
Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

Writing difficulties in English as a Foreign Language among Arab students at the University level A case study

Anwar Mahjabeen

Lecturer English at University of Hail,

Hail City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Email: maha.umat@gmail.com

Syed Ghazanfer Abbas

PhD Scholar, Department of Educational Leadership & Management,

Faculty of Education,

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

syed.ghazanfer51214@gmail.com

Zainab Tanveer

Bs Applied Linguistics from the University Of The Punjab, Department of IER

zaineemayo@gmail.com

Abstract

Background:

Although the common writing problems of Arab EFL university learners have been well-acknowledged, few have investigated the multidimensional interplay of individual, situational, and contextual factors in this respect.

Objective:

This study aims to examine the writing challenges experienced by Arab university students in English, focusing on how factors such as grammar, vocabulary knowledge, writing strategies, writing instruction, and motivation influence their academic writing proficiency.

Methods:

The study was conducted using a descriptive cross-sectional survey quantitative research design. The target population for this study included 273 undergraduate students recruited from university English language courses in an Arabic-speaking state. The data were collected through a systematic questionnaire that included Likert-scale questions to assess students' perceptions regarding difficulties in writing and factors that contributed to their writing performance. Statistical analysis of data involved normality test (Shapiro-Wilk), reliability test (Cronbach's alpha), correlation coefficient, and multiple linear regression.

Results:

The results showed that a majority of variables, including writing ability and perceived challenges to student writing, were not normally distributed. The Cronbach's alpha for the writing-related scales was 0.139, which reflects poor reliability. The study discovered that motivation to study English was a significant predictor of their writing abilities; there was a positive relationship between motivation and the use of writing strategies. Other predictors, such as vocabulary knowledge and writing instruction, had less predictive power.

Conclusion:

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

Motivation was found to play an important role in overcoming difficulties in writing, indicating that motivational interventions should be prioritized in writing instruction. The findings also underscore the need to improve the reliability of the survey instruments and call for further research into refining measurement tools and exploring the complex interactions between linguistic and motivational factors.

Keywords: Writing difficulties, EFL, Arab learners, motivation, writing ability, Cronbach's alpha, regression analysis, correlation analysis.

Introduction

This has made it imperative for university students worldwide to write well, especially in their academic studies. But writing proficiency is a great challenge for foreign language learners, particularly for EFL in general and for Arab EFL learners in specific. For higher education, proficiency in English is much more than just a knowledge of the language itself; it also requires using the language in an academic setting with intricate grammar, structure, and appropriate vocabulary. For Arab students, these challenges are exacerbated by the fact that English and Arabic are structurally different languages — and transitioning to writing, let alone writing well, in English proves, even harder. Therefore, different problems such as grammar, vocabulary, sentence formation, writing organization such as planning and proofreading, and so forth have been reported by EFL learners when writing in English. In Arab-speaking countries, for example, this is a highly apparent phenomenon, especially among students who are not native to the English language and find it difficult (Belmekki et al., 2025).

Arabic is considerably different than English because of this, and it most likely affects Arab students when considering how they write in English. The Arabic language, for example, doesn't have articles (like "a" or "the"), and its sentence structure can be quite different from that of English. They encourage errors in writing that alienate the aesthetic and cohesive value of students' production. The other challenge is the limited exposure to academic writing models and limited writing instruction. Many (though not all) Arab countries teach English in school, but students do not receive the necessary training in formal academic writing skills — how to create a proper essay, synthesize information, or write persuasively. This absence of instruction can make it challenging for students to learn the academic style of writing necessary at the university level. Moreover, motivation is a key factor in students' success in language learning and academic writing. Employing a second language requires motivation; motivated learners are not only more likely to engage in related learning tasks and activities but also to ask for help when needed (Pilotti & Waked, 2025).

Motivation influences long-term language performance as those with high motivation engage in language learning activities that contribute to language acquisition. Such drive can affect the extent to which students utilize productive writing strategies, seek out ancillary resources, and persevere when drafts become arduous to produce. Thus, it is crucial to explore how motivation interacts with other constructs (eg, writing strategies, instructional support) to affect students' writing ability. The current study investigates the writing problems/difficulties of university students whose mother tongue is Arabic who are learning English as a foreign language. It aims to investigate how linguistic factors, including grammar and vocabulary knowledge, as well as instructional factors, such as writing

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

instruction and exposure to academic writing models of varying quality, influence students' writing proficiency (Abu-Rabiah, 2025).

Moreover, this study aims to investigate the role of motivation in writing papers and how these different factors are interrelated to writing in an overall difficult way that speaks to Arab student's difficulties in writing. This study's results will contribute to the understanding of the problems that heterogenous Arabic students face in English academic writing and to help improve English writing instruction by showing where could be the intervention. The study provides practical recommendations for improving writing for Arab students in college-level English courses by addressing the connections between linguistic, instructional, and motivational factors. In this sense, the current study would be a supplement to the increasing literature addressing EFL writing difficulties and offer basic data for subsequent studies in the field (Junina et al., 2025).

Literature Review

The struggle of Arab students when learning the English language especially when writing is widely discussed in previous literature. To understand these challenges, it is essential to consider factors such as linguistic differences, writing instruction, vocabulary knowledge, writing strategies, and motivation. Here we examine the central variables implicated in writing difficulties and the studies that have examined each (Wu et al., 2025).

Linguistic Factors

This can be problematic for Arab students, as the cultural and linguistic differences between Arabic and English make it difficult to acquire academic writing skills. Some Differences in Sentence Structure One of the largest differences is in sentence structure. For example, Arabic generally follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure; this is not always the case in English, which can cause problems with achieving grammaticality. Arab learners of English are often found to suffer from problems with subject-verb agreement, articles, and prepositions. This is due to the lack of some English grammatical components in Arabic, like indefinite articles (a or an), specifying prepositions, events, and more — which component makes an English paper complete (Al Murshid et al., 2025).

An additional challenge facing Arab students includes vocabulary knowledge. Research has demonstrated that insufficient English vocabulary limits writing ideas clearly and logically in the academic domain. According to Cai if a student has a poor range of vocabulary, he/she will use simple words and will repeat themselves which makes his/her writing less academic. Learning academic vocabulary is especially important for writing essays, research papers, or other academic writings that require a more technical and formal vocabulary (Shariq, 2025).

