arabic it is the opposite (Noun+Adj). Therefore, student number (16) transferred this rule of correct Arabic sentence structure into an incorrect English sentence structure.

Table Five: Errors summary

Type of error	Source	Frequency	Type of error
Preposition usage	Colloquial	3	Syntactic
Inappropriate expression	MSA	2	Lexical
Inappropriate expression	Colloquial	1	Lexical
Excessive use of “and”	Colloquial	2	Lexical
Sentence structure	Colloquial	4	Lexical and syntactic
Excessive use of when	MSA	1	Syntactic
Subject ellipsis	colloquial	2	Syntactic
Subject ellipsis	MSA	1	Syntactic
Pronoun usage	MSA	1	Syntactic
Copula omission	MSA	1	Syntactic
Adjective usage	Colloquial	1	Syntactic
Total		19	

The above table summarizes the type of errors that were detected in the students' writing, its source and frequency. It is obvious that the number of errors that caused by colloquial is double the number of errors caused due to MSA. On the other hand, the inappropriate expression mistakes were found in both MSA and Colloquial. Sentence structure errors were the most frequent errors; the source of this error was the colloquial language style. As mentioned earlier, colloquial does not necessary follow a fixed pattern of sentence structure as long as the message is being delivered and the interlocutor received the information he is looking after.

### Stage Three: Semi -Structured Interview

An interview script of ten questions had been designed for the teachers of Arabic language at the named school that is subject to this study (see appendix 3). Four experience teachers participated in this task. Their years of experiences ranged from 5-13 years of teaching Arabic language. The

teachers' responses to the interview's questions were almost identical in terms of the students' usage of the colloquial language style. First, the teachers reported that they speak MSA in up to 60-70 percent whereas their students do not speak any MSA. The students refuse to use the MSA and prefer speaking in their colloquial, not only in their speaking but also in writing their essays. Second, most of their students' writing lack consistency, cohesion and coherence. Third, the students' essays are full of spelling mistakes and colloquial expressions. Finally, having asked the teachers about the reason behind their students' weakness in the writing skill, they replied that the number of Arabic lessons in general and the number of writing lessons in particular are not enough. The students are taking 3 Arabic lessons per-week and 1 period of writing every two weeks.

#### Stage Four: (Grades Collection and Analysis)

This stage of the study examined the relationship in writing skill between English and Arabic through looking at both subjects results in the final-term one writing exam 2013/2014.

Table Six: Grades Collection and Analysis

Student	English Composition	Arabic Composition
1	72	71
2	84	81
3	73	77
4	59	64
5	72	78
6	66	70
7	65	65
8	61	60
9	47	55
10	73	79



Student	English Composition	Arabic Composition
11	75	69
12	77	82
13	83	85
14	72	85
15	81	88
16	82	89
17	79	77
18	73	76
19	80	85
20	65	60
Number of Participants	20	20
Grades range	59-84	55-89
Mean	68.7	74.8

The above table illustrates 20 students' grades in writing skill in both subjects (English and Arabic) composition. The grades` range in both subjects is very close and reflects significant relationship between the two subjects. It is noticeable that students who scored high marks in English obtained high marks in Arabic. This table also attests what Cummins` (1979) argued about the relationship between the mother tongue and the second language. Students (2, 13, 1, 5, 16, 19) relatively scored high marks in their writing in Arabic, so the expectation of being better in writing in English has come true through their scores of the same skill in English. On the other hand, Students (4,7,8,9,20) scored low marks in their writing in their MSA, therefore, it was expected from them to score low scores in writing in English, through the expectation of negative transfer from L1 into L2.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

This study focused on the writing skills of Emirati grade nine male students in one of the semi-private schools in AL Ain- UAE. The study tried to examine the students' writing and to explore the reasons behind their low performance in the writing skill in English language. After examining the literature, the researcher based his study on Cummins Interdependence Hypothesis in order to find answers for the research's questions. The researcher adopted the mixed method of research. This method had been implemented in five stages: Controlled writing task (sentence translation), free writing task (short paragraph), semi-structured interview, and grades collection and analysis. The findings of the study have been tabulated with illustrations in figures.

