The Impact of Interfering Mother Tongue in EFL classes on Kurdish learners at university level

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Abstract

This research examines the effects of mother-tongue interference on Kurdish university-level students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. This study aims to investigate the correlation between EFL proficiency, mother tongue language, and learner outcomes. The research includes 250 students enrolled in the English department at Akre College, Duhok University, who are pursuing advanced academic degrees. The study utilized a quantitative research design and collected data through a questionnaire to assess language proficiency, mother tongue interference, and learner outcomes. The study employed SPSS for conducting correlational and regression analyses. The study indicates notable associations among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) proficiency, native language, and student achievements.　This study has implications for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. It highlights the impact of mother-tongue interference and emphasizes the importance of promoting English proficiency as a foreign language. Educators can enhance the English language learning outcomes of Kurdish university students by utilizing effective teaching strategies, mitigating mother tongue interference, fostering balanced bilingualism, and establishing a supportive learning environment. Subsequent studies ought to investigate these associations in broader and more heterogeneous populations, employing a longitudinal approach and objective gauges of language proficiency to augment our comprehension in this domain.

Keywords: Interfering mother tongue, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Kurdish learners, Language proficiency.

Introduction

Globalization has facilitated the exchange of ideas, culture, and communication, particularly with the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, which is based on technology, IT, and AI (Li, 2022). There has been significant migration of individuals from various regions for employment, financial gain, or educational purposes. The presence of foreign students in university classrooms has increased significantly due to technological advancements, as noted by Ali (2021). Top universities such as Harvard and Ivy League institutions, as well as those in London, attract a significant number of international students. This trend has resulted in the dispersion of individuals across the globe. Numerous students come to China for educational purposes, to obtain scholarships due to friendly government relations with their home countries, to compare education quality, and to contribute to economic development and cooperation (Chen, 2018).

Many prestigious American universities, including Harvard, Yale, Columbia, the University of California, and UC Berkeley, have a significant number of international students in their classes. MIT, in particular, has a high number of students from South Asia, specifically Pakistan and India. This trend has led to increased competition and changed market dynamics as foreign students seek education in various regions. (Kondakci, 2018) International students commonly experience culture shock when transitioning from their home countries. Many South and East Asian students who come from collectivistic societies may feel overwhelmed by the individualistic culture prevalent in the western world, as per Hofstede's

cultural dimensions. Western societies exhibit a tendency towards openness and flexibility, which is reflected in their languages, in contrast to the prevalent conservatism observed in most other societies.

Eastern languages such as Urdu, Kurdish, Korean, Japanese, and Hindi place great emphasis on honorifics when addressing both elders and younger individuals. In contrast, the English language prioritizes flexibility and ease of communication, which can sometimes be perceived as disrespectful in certain cultures. In Korean culture, addressing someone as "you" is deemed impolite. Instead, individuals are expected to use the person's title or position in an organization and employ appropriate honorifics. However, this strict adherence to formality may limit creativity and pose obstacles. (Ahn, 2020).

English is widely recognised as the global language due to its prevalence across various languages. The majority of speakers use English as a foreign language. Various language proficiency exams, such as IELTS and English-speaking tests, are mandatory for university admission. English is taught as a foreign language worldwide, which can pose challenges for students accustomed to their native language and may impede their ability to acquire a new language at a later stage in life. Learning a new language is commonly preferred during the school years, but it is imperative for higher education students to acquire English as an EFL. State colleges in Kurdish-speaking regions offer free education, leading to a significant rise in the number of Kurdish speakers seeking to acquire proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL). Research indicates that females tend to exhibit a more favorable attitude towards learning English as a foreign language compared to males (Akdamar, 2020).

Kurdish is an Iranian language spoken by millions of Kurds, both native to and residing in the geo-cultural region of Kurdistan. Kurds are an ethnic group that is primarily located in the Middle East and Asia. The regions encompass certain portions of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurdish language comprises a set of dialects. The Kurdish family comprises three main dialects: Northern Kurdish (Kurmanji), Central Kurdish (Sorani), and Southern Kurdish (Xwarîn). The Kurdish language has three distinct dialects that have evolved differently across various regions due to historical differences, alphabet development, and writing systems (Samareh, 2019).

Kurdish is the official language of Iraqi Kurdistan. Although Kurdish has Indo-European origins, it has a distinct alphabet that utilizes the Latin Script and incorporates diacritic marks to represent non-English sounds. This may affect Kurdish speakers' acquisition of English as a second language. Khalil (2018) found notable dissimilarities in the functions and meanings of prepositions in Kurdish and English, despite some similarities.