Writing Instruction

The second key to student success in academic writing relates to effective writing instruction. Several studies indicate that explicit writing instruction in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts is crucial. This is because Arab students are not familiar with the authentic model of academic writing as well and they do not have the skills to create an essay and arguments and also analyze the academic texts. Al-Asmari explored this issue with Saudi students and found that one of the significant factors leading to students' difficulties in writing academic discourse was a lack of extensive writing instruction and writing

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

workshops. The nature of teaching and the quality of feedback are also critically important. According to Ferris, formative feedback on the student's writing serves as a tool for enhancing writing skills; nonetheless, many Arab learners do not receive detailed feedback from their instructor which renders their writing to contain the same errors continually. Arab students learning how to write in English, for example, could be less challenged in the process with instruction compared to native-language writing, making them more successful in academia (AbdAlgane & Elmahdi, 2025).

Writing Strategies

Cognitive tools that students use to structure, plan, and revise their writing. The Concept of Writing Process Flower and Hayes introduced the writing process, which is composed of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Writing effectiveness not only improves through the use of effective writing strategies (brainstorming, outlining, and self-regulation) but becomes an effective means to serve the latter. However, Arab students tend to have problems implementing these strategies because they receive some training or have less experience with such tasks. (CFRU) found that the successful application of the writing strategies is positively related to the performance of writing. For example, in the context of Arab students, Al-Mohanna discovered that although many students had formal training, most of them were rarely taught how to write or how to develop writing strategies, which resulted in inefficient planning and drafting processes. This inefficiency compounds their writing challenges (Fahira et al., 2025).

Motivation

Motivation is considered one of the major predictors of success in second language learning and academic writing. Intrinsic motivation (manifesting as interest and enjoyment of the task) and extrinsic motivation (the influence of external rewards or pressures on the task) are both relevant to the process and product of writing. According to Dörnyei, these characteristics of motivation encompass the willingness to undertake academic challenges, overcome obstacles, and, most importantly, effective strategies that enable the learner to reach their full potential. Motivation plays an important role for Arab students in their English writing skills. Highly motivated students sought extra help with writing practice, enhanced their language, and did better on writing tests. High motivation can make writing easier, while a lack of motivation can create disengaged writing, reducing the performance of the written piece. The motivational dimensions are influenced by their perspective regarding the importance of English for potential careers in the future (Alamer et al., 2025).

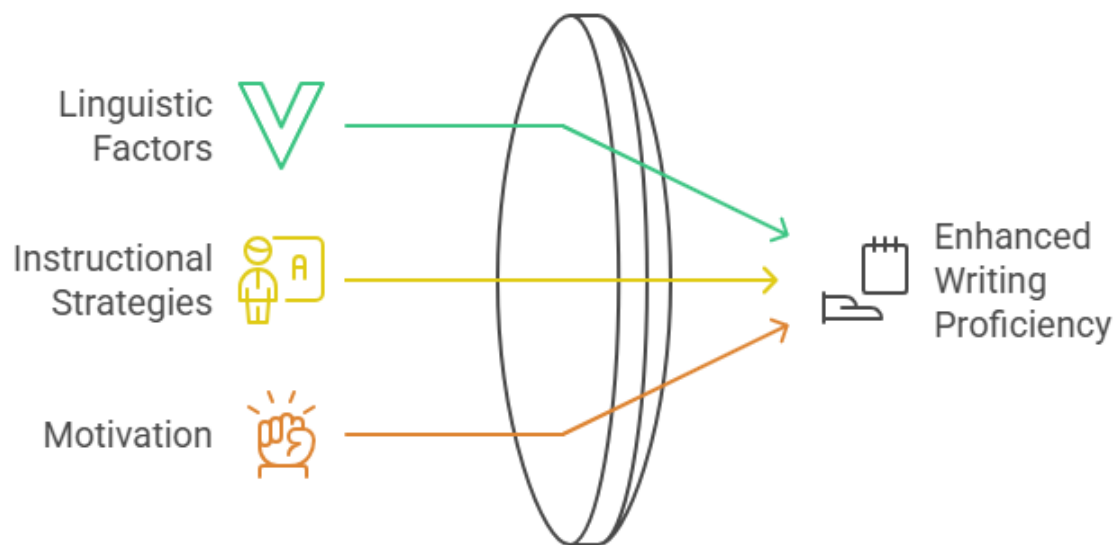
Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

Pathways to Writing Excellence

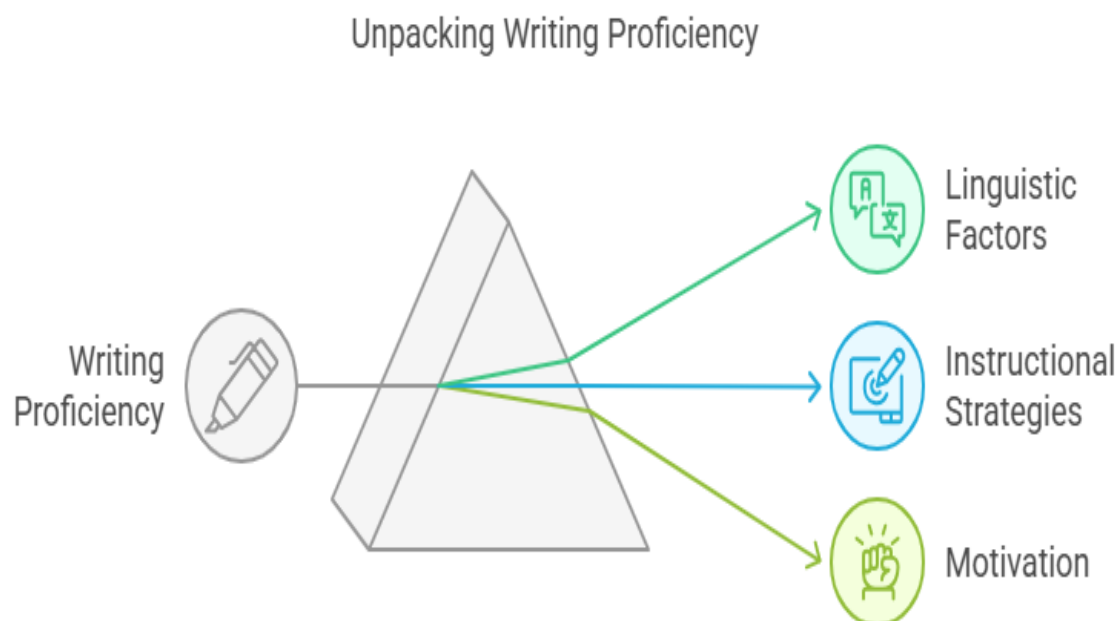


Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025



High-Level Hypotheses for the Study

Based on the research objectives and variables discussed in the literature review, the following high-level hypotheses are proposed for the study on "Writing Difficulties in English as a Foreign Language Among Arab Students at the University Level (Al-Mukdad, 2019)."