This study tried to provide a sufficient data through which both teachers of Arabic and English language could refer to in order to develop strategies that enhance their students' writing in English language. In other words, the study revealed significant relation between the writing skill in the MSA and in English as a target language. Students who are good writers in their MSA would be better writer in English language than those who are less proficient in MSA or rely more on their colloquial while writing in English.

The findings of this study confirmed that colloquial Arabic affected the students' writing performance and lead to higher percentage of negative transfer into writing in English. This effect of colloquial was noticed in most of the students' responses. Colloquial Arabic was a source of errors at two linguistic levels (Syntactic and lexical). Some of them failed to express their ideas due to inappropriate expressions that are used in the

daily spoken language. Others failed due to word-by-word translation ignoring the word order of the target language. On the other hand, some of them suffer from a lack of knowledge on a syntactic level and produced unmeaningful chunk of words that were translated into English before having considered these patterns in correct form of their MSA. The findings revealed the fact that these students are only translating their L1 regardless of what type of Arabic they are using into English. The whole process of writing or sentence translation appeared to take place through thinking in their colloquial then transferring these thoughts into written script. This lack of consistency negatively affects the flow of their writing in English. Moreover, the first two stages of this research proved the students' low proficiency in writing in their mother tongue. The mixture of colloquial and MSA in writing in Arabic lead to a weak performance in writing in Arabic. It is also obvious that MSA sentence structure is closer to the sentence structure in English than the colloquial does. This similarity was reflected through the comparison between the number of mistakes that occur in the sentence translation task from MSA and that task of translating from the colloquial. The errors in sentence translation from the colloquial were double the errors that were caused in MSA sentence translation

The study revealed a correlation among Arabic-English writing skills; it showed the importance of MSA writing abilities and skills with regard to writing in English. Moreover, the study revealed a new source of errors that weaken students' writing in English that is the colloquial language style. Colloquial Arabic has many expressions that are rooted from the different spoken dialects; those expressions might extremely affect the meaning of the English sentence. On the other hand, Colloquial Arabic followed no fixed structure or rules as it is not the official language,

therefore, this lack of structure also negatively affects the English language writing.

The finding of the study with the data analysis proved what has been put forward that the strength and weaknesses in writing in L1 can affect the students writing skills in L2. The data analysis revealed clear evidences that the process of writing in L2 is highly affected by the students' abilities and skills in writing in MSA (Fus`ha). The findings of the study coincided with what comes in Cummins (1979) Threshold Hypothesis that a learner must have a level of proficiency in his L1 before transfer can take place. The findings also supported what has come in Torres and Fischer (1989), their study came up with that fluency in one`s native language increases the probability of becoming proficient in a second language.

This chapter will also discuss what has been found in the literature with the findings of the study in correlation with its questions.

Stage one: (Task one- Sentence Translation)

The findings of task one have shown the number of errors that were negatively transferred from colloquial language style were almost double the number of errors that were negatively transferred from the MSA (Fus`ha). Cummins (1978) argued that some aspects of the first language could be positively transferred while acquiring a second language. Therefore, having low proficiency in L1 might attribute to a negative transfer in L2. The findings of task one showed that MSA caused fewer errors than those caused by the colloquial. This tells that as long as the learners` L1 has similar patterns that are close to the target language L2, then a positive transfer will take place and the produced language will be correct. Colloquial Arabic as mentioned earlier do not follow certain pattern and appeared to be inappropriate in terms of lexical and syntax,

whereas the MSA must follow certain structure and most of the time closer to the structure of the English language sentence. This similarity in patterns reduced the number of errors in the sentences that were translated from MSA. This attests what has been indicated by Baker (2001) as a need to call for the development of the mother tongue.

