The Impact of Proficiency in First Language on Mastering English for Saudi EFL Students

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Abstract

The study aimed at clarifying the relationship among standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and English language proficiency concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing. To achieve this aim, the research participants were 100 undergraduate male and female students from the Department of Languages &Translation, English language, at a Saudi University. The study design adopted the quasi-experiential design using one experimental group to be taught the study program, Integrated Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Language (I PBTSAEL), which was based on the integration of Arabic and English languages skills. A quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed. The study instruments included: Pre-post three skills test (PPTST) and semi- structured interviews. The statistical methods of the paired samples t- test and the effect size analyses were employed for interpreting the quantitative data, whereas the qualitative data were collected from the semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study indicated that the study program of IPBTSAEL improved the participants English language skills of speaking, reading and writing. This data proved the positive transfer and relation between standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and English language. The study recommended strongly applying its program in other courses and other majors for improving other EFL undergraduate students' English language skills of speaking, reading and writing.

Keywords: Positive transfer, Standard Arabic (Fus`ha), English language Proficiency, Speaking, Reading, Writing

INTRODUCTION

The transfer of skills and the influence of one language on another has always been the interest of several linguists and educators for ages. Lu (2010*)* indicated that linguistic transfer is what the language learners carry over to or generalize in their knowledge about their native language (NL) to assist them in learning the target language (TL). Moreover, Lu (2010) stated that these linguistic transfers are either positive that do not lead to linguistic errors and negative that lead to errors in second language classroom teaching. Arabic language, particularly standard dialect, and English language come under this assumption. Standard Arabic is a semantic language; its grammatical structure is very different from that of European languages such as English language. Although this, there are some areas of interference between Standard Arabic and English language

(Qaid & Ramamoorthy, 2011). As Arabic is the official language in many countries, including Saudi Arabia. This study tries to investigate the influence of the L1 (first language) (Standard Arabic or Fus`ha)) on learning and acquiring EFL (English as a foreign language) for the EFL Saudi undergraduate learners majoring in English language

Generally speaking, it is commonly known among researchers and linguists that the similarities and differences between the two languages indicate the degree of the nature of transfer and interference (positive or negative transfer) between them (Dweik , 2000; Ellis, 1986; Odlin, 1989). According to Odlin (1989), the transfer that is resulting from the similarities and differences between the two languages can occur at any levels, strategic, linguistic, discoursal and pragmatic. Standard Arabic and English language is an example of this transfer and interference (Dweik,2007). Several literatures has been conducted in this linguistic area to prove this transfer concerning Arabic and other languages such as Chinese and their relation to the English language. For example, Lu (2010) conducted a study to investigate Chinese native language transfer on English second language acquisition (SLA), focusing on Chinese topic prominence (TP) and English subject prominence (SP). 125 participants were involved in three tasks: Interpretation, translation and acceptability judgment. The findings proved that in interpretation and translation tasks, the numbers of TPs decline and even disappeared with the increase of the learners' English proficiency in acceptability judgment. In other terms, the Chinese transfer played an important role in English SLA for the Chinese English language learners.

Therefore, the role of L1 (first language) in L2 learning has been the subject of considerable research since the beginning of the 19th century. Some language learning theories (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1993; House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper, 1995) took the position that L1 has an extremely facilitating role to play in L2 learning process. For example, in his study, Hussein (2013) investigated and analyzed the actual reasons, attitudes and purposes behind the use of the mother tongue (Arabic) in teaching English as an L2 (EFL) to Arab students at Jordanian private and government-aided universities. The results obtained demonstrated that almost all the respondents expressed the need for the use of Arabic in the English classroom because it assisted them in understanding the meaning of new or difficult words, explain complex syntactic rules, and save time.