The language is extensive. It possesses a distinct phonological system that is unfamiliar to English-speaking individuals. The Kurdish language exhibits a unique internal structure of words and their constituent parts, distinguishing it from other languages. The evolution of the Kurdish language encompasses the development of words and their interrelationships within the language. This term denotes the study of the structure and formation of words. The Kurdish language exhibits distinctive syntax and lexicon, in addition to phonology and morphology, setting it apart from other languages spoken in the Middle East region (Karim, 2019). The language analysis emphasizes the occurrence and arrangement of lexical items in Kurdish, referring to the vocabulary comprising the language (Hamadamin, 2020). Non-native learners of Kurdish face difficulties due to its unique prepositions, linguistic elements, dialects, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. They encounter difficulties in mastering the accurate pronunciation of the language's words, as noted by Gorani (2020).

The Aim of the Study

The purpose of this research, titled "The Impact of Interfering Mother Tongue in EFL Classes on Kurdish Learners at the University Level," is to examine the influence of the mother tongue on university-level Kurdish EFL students. The purpose of this research is to better understand how the trainees' native Kurdish language affects their English language skills.

Research Problem

Kurdish students at the university level face difficulties learning English because of interference from their mother tongue, despite the growing emphasis on English language competency in Kurdish educational institutions. The challenge for researchers is to decipher how interference phenomena manifest themselves in the language of Kurdish learners and how they affect their progress in learning English. The following is a summary of the study's research problem, which is titled "The Effects of Mother Tongue Interference in English as a Foreign Language Classes on Kurdish Students at the University Level."

The following are subproblems that can be found inside this research problem:

The first step in dealing with interference is recognizing it; in other words, what are the unique linguistic characteristics and interference patterns brought about by the Kurdish language's impact on English language acquisition? How do these factors affect students' ability to learn English language fundamentals, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation? What linguistic difficulties do Kurdish students of English confront as a result of intrusion from their mother tongue? What effects do these difficulties have on their ability to understand and use the English language?

Implications for Educators What pedagogical tactics and approaches can help Kurdish EFL students overcome the challenges posed by mother-tongue interference? How can teachers improve the language learning process by including strategies like awareness-raising activities, language transfer exercises, and focused instruction?

Moreover, from the viewpoint of the student: How do Kurdish students feel about the use of their native language in English as a foreign language (EFL) class? What effects does know about interference have on their drive, self-assurance, and learning?

esearch Objectives

The study seeks to examine the effects of mother-tongue interference on Kurdish learners in university-level EFL classes:

- The objective of this study is to analyze the linguistic features and patterns of interference that arise from the influence of the Kurdish language on the English language learning of Kurdish learners at the university level.

- The objective of this study is to offer guidance and suggestions to EFL instructors, curriculum developers, and policymakers who are responsible for teaching English to Kurdish students at the university level. The purpose is to enhance teaching methods and promote language acquisition for this particular group of learners.

- This study aims to evaluate the impact of mother-tongue interference on the language proficiency of Kurdish learners in English by analyzing the linguistic challenges they encounter in comprehension and production.

- The aim of this study is to perform an error analysis of English language usage by Kurdish learners. The study will identify common errors and determine the influence of their mother tongue on these errors, specifically in the areas of syntax, semantics, and phonology.

- This study aims to examine the pedagogical implications of mother-tongue interference in EFL classes for Kurdish learners. It also seeks to suggest effective teaching strategies and approaches that can alleviate the adverse effects of interference on their English language acquisition process.

- The study aims to explore the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of Kurdish learners regarding their mother tongue interference in EFL classes. Additionally, it seeks to analyze the impact of their awareness of interference on their motivation, self-confidence, and overall learning experience.

Literature review

EFL Classes at University Level

English language learning is a common requirement or course offering in many universities for students studying it as a foreign language. Foundation-level courses are a requirement in Australian universities, particularly for students who need to improve their English pronunciation and communication skills. There has been an increase in international student mobility for educational purposes, leading to a growth in the number of students studying English as a second language. This trend has been observed over the past decade (Macaro, E. C., 2018). The use of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has become prevalent, leading to non-English-speaking teachers instructing in English. Despite this, universities worldwide continue to prioritize English as the language of instruction (Macaro, 2018). E-learning has become increasingly popular as a means of providing education to students. It has enabled students to pursue international careers and has also increased the global visibility of universities. Students can advance their careers (Zhou, 2022). English as a Medium of Instruction facilitates students' fluency development, and universities can aid in fostering students' English language proficiency (Aizawa, 2020; Rose, 2019).