Having interviewed the Arabic language teachers in task three ( semi-structured interview), it was found that the number of Arabic lessons per-week is two times less than the English language classes. The Arabic language lessons are three lessons per-week, whereas, English lessons are nine lessons per week. Writing lessons in Arabic language is one lesson every two weeks whereas writing lessons in English are four lessons every two weeks. This would interpret the students' weakness in writing skills in their mother tongue that is negatively affected their skills in writing in the second language (English). Students are more exposed to the target language before developing their L1. This lack of interest in L1 will lead to cause low proficiency in the mother tongue and leave no hope of L2 development based on L1 proficiency as indicated by Cummins Interdependence Hypothesis about the relationship between L1 and L2 development. Cummins indicated that writing in L1 could be a source of positive transfer through the development of knowledge and literacy in L2. This means that if the L1 is not reasonably developed and learners did not reach a level of proficiency, then they would face difficulties achieving proficiency in L2. In case of the students who are subject to this study, the students are not using their MSA even during the Arabic lessons as reported by their teachers through the interview. The students suffer from low proficiency in their MSA and rely more on using their colloquial. This use of colloquial has negatively affected the students writing even in their mother tongue.

It is obvious that these students stumbled finding the appropriate expressions in their MSA and rely more on their everyday expressions that cause lots of linguistics problems. Therefore, teachers need to consider this issue to promote students` writing skills. Teachers need to design activities that enhance students writing skills. A careful choice of curriculum that matches these students` abilities and addresses this issue. They should provide their students with ample opportunities and increase the number of writing lessons. In addition, more training on looking for the appropriate synonyms to their colloquial expressions in their MSA is required. Students` awareness of the MSA sentence structure would benefit them producing more accurate structures that lead them consequently to a better sentence translation into English.

#### Stage Two: (Task Two- Free writing –Short Paragraph)

Having given the students opportunities to write freely in task two. Students again committed errors due to the colloquial usage in double the number of errors that were detected due to the MSA (Fus`ha) usage. The students were asked to write freely about a vacation they had before, they were asked to write first in English language and then, to translate their topics into Arabic. The reason behind asking them to translate what they have written in English into Arabic is to find out more about their proficiency in Arabic language. The researcher wanted to know whether the students are using their MSA in their writing or their colloquial. The result came up with that, the students are using their colloquial which causes errors at two linguistic levels lexically and syntactically. Wachs (1993) argued that students memorize a good number of vocabulary and grammar rules that do not appear in their writing. The findings showed that the students are memorizing and using their colloquial expressions that are not accepted in writing in both languages MSA and English. They are transferring their spoken language into their writing ignoring the

appropriate rules of writing in both languages. This inappropriate usage is caused due to lack of knowledge and instructions of the appropriate structure of writing. The number of writing lessons is not enough to promote the students writing skills in both languages Arabic and English.

Goody and Watt (1968) considered the written discourse as superior to the oral discourse in terms of being more logical, formal, and complexity. Most of the expressions that are acceptable in a spoken discourse are not acceptable in a written discourse or at least might cause weakness in style or vague in understanding some lexical items. Using lexical from ones` dialect might not be comprehensible to many others who are not exposed to the same culture. Therefore, MSA is considered as the formal Arabic language that is used officially in formal speeches, reading and writing.

The reason behind students` deficiency in MSA is the absence of the language laboratories, limited resources such as technology and the absence of pedagogical attractive materials. The language teaching system in the Arab world lacks efficiency due to the old fashioned and inflexible method of teaching that is based on lecturing and memorization more than the practical usage of the language in its real life situations Mourani (2004). Schools, stakeholders, and parents are not paying enough attention to the importance of MSA. They focus more on teaching English language ignoring the fact that MSA contributes to learning English.