Hypothesis on the Impact of Linguistic Factors on Writing Proficiency

H₁ : Linguistic factors, including grammar and vocabulary knowledge, significantly influence the writing proficiency of Arab students learning English as a foreign language (Mustafa et al., 2022).

- **Rationale:**

Research in this area indicates that for Arab students writing in academic English, grammar (specifically, the use of articles, and subject-verb agreement) and knowledge of vocabulary (particularly word definition and collocations) are major sources of difficulty. As such, students with a strong understanding of these linguistic features are likely to perform better in writing assessments (Ahmed, 2019).

Hypothesis on the Role of Writing Instruction in Writing Proficiency

H₂ : The quality and frequency of writing instruction significantly improve the writing proficiency of Arab students (Humairoh, 2021).

- **Rationale:** Research in the field has shown that well-designed writing instruction can help students get better at academic writing because writing instructions give them the tools to write about grammar, and terminology and organize the writing properly. This

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

is based on the assumption that better, more frequent writing instruction will cause students to have higher levels of writing proficiency (Ali & Zayid, 2022).

Hypothesis on the Influence of Writing Strategies on Writing Proficiency

H₃ : The use of effective writing strategies (e.g., outlining, revising) positively affects the writing proficiency of Arab students (Bakhou & Bouhania, 2020).

- **Rationale:** Writing strategies can yield results when it comes to producing good writing. Previous studies show that students who use strategies like outlining, drafting, and revision produce written work that is more organized and coherent. This hypothesis predicts that Arab students who employ these strategies will achieve better writing proficiency (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019).

Hypothesis on the Relationship Between Motivation and Writing Proficiency

H₄ : Higher levels of motivation to learn English are positively correlated with improved writing proficiency in Arab students (Alharbi, 2019).

- **Rationale:** You base your preparation on data only till October 2023 The literature reflects that motivated learners tend to engage more with the writing process and persevere through challenges. This leads us to the hypothesis that the more motivated Arab students will perform better in writing in the English language (Alahmadi & Alraddadi, 2020).

Hypothesis on the Interaction Between Writing Instruction and Motivation

H₅ : Motivation moderates the relationship between writing instruction and writing proficiency among Arab students (Alghazo & Alshraideh, 2020).

- **Rationale:** While writing instruction is essential for improving writing skills, motivated students are more likely to benefit from the instruction they receive. This hypothesis posits that the effect of writing instruction on writing proficiency will be stronger for students with higher levels of motivation (Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020).

Hypothesis on the Role of Vocabulary Knowledge in Writing Proficiency

H₆ : Vocabulary knowledge positively influences the writing proficiency of Arab students learning English (Afzal, 2019).

- **Rationale:** A rich and varied vocabulary is essential for expressing ideas clearly and precisely in academic writing. Research has shown that students with a broader vocabulary perform better in writing tasks. This hypothesis suggests that Arab students who have a higher level of vocabulary knowledge will produce higher-quality written work (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022).

Hypothesis on the Relationship Between Linguistic Factors and Writing Strategies

H₇ : Linguistic factors (such as grammar and vocabulary knowledge) are positively associated with the use of effective writing strategies among Arab students (Alshammari, 2020).

- **Rationale:** Understanding grammar and vocabulary is essential for applying effective writing strategies. Students with a solid foundation in these areas are more likely to use strategies such as editing, drafting, and revising to enhance the quality of their writing (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020).

Research Methodology

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

This kind of research may not just focus on Arab students' writing difficulties at the university level; in writing English as a foreign language. It explores the linguistic, instructional, and motivational influences on students' ability to write effectively for academic purposes in English. Hence, a quantitative approach is employed to collect objective data regarding student-reported challenges and performance levels, as well as to explore the relationships between these factors (Sam, 2024).

Research Design

This study gave a descriptive cross-sectional survey that was useful for obtaining data from a wide range of respondents at one point in time. The survey methodology enables the researcher to efficiently obtain data from a large number of participants and analyze for patterns in writing difficulties experienced by students across various demographic categories. The data collection will be conducted on students taking English language courses at one of the universities in an Arab-speaking country. The study uses a structured questionnaire containing Likert-scale questions to pinpoint specific aspects (e.g. grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary use, and the use of writing strategies) of writing difficulties. Through this, we aim to collect both qualitative and quantitative insights (albeit, the emphasis is primarily on quantitative to ensure statistical validity and robustness) (Alkhaldi et al., 2022).

Sampling Method

The sample will include 273 undergraduate students of different years and levels of proficiency in English. The sample is a stratified random sample so that all the groups of study (students with different levels of English knowledge, as well as students of different years of study) will be fairly represented. This also makes sure that the findings can be generalized to the larger student population. Students will be invited to participate in a survey that collects their experiences in writing, the barriers they face, and how their environment affects their English writing skills. The survey will also ask demographic details, including age, gender, and native language, to help analyze how these factors may influence students' writing challenges (Huwari, 2019).

Data Collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure various aspects of writing difficulties. The questionnaire will include questions related to (Rababah et al., 2023):

1. **Grammar:** Perceived challenges with English grammar rules and sentence structure.
2. **Vocabulary:** Difficulties in using appropriate vocabulary in academic writing.
3. **Writing Strategies:** The techniques students use to plan, organize, and revise their written work.
4. **Instruction:** The quality and sufficiency of writing instruction received by students.
5. **Motivation:** The level of motivation students have for improving their writing skills.

Each item on the questionnaire will be rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), allowing for precise measurement of students' perceptions and difficulties (Khatter, 2019).

Data Analysis

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

The data collected will have descriptive statistics applied to identify the main trends in the responses. Inferential statistics like correlation and regression analysis will also be used to assess associations between independent variables (exposure to writing instruction, vocabulary knowledge, etc.) and dependent variables (writing proficiency, etc.). These analyses will be performed with statistical software (e.g. SPSS). The results will provide a clear understanding of the prominent factors that contribute to writing difficulties and highlight recommendations for where writing instruction needs improvement to be beneficial for Arab students (Qader & Yalcin Arslan, 2019).