English is widely taught worldwide as a second or foreign language. It serves as a common medium for communication and knowledge exchange. Additionally, English as a medium of instruction facilitates the teaching of the language for basic communication purposes. English as a medium of instruction enables students to standardize their learning approach. Using a single language, such as English, for instruction is preferable to using multiple languages, as learning multiple languages can be challenging. Teaching or learning English as a foreign language is a complex task. Inefficient and unproductive strategies are observed in Pakistani universities for academic development and language learning. Students are intrinsically motivated to learn English or other languages without the need for scholarships or financial support (Hussain, 2020). There are several reasons for this. It is noteworthy that many underdeveloped countries have indigenous and official languages that are not English. Additionally, indigenous individuals tend to use their native language instead of English to convey information. The insufficient results of strategies may be due to the teacher's insufficient knowledge of the language and their communication with other students (Panhwar, 2018).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) poses a challenge for students in various countries due to its non-native status for the majority of the world's population. Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at the university level can be challenging. The teaching of this subject varies across countries and is influenced by cultural factors. At a fundamental behavioural level, students exhibit disengagement from language while attempting to participate to a certain degree (Panhwar B. A., 2020). University students tend to exhibit greater flexibility and maturity but may experience a decline in their language learning and memory retention abilities. According to Izadpanah (2022), a child's mind is considered a blank slate in psychology, allowing them to learn multiple languages at a young age. However, as individuals mature, they absorb the language and customs of their society, which can either hinder or enhance their intelligence. This can have a direct impact on their ability to learn English as a foreign language at the university level. English is highly valued in many societies due to their Xenocentric culture. For instance, in Pakistan, individuals who speak English are considered intelligent and superior to some extent. Therefore, it is crucial for students to learn English as a second language. In contrast, in Chinese cultures and other East Asian countries, people prefer their native language. However, when students travel to foreign countries, they must learn English as a foreign language to communicate effectively and understand lectures.

Key differences between Kurdish and English Language

Kurdish is dated to be a very old language spoken by almost 45 million people all over the world which includes regions like Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Kurdish roots are based on Indo-Iranian and Indo-European languages and that is where similarities between both languages come in. It is known that even though Kurdish and English have key differences among them but still it is known to have many similarities which allow Kurdish people to learn the English language in an easy way and in a quick manner (Hussein, 2019).

Grammar

Language is a worldwide means of communication characterized by distinct symbols that convey specific meanings. When combined, symbols form words with attached meanings. These words, when turned into phrases, take on a distinct meaning. Each language has a specific sentence structure that must be followed for the sentence to make sense. Deviating from this structure will result in an unacceptable sentence due to a disrupted structure. This may result in grammatical errors. In recent times, many nations have adopted innovative and scientific methods to facilitate English language learning for their citizens (Nithyanantham, 2019).

It is essential for language learners to acquire knowledge of typology and grammatical structure to effectively communicate through writing and speaking. Grammar encompasses sentence structure, typology, and word placement. The language structure encompasses tenses, word sequencing, and grammar. Research suggests that individuals may use various methods to learn a language, but there is no singular universal path for understanding its grammar. Therefore, each person may have their own approach to language learning. (Muhammed, 2018).

English grammar encompasses various elements, such as sentence structure and grammatical errors, including tenses. The quality of grammar usage can influence language and its perception. Digital platforms exist to check and suggest corrections for grammatical errors (Xu, 2018). A strong foundation in the basics of the English language is essential for effective grammar structure. Modern applications offer students the opportunity to learn and correct grammar mistakes. Zhou P. (2018) suggests that personalised assistance is necessary for college students to identify and rectify their grammar errors. Foreign university students learning English as a second language require an instructor proficient in the fundamentals. Research indicates that children who are taught English academically as an EFL from a young age may still make errors in their sentence construction, including mistakes in grammar and sentence structure (Delbio, 2018).

The Kurdish language is a longstanding language spoken by a widespread population. The Turkish language is spoken by a diverse group of people, including Turks, Azeris, Assyrians, Armenians, Turkmen, and Arabs, who are in the minority in their respective regions. (Rashid, 2021). Few studies have addressed Kurdish grammar and the challenges Kurdish students encounter when learning the language, including their motivation, beliefs, and learning strategies as taught by their instructors (Bajalani, 2019; Ali, 2020). Kurdish exhibits regional diversity with varying dialects, resulting in differences in grammar across regions. Grammatical gender also changes with the regional dialects. (Ahmad, 2022).

