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БІРІНШІ ТІЛДІҢ АКАДЕМИЯЛЫҚ ЖАЗУ ДАҒДЫЛАРЫНА ЫҚПАЛЫ: SDU УНИВЕРСИТЕТІНІҢ «ЕКІ ШЕТ ТІЛ» МАМАНДЫҒЫНЫҢ ЖОҒАРЫ КУРС СТУДЕНТТЕРІ БОЙЫНША ЗЕРТТЕУ

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РОЛЬ РОДНОГО ЯЗЫКА В ФОРМИРОВАНИИ НАВЫКОВ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОГО ПИСЬМА: КЕЙС-СТАДИ СТУДЕНТОВ СТАРШИХ КУРСОВ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТИ «ДВА ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКА» УНИВЕРСИТЕТА SDU

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THE ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGE IN SHAPING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS: A CASE STUDY OF SENIOR TFL STUDENTS AT SDU UNIVERSITY

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Аңдатпа

Бұл сапалық жағдайлық зерттеу SDU университетіндегі «Шетел тілдерін оқыту» мамандығының жоғары курс студенттерінің академиялық жазу дағдыларына бірінші тілдің әсерін қарастырады. Жоғары білім берудің барлық салаларында ағылшын тіліндегі академиялық сауаттылыққа қойылатын талаптардың артуына байланысты, студенттердің жазбаша тәжірибесіне бірінші тілдің ықпалын зерттеу маңызды болып табылады. Зерттеу барысында «Академиялық жазу» пәнінде оқитын төрт жоғары курс студентімен жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбат жүргізіліп, олардың жазбаша жұмыстары талданды. Бірінші тіл трансферін көрсететін тұрақты лингвистикалық және риторикалық ерекшеліктерді анықтау үшін тақырыптық талдау қолданылды. Нәтижелер студенттердің сөйлем құрылымы, байланыс құралдарын қолдануы, сөз таңдау ерекшеліктері және идеяларды ұйымдастыруы олардың ана тілінің әсерінде болғанын көрсетті. Студенттер ағылшын тіліндегі академиялық жазу талаптарын сақтауда қиындықтарға тап болатынын атап өтті, сонымен қатар өзара тексеру, редакциялау және тілдік қолдау бағдарламаларын пайдалану сияқты өтемдік стратегияларды қолданатынын айтты. Зерттеу көптілді студенттерге қолдау көрсету мақсатында академиялық жазуды оқытуда салыстырмалы тілдік сананы енгізудің маңыздылығын көрсетеді.

Аннотация

Данное качественное кейс-стади изучает влияние родного языка на академические навыки письма студентов старших курсов специальности «Два иностранных языка» Университета SDU. В связи с растущими требованиями к академической грамотности на английском языке во всех областях высшего образования

важно изучить влияние родного языка на письменную практику студентов. Четыре студента старших курсов, обучающиеся по курсу «Академическое письмо», были опрошены с помощью полуструктурированных вопросов, и их письменные задания были выполнены для анализа. Тематический анализ был применен для выявления устойчивых лингвистических и риторических особенностей, указывающих на перенос родного языка. Результаты показали, что структура предложений, средства связности, выбор слов и общая организация идей студентов находились под влиянием их родного языка. Студенты отметили трудности в соблюдении норм академического письма на английском языке, а также упомянули использование компенсаторных механизмов, таких как взаимная проверка, редактирование и программы языковой поддержки. Исследование подчеркивает важность интеграции контрастивной осведомленности в обучение академическому письму для более эффективной поддержки многоязычных студентов.

Annotation

This qualitative case study investigates the effect of the first language (L1) on senior Teaching Foreign Languages students' academic writing ability at SDU University. With demands for English academic literacy growing across all areas of higher education, it is worth exploring the effect of L1 on written practice among students. Four senior students who were enrolled in one Academic Writing course were interviewed through semi-structured questions, and written tasks were completed for analysis. The thematic analysis was applied to establish regular linguistic and rhetorical features that signpost L1 transfer. The findings indicate that sentence structure, coherence devices, choice of words, and overall organization of ideas of the students were influenced by their native language. The students reported difficulties in adhering to English academic writing conventions, but also made comments regarding the use of compensatory mechanisms such as peer review, editing, and language support software. Integration of contrastive awareness with academic writing instruction is highlighted by the study for greater support for multilingual students.

Түйінді сөздер: академиялық жазу, қиындықтар, жоғары курс студенттері, бірінші тіл.