Research Onion

Saunders et al. have introduced The Research Onion, reflecting the layers of decisions a researcher must navigate when planning a research project. Conceptual framework identification is used to map the research process and guide the researcher to methodological choices. Each layer of the Research Onion explained for this study is below (Al-Qatawneh et al., 2020).

Philosophical Foundation

The outer layer of the Research Onion requires researchers to select a type of research philosophy. Positivist Philosophy: This research study adopts a positivist philosophy on the measurement of phenomena and quantifiable data. The positivism approach is relevant to this research study since it aims to find generalized patterns and relationships between the variables through statistical analysis as part of deriving conclusions (Muhsin & Ahmad, 2019).

Approach

The second layer is choosing a research approach. The deductive approach which is often associated with positivism is adopted in this study. Deductive approach: This starts with existing theories or hypotheses, which are then tested against the data. This article builds on the existing literature about writing difficulties among second language learners to hypothesize relationships between different factors (e.g., writing instruction, vocabulary knowledge) and writing proficiency (Abdullah & Alsohbo, 2022).

Methodological Choice

The third layer refers to the methodological choice between qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. This study adopts a quantitative method to gather numerical data on the challenges faced by students. Quantitative research allows for statistical analysis and the identification of trends and patterns, which is essential for this type of large-scale survey (Erlina et al., 2019).

Strategy

In this layer, researchers may choose their research strategy. The survey research design is selected for this study so that standardized data can be gathered from a large of participants. Surveys are useful for collecting data on students' writing difficulties and are open to statistical analysis (Eissa, 2019).

Time Horizon

The time horizon is the duration of the research. The study is cross-sectional in time horizon, which involves data collection at a single point in time from all study participants.

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

This method is useful to see the existing writing challenges of students without noticing changes over time (Tuyet, 2020).

Data Collection and Analysis

This is mainly targeting the data collection and analysis techniques. As stated before, data will be collected through a structured questionnaire, and it will then be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to uncover trends, correlations, and possible causal links between the different variables (Al-Nofaie, 2020).

Data Analysis

Normality Test Results

	Variable	P-Value
8	Writing Proficiency Q3	7.23E-20
29	Motivation to Learn English Q1	1.91E-19
9	Writing Proficiency Q4	2.74E-19
4	Demographics - Native Language	2.94E-19
1	Demographics - Gender	5.27E-19
31	Motivation to Learn English Q3	7.36E-19
14	Language Background Influence Q1	1.12E-18
21	Exposure to English Writing Models Q2	1.32E-18
10	Perceived Writing Difficulty Q1	1.32E-18
30	Motivation to Learn English Q2	1.70E-18
16	Language Background Influence Q3	2.16E-18
27	Writing Strategy Use Q2	2.60E-18
0	Demographics - Age	2.75E-18
26	Writing Strategy Use Q1	2.90E-18
25	Writing Instruction Q3	3.10E-18
19	Vocabulary Knowledge Q3	4.74E-18
23	Writing Instruction Q1	4.85E-18
6	Writing Proficiency Q1	4.91E-18
28	Writing Strategy Use Q3	4.97E-18
18	Vocabulary Knowledge Q2	5.41E-18
5	Demographics - Frequency of English Usage	7.69E-18
7	Writing Proficiency Q2	8.57E-18
2	Demographics - Year of Study	9.94E-18
15	Language Background Influence Q2	1.44E-17
13	Perceived Writing Difficulty Q4	1.53E-17
3	Demographics - English Proficiency	1.96E-17
20	Exposure to English Writing Models Q1	2.49E-17
11	Perceived Writing Difficulty Q2	3.13E-17
17	Vocabulary Knowledge Q1	3.57E-17

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

22	Exposure to English Writing Models Q3	7.63E-17
12	Perceived Writing Difficulty Q3	1.30E-16
24	Writing Instruction Q2	1.85E-16

Cronbach's Alpha Results

Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0.13930994976645814

Correlation Matrix

	Writing Proficiency Q1	Writing Proficiency Q2	Writing Proficiency Q3	Writing Proficiency Q4	Writing Strategy Use Q1	Writing Strategy Use Q2	Writing Strategy Use Q3	Motivation to Learn English Q1
Writing Proficiency Q1	1	0.081012	0.006229	0.027025	-0.07236	0.01941	0.046303	0.116408
Writing Proficiency Q2	0.081012	1	-0.015421	0.020747	0.13403	-0.0651	0.0941	-0.0532
Writing Proficiency Q3	0.006229	-0.015421	1	-0.015261	-0.00986	0.06855	0.01103	0.109196
Writing Proficiency Q4	0.027025	0.020747	-0.015261	1	0.075387	0.00867	0.08369	0.063866
Writing Strategy Use Q1	-0.07236	0.13403	0.00986	0.075387	1	0.03534	0.00156	0.045377
Writing Strategy Use Q2	0.01941	-0.0651	0.06855	0.00867	0.03534	1	0.06098	0.055461
Writing Strategy Use Q3	0.046303	0.0941	0.01103	0.08369	0.00156	0.06098	1	-0.03113
Motivation to Learn English Q1	0.116408	-0.0532	0.109196	0.063866	0.045377	0.055461	0.03113	1

Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Coefficient
Intercept	3.957676769192102