Vocabulary

In a language, there are many components that make a certain language complete. Often these languages contain a very high ratio of words that have synonymous meaning while some languages are known to have a very limited set of vocabulary. The more there are different symbols that have similar meaning in the eyes of the native speakers, the higher vocabulary the language will have however, if there are less symbols present that have the same meaning it means that there is lesser vocabulary in that language and the language is more direct rather than being complex. Without

grammar some incomplete information can be conveyed however, without vocabulary it is impossible to convey information, vocabulary is present in the process of listening, speaking and even writing. While as vocabulary is acquired there is a higher success rate of language communication (Cheng, 2021). However, it is seen that as English has had a long-term influence on people based on the history of native English people and their colonial mindsets, and also the way teachers teach English as an EFL, students tend to forget words and their meanings, however even if they remember the words, they are unable to express them (Sharma, 2018).

Pronunciation

The role of grammar knowledge in skills that require hearing and listening is vital and important, as it increases the pace of learning. However, that is widely affected by pronunciation, as shown by the fact that Saito (2022) examined almost forty extemporaneous speech samples gathered by Japanese learners in order to observe their own pronunciation of letters and also by the fact that Tsuji (2004) found that Japanese learners were more likely to mispronounce English vowels than consonants. Pronunciation is There are a number of reasons for this, one of which is that people may bring their mother tongue, as well as their own local accent and pronunciation of letters, into the English language, which may disrupt the pronunciation that the English language was meant to have originally (Reddivari, 2022). English is spoken in a variety of accents around the world, and these accents fluctuate depending on the country and even the region in which they are spoken. Pronunciation also differs with these varied accents. The English spoken in the United Kingdom, the English spoken in the United States, and the English spoken in Australia will all have very distinct pronunciations.

There will be regional differences within American English accents, such as the accent used in the South of the United States and the North of the United States, and this will cause them to have different pronunciations as well. The same is true when it comes to British English; for example, the accent spoken in London will differ from the accent spoken in Scotland, but this is because their native language or mother tongue is different. In both cases, the reason for these differences is that English is not their mother tongue. Even within the English language, there are different pronunciations that are used based on regions. However, it was previously mentioned that the Kurdish language is spoken by a large number of people and that it is a language that has been dispersed across regions ranging from Turkey to Iran. It is an Indo-European language that is spoken by people who live in mountainous areas. As a result of the fact that the Kurdish language is spoken in a number of different dialects, it is reasonable to assume that the pronunciation of the language also varies, given that each dialect will have its own distinctive pronunciation (Othman, 2018).

Writing System

Kurdish has been historically spoken in Iraq and was traditionally written in a variant of the Persian alphabet prior to the 16th century. According to Kurdish history, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei claimed that the US was attempting to establish a "New Israel" in the region during a referendum (Bengio, 2021). This led to a heightened determination to establish fundamental human and linguistic rights, which contributed to the language's growth. These rights were often linked to Israel, Zionism, and Imperialism, as noted by Soleimani (2019), Sheyholislami (2019), and Khezri (2021). Since the 17th century, the Kurdish language has been documented as being written using the Yezidi script, which has its roots in the 13th century.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Kurdish language has been transcribed using the Latin alphabet for written communication purposes in Turkey and Syria. The Latin alphabet is used for written communication in Turkey and Syria for the Kurdish language, which is spoken by around 30 million people worldwide. The Kurdish writing system exhibits several differences from that of English. Differences between Kurdish and English include the use of diacritical marks, variations in the number of letters and alphabet system, and differences in the pronunciation of certain letters.

The Kurdish writing system consists of 35 letters, whereas English uses only 26 letters. The Kurdish language employs additional characters to denote sounds that are either absent in English or require multiple letters to articulate. Furthermore, the identical letters in both writing systems may produce distinct sounds in each language. The English pronunciation of the letters "c" and "r" is voiceless alveolar affricate and alveolar approximate, respectively. However, in Kurdish, these letters may be pronounced differently (Fatahi, 2017). The differences in pronunciation and the use of diacritic marks in Kurdish may present challenges for Kurdish learners of English as a Foreign Language (Gorani, 2019).