Ключевые слова: академическое письмо, трудности, студенты старших курсов, родной язык.

Keywords: academic writing, challenges, senior students, first language.

Introduction

Academic writing is one of the essential skills that are demanded of students learning at tertiary levels, particularly those pursuing a degree in Teaching Foreign Languages (TFL). It is the cornerstone of academic discourse, critical thinking, and professional development. Academic writing, however, is more demanding for non-native speakers of English. Among numerous factors influencing students' academic writing is their L1, which has been established as one of the major factors influencing academic writing. The study investigates the extent to which L1 influence constitutes a major setback to the writing proficiency of upper-level TFL senior-year students at SDU University. Specifically, it attempts to investigate the extent to which the L1 transfer phenomenon and structural disparities between the two languages impact the learners' writing as well.

Understanding how L1 influences written academic work is important for both instructors and students. English academic writing has salient differences from most other languages in terms of structure, argumentation, and stylistic conventions. Differences frequently cause students' native linguistic pattern interference, generating syntactic errors, coherence issues, and erroneous rhetorical schemata. Through examining these problems, the current research seeks to further understand the particular problems of TFL students at SDU University. The findings will assist instructors in creating more effective pedagogical methods that address these problems, which will eventually lead to an improvement in the students' academic writing and their ability to use English for effective communication. As Kaplan (1966) describes, «There is a rhetorical pattern for each language, and these patterns affect how people organize their writing».

Moreover, this research is also significant in the general field of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. This research aligns with previous research about language transfer and problems related to academic writing, but is more localized as it focuses on students. Such specificity allows for the creation of specific recommendations that can directly apply to the institution's curriculum. Additionally, the findings gained through this research can be used to

inform curriculum designers on measures to help improve the situation of students who face L1-related writing challenges.

The primary aim of this study is to examine the degree to which the first language (L1) influences academic writing among senior-year Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TFL) students at SDU University and to identify the particular linguistic challenges they face. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways can L1 influence academic writing proficiency?
2. How can students overcome these challenges?

In this study, meaningful data will be generated that can inform and assist in the development of effective solutions to improve teaching practices in academic writing. The findings of this research will add to the existing body of knowledge, thereby facilitating significant development in the field of Teaching Foreign Languages (TFL) in addition to providing beneficial knowledge for TFL students, language instructors, curriculum developers, and researchers working in the field of second language writing.

Literature Review

Academic writing is one of the essential skills required for success in higher education, but it creates significant challenges for second or foreign language learners. This study discusses the influence of students' first language (L1) on their academic writing development, as well as challenges related to the analysis of writing topics, linguistic and literacy backgrounds, and psychological barriers. Each of these serves to underscore the multifaceted manner in which previous linguistic and academic experience affects students' capacities to satisfy the requirements of second language academic writing.

Difficulty in Analyzing Writing Topics

One of the foundational challenges learners face in developing academic writing skills is the ability to fully comprehend and analyze writing prompts. This challenge is not merely linguistic but deeply connected to prior educational experiences, literacy practices in the first language (L1), and unfamiliarity with academic genres in the target language. As Pineteh (2014) emphasizes, academic writing difficulties often stem from «students' linguistic and general literacy backgrounds, their attitudes toward academic writing, and the privileging of middle-class literacy practices in higher education» (p. 13). This observation highlights how the gap between prior education and new academic expectations can lead to misunderstandings when students engage with writing tasks. This issue is exacerbated when students come from educational systems where writing is treated primarily as a means of factual reproduction rather than critical inquiry and argumentation (Mumtaz, 2021). As Mumtaz (2021) explains, students in such contexts «often approach academic writing tasks as if they were closed-ended exam questions requiring factual recall rather than tasks that require analysis, synthesis, and argument development» (p. 98). The consequence is that students write around the topic rather than engaging with its deeper analytical requirements. A related finding comes from Sajjad et al. (2021), who argue that students' struggles with writing topics are directly linked to their unfamiliarity with academic genres, leaving them uncertain about how to approach open-ended prompts. This genre unfamiliarity combines with rhetorical differences between the students' first language and the target academic discourse, contributing to misinterpretation of tasks and poorly structured responses (Mansour, 2021, p. 61).

The rhetorical expectations embedded in academic writing are culturally specific, and students educated in systems where narrative or descriptive writing is dominant may lack exposure to the analytical and evaluative modes required in academic contexts (Ankawi, 2015, p. 14). When these students write, they often rely on rhetorical strategies from their L1, which may not align with the linear, explicitly argumentative structure expected in academic English. This leads to a broader challenge where language, culture, and academic expectations converge, creating both linguistic and cognitive barriers to effective academic writing.