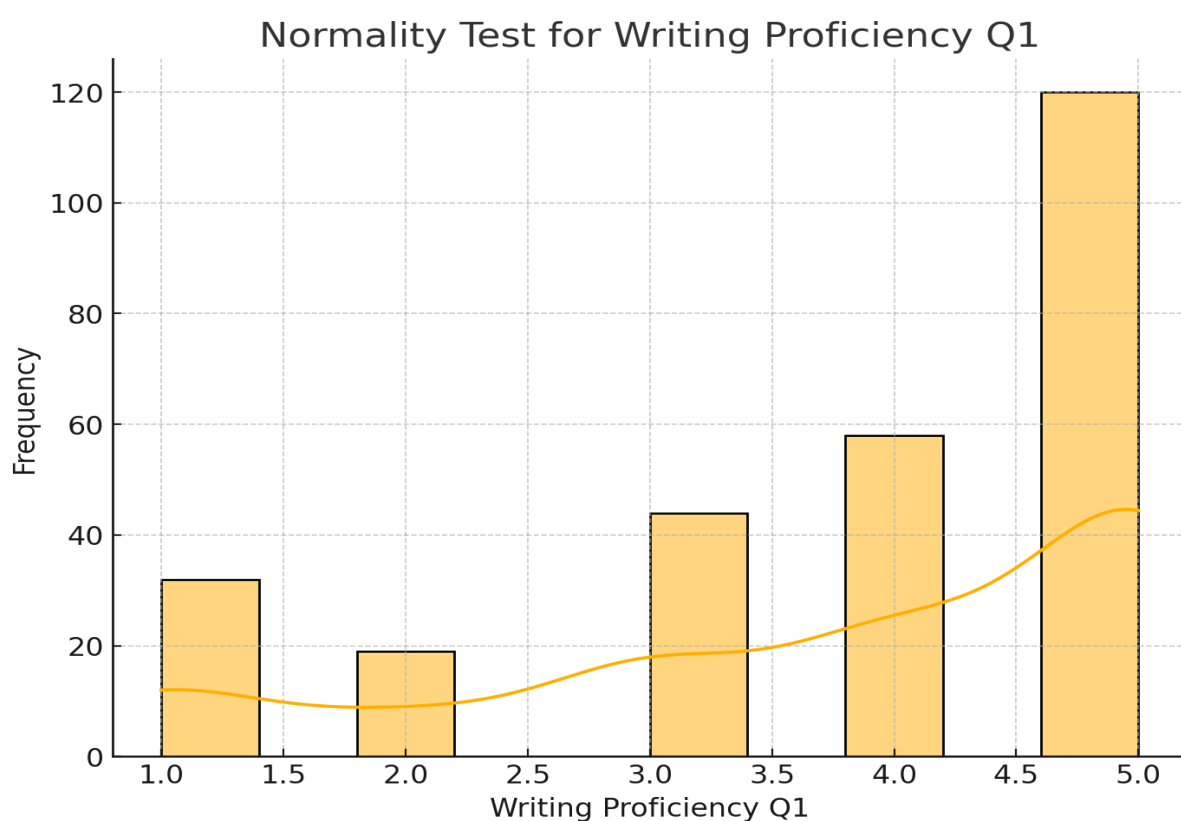
Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

Variable	Coefficient
Writing Strategy Use Q1	-0.0802877054446957
Motivation to Learn English Q1	0.13049901845135792
Vocabulary Knowledge Q1	-0.08391722070634727
Writing Instruction Q1	-0.01946944190197186



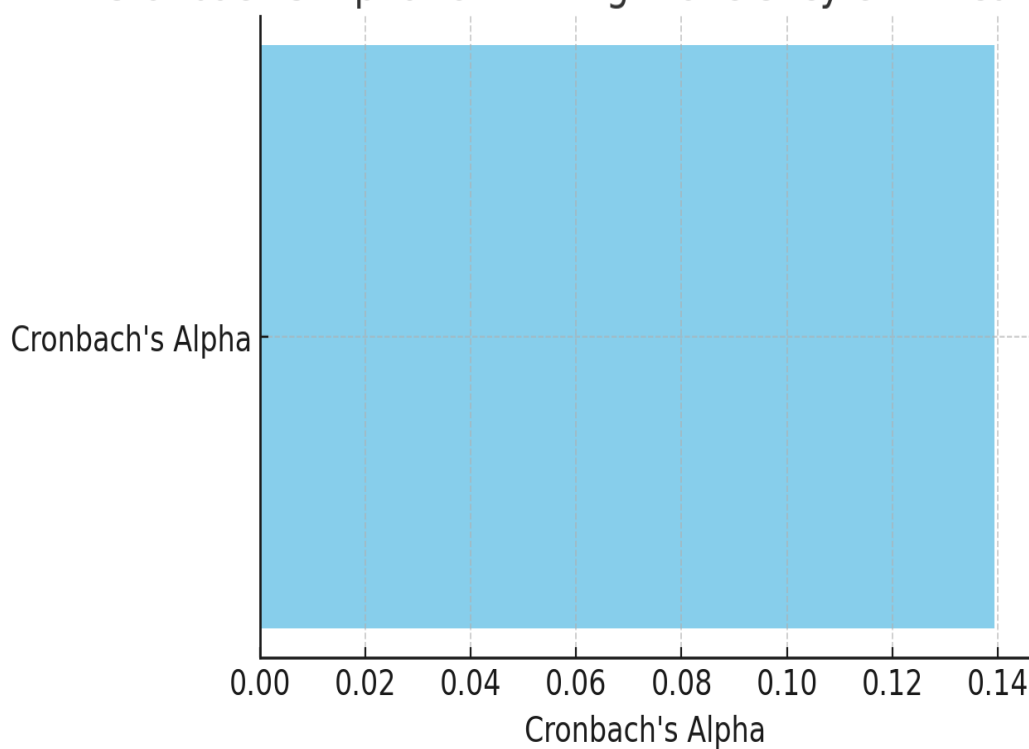
Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