Cultural disparities influence the writing systems of the English and Kurdish languages. The Kurdish language has a distinct cultural and historical context from English, which is predominantly spoken in Europe and North America. This difference in culture and values is common among Middle Eastern speakers of Kurdish. The Kurdish language differs from English in terms of phrase and sentence formation, vocabulary selection, and other language constituents (Musa, 2015). Hassani (2018) suggests the use of an OCR platform capable of distinguishing between Kurdish, Persian, and Arabic text due to the diverse nature of the Kurdish language. Kurdish incorporates elements from various languages, including different writing styles and systems, making it a complex language with alphabets from other languages. According to Muhammad (2019), approximately 4304 manuscripts were produced by 1076 volunteers of diverse ages, races, and demographics, containing a total of 17466 lines. According to Hassani I. a. (2021), Tesseract LSTM, a widely used Optical Character Recognition engine, has been studied by researchers for its ability to recognise multiple languages using AI techniques such as Machine Learning and Internet of Things (IOT).

Factors that contribute to mother tongue interference among Kurdish learners in EFL classes.

The term "mother tongue" refers to the person's native tongue as well as the first language they have been exposed to from birth onward. They are able to reach a proficient level in it, at which point it is simple for them to communicate with people who speak the same language. In order to acquire a second language effectively, it is essential to determine the degree to which one's native language is comparable to, or dissimilar to, the target language being learned. This is true even if the ability to do so is already present. For example, syntax, lexicology, phonology, and morphology combine to form a language's vocabulary. How dissimilar or similar a language's vocabulary is to that of another language is one of the factors that determines how easy or difficult it is to learn another language (Totibadze, 2018).

There is always a factor of relatability and comfort because the mother tongue is the one that always stays with a learner while complementing the second language that a foreigner is learning (Dilshad, 2022). Learners of foreign languages can use their mother tongue as a tool for transferring their existing knowledge regarding linguistics from their native tongue to the target language. This can actually be advantageous, as there is always a tool for transferring existing knowledge regarding linguistics from their native tongue to the target language. For example, if the pronoun of "ship" in one language is feminine, then the person studying that language may be able to transfer that information to the learning of a new language in which the pronoun of "ship" is also feminine (for example, in English, we frequently refer to "ship" as "she"). Therefore, if the knowledge is complementary, the transfer can be helpful in learning the new language, such as by gaining and learning new words, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. If the knowledge is not complementary, however, the transfer is not likely to be helpful. However, the mother tongue is not always a useful source, and it can also tend to be a source of interference in the process of learning a second language. In addition to this, the majority of cultures are exocentric, and they prefer English over their own mother tongue; as a result, they do not benefit from the relatability factor. People in Pakistan, particularly those of Punjabi origin, are a good illustration of this phenomenon. For some reason, they choose not to teach students Punjabi for the sole reason that they do not feel proud of the language, which is one reason why Pakistani or Punjabi people may not feel pride in their mother tongue (Hafeez, 2021).

Learners may transmit faulty rules from their home language into the target language if the rules of grammar and linguistic structures of their mother tongue are significantly different from those of the target language. For instance, if the English statement "what is your name?" were to be translated word for word into another language, the resulting sentence might have an incorrect structure. If we were to translate the preceding statement into another language with different rules, such as Urdu, the sentence would become the English equivalent of "Your name is what," which is obviously a sign that there is a grammatical issue. Learners may inadvertently transfer incorrect information into the target language concerning different grammatical and sentence structures as well as different verb tenses. This can lead to a negative role for the learner's mother tongue in the process of acquiring a second language due to errors in the use of tenses, prepositions, or various other parts of speech. However, a wide variety of innovative approaches and methodologies have been developed in order to aid L2 (Level 2) language learners in their pursuit of efficient learning and to investigate the influence that a learner's native tongue has on their ability to pick up a second language (Khan, 2020).

In addition, when existing knowledge of the mother tongue is applied to the target language, it might lead to inaccuracies in pronunciation and vocabulary. There is a possibility that the target language and the mother tongue have vowel and consonant sounds that are not identical. The learners might also have trouble with their pronunciation as a result of this. The ability to speak fluently is one that develops with time. People are able to speak fluently or as if it were "natural" to them in their mother tongue because they both think and communicate in that language. Learners of a second language will frequently fall back on their first language for support, particularly when they are first starting out. It is possible that this will impede their progress in learning a second language and becoming fluent in that language (Kanwal, 2022). If learners frequently translate the second language in their minds into the target language, it may become difficult for them to develop the ability to think in the target language, which will slow down the process of becoming fluent in the target language. This pattern of behaviour can also be blamed for the phenomenon of being able to speak a second language better in writing than in speech. For instance, some of the best English authors are also some of the worst English speakers since they originally learned English as a second language.