On the other hand, task one and task two looked at the types of errors that might be caused while translating sentences from both language styles MSA (Fus`ha) and Colloquial into English language. The study identified at what linguistic levels do these errors might occur. The findings revealed errors at two linguistic errors` type; Lexical and Syntax. The results showed that not only the colloquial which was the source of error but also MSA attributed to these kinds of errors. In task one, nine

syntactic errors were detected as a result of colloquial usage and one error at the lexical level. MSA attributed to five syntactic errors and two errors at the lexical level. This would be interrupted by the fact that students' lexical knowledge is more developed than their syntax awareness. On the other hand, task two supported this findings and showed twelve syntactic errors and seven errors at the lexical level. Again this reflects the students' low proficiency in terms of syntax knowledge.

In task two, the most prominent type of syntax errors were detected in the preposition usage. This type of error was found only in students number 1, 18, 19, the three sentences were written in colloquial. Lakkis and Malak (2000) agree with Henning (1978) that errors in the usage of preposition by Arab learner are due to transferring from their mother tongue. On the other hand, the usage of preposition in some MSA sentence structure are very close to those used in English sentence structure. For example: "ذهبت الى الجبل الأخضر" the preposition "الى" means "to" in English, therefore, the omission of the preposition "الى" in the colloquial sentence given by the student number 18 caused the error at a syntactic level when he translated it into English.

The sentence structure error was produced by students number 5,6,7,8. The source of this type of errors was the colloquial language style. The students followed unacceptable structure of MSA causing errors at two linguistic levels (Syntactic and lexical). As mentioned earlier, colloquial follows no rules and no fixed structure unlike the MSA. Therefore, this incorrect structure had been negatively transferred into the English sentence structure producing a vague structure. Therefore, this high influence of Colloquial Arabic on the students' writing of English needs to be indicated by the language teachers. ESL teachers need to introduce their students to this issue to avoid any negative transfer might occur. On the other hand, Arabic language teachers have a great role to play in this



matter, they need to urge their students to use their MSA. They need also to indicate that there is a huge difference between the spoken and written Arabic. This difference would affect the students' performance in both subjects (English and Arabic) especially in the writing skills.

#### Stage Three: (Task Three- Semi-Structured Interview)

The findings of this task came up to prove that grade nine Emirati male students are not taking enough lessons in their MSA. On the contrary, they are studying English triple the number of studying Arabic; they are taking 3 Arabic lessons and 9 English lessons. Students are more exposed to English language than to their MSA. Therefore, the lack of proficiency in MSA is justified by the low amount of Arabic periods especially the writing lessons. Students are not even practice writing in their mother tongue. This would interpret their weakness in writing in the target language (English) and prove what Cummins (1979) came up with that students who have low-level of L1 skills and who were being instructed in L2 especially at the beginning of being schooled, they might lose all knowledge of L1 and may have difficulties acquiring L2. Lopez and Greenfield (2004) agreed on Cummins' argument for the necessity of students' L1 development before intense instructions in L2. They suggested in their study of the cross linguistic transfer of phonological awareness skill among Spanish speaking pre- school learners who were enrolled in Head Start Program. Their study came up with that learner's Spanish proficiency level in terms of phonology contributed significantly to the variance in English phonological awareness. Therefore, Grade nine students who are subject to this study have no knowledge and proficiency in their L1 to help them accommodate this knowledge in learning their L2.

#### Stage Four: (Grades Collection and Analysis)

The study revealed a significant relationship between the students' proficiency in Arabic writing and English writing. The scores of the two tests revealed this correlation between the two skills. The reason behind scoring low grades in MSA writing according to the students' teachers' reports and interviews is that students attain low marks in writing composition in Arabic due to the use colloquial expressions, lack of consistency and absence of rules in writing. The teachers added that students sometimes are only transferring their spoken language onto papers without considering any rules of writing. The teachers added then that the number of writing lessons in Arabic is not enough as they are taking only one writing session every two weeks, not only that, but also the Arabic classes in general are not enough, they only teach three lessons of Arabic per week. This testimony from the Arabic teachers themselves would support the findings of this study.