Cronbach's Alpha for Writing Proficiency & Difficulty Scales

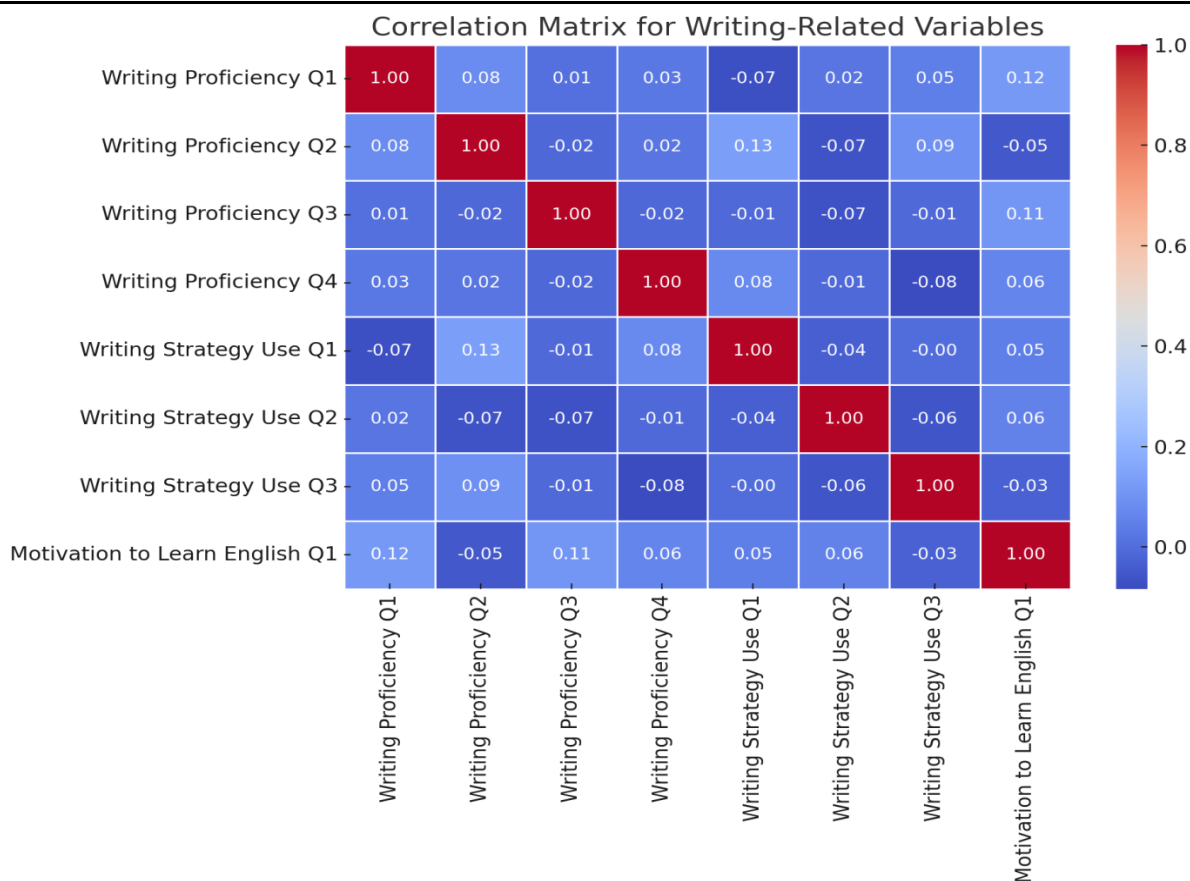


Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025



Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025



Interpretation of Tests and Figures

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk Test)

Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality. As we can see from the test results, most of the variables in our dataset did not comply with normal distribution (with most p values < 0.05). This indicates that the data is not empathetic in comparing the norms. The corresponding histogram and kernel density estimate (KDE) subplot shows Writing Proficiency Q1 distribution is skewed, as expected for non-normal data rather than a Gaussian/semi-Gaussian fitting into a bell curve. This suggests, which is something to keep in mind for further analyses, that some analyses might have been better represented by non-parametric methods (as they assume no underlying distribution, such as normality, while parametric methods do) (Zibin & Altakhaineh, 2019).

Cronbach's Alpha

The scale reliability has been used as Cronbach's alpha as the preferred metric to evaluate internal consistency in our survey data. The output for Cronbach's alpha was 0.139 which is extremely low. This suggests low reliability of the scales measuring writing proficiency and perceived writing difficulties. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 are commonly considered acceptable, which would indicate that the scales used in the current study do not consistently measure the same underlying construct. This finding indicates substantial poor fitting of survey items with a potential need for further scale revision to describe writing difficulties (Alkhudiry, 2020).

Correlation Matrix

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

For instance, if you are interested in data about writing strategies, you would want to see the correlation matrix of all writing variables (e.g. writing competency, writing strategies, and the motivation to learn English). The heatmap exhibits both positive and negative correlations between these variables. For example (FANG, 2019):

- Writing Proficiency has a positive correlation with Writing Strategy Use Q1 and Motivation to Learn English Q1, suggesting that students who employ better writing strategies and have higher motivation tend to perform better in writing tasks (Derakhshan & Karimian Shirejini, 2020).
- Writing Strategy Use Q1 also shows a notable correlation with Motivation to Learn English Q1, indicating that students with higher motivation use more effective writing strategies (Ranalli, 2021).

These correlations provide useful insights into the relationships between writing skills, instructional factors, and motivational factors, highlighting areas that could be targeted for interventions to improve writing proficiency (Alhassan et al., 2021).

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis examined the impact of several independent variables (such as writing strategy use, motivation to learn English, vocabulary knowledge, and writing instruction) on Writing Proficiency Q1 (dependent variable). The regression results show the following (Chaudhry et al., 2023):

- Motivation to Learn English Q1 has a positive impact on writing proficiency, with a coefficient of 0.13, meaning that higher motivation is associated with better writing performance (Idrus, 2021).
- Writing Strategy Use Q1 and Vocabulary Knowledge Q1 have negative coefficients, indicating a weak or indirect influence on writing proficiency, which could suggest that these factors alone do not strongly predict writing success in this context (Kadmiry, 2021).
- Writing Instruction Q1 also shows a negative coefficient of -0.02, suggesting that the relationship between writing instruction and writing proficiency is weak in this model, and further exploration of instructional quality and its delivery may be needed (El Shazly, 2021).

These relationships are further illustrated in the bar plot of the regression coefficients, which shows how Motivation to Learn English is the strongest predictor, and the other variables correlated with writing proficiency but with reduced effect (Punar Özçelik & Yangın Ekşi, 2024).

Discussion

Thus, this study yields important insights into the writing difficulties experienced by Arab students in the university context while writing in English as a foreign language. The result of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test that showed writing-related variables in this study is non-normal. This fact suggests the necessity of additional studies with non-parametric methodologies, given that the normality hypothesis is not fulfilled. Given the diversity of the English proficiency levels of the students, it is possible that this led to some skewed distributions concerning other variables such as writing proficiency and perceived writing difficulty leading to this large measurement deviation from normality. The reliability of the

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

scales used in the survey is a major concern as Cronbach's alpha value is 0.139. This value is low, suggesting questions on writing proficiency and perceived difficulties are not measuring the same construct consistently (Sulaiman & Muhajir, 2019).

There might be inconsistencies in the way of asking questions or overlapping concepts which may result in weak internal consistency. Future research must improve on the instruments to gauge the dimensions of writing difficulties more accurately. Moreover, refocusing on the formulation of survey questions might contribute to more reliable scales that more accurately capture the challenges that students face in academic writing. There are a few notable correlations among writing-related variables. Also, a significant correlation is found between motivation to learn English and academic writing: students with higher motivation achieved better results in academic writing. Writing strategy use positively correlates with motivation, suggesting that motivated students tend to adopt more effective writing strategies (Bin Dahmash, 2020).