On the other hand, some other theories (e.g. Beebe et al., 1990; Olshtain, 1987; Takahashi and Beebe, 1993) maintained the position that L1 is the main obstacle to L2 learning. Such theories consider L1 as the major cause of the L2 learners' problems. This viewpoint was confirmed by Al-Ghazalli's (2013) study which was concerned with assessing the English translations of implicit negatives as found in Qura'nic ayahs and Arabic literary texts to uncover whether or not the translations of this type of negation are accurately produced. The assessment of the translated texts proved that translation of implicit negatives is difficult to process and convey from Arabic into English due basically to the linguistic differences between both languages. This sometimes has led to translate Arabic implicit negatives into English explicit negatives. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) pointed out that some of the errors committed by Arab students learning English as a foreign language are due to Arabic interference. In the same vein, Mahmoud (2000) agreed with

the assumption that errors caused by L1 play a pivotal role on L2 learning. According to these linguists, the errors committed in L2 learning which are the result of the differences between L1 and L2 are called transfer or interference errors.

Furthermore, Freeman and Freeman (2000) stated that, if a student has strong educational background and literacy in the first language, the student could be expected to perform well academically and progress at a relatively fast pace in L2, as they already have developed the academic language skills in their L1. In other terms, in second language (L2) acquisition, L1 literacy skills can transfer to the English usage of the L2 learners because transfer is a psycholinguistic process in which L2 learners activate their previous linguistic knowledge to develop and use their interlingua. Thus, transfer could be either a learning strategy or communication strategy (Freeman and Freeman,2000) and it could be positive or negative which is the main target of the current study. This is obvious in the comprehensive studies (e.g. Ellis, 1986; Hammerly,1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long,1991; Odlin,1989) on transfers and they all helped to display that transfers are at all the linguistic levels, phonological, lexical, syntactical and semantic. Several studies (e.g. Abu Ghwaileh, 2014; Al-Zoubi & Abu-Eid ,2014; Dweik & Abu Al Hommos,2007; Elsayed,2014; Mourssi, 2013; Rahman,2015; Sabbah, 2015) were conducted to prove this transfers either positive or negative between Arabic and English languages.

What is observable in these studies that they have highlighted the transfers of these four linguistic levels of phonological, lexical, syntactical and semantic between Arabic and English languages. Furthermore, some of these studies (e.g. Abu Ghwaileh, 2014; Al-Zoubi & Abu-Eid ,2014; Rahman, 2015; Sabbah, 2015) demonstrated the negative transfers of Arabic language on English. On the other hand, other studies (e.g. Abu Ghwaileh, 2014; Dweik & Abu Al Hommos,2007; Elsayed,2014; Mourssi,2013) illustrated the positive transfers of Arabic language on English language. The current study is an attempt to prove the positive transfers between standard Arabic and standard English language concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing through the application of its proposed program. Elaboration on some of these studies, one positive and one negative, is required as a supportive evidence for the current study claims.

 As an evidence on the positive linguistic transfer between Arabic and English languages, the study of Dweik and Abu Al Hommos (2007) investigated the relationship between the first language (Arabic) proficiency and the second language (English) performance in the writing skill of the Jordanian bilingual second secondary school students. The researchers used the composition prompt tests instrument for this purpose; one test was in Arabic and the other was in English. The participants were 20 male students who were chosen on the basis of the students' achievements in the previous years. As a result of the study, a significant relationship was found between the two languages. Those students who got high marks and were proficient in Arabic writing performed well in the counter skill (English). Results of the study illustrated that there is a need for integrating the instruction of writing skill between the two languages in the textbooks so that the writing level of students in L2 (English) can be improved.

 On the syntactical or structural level, the study of Mourssi (2013) investigated the cross linguistic influence of the L1 in learning L2 grammar, specifically the acquisition of the

simple past tense. This empirical study was conducted on 74 Arab learners of English (ALEs) and lasted for four months. A detailed analysis was made of the acquisition of the simple past tense forms in 222 written texts produced by ALEs. Written texts were collected chronologically from each subject at three stages in the experiment. The Quantitative analysis demonstrated the cross linguistic influence of L1 (Arabic) in acquiring the linguistic items of L2 (English) in general and in acquiring the simple past in particular.