On the other hand, the students feel highly proud of their identity, they consider their dialect as essential part of their identity and they prefer talking and communicating using their dialect. Teachers' responses through this interview reported that students are more willing to use their colloquial during the Arabic lesson. Teachers use the MSA at 70 % and the colloquial at 30 %. When they were asked about the reasons, they said that sometimes their students do not understand many of MSA expressions; therefore, they feel a need to talk to their students using the Emirati dialect in order to explain some concepts. Teachers are facing great challenges to enforce and encourage their students to speak using the MSA. Therefore, students' low proficiency in MSA is expected and a serious issue that demands the stakeholders interference and urges them to modify their curriculum and to increase the number of Arabic lessons.

## 5.2 Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

As indicated earlier in chapter one of this study, this study aims to answer the following questions:

### 5.2. 1 Results for research question 1

- 1- What is the role of L1 MSA and Colloquial Arabic on the learners' writing performance in L2 English?

The finding and the data analysis of the four stages of this study provided a comprehensive answer to this question. The first and second task came up with almost the same results that students' performance in MSA are reflected on their performance in writing in English. The two tasks imply low proficiency in terms of MSA. This low proficiency as indicated in Cummins (1979) hypothesis attributes to low proficiency in the target language. Comparing errors that were occurred while translating from MSA (Fus`ha) to errors that were occurred due to translating from the Colloquial Arabic, it was clearly shown that using MSA (Fus`ha) while translating Arabic into English gave more accurate results in the target English sentence structure.

On the other hand, this low number of errors that were caused while translating from MSA could be avoided by giving the students more instructions. For example: by looking at the results of the sentence translation from MSA, we can notice that two errors occurred in sentences (6 and 9). The error in sentence number 6 was of lexical type, where two students only out of 20 failed to use the appropriate expression and they succeeded in delivering their messages despite the wrong word choice. On the other hand, 5 students out of 20 failed to use the appropriate preposition in sentence number 9. This failure of using the

appropriate preposition by Arab learners has been the subject of many studies. Preposition usage is considered as one of the toughest part of the parts of speech that Arab learners could master in writing in English language. Therefore, understanding the difference between English and Arabic preposition and the understanding of the meaning of Arabic preposition would enhance students' usage of preposition in English.

Stage three and four included a semi-structured interview with the Arabic teacher and followed by the last stage of data analysis through collecting and comparing the students' results in both subjects (English and Arabic). These stages contributes to our understanding of the reason behind the students' weakness in writing skills in both subjects. Stage 3 explored the reasons behind the students' low performance in writing in Arabic that were mainly because of the low number of writing lessons that are given to students per week and the lack of interest from the side of the stakeholders and the students in this subject. The two reasons support what has mentioned earlier in the introduction section of this research that these students are more exposed to the English language than to their mother tongue language (Arabic). Therefore, low performance in writing in MSA attributes to low performance in writing in English.

### 5.2.2 Results for research question 2

At which linguistic level can the Fus`ha and the Colloquial be traced?

Stage number one and stage number two included at which linguistic level errors could be traced in the given tasks. It was found that the negative transfer from L1 could be sourced from both languages style MSA (Fus`ha) and Colloquial. This negative transfer attributes to errors at two linguistic levels (syntactic and lexical) where the syntax errors were double the number of lexical mistakes in both stages. Both results

revealed the same type of errors at both levels; the syntactic errors occurred in the preposition usage, excessive use of “when”, subject ellipsis, pronoun usage, copula omission, and adjective usage. Many studies have addressed those types of errors but unfortunately, no study tried to examine what style of Arabic language is more responsible about producing these errors. Therefore, the researcher aimed at finding an answer for this question about the effect of Colloquial Arabic on students’ performance in the English writing skill.

### 5.3 Limitation of the Study

This study has been implemented on small number of grade nine Emirati male students. The results were based on two written tasks given to the students in one term. The results would be more reliable if these students were given extra lessons of MSA and then to apply the same study on them, this might be a good hint for further studies. This study also has been implemented on only male grade nine Emirati students therefore this study cannot be generalized and need to be conducted on bigger groups of both sex groups.