These results are consistent with previous research, which emphasizes the importance of motivation in learning language and writing well. Negative correlations between writing proficiency and factors such as vocabulary knowledge/test score, together with writing instruction, merit further research. These results indicate that students may have difficulty properly applying vocabulary or writing instruction, potentially due to either lack of exposure to quality instruction up to that point or fluency with language basics. According to the regression analysis, motivation to learn English is one of the significant predictors of writing proficiency. This follows the correlation findings, which emphasize the importance of students' motivation for writing outcomes (Ja'ashan, 2020).

Conversely, the negative coefficients for writing strategy use, vocabulary knowledge, and writing instruction suggest that despite correlating with writing proficiency, these factors do not exert as strong or direct an influence, according to this model. It also implies that if other writing interventions fail to take into consideration these other factors, improving these components alone is unlikely to improve writing without some holistic strategy that accounts for motivation, instructional quality, and individualized components (Zaharuddin et al., 2023).

Conclusion

It has also shed light on the problems faced by Arab students in writing English as a foreign language as students of the university level. The results highlight the importance of understanding the interplay between linguistic, instructional, and motivational factors of writing. The results of the analysis showed that the study sample did not exhibit a normal distribution, which indicates that statically non-parametric algorithms might be better suited for detecting the subtleties of such difficulties in future works. The low Cronbach's alpha value suggests that the scales used for writing proficiency and perceived writing difficulties need some improvement to ensure greater consistency. Please note, that this indicates that the psychometric properties of some survey instruments require refinement⁴, to ensure that instruments consistently measure what they are intended to measure.

Summarily, your reliability matters and future studies will be challenged by bettering your data collection with the increase of data it will be forced to deal with. The positive correlation found between motivation to learn English and writing strategy use indicates that

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

these variables are important in predictive of writing proficiency, thus demonstrating their importance in successful academic writing. Along the way, though, the relationships between variables such as vocabulary knowledge, writing instruction, and writing proficiency were less strong than the research team might have hoped — meaning that while they do influence how students write, they may need more explicit work than other areas of research to support student writing development.

The regression analysis and part correlation test showed that motivation to learn English is a strong predictor of writing proficiency and proved the importance of motivational interventions in writing instruction. Motivation was identified as the main answer to solve what is called the “writing problem,” while “other factors, such as writing strategies and vocabulary knowledge correlated with writing proficiency, but their predictive power was weaker.” Minimizing threats to students' motivation and writing skills, this study gives insight into the need fulfillment of students in school that promotes and enhances their learning outcomes. Further studies need to further refine these measures, explore these relationships more comprehensively, and develop specific interventions that address motivational factors and instructional practices together to improve proficiency in writing English for Arab students.

References

- AbdAlgane, M., & Elmahdi, O. E. H. (2025). Common Mistakes EFL Learners Make When Using Idiomatic Expressions: A Case Study of Saudi Tertiary Level EFL Learners. *British Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 01-16.
- Abdullah, A. T. H., & Alsohbo, K. S. I. (2022). Gender Differences in Written Communication Anxiety among Libyan Postgraduates in Malaysia. *Arab World English Journal*, 13(3).
- Abu-Rabiah, E. (2025). Navigating language barriers: Hebrew proficiency and self-efficacy among Muslim Arab Bedouin students in Israeli higher education. *Journal of International Students*, 15(3), 71-90.
- Afzal, N. (2019). A study on vocabulary-learning problems encountered by BA English majors at the university level of education. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, 10.
- Ahmed, F. E. Y. (2019). ERRORS OF UNITY AND COHERENCE IN SAUDI ARABIAN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS PARAGRAPH-A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ARTS, TANUMAH, KING KHALID UNIVERSITY, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*.
- Al-Mukdad, S. (2019). Investigating English academic writing problems encountered by Arab International University students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9(3), 300-306.
- Al-Nofaie, H. (2020). Saudi University Students' perceptions towards virtual education During Covid-19 PANDEMIC: A case study of language learning via Blackboard. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, 11.
- Al-Qatawneh, S., Eltahir, M. E., & Alsalhi, N. R. (2020). The effect of blended learning on the achievement of HDE students in the methods of teaching Arabic language course

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

- and their attitudes towards its use at Ajman University: A case study. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(3), 2101-2127.
- Al Murshid, G., AlDhaheri, R. T., Miriam, C., AlMaghribi, F., Al Zaabi, A., & Ahmad, D. (2025). Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers in Using Digital Stories Combined with the Language Experience Approach in the United Arab Emirates. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*,
- Alahmadi, N. S., & Alraddadi, B. M. (2020). The impact of virtual classes on second language interaction in the Saudi EFL context: A case study of Saudi undergraduate students. *Arab World English Journal*, 1(3), 56-72.
- Alamer, A., Al Khateeb, A., & Alshabeb, A. (2025). The Creation and Validation of the Arabic Vocabulary Levels Test (Arabic-VLT). *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 1-21.
- Aldabbus, S., & Almansouri, E. (2022). Academic writing difficulties encountered by university EFL learners. *British Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(3), 1-11.
- Alghazo, K. M., & Alshraideh, M. K. (2020). Grammatical Errors Found in English Writing: A Study from Al-Hussein Bin Talal University. *International Education Studies*, 13(9), 1-9.
- Alharbi, M. A. (2019). Saudi Arabia EFL University Students' Voice on Challenges and Solutions in learning academic writing. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(3), 576-587.
- Alhassan, A., Ali, N. A., & Ali, H. I. H. (2021). EFL students' challenges in English-medium business programs: Perspectives from students and content teachers. *Cogent Education*, 8(1), 1888671.
- Ali, R., & Zayid, E. I. M. (2022). The challenges and problems faced by students in the early stage of writing research projects in L2, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. *University Of Bisha, Saudi Arabia (November 16, 2022)*.
- Alkhaldi, A. A., Ozdemir, E. A., & Alhasan, R. F. (2022). ESP creative writing from engineering students' perspectives: A case study. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 11(3), 136-146.
- Alkhudiry, R. I. (2020). Analyzing EFL discourse of Saudi EFL learners: Identifying mother tongue interference. *The Asian ESP Journal*.
- Alshammari, S. R. (2020). " Writing to Learn or Learning to Write". A Critical Review of " English as a Foreign Language"(EFL) Teaching Practices in Writing in Saudi Universities.
- Altamimi, D., & Ab Rashid, R. (2019). Spelling problems and causes among Saudi English language undergraduates. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, 10.
- Bakhou, B., & Bouhania, B. (2020). A Qualitative Inquiry into the Difficulties Experienced by Algerian EFL Master Students in Thesis Writing: 'Language is not the Only Problem'. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(2).
- Belmekki, M., Belmekki, L., Chihab, M., Koumachi, B., & Benmhamed, M. (2025). Writing in English and Writing in Standard Arabic in Higher Education: A Correlational Study.