Examples on the studies that proved negative and positive linguistic transfers between Arabic and English is the study of Abu Ghwaileh (2014). This study proved the correlation between Arabic proficiency and English language performance in the writing skill of grade nine Emirati male students. The study findings proved that low proficiency in MSA (Fus`ha) or colloquial Arabic caused fatal errors in writing in English as a second language. However, having higher proficiency in MSA (Fus`ha) attributed to positive transfer into the target language (English). The participants` grades in writing compositions in both subjects, namely Arabic and English, were collected and analyzed. This analysis revealed that those who scored high grades in MSA (standard Arabic) performed better in writing in English. The findings of the study agreed with Cummins Interdependence Hypothesis about the correlation between L1 and L2 with the hope to assist the ESL teachers and the Arabic language teachers in designing the appropriate materials that enhance the students` writing skills in both subjects.

After reviewing literature, it is clear that the transfers between English and Arabic could be positive or negative. However, the current study tries to prove that the interference and transfers between standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and proficiency in English language for the EFL Egyptian University students is positive through applying the current study proposed integrated program of standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and English language. From this point of view, and on the contrary with the studies that proved the negative impact of the transfers and interference of the first language (L1) on learning and acquiring the second language L2 , the present study attempted to prove the positive correlation between proficiency in standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and proficiency in the English language concerning the three skills of speaking, writing and reading of the Saudi undergraduate students and offering recommendations and suggestions to be taken into consideration by the educational policy- makers in Saudi Arabia. Table (1) illustrates the pronunciation of the 28th Arabic Letters and Their Global Phonemic or Alphabetical Value as adopted from https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/

Table (1): The 28th Arabic Letters and Their Global Phonemic or Alphabetical Value

Name of the Arabic Letter	Phonemic Translation	Global Phonemic or Alphabetical Value of the Letters	
ا	ألف	ʾ / ā	/a:/
ب	باء	B	/b/ /p/
ت	تاء	T	/t/
ث	ثاء	ṯ	/θ/
ج	جيم	Ǧ	/dʒ/
ح	حاء	ḥ	/ħ/
خ	خاء	ẖ	/x~χ/

د	دال	D	/d/
ذ	ذال	ḏ	/ð/
ر	راء	R	/r/
ز	زاي	Z	/z/
س	سين	S	/s/
ش	شين	š	/ʃ/
ص	صاد	ṣ	/sˤ/
ض	ضاد	ḍ	/dˤ/
ط	طاء	ṭ	/tˤ/
ظ	ظاء	ẓ	/ðˤ~zˤ/
ع	عين	ʿ	/ʕ/
غ	غين	ġ	/ɣ~ʁ/ (/g/)
ف	فاء	F	/f/ ، /v/
ق	قاف	Q	/q/
ك	كاف	K	/k/
ل	لام	L	/l/ ، [lˤ]
م	ميم	M	/m/
ن	نون	N	/n/
ه	هاء	H	/h/
و	واو	w / ū / aw	/w/ / /u:/ / /au/ ، /u/ ، /o/ و /o:/
ي	ياء	y / ī / ay	/j/ / /i:/ / /ai/ ، /i/ ، /e:/ و /e/

Additionally, for the knowledge of the researcher, no studies have been conducted to prove a correlation between proficiency in standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and English language proficiency concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing either in the EFL Saudi context or any other EFL Arabic context which gives a big novelty for the current study. All these were strong motives that pushed the researcher to conduct the current study.

THIS STUDY

Proving the positive correlation between proficiency in standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and proficiency in the English language concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing of the Saudi EFL University students through the application of the current study proposed integrated program of standard Arabic and English language. In addition to offering recommendations and suggestions to be taken into consideration by the Saudi educational policy makers in TEFL instruction.

However, a lot of research has been conducted in the area of transfer or interference of language skills across languages, a very few have investigated this phenomenon among Arabic EFL learners and none in the Saudi context despite the fact that Arabic-speaking students represent a large proportion of the EFL body all around the world. Moreover, most the studies conducted in this language area proved the negative correlation between Arabic an English language in contrary with the current study that tries to approve the opposite of this. Additionally, none of the previous studies investigated if there was a correlation between proficiency in Standard Arabic and proficiency in English language concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing which is the objective of the current study.