## CHAPTER VI:

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Conclusion

This study was conducted with the purpose of finding the impact of Colloquial Arabic Language style on English writing skill. Most of contrastive analysis studies and error analysis studies dealt with Arabic learners by considering their mother tongue (Arabic) as one of the error sources, ignoring the fact of having two versions of Arabic; MSA and Colloquial. Therefore, this study introduced a new source of error that might be more responsible about the learners' negative transfer into English. It is the colloquial or the daily spoken Arabic language especially that which is spoken by grade nine Emirati students. The study was launched with two major questions related to this issue of negative transfer:

- 1- What is the role of L1 MSA and Colloquial Arabic on the learners' writing performance in L2 English?
- 2- At which linguistic level can the MSA (Fus`ha) and the Colloquial be traced?

To answer these two questions, the researcher adopted the mixed method approach. The research has been conducted in four stages. First, sentences translation task. Second, free writing task. Third, semi-structured interviews with Arabic language teachers. Fourth, collection and comparison of students' marks in writing in both subjects (English and Arabic). The findings came up with a significant correlation between the two languages. This study did not contradict the finding of most of the contrastive analysis studies, but further it introduced the Colloquial

Arabic style as a new source of learners' errors. Therefore, mastering MSA would contribute to a better performance in writing in English. This fact was clearly shown through the grades comparison in stage four of this research. The data showed that those who are good in Arabic composition are scoring almost the same grades in writing in English.

Syntactic and lexical errors were traced in this study. Most of these errors were as a result of Arabic colloquial language style interference. Most of the learners rely on their daily spoken language in expressing their ideas; their writings lack consistency and follow no pattern. Therefore, Arabic language teachers should illustrate to their learners how this negative transfer and interference occur and how to avoid this type of transfer; they should clearly differentiate between the spoken and the written discourse.

The students' poor linguistic knowledge in MSA obliged them to rely on their colloquial language style that lack reasonable patterns in MSA. The subjects were generally not aware of MSA rhetoric and writing conventions, therefore, they switch to their colloquial. The result of this was the production of inappropriate English sentence structure. On the other hand, students are more affected by their Arabic writing style which is characterized by being lengthy and not precise (Al-Khatib 2001). Students keep on repeating the same idea from different angles. This repetition aimed to persuasion by Arab writers, they keep on repeating the same words, phrases to persuade the interlocutor of their idea. On the other hand, the lack of ideas and knowledge cause these ideas repetition especially when topics are limited with specific word numbers. Arab writers aim at expanding their ideas without recognizing that they are repeating themselves.

Parents, students, and stake holders are paying more attention to English language teaching in comparison to MSA. Parents look for international schools for their children, they prefer the English speaking schools as

they believe that English language guarantee their children`s admission to many universities in the UAE and worldwide. Students are more exposed to learn English language classes than to Arabic classes. In many English speaking schools, Arab students are communicating with each other using the English language, this might cause Arabic language attrition, and they lack proficiency in their mother tongue. On the other hand, stakeholders and curriculum designers keep on looking for the newest, more modern syllabus of English language. They are more interested on promoting the students` abilities in English language, ignoring the fact of Arabic language as an essential requirement in acquiring a second language. English language proficiency is an essential requirement for many universities in the country. Students are not required to have a level in MSA to enter any university. Moreover, ESL teachers are required with certain skills, they even sent to several workshops on new teaching techniques, whereas, Arabic language teachers can be hired with minimum requirements. Arabic teachers are not required to attend workshops as ESL teachers do.

Arab schools in general and the UAE`s schools in particular do not have any linkage between the Arabic department and the English department. No communication in terms of planning, curriculum design, and students performance discussion is implemented in most of the country`s schools. Each department work solely and design its activities apart from each other. The writing tasks varies in both departments, the number of writing lessons in English is double the number of those in Arabic. The findings of the interview with the Arabic teachers revealed this fact of having low number of writing lessons. Students` errors in Arabic writing are very similar those errors committed in English and the source of errors is the same. Transferring thoughts of colloquial language style in both



languages (MSA and English) was one of the most prominent errors. Therefore, a need of correlative planning has to be set.