Linguistic and Literacy Backgrounds

The influence of students' first language and literacy backgrounds on their academic writing has been extensively documented. First language linguistic transfer—the tendency to apply grammatical and rhetorical structures from L1 into the second language—shapes not only surface-level errors but also deeper textual organization and coherence (Mustafa, Arbab, & El Sayed, 2022). Mustafa et al. (2022) found that students often «compose their ideas first in their mother tongue, translating them into English later, resulting in awkward sentence structures and unnatural cohesion» (p. 44). This transfer is not limited to sentence-level grammar; it extends into broader rhetorical patterns. As Mansour (2021) notes, students tend to «import rhetorical strategies from their first language, resulting in texts that lack the directness, conciseness, and explicit argumentation expected in academic writing in English» (p. 60). This suggests that academic writing difficulties are not simply linguistic – they are closely tied to the culturally embedded ways students are taught to organize and express ideas in their first language. Ankawi (2015) adds that students whose first language follows significantly different structural rules – such as in tense formation, article usage, or subject-verb agreement – are particularly vulnerable to persistent grammatical errors (p. 57). This grammatical insecurity, combined with unfamiliar rhetorical norms, creates what is known as double transfer, where both content organization and surface-level language suffer from first-language interference.

The role of academic literacy backgrounds also deserves attention. Pineteh (2014) highlights that students from educational systems where reading and writing were not deeply embedded in the curriculum often enter university with limited exposure to academic texts and lack familiarity with citation, paraphrasing, and argument development (p. 14). In such cases, students' prior experience frames writing as a product-oriented task, where the primary goal is linguistic correctness rather than idea development or argument construction. Mumtaz (2021) reinforces this point, explaining that limited reading practices in the target language restrict students' ability to internalize the academic conventions required at university (p. 100). This is critical because academic reading and academic writing are mutually reinforcing – weak reading habits directly inhibit the development of strong academic writing skills (AlMarwani, 2020, p. 116). Sajjad et al. (2021) further explain that students from writing cultures dominated by rote learning enter university unprepared for the interpretive, synthesizing, and evaluative demands of academic writing (p. 1761). Without these skills, students struggle not only with producing texts but also with understanding how knowledge is constructed within academic discourse. This compounds their difficulty with paraphrasing and integrating sources, leading to either unintentional plagiarism or overly simplistic source use (Mumtaz, 2021, p. 102).

Psychological Barriers

In addition to cognitive and linguistic factors, psychological barriers – often rooted in first language influence – exert a profound impact on students' academic writing performance. Writing anxiety is also extremely prevalent in students writing in a second language (AlMarwani, 2020). Students have felt «intimidated by writing tasks because they feared making linguistic errors, which resulted in avoidance and procrastination» (p. 118), as stated by AlMarwani (2020). This kind of anxiety is strongly associated with reduced self-efficacy in academic writing, particularly for students who had few chances to practice extended writing in their prior education (Mansour, 2021, p. 88). This stress is added to by academic alienation – a feeling that academic writing involves having to assume another's voice and locate oneself in an academic discourse that is not one's own (Mansour, 2021, p. 93). Students tend to experience academic writing not as a process of finding and creating ideas, but as a trial of one's skill to replicate a specific, culturally embedded style (Pineteh, 2014, p. 15). Furthermore, feedback practices also help increase this stress. When students receive feedback that touches only on surface-level grammar, rather than feedback that pushes the development of argument and structure, they internalize the notion that good writing equals grammatically flawless writing (Mumtaz, 2021, p. 102). This reinforces a tendency to write safe, formulaic responses rather than engaging with more complex and nuanced ideas. Furthermore,

AlMarwani (2020) points out that students who have experienced educational settings characterized by teacher-centered instruction – where correctness was valued over creativity – find it difficult to achieve a sense of academic ownership in their writing (p. 117). Lacking faith in their capacity to engage with academic discourse, they fall back on passive, imitative writing, thereby reinforcing their alienation and anxiety.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employs qualitative case study research, which is optimally suitable to explore the complexity of foreign language acquisition and academic writing skill development in a specific learning context. The case study nature of this research enables scrutiny of the influence of first language backgrounds on advanced-level TFL (Teaching Foreign Languages) students' academic writing competence. Qualitative design was used to identify students' subjective experiences, perceptions, and writing styles, particularly generating rich, textured data that would not be possible through quantitative means alone. Having a small purposive sample allows the researcher to explore the intricacies of L1 transfer, language interference, and writing strategies in a genuine academic context.