Moreover, pedagogically, the proposed integrated program of Arabic and English languages of the current study will be productive and fruitful for the university instructors and the Saudi policy makers curricula planners in designing integrative texts and academic activities that correlate between the two languages of English and Arabic to achieve the desired targets. Finally, the integrative texts between the two languages could achieve intellectual security through creating positive attitudes towards English language and the culture of its native speakers for the EFL Saudi university students.

Proving the positive linguistic transfers between proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language in the three skills of speaking, reading and writing for the EFL Saudi University students.

Based on the study problem and the related literature, the current study attempted to answer the following main question and its sub-questions:

What is the correlational relationship between EFL Saudi University students' proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language?

The following sub-questions emanate from the main question:

1-What is the correlational relation between EFL Saudi University students' proficiency in speaking standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and proficiency in speaking English language?

2- What is the correlational relation between EFL Saudi University students' proficiency in reading standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and proficiency in reading English language?

3- What is the correlational relation between EFL Egyptian University students' proficiency in writing standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and proficiency in writing English language?

Hypotheses of the Study

1-There is a positive correlational relationship between proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language.

2-There is a positive correlational relationship between speaking proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language.

3-There is a positive correlational relationship between reading proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language.

4-There is a positive correlational relationship between writing proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language.

METHOD

Participants

The study participants were 100 male and female students from the first year students majoring in English language, Department of Languages & Translation, at one of the Saudi Arabia Universities, aged 18 to 20 years old.

Research Design

 The current study adopted a mixed approach i.e. using a quantitative and qualitative interpretations and a quasi-experimental study (i.e. one experimental group). Furthermore, the study used an integrated program between Arabic and English languages based on the three skills of speaking, reading and writing to prove the correlational relation between the proficiency of these skills in the two languages. This integrated based-three skills program was taught for the experimental group students. The study program application lasted for 12 weeks and the study used a pre/posttest three skills test to measure its effect on the study participants. The following figure represents the study design:

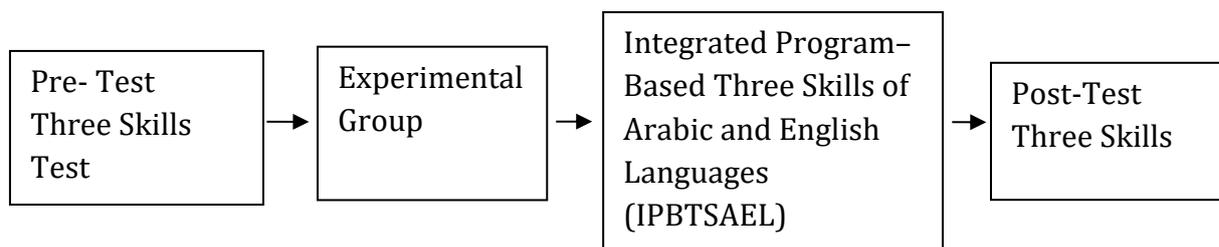 Pre-Application Groups Treatment Post-Application

Figure (1): The Quasi-Experimental Design of the Study

Variables of the Study

To affirm the accuracy of the results, the variables are classified as independent and dependent:

-The independent variable is the application of the Integrated Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Languages (IPBTSAEL).

- The dependent variable is the correlational relation of the proficiency of the three skills (speaking, reading, writing) of the two languages of Arabic and English.

Research Instruments

The following instruments were used to be applied in the current research:

1. Pre-Post Three Skills Test (PPTST):

 The test consisted of three parts: Speaking, reading and writing (See Appendix 1). It was applied on the study participants before and after the application of the study program to demonstrate the correlational relationship between the proficiency of the two languages of Arabic and English concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing. The differences between the two tests were indicated and interpreted statistically, using the paired samples t-test to measure the three skills of speaking, reading and writing. Some resources (e.g. Abu Ghwaileh, 2014; Farran,2010; Dweik & Abu Al Hommos, 2007) were elaborated on in conducting the PPTST.