## 6.2 Recommendations

- It is apparent that these students suffer from the same low performance in writing skill due to the heavy usage of their colloquial Arabic than their MSA, therefore, a need to highlight differences between daily spoken language and the written language style is highly recommended.
- Increasing the appropriate writing tasks in both subjects with training on using the appropriate activities and techniques to promote students' writing skill, rather than being controlled with shallow textbooks orientation.
- Students need to be trained on how to think using their MSA and avoid using their colloquial Arabic while writing in both subjects. Additionally teachers should familiarize their students with the similarities and differences between their L1 and L2.
- MSA must be taught at early stages. This would help to reduce the writing problems at later stages. This early teaching could improve the students' self confidence in writing.
- Increase the number of MSA lessons per week. In addition to increase the number of writing lessons in both subjects.
- Introduce students with plenty of synonyms and antonyms especially for lexical items from the colloquial with more appropriate expressions from the MSA.
- Students' marked papers must be highlighted with errors that caused due to colloquial interference and provide the alternatives from the MSA.

- Provide the ESL teachers of the similarities and differences between the students' mother tongue (MSA) and English language.
- Train students to reduce the use of L1 gradually as they start to pick up and learn new expressions in English. Assistance from their teachers to employ L2 more frequently is highly recommended.
- Increase the amount of reading before the writing lesson would be beneficial to enrich students with the required lexical items for the writing task. These reading must be related to the students' interests and hobbies
- ESL teachers need to know about their learners L1 literacy, they need to identify their weaknesses and strengths and design their writing tasks accordingly to build up on their strength acquire L2 literacy.
- Promoting students' techniques and strategies in L1 would be positively transferred into their writing in L2. Hence, more training in writing in L1 is highly recommended to promote writing in L2.
- In order to avoid ideas repetition due to words limitation. Teachers should give their students unlimited words number tasks to express themselves freely and to train them on being more precise and straightforward, gradually they can instruct their students with less open words limit tasks.
- Increase parents' awareness of the importance of the MSA and the need of having a level of proficiency in order to help their children acquire their second language.
- Stakeholders are required to design certain entrance exams in MSA as a university entrance requirement.

- ESL teachers and Arabic language teachers should have a correlative planning especially for the writing lessons for both subjects. The choice of topics must be of students' interest and related to the theme of the study.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix (1)

ترجم الجمل التالية إلى اللغة الانجليزية (Colloquial Sentences)

1- سرنا دبي ويوم وصلنا رحنا الفندق

-----

2- سرنا أنا وهي إلى عمان

-----

3- ترا الريال يوم خطف من هني ما شفناه

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4- الأستاذ زخ الولد يغش

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5- اليوم ما شي امتحان

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6- تدري إني توهقت

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7- عقب ما وصلت، دش سالم

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8- ما شفته من قبل

-----

9- تميت بالعزبة لين الفجر

-----

10- في بيتنا ست غرف وغراج وحديقة

-----

ترجم الجمل التالية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية (MSA Sentences)

1- ذهبنا إلى دبي وعندما وصلنا توجهنا إلى الفندق

-----

2- ذهبت أنا وأهلي إلى عمان

-----

3- عندما مر الرجل من هنا لم نره

-----

4- ضبط الأستاذ الطالب يغش

-----

5- ليس هناك امتحان اليوم

-----

6- أنا في ورطه

-----

7- بعد أن وصلت , دخل سالم

-----

8- لم أره من قبل

-----

9- بقيت في المزرعة حتى الفجر

-----

10- في بيتنا ست غرف وموقف وحديقة

-----

Both Sets of sentences in English

- 1- We went to Dubai, once we arrived, we went to a hotel.
- 2- My family and I went to Oman.
- 3- When the man passed by us, we did not see him.
- 4- The teacher caught the students cheating.
- 5- There is no exam today.
- 6- I am in a trouble.
- 7- After I had arrived, Salim entered.
- 8- I have not seen him before.
- 9- I stayed in the farm until the sunrise.
- 10- In Our house, there are six rooms, a parking, and a garden.