Participants and Instrumentation

The study was conducted in an SDU university in Kazakhstan with fourth-year students of Teaching Foreign Languages. Purposive sampling was employed in the choice of participants to make sure they had information and experiences on the research issue. The sample included four participants – three females and one male – who have studied an Academic Writing course and demonstrated various levels of competence in the English language. All of the participants received their secondary school education in non-English-medium schools, where their L1 was at the forefront of their academic literacy development. This screening requirement was established to ensure that the participants would be capable of reflecting meaningfully on how their L1 impacted English academic writing.

To collect data instrument were used:

1. Semi-structured interview, designed to encourage open-ended responses while maintaining a consistent thematic structure across participants.

Data Collection Process

Semi-structured one-to-one interviews were held with all the participants offline. The interviews took between 10 and 15 minutes and were directed by a set of nine open-ended questions that were meant to address students' attitudes towards academic writing, students' attitudes towards L1 interference, and students' strategies to enhance their writing ability in English. Further probing questions were added as necessary to try to solicit more elaborate responses. All interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission and then transcribed verbatim for analysis. The interviews were anonymous to maintain the participants' privacy.

Reliability

To enhance reliability, all interview sessions were conducted in the same format, using the same guiding questions and recording tools. Manual transcription was double-checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy. Coding of data followed an established framework, and themes were cross-verified with a peer researcher to avoid bias.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-step model by Braun and Clarke (2022):

1. Familiarization with the data – Reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and writing samples.
2. Generating initial codes – Identifying keywords, phrases, and patterns relevant to L1 influence.
3. Searching for themes – Grouping codes into broader categories such as «transfer of syntactic structures», «lexical influence», and «metalinguistic awareness».

4. Reviewing themes – Comparing themes across data sources for consistency and relevance.
5. Defining and naming themes – Refining and labeling themes to reflect participants' experiences accurately.
6. Producing the report – Synthesizing themes into a narrative that addresses the research questions.

This approach allowed the researcher to explore how each participant navigated the challenges of writing in English and the extent to which their first language influenced structure, vocabulary, and rhetorical style.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all the participants before engaging them in the study. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were assured to all the participants. Pseudonyms were applied while reporting to maintain confidentiality. Data gathered was stored and utilized only for academic purposes. Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Findings

In this study, Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-step thematic analysis framework was used to analyze the qualitative data collected from four senior TFL major students. This was used because it is a flexible, rigorous, and systematic approach that enables researchers to discover, analyze, and report patterns within a qualitative dataset and to be close to participants' lived experiences. Because of the exploratory nature of the research being conducted here, planning to ask questions of the challenges and coping strategies encountered by students in academic writing, Braun and Clarke's process was well-suited. It offered a rigorous but flexible framework within which to interpret rich narrative data close to the learners' voices. Thematic analysis permitted in-depth working with each participant's narrative, and from this, six superordinate themes emerged that represent both patterning and difference in students' experiences. These are:

1. Cross-linguistic Influence on Sentence Structure
2. Word-for-Word Translation and Idiomatic Misuse
3. Lexical Constraints and Formality in Academic Discourse
4. The Importance of Feedback in Development
5. Strategies for Writing and Thinking in English
6. Emotional Responses and Learner Motivation.

Each of the themes is demonstrated through the voices of Participants 1 to 4, revealing the intricate interplay between linguistic background, writing development, and affective investment. This method of analysis not only enabled the researcher to search for patterns of recurrence throughout the data but also retained each participant's voice in its uniqueness, rendering it extremely well-suited to a study that was concerned with personal and educational change.

Theme 1: Cross-linguistic Influence on Sentence Structure

All participants noted how their native language (L1) significantly shaped their early English writing patterns. Their tendency to transfer sentence structures from Kazakh or Russian to English resulted in grammatical errors and awkward phrasing. Participants indicated that their sentence construction in English was initially modeled after their native language patterns, which often led to awkward or incorrect structures.

Participant 1 explained,

«...structure of sentences in English is different from the structure of sentences in Kazakh... In Kazakh we use verbs at the end of the sentence... At first, it was difficult to get used to this rule».

Participant 3 recalled a moment when this caused noticeable confusion:

«Once, I wrote: 'He his book read,' which reflects Kazakh word order. My teacher circled it in red and said, 'Think in English, not in Kazakh!' That moment stuck with me».