The influence of one's age can also be seen in the process of picking up a second language. Younger learners, whose brains are still developing, have a greater capacity for plasticity, and as a result, they are better equipped to comprehend novel linguistic norms and structures than older learners. As a result, kids can experience less interference from their mother tongue. Because adults already possess a high level of fluency and typically have a greater understanding of their mother tongue, it is more likely that they will be able to transfer their existing knowledge of syntax, sentence structure, and other components of speech to the target language. It may impair their growth in the language they are learning as a second language.

People who are learning a second language frequently struggle with the transition from one writing system to another. For instance, the alphabet and writing system used for the Arabic language are not the same as those used for the English language. Its alphabets do not correspond to those used in English in any way, and it's possible that they even sound different from English alphabets. There is a possibility that the different cultures of people who speak a second language in addition to their mother tongue each play a part in the process of acquiring a second language. There are a variety of societies, each of which has its own distinctive ideas and modes of self-expression. People in different countries have quite different attitudes towards time, personal relationships, social interactions, and other areas of life, all of which are components of culture (Ali G. a., 2022). It is possible for different cultures to have various cultural values, such as individuality, collectivism, a certain degree of uncertainty avoidance, and so on. These values are included among the dimensions offered by Hofstede in his cultural dimensions, which are designed to accommodate a variety of dimensions (Alqarni, 2022). The ways in which people of different cultures use and comprehend language can be impacted by cultural variations. If the learner's mother tongue comes from a culture that is vastly dissimilar to that of the target language, then mastering the nuances of the target language may prove difficult.

Ironically, having a strong command of one language can actually slow down one's progress towards mastery of a second tongue. For instance, proficient speakers of their mother tongue may have a tendency to rely primarily on their mother tongue to explain their ideas, regardless of how simple or complicated those concepts may be. They could get into the habit of translating the second language word for word into their first language and vice versa, rather than making use of the distinctive patterns and idioms of the language they are trying to learn. It is essential to note that students of Kurdish who are also learning English as a foreign language frequently encounter a wide variety of challenges. The structural differences between Kurdish and English, which are one key aspect that cannot be ignored, lead to the mother tongue of native Kurdish speakers interfering with the learning of English by those who speak Kurdish as a second language. Prefixes, suffixes, and inflection are the three components that make up the English language. Analytical language is the name given to the language that is constructed out of these many compositions. Kurdish is an example of an agglutinative language, which contrasts with its more common classification as an analytic language. The formation of words in Kurdish is accomplished by applying morphemes to a root in a synthesis process. The relevance of this indicates that Kurdish students may become perplexed while attempting to gain the ability to read, write, and speak English (Manan, 2017; Ahangari, 2020). Additionally, the Kurdish language and the English language both feature lexical distinctions of their own. The English language is known for its high level of ambiguity avoidance. It has a much larger vocabulary than Kurdish has, which might lead to misunderstandings and mistakes when speakers of Kurdish try to communicate in English (Mukri, 2019).

Summary

The literature review investigates the function of Kurdish in second-language EFL learning. Because of globalization and the rising number of international students, English is now the most widely spoken language in the world (Ii, 2022). Kurds may find it difficult to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) because of the linguistic and cultural differences between Kurdish and English. Kurdish is a language spoken and written by a small minority of people in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. It uses a variant of the Latin alphabet called diacritics to depict phonemes that are absent from English. Foreign students studying English may also encounter challenges due to cultural differences and the use of different honorifics (Karim, 2019). The aforementioned literature review also compares and contrasts the two languages with regard to grammatical and lexical features, pronunciation, spelling, and sentence structure. The Kurdish language has Indo-Iranian and Indo-European roots. And its grammar is further complicated by the existence of numerous regional dialects. Compared to Kurdish, English has very different grammar rules. To create sentences and phrases, express thoughts, and transmit instructions, a firm grasp of the essentials is required (Muhammad, 2019).