## Appendix 2

### Free Writing Task – Short Paragraph

Write a paragraph of 100-150 words about “How did you spend your holiday?” then Write about the same topic in your mother tongue (Arabic) with the same word limit.

#### English

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#### Arabic:

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## Appendix 3

### Interview consent Form

#### Research-based Master of Education

I, ----- (Participant`s name), understand that I am being asked to participate in an interview activity that forms part of [Fadi Mohammad Rashied Abu Ghwaileh] `s required project work in the above-noted British University in Dubai Master`s program. It is my understanding that this interview has been designed to gather information about the following topics:

- Arabic language teaching.
- Students` attitude towards MSA (Modern standard Arabic).
- Arabic language teachers` challenges in delivering Arabic Language classes using MSA vs. Colloquial.

I have been given some general information about this research and the type of questions I can expect to answer. I understand that the interview will be conducted in a written form of 10 questions and that it will take approximately 30 minutes of my time to answer it.

I understand that my participation in this research study is voluntary and that I am free to decline to participate, without consequences, at any time prior to or at any point during the activity. I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential used only for the purpose of completing this research, and will not be used in any way that can identify me. All interview responses, notes, and opinions will be kept in a secured environment. If I decline it, it will be destroyed by the researcher. I will also be provided with a copy of the student research at my request.

I understand that the results of this activity will be used exclusively in the below-named student`s University MA project.

I also understand that there are no risks involved in participating in this activity, beyond those risks experienced in everyday life.

I have read the information above. By signing below and returning this form, I am consenting to participate in this interview activity as conducted by the below named [Fadi Mohammad Rashied Abu Ghwaileh]

Participant name: -----

Email address: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Student name: Fadi Mohammad Rashied Abu Ghwaileh

Email address: [120148@student.buid.ac.ae](mailto:120148@student.buid.ac.ae)

Cell: 0504110756



## Appendix 4

Name: الاسم:

Position: الوظيفة

Years of experience: سنوات الخبرة:

=====

1- ما هي الصفوف التي تدرسها؟

\_\_\_\_\_

2- كم عدد سنوات الخبرة؟

\_\_\_\_\_

3- هل تتحدث اللغة العربية الفصحى أثناء تدريسك لمادة اللغة العربية؟

\_\_\_\_\_

4- هل يتحدث الطلاب اللغة العربية الفصحى أثناء الحصة؟

\_\_\_\_\_

5- إذا كنت تتحدث العامية والفصحى أثناء التدريس. ما هي النسبة التقريبية للتحدث بكل منهما؟

\_\_\_\_\_

6- ما هي الصعوبات التي يواجهها طلابك في كتابة مواضع الأنشاء؟

\_\_\_\_\_

7- ما هي الأخطاء الأكثر تكرارا بكتابة الطلاب؟

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8- هل يستخدم الطلاب اللغة العامية في كتاباتهم؟

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9- كم عدد حصص الكتابة التي تدرسها اسبوعيا للطلبة؟

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10- كم عدد حصص اللغة العربية التي يدرسها الطلاب أسبوعيا؟

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اية ملاحظات أخرى:

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Name: الاسم:

Position: الوظيفة

Years of experience: سنوات الخبرة:

1- What grades are you teaching?

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2- How many years of experience do you have?

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3- While teaching Arabic language, do you speak MSA (Fus`ha)?

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4- During the Arabic lesson, Do students speak MSA (Fus`ha)?

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5- If you are speaking both MSA and Colloquial, what in percentage do you speak each?

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6- What difficulties do your students face in writing composition?

---

7- What are the most frequent errors that your students make in their writings?

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8- Do your students use the colloquial in their writing?

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9- How many writing lessons do you teach per-week?

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10- How many Arabic lessons do students study per-week?

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Others:

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