Participant 4, whose native language is Russian, also struggled with sentence order:

«...in English, I once wrote: 'To school I went yesterday' – but my teacher told me it sounded

old-fashioned or poetic. In normal English, it should be ‘I went to school yesterday’»

These examples reflect the syntactic interferences from L1, which required unlearning and conscious restructuring of thoughts in English.

Theme 2: Word-for-Word Translation and Idiomatic Misuse

Participants admitted that literal translation from their native languages led to confusion, especially when using idioms or culturally bound expressions. Also, they described moments when idioms or everyday expressions from L1 were used inappropriately in English academic settings.

Participant 2 recounted,

«I once translated a Kazakh expression literally in an English presentation – I said ‘This idea doesn’t sit in my head’ instead of ‘I can’t grasp this idea.’ My classmates were confused».

Participant 3 shared a similar experience:

«I once wrote ‘It burned my liver’ in an essay – which in Kazakh means ‘I was very upset.’ But in English, it makes no sense».

Participant 4 highlighted how Russian idioms influenced his vocabulary:

«... I wrote: ‘This topic is very actual for today,’ which again came from Russian influence. My teacher corrected me and said: ‘In English, say relevant or timely’».

This theme shows how direct translations can result in semantic errors that hinder comprehension. The participants gradually learned that English expressions often require a different conceptual framing.

Theme 3: Lexical Limitations and Informality in Academic Tone

Another key theme that emerged was students’ struggle with word choice and formal tone. Many initially used overly simple, vague, or informal vocabulary in academic writing. Their essays contained repetition, which instructors corrected by introducing more academic phrasing.

Participant 1 mentioned,

«...my teachers pointed out that my writing sounded unnatural, and I used abbreviated words. Now I am working on how to fix those problems».

Participant 2 described feedback she received:

«I once wrote: ‘This topic is kinda important because it has a lot of things to discuss.’ My professor underlined it and said, ‘This is too informal. Try: This topic is of particular significance due to its broad implications’».

Participant 3 noted that he frequently used contractions:

«I often used abbreviations like ‘doesn’t’ and ‘can’t’ in formal essays... I now use full forms like ‘does not’ and ‘cannot’».

Participant 4 admitted to vagueness in his earlier writing:

«...I used to write sentences like: ‘People must do something good and make better,’ which was too vague. Now I try to be more specific».

These reflections reveal a developmental trajectory from informal, imprecise language toward more academic, polished writing styles.

Theme 4: The Role of Feedback in Growth

All participants cited instructor feedback as a turning point in their academic writing progress. Constructive criticism helped them recognize weaknesses and guided them toward clearer, more effective expression.

Participant 2 remembered being corrected for repetition:

«I used the phrase ‘a big problem’ too many times. The instructor suggested using synonyms like ‘a significant issue’ or ‘a pressing matter.’ That helped me realize how limited my vocabulary was».

Participant 3 described a breakthrough:

«I submitted an essay with no clear structure... My instructor showed me how to use topic sentences, linking phrases... That changed the way I approached writing entirely».

Participant 4 reflected on his transformation:

«I wrote everything in one long paragraph... My professor explained how to expand ideas and use formal transitions. That was one of my first real breakthroughs».

Feedback not only corrected technical issues but also built confidence and awareness, marking critical moments of learner development.

Theme 5: Strategies to Think and Write Directly in English

Initially, all participants translated from their L1 to English during writing. However, as they progressed, they adopted strategies to think directly in English, which enhanced fluency and reduced errors.

Participant 1 stated,

«At first time, yes, I did [translate]. But now I try to think directly in English. It makes the process faster and makes work easier».

Participant 2 created a habit to reinforce this mindset:

«I started a voice diary in English. Every night, I recorded a 2-minute audio reflection... It helped me speak more fluently and confidently».

Participant 3 explained,

«I used to translate word by word... Now I practice thinking in English while doing daily activities like cooking or walking».

Participant 4 shared a multi-language mental process:

«I used to mix all three languages in my head — Russian for thinking, Kazakh from school, and English for writing. I started writing short journal entries in English... Over time, that helped me gain more fluency».

Theme 6: Emotional Responses and Learner Motivation

Participants described emotional challenges such as fear, embarrassment, and self-doubt, but they also shared motivational strategies that helped them persist and grow.

Participant 1 encouraged:

«Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Be more confident in yourself and remember — not everything works out on the first try».

Participant 2 described feeling embarrassed during a speaking exam:

«I said something like 'My friends, me, together go walking.' The grammar was incorrect... but moments like that helped me understand how important it is to think in English».