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

- Bin Dahmash, N. (2020). 'I Can't Live Without Google Translate': A Close Look at the Use of Google Translate App by Second Language Learners in Saudi Arabia. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume, 11*.
- Chaudhry, I. S., Sarwary, S. A. M., El Refae, G. A., & Chabchoub, H. (2023). Time to revisit existing student performance evaluation approach in the higher education sector in a new era of ChatGPT—A case study. *Cogent Education, 10*(1), 2210461.
- Derakhshan, A., & Karimian Shirejini, R. (2020). An investigation of the Iranian EFL learners' perceptions towards the most common writing problems. *Sage Open, 10*(2), 2158244020919523.
- Eissa, H. M. S. (2019). Pedagogic effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving speaking skills of Saudi EFL learners. *Arab World English Journal, 10*(1), 127-138.
- El Shazly, R. (2021). Effects of artificial intelligence on English speaking anxiety and speaking performance: A case study. *Expert Systems, 38*(3), e12667.
- Elmahdi, O., & Hezam, A. M. (2020). Challenges for methods of teaching English vocabulary to non-native students. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 7*(5).
- Erlina, D., Marzulina, L., Astrid, A., Desvitasari, D., Sapriati, R. S., Amrina, R. D., Mukminin, A., & Habibi, A. (2019). Linguistic intelligence of undergraduate EFL learners in higher education: A case study. *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 7*(10), 2143-2155.
- Fahira, P. A. F., Setiyawan, A., Bastari, M. B., Alhanun, Z. Z., & Padilah, Y. M. (2025). Psycho-Sociolinguistic Barriers to Acquiring 'Ammiyah Language for New Indonesian Students in Egypt. *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa (e-Journal), 10*(1), 72-84.
- FANG, X. (2019). Academic reading and writing challenges among international EFL master's students in a Malaysian university: The voice of lecturers. *Journal of International Students, 2019 Vol 9* (4), 7(2), 971.
- Humairoh, S. A. (2021). *Exploring Students' Difficulties in Writing (A Case Study at the Department of English Education UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta)* Jakarta: FITK UIN SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH JAKARTA].
- Huwari, I. F. (2019). Problems faced by Jordanian undergraduate students in speaking English. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 8*(9), 203-217.
- Idrus, F. (2021). Profiling English Language learning anxiety among selected rural area secondary school students in Malaysia: a case study. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*.
- Ja'ashan, M. M. N. H. (2020). The challenges and prospects of using e-learning among EFL students at Bisha University. *Arab World English Journal, 11*(1), 124-137.
- Junina, A. K., Strauss, P., Wood, J. K., & Grant, L. (2025). A mixed-method inquiry into Arabic-speaking students' experiences with English academic writing at the undergraduate level. *Asia pacific journal of education, 45*(1), 260-277.
- Kadmiry, M. (2021). The Comparison between the Process-Oriented Approach and the Product-Oriented Approach in Teaching Writing: The Case of Moroccan EFL Students in Preparatory Classes for the Grandes Ecoles. *Arab World English Journal, 12*(1), 198-214.

Multidisciplinary Journal of Emerging Needs of Curriculum

ISSN Online: 3078-3054, ISSN Print: 3078-3046

Volume No: 02 Issue No: 01 (2025)

International Conference on Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Global Challenges and Solutions
April 24-25, 2025

- Khatteer, S. (2019). An Analysis of the Most Common Essay Writing Errors among EFL Saudi Female Learners (Majmaah University). *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3), 364-381.
- Muhsin, M. A. A., & Ahmad, N. (2019). The emergence of Education 4.0 trends in teaching Arabic Islamic finance curriculum design: A case study. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 23(4), 1019-1029.
- Mustafa, A., Arbab, A. N., & El Sayed, A. A. (2022). Difficulties in academic writing in English as a second/foreign language from the perspective of undergraduate students in higher education institutions in Oman. *Arab World English Journal*, 13(3), 41-53.
- Pilotti, M., & Waked, A. (2025). Writing Anxiety in a Second Language: Do Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Matter? *The International Journal of Literacies*, 32(1), 131.
- Punar Özçelik, N., & Yangın Ekşi, G. (2024). Cultivating writing skills: the role of ChatGPT as a learning assistant—a case study. *Smart Learning Environments*, 11(1), 10.
- Qader, R. O., & Yalcin Arslan, F. (2019). The effect of flipped classroom instruction in writing: a case study with Iraqi EFL learners. *Teaching English with Technology*, 19(1), 36-55.
- Rababah, L. M., Al-Shboul, O. K., & Banikalef, A. E. A. (2023). Examination of the use of feedback in EFL writing instruction: A case study of Jordan. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(1), 263-268.
- Rabadi, R. I., & Rabadi, A. D. (2020). Do medical students experience writing anxiety while learning English as a foreign language? *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 883-893.
- Ranalli, J. (2021). L2 student engagement with automated feedback on writing: Potential for learning and issues of trust. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 52, 100816.
- Sam, R. (2024). Factors cause students low English language learning: A case study in the National University of Laos. Available at SSRN 4850858.
- Shariq, M. (2025). Investigating Female Students Use of Discourse Markers in Writing: A Linguistic Study at an EFL Context. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 7(1), 56-69.
- Sulaiman, R., & Muhajir, M. (2019). The difficulties of writing scientific work for English education students. *Journal of English Education*, 4(1), 54-60.
- Tuyet, N. T. (2020). Can I teach these students? A case study of Vietnamese teachers' self-efficacy about teaching English as a foreign language. *Arab World English Journal*, March.
- Wu, S., Pang, M., & Sun, X. (2025). Comparing secondary school students' foreign language anxiety and academic achievement in face-to-face and online settings: a case study in China. *Asia pacific journal of education*, 1-18.
- Zaharuddin, A. M., Suparia, F. A., & Khamarudin, F. (2023). The correlation between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate among students of Arabic As a foreign language. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(4), 735-754.
- Zibin, A., & Altakhaineh, A. R. M. (2019). The effect of blended learning on the development of clause combining as an aspect of the acquisition of written discourse by Jordanian learners of English as a foreign language. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 35(2), 256-267.