A person's mother tongue is the first language they acquire and master. Understanding the syntactic, lexical, phonological, and morphological similarities and differences between two languages is essential while learning a second language. The mother tongue can be a source of hindrance when learning a second language, but it can also be helpful for passing on preexisting linguistic skills. Using only first-language knowledge can lead to problems with syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary in the second language. Many variables affect the success of second language learners. Age, writing systems, cultural diversity, and mother tongue proficiency are only a few of the considerations. It can be challenging for students to master a second language and master the unique patterns and idioms of that language if they rely too heavily on their native tongue. The use of a lexical and syntactic assessment to see if Kurdish students of English have influenced the language is also crucial. A lexicon contains all the words and concepts in a language, making it a crucial reference tool. A lexicon is a collection of all the words in a certain language, and dictionaries like English or Arabic dictionaries fit this description (Gorani, 2019). In contrast, syntax refers to the order in which words are arranged so that the sentence makes sense and follows the rules of the language. Most native speakers of Kurdish and other languages have trouble learning English because they confuse English syntax with their

native language. This is where a person's first language, in this case Kurdish, may play a role in distorting their English syntax.

Research Methodology

The study applied following procedures could be taken as part of the research methodology for the study titled "The Effect of Mother Tongue Interference in English as a Foreign Language Classes on Kurdish Learners at the University Level."

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative methodology for its investigation. The purpose of this research is to quantify the influence of mother tongue interference in university-level English as a foreign language class for Kurdish students. Data is collected using a cross-sectional approach to provide a moment-in-time snapshot of the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Questionnaire

In order to collect quantitative data pertinent to the study's aims, a questionnaire will be designed and given to participants. The study's objectives, as well as the literature reviewed and theoretical frameworks considered, will inform the development of the questionnaire. It will be made up of multiple-choice questions wherein respondents must pick one of several possible options.

Study Sample and Participants:

The study sample consists of 250 students majoring in English at Akre College, a division of Duhok University, who are pursuing a doctoral degree. The sample size is 250, with 100 female and 150 male students participating. Several factors about the school's current student body influenced our decision to enlist here. A random sample of students from grades 1 through 4 was chosen. Students between the ages of 18 and 24 are taking part.

Data Collection

The study collected data on the effects of native language interference in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes for Kurdish students. Surveys, examinations, and questionnaires can be used as the main tools for gathering information about the participants' linguistic competence, mother tongue interference, attitudes, and perspectives. The association between reading ability and academic success will be studied by gathering relevant data. The instruments used to collect data should be trustworthy and valid if we want to have confidence in the results. Statistical methods like correlation analysis and linear regression will be used to analyze the survey data in order to draw conclusions about the influence of MTI on EFL outcomes for Kurdish learners. The questionnaire should be pilot tested on a small group of people to check for readability, consistency, and validity. All aspects of the questionnaire's delivery and processing shall adhere to ethical standards, including those of informed consent and confidentiality. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of mother tongue interference on university-level Kurdish EFL students by collecting relevant data, analyzing it with proper statistical techniques, and drawing conclusions based on those analyses. The findings may aid in elucidating the research issue and shedding light on how to enhance learning outcomes and pedagogical practices.

Results

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		EFL	Mother Tongue Language	Learner
EFL	Pearson Correlation	1	.481**	.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	308	308	308
Mother Tongue Language	Pearson Correlation	.481**	1	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	308	308	308
Learner	Pearson Correlation	.624**	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	308	308	308
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)				

The Pearson correlation coefficients between research variables are displayed as a matrix in the accompanying table. English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Mother Tongue Language, and Learner are the three variables correlated in the table. There is a 481-fold association between proficiency in English as a Foreign Language and proficiency in a person's mother tongue. This association is significant at the 0.01 level of statistical significance. There were 308 people included in the correlational study. The association between English as a Foreign Language and learners is 624. The significance level of this correlation is also 0.01 (p.01). There were 308 people included in the correlational study. The association between a person's mother tongue and their ability to learn a new language is 597. This association is significant at the 0.01 level of statistical significance. There were 308 people included in the correlational study. Correlation coefficients, which measure the degree and direction of an association between two variables, can be anywhere from -1 to 1. If the correlation coefficient between two variables is positive, it indicates that there is a positive relationship between them. Here, we see that EFL, MTL, and learners are all positively correlated with one another. The probability that the observed correlation coefficient was due to random chance is represented by the statistical significance (Sig.). The relationships are extremely unlikely to have arisen by chance alone if the significance level is.000.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.890	.178		4.998	.000
EFL	.403	.057	.432	7.112	.000
Mother Tongue Language	.114	.055	.126	2.089	.038
a. Dependent: Learner					

The regression analysis indicates that the variable "EFL" has a coefficient of.403. The unstandardized coefficient indicates the anticipated alteration in the dependent variable (Learner) when the independent variable (EFL) changes by one unit. The Beta coefficient of.432 denotes the standardized impact of EFL on the dependent variable. The coefficient's hypothesis of being equal to zero is tested by the t-

value (7.112), and the coefficient is deemed statistically significant with a significance level of.000. The coefficient for "Mother Tongue Language" is.114. The unstandardized coefficient signifies the anticipated alteration in the dependent variable (Learner) due to a unitary modification in the independent variable (Mother Tongue Language). The Beta coefficient of.126 denotes the standardized impact of the mother-tongue language on the dependent variable. The t-value (2.089) tests the null hypothesis of the coefficient being zero, and the significance level of.038 indicates statistical significance.