 Each skill was marked out of 20 marks so the total test score was 60 marks. The duration time of the test was 80 minutes. The first section of the test was reading. It included two passages with 10 multiple choices on each passage. The second section of the test was writing. There were two parts in this section. Part one: The participants have 5 minutes

to read a passage and 15 minutes to write a paragraph summarizing the passage. Part two: They have 20 minutes to plan and write an essay. The third section of the test was speaking.

The speaking section included three speaking tasks to test the participants' English speaking skills. In part one, they were given a visual prompt, such as a picture, a mind map, or a form, and a question about the prompt. They had two minutes to prepare and two minutes response. In part two, the participants were asked to talk about a personal experience or interest. They have two minutes to prepare two minutes response. In part three, the participants were asked to give their opinion about / on a quote, a public opinion, or a social issue. They had two minutes to prepare a three-minute argumentative presentation, including reasons and examples in their response.

2. Semi- Structured Interviews:

They were held for a discussion group from the study participants held at the end of the study program application to know their opinions of the study program application in demonstrating the correlational relations between proficiency in Arabic and English languages in reference to the three skills of speaking, reading and writing. The duration of each interview was two minutes with each participant from the discussion group. The interview included three main questions based on eliciting the participants' opinions concerning the effectiveness of the study program and the correlational relation between the two languages. The data collected from the interviews that were held with 16 participants (8 females and 8 males) were used for the sake of the qualitative interpretation of the study results.

3. Integrated Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Languages (IPBTSAEL):

This program was designed and developed by the researcher as a blended curriculum integrating the three skills of the two languages of Arabic and English in one curriculum. The program details could be summarized as follows:

Program Objectives:

This course is an integrated one between Arabic and English languages with the aim of indicating and showing the correlational relationship between proficiency in Arabic language and its counterpart in English language concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing.

Targeted Participants:

They were 100 first year students (Male and Female) of the Languages & Translation Department, English language at on one of the Saudi Universities.

Course Duration:

The program was applied in the second semester of the academic year 2017/2018 and continued for three months from the first of February till the end of April, 2018.

Course Materials:

The program depended on translating the academic material assigned for the second year students, level 4 in the Novel Subject into Arabic. The novel was Animal Farm written by George Orwell which was first published in England on 17 August 1945.Then, the lecture time was divided into two halves. The researcher taught the male participants in the first half of the lecture in Standard Arabic without any use of the vernacular and he taught them in the second half of the lecture in English language only without any use of the mother tongue (Arabic Language). One of the female colleagues volunteered to teach the same course according to the same procedures that have applied with male students.

Procedures

1- Reviewing the related literature and the previous studies in order to set the theoretical background of the study and to design its instruments.

2- Concentrating on the domains of designing and developing the study instruments of the Pre-Post Three Skills Test (PPTST), the Semi- Structured Interview and the Integrated Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Languages (IPBTSAEL).

3- Presenting the designed instruments and the study program to a group of specialized jurors in TEFL for validation and getting the coefficient internal reliability of the PPTST.

5- Modifying the instruments and the study program items according to the jurors' comments in their final form.

6-Administering the study instruments of the PPTST to the study participants before the application of the study proposed program.

7-Implementing the proposed study program (IPBTSAEL) to the study participants.

9-Administering the instruments of (Semi-structured interview and IPBTSAEL) to the participants of the experimental group after administering the proposed program (IPBTSAEL).

10- Analyzing the collected data using the appropriate statistical techniques through the SPSS Program, version 19. For collecting the qualitative data, the semi-structured interviews results were held with the discussion groups (16 students, 8 males and 8 females) from the study participants.

11- Interpreting the study results to answer the study questions and verify its hypotheses.

12- Presenting the study conclusions and recommendations for the educational policy-makers in Saudi Arabia and the instructors of English language.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was applied within the following delimitations:

1. The participants of the study were 100 male and female undergraduate Saudi students of the Department of Languages & Translation, English language, at one of the Saudi Universities, aged 18 to 20 years old.