Participant 4 reflected on self-doubt:

«I often hesitate, thinking 'What if this doesn't sound natural?' That fear followed me into English».

Despite emotional setbacks, all participants demonstrated resilience. Their stories show that emotional awareness and motivation play essential roles in developing academic writing competence.

Discussion

The findings of the research offer a valuable contribution to understanding the upper-level TFL students' experience of academic writing, particularly how linguistic background, learning strategy, and emotions impact their development as writers. The findings supported that cross-linguistic influence was one of the most significant factors in determining students' approach to academic writing in English. The students all reported being affected by the syntactic and semantic makeup of their native languages, namely Kazakh and Russian, on word choice, as well as on sentence structure. The impact was most apparent on the propensity to transfer ideas directly from L1 to English, with high incidences of grammatical, sentence structure, or inappropriate tone blunders. Students were similarly struggling with employing academic words and idiomatic language, opting for familiar L1 counterparts that were less appropriate by connotation to academic English. Informality of writing was similarly prevalent, especially where students tried to communicate sophisticated thoughts by using limited words. This necessitates greater teaching emphasis on word development as well as genre-appropriate conventions within academic composition classes.

Despite these challenges, students proved to possess a solid adaptive capacity. Consistent across all their comments was the importance of instructor feedback. Most participants mentioned extensive and frequent feedback as the primary improvement factor. In addition to flagging up individual language difficulties on the basis of L1 influence, feedback caused them to adapt more appropriate academic styles. This underlines the role of feedback as a formative tool, which allows learners to acquire metalinguistic awareness as well as confidence in expression through their writing. The other major development noticed by the learners was the subtle transition from writing texts in their home language and then translating them into English to directly writing English. This mental transition practically eliminated translation and resulted in smoother, more logical, and more natural writing. Such a transition is a sign of greater internalization of the target language and a sign of linguistic maturity on the part of high-proficiency learners.

In addition to linguistic approaches, students also highlighted the emotional dimension of learning how to write. Frustration, fear, and apprehension characterized them at the beginning of their learning process, but were later turned into autonomous motivation and grit by them. Pride of accomplishment was reflected by most participants as they perceived obstacles as a stimulus for change rather than as hindrances. This signifies the place of emotional intelligence and control in second language academic writing development, especially in high-stakes learning environments. Overall, the results respond to the second language academic writing development process. Regardless of the overwhelming influence of L1, it is possible for students to overcome it through cognitive restructuring, feedback, strategic learning, and effort on their part. These results can certainly help teachers create enhanced instructional strategies to be utilized by multilingual students.

Limitation

Even as this research provides valuable information about upper-level TFL students' writing experiences, it is crucial to admit the presence of certain inherent limitations at the beginning. The research was originally based only on qualitative data from interviews, which, while detailed, might not necessarily represent the participants' true writings. Self-reported experience is always subject to memory, perception, as well as the desire to present oneself in a positive light. In addition, the sample was limited to only four participants, which does not sufficiently reflect the wide range of experiences of Teaching Foreign Languages (TFL) students with different linguistic, educational, or geographical backgrounds. Therefore, the findings might not be generalizable to all multilingual learners. Another limitation relates to the lack of participants' academic writing samples. Having access to real essays or written assignments would have allowed a deeper exploration of how L1 influences occur within real academic texts. Their inclusion would have helped in the triangulation of interview data and allowed a more objective assessment of students' writing development and issues.

Conclusion

The study investigated senior students' experiences of academic writing at TFL and discovered the intricate relationship among language background, writing practice, and learner development. Thematic analysis identified deep-seated problems characteristic of cross-linguistic interference, literal translation from L1, limited academic vocabulary, and informal written discourse. Despite such difficulties, the students improved through teacher feedback, independent revisions, and a steady progression of their capacity for English thinking. Their stories also emphasized the affective dimension of learning, in which motivation and confidence were central to the overcoming of writing anxiety. The results indicate that the construction of academic writing is a complex process with both linguistic and cognitive growth. Teaching that is targeted not only at grammar and composition but at English-based thought creation and academic voice creation is the key. Possible future research can be strengthened by including interviews as part of a corpus of samples of students' academic writing. This extension will enable researchers to contrast points of difficulty reported with real written production, thereby enabling trends to be identified more

precisely in terms of L1 influence, lexis development, and writing mode. This framework can be more revealing about multilingual students' acquisition of knowledge about conventions of academic writing and how focused intervention can lead to their further development.

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