Conclusion

The study indicates that both EFL and Mother Tongue Language have significant effects on the Learner variable, which pertains to the performance of Kurdish learners at the university level. The regression analysis indicated a significant positive impact of EFL on the Learner variable. As EFL proficiency improves, Kurdish learners' performance also improves. The Beta coefficient of.432 indicates a significant impact of EFL on the Learner variable. The results emphasize the significance of prioritizing the advancement of English as a foreign language ability to augment the language acquisition achievements of Kurdish students in tertiary education contexts.

The study revealed a significant positive impact of mother-tongue language on the Learner variable. The correlation coefficient of 0.114 suggests a positive relationship between proficiency in the mother tongue and the English language performance of Kurdish learners. The Beta coefficient of.126 indicates a lesser impact in comparison to EFL; however, the significance of this variable highlights the importance of mother tongue proficiency in the process of learning English. The promotion of a strong foundation in the mother tongue and addressing interference may enhance the English language proficiency of Kurdish learners. The study emphasizes the importance of EFL and Mother Tongue Language in impacting the academic achievements of Kurdish students in higher education. The study highlights the significance of delivering efficient English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and tackling the influence of the mother tongue in order to improve the English language acquisition and competence of Kurdish students. Optimizing the learning outcomes of Kurdish learners requires language programmes and pedagogical approaches that consider the linguistic challenges and mother tongue interference. Educators and policymakers should prioritize designing such programmes and approaches.

The study's conclusions are based solely on data collected from a sample of 308 participants from Akre College at Duhok University. Caution should be exercised when extrapolating these findings to the wider population of Kurdish students at the university level. Additional research with larger and more diverse samples is necessary to confirm and extend these findings.

Recommendation

The study's results suggest the following recommendations:

- Improving the quality of EFL instruction is crucial due to its significant impact on the performance of Kurdish learners. Effective teaching can be achieved through the use of communicative and interactive activities, ample practice and feedback opportunities, and the integration of technology and authentic materials. CPD programmes can aid EFL educators in staying current with contemporary pedagogical approaches and strategies.
- The study emphasizes the significance of mitigating the impact of mother tongue interference in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Educators must recognize the linguistic difficulties encountered by Kurdish students and create techniques to minimize the adverse impact of interference. Effective language instruction may require targeted teaching in challenging areas, explicit comparison between the native language and English structures, and increasing learners' awareness of language transfer. Offering sufficient practice and corrective feedback can help overcome interference from the mother tongue.

- It is recommended to promote balanced bilingualism, acknowledging the beneficial impact of mother-tongue languages on English language acquisition. Prioritize the cultivation of proficiency in both the native language and English to establish a strong basis for language acquisition. Encourage learners to preserve and appreciate their native language while developing competence in English. Include activities that enhance cross-linguistic awareness and transferable language skills.
- Establish a learning environment that is supportive and inclusive, which promotes motivation, self-confidence, and positive attitudes towards language acquisition. Promote classroom engagement through active participation, collaboration, and peer interaction. Facilitate learners' expression of opinions, sharing of experiences, and use of English in genuine situations. Promote pride and a sense of belonging in linguistic and cultural diversity.

Future Studies

Further research is recommended to improve the understanding of how the interference of the mother tongue affects Kurdish learners at the university level. Possible concise and academic rewrites: Possible concise and academic rewrites: This may involve longitudinal research on learners' language development, inquiries into particular domains of native language interference, and the examination of effective pedagogical approaches to tackle these difficulties. The inclusion of a diverse sample from various universities and regions would offer a wider outlook on the matter. The English language learning outcomes of Kurdish learners at the university level can be improved by implementing these recommendations, which can be carried out by educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. The objective is to establish a stimulating and efficient educational setting that recognizes the impact of the native language while fostering the growth of proficiency in English as a foreign language.

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