2. The study was carried out in the second semester of the academic year 2017\2018.

3. The study was restricted to the applied tools i.e. semi-structured interviews; PPTST and IPBTSAEL

4. The study was conducted encompassing the three skills (speaking, reading and writing) of the two languages of Arabic and English.

5. The study was conducted utilizing the Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Languages (IPBTSAEL) application.

Research Instruments Validity and Reliability

The present study was validated by 8 Faculty Members, 4 Associate Professors and 4 Full Professors, from one of the Saudi Universities based in Saudi Arabia and another Egyptian University, all of them were specialized in Applied Linguistics-Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Their suggestions and recommendations concerning the pre/post three skills test, the semi-structured interview and the study program were considered and the modifications based on their views were carried out. In the meantime, the researcher used the SPSS statistic program to get the internal consistency of the coefficient reliability of the Pre/Post Three Skills Test (PPTST) which was found to be (.765) which is a high degree of reliability among the test items.

Pilot Study

Before going through the study procedures, a pilot study was conducted on 10 students rather than the study participants in order to:

1-Check the appropriate time allocated for each instrument;

2-Make sure the words and phrases of the instruments and the study program were clear for the participants;

3-Indicate the internal consistency of the coefficient reliability of the PPTST items which was found to be (.765).

3- Be aware of the procedures that would be followed when using each instrument.

RESULTS

For the purpose of answering the study questions and verifying its alternative hypotheses, the Paired Samples T-test and the Effect Size were employed in analyzing the data collected from the Pre-Post Three Skills Test (PPTST) to measure the impact of the study program, Integrated Program-Based Three Skills of Arabic and English Language (IPBTSAEL), on the participants' English language three skills of speaking, reading and writing. In order to give more validity and reliability in the results of this study, the data collected from holding the semi-structured interviews with the 16 volunteering discussion group students from the study participants was interpreted qualitatively.

Answering the Main Study Question and Test the First Hypothesis

Paired samples t-test and the effect size were calculated for the total score of the pre-post three skills test (PPTST) for each participant. Table (2) displays the results of the paired samples t-test.

Table (2): Pre-Post Three Skills Test Paired Samples Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
				Lower	Upper			
Scoring on Test Before the Study Program Application - Scoring on Test After the Study Program Application	-10.54000	3.32247	.33225	-11.19925	-9.88075	-31.723	99	.000

The results that came out from table (1) shows that t (99) = (-31.723), p (.000) ≤.05. This is a clear evidence that there are statistical significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test of the three skills test (TST) in favour of the post-test. In other terms, the study program application enhanced the participants' English language three skills of speaking, reading and writing and indicated the positive correlational relationship between proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language. For more reliability and evidence, the effect size was calculated for the two tests as indicated in table (3).

Table (3): Effect Size of the Study Program for the Pre-Post Three Skills Test

Dependent Variable: Scoring on Test After the Study Program Application						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	8085.410[a]	26	310.977	27.039	.000	.906
Intercept	108202.609	1	108202.609	9407.917	.000	.992
Pretest	8085.410	26	310.977	27.039	.000	.906
Error	839.590	73	11.501			
Total	206950.000	100				
Corrected Total	8925.000	99				
a. R Squared = .906 (Adjusted R Squared = (.872)						

Results from table (3) declare that F= (26,73) = (27.039), P= (.000) and the Partial Eta Squared "η2" is (.906) which is a very large effect size for the study program application on improving the participants' English language skills of speaking, reading and writing and proving the existence of the positive correlational relationship between proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language. Thus, the main study question was answered and the first hypothesis was accepted. Furthermore, the paired samples t-test and the effect size were calculated for the three skills of English

speaking, reading and writing of the pre-post three skills test (PPTST) separately to answer the sub-questions of the study and the hypotheses based on them.

Answering the First Study Question and Test the Second Hypothesis

For the purpose of indicating whether the application of the integrated program-based three skills of Arabic and English language (IPBTSAEL) enhanced the participants' English language speaking skills, the paired samples t-test was used to determine any significant differences between the pretest and the posttest scores of the speaking section of the three skills test. The results are demonstrated in table (4).

Table (4): Speaking skills Section of the Three Skills Paired Samples T-Test

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Scoring on the Pretest Three Skills Speaking Section - Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Speaking Section	-4.75000	1.51341	.15134	-5.05029	-4.44971	-31.386	99	.000

 The findings from table (4) demonstrated that t (99) = (-31.386), p (.000) ≤.05. Thus, this indicates that the statistical significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test of the speaking section of the three test skills is in favour of the post-test. In other terms, the application of the study integrated program-based three skills of Arabic and English languages (IPBTSAEL) enhanced the participants' English language speaking skills. For more reliability on this data, the effect size of the study program, IPBTSAEL, on enhancing the participants' speaking skills was estimated through calculating the values of Eta square "η2" as indicated in table (5).

Table (5): Effect Size of the Study Program for the Speaking Skills Section

Dependent Variable: Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Speaking Section					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	467.599a	12	38.967	22.876	.000
Intercept	11633.054	1	11633.054	6829.516	.000
Pretest	467.599	12	38.967	22.876	.000
Error	148.191	87	1.703		
Total	24983.000	100			
Corrected Total	615.790	99			
a. R Squared = .759 (Adjusted R Squared = (.726)					

As it is clear in table (5) that F= (12,87) = (22.876) =, P= (.000) and the Partial Eta Squared "η2" is (.726) which is a large effect for the effectiveness of the study program (IPBTSAEL)

on increasing the participants' English language speaking skills. All this data answered the first question of the study and verified the second study hypothesis which is: There is a positive correlational relationship between speaking proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language.

Answering the Second Study Question and Test the Third Hypothesis

In order to indicate the effectiveness of the study program (IPBTSAEL) on the study participants' English language reading skills or not, the paired samples t-test and the effect size were calculated for the participants' pre-test and post-test concerning the reading section. Table (6) declares the findings of the paired samples t-test.

Table (6): Reading skills Section of the Three Skills Paired Samples T-Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Scoring on the Pretest Three Skills Reading Section - Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Reading Section	-5.33	1.47747	.14775	-5.62316	-5.03684	-36.075	99	.000

As it is obvious in table (6), the findings illustrated that t (99) = (-36.075), p (.000) ≤.05. This is a clear evidence that there is a statistical significant difference between the reading skills section of the three skills pre-test and the reading skills section of the post-test. This statistical significant difference is in the favour of the post-test. This means that the application of the study program enhanced the participants' English language reading skills. To support these findings and to get more evidence, the effect size was calculated for the two tests as stated in table (7).

Table (7): Effect Size of the Study Program for the Reading Skills Section

Dependent Variable: Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Reading Section

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	439.429a	12	36.619	24.207	.000	.770
Intercept	14477.158	1	14477.158	9569.980	.000	.991
Pretest	439.429	12	36.619	24.207	.000	.770
Error	131.611	87	1.513			
Total	25032.000	100				
Corrected Total	571.040	99				
a. R Squared = .770 (Adjusted R Squared = (.738)						

The findings in table (7) illustrate the effect size results that F (12,87) = (24.207), P.= (.000), whereas the Partial Eta Squared"η2" is (.738) which is a large effect size. Thus, the second study question was answered and the third hypothesis which is there is a positive correlational relationship between reading proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language was accepted.

Answering the Third Study Question and Test the Fourth Hypothesis

To answer this question and verify the related hypothesis, the paired samples t-test and the effect size results of the pre-test and post-test related to the writing skills section of the three skills test were calculated. Table (8) indicated the results of the paired samples t-test.

Table (8): Writing skills Section of the Three Skills Paired Samples T-Test

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Scoring on the Pretest Three Skills Writing Section - Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Writing Section	-2.75000	2.68695	.26869	-3.28315	-2.21685	-10.235	99	.000

The results from table (8) show that t (99) = (-10.235), p (.000) ≤.05. This is a clear evidence that there is a statistical significant difference between the pretest and the posttest of the writing skills section in favor of the post-test. This proved that the study program improved the participants' writing skills. For more evidence, the effect size was conducted for the pre/posttest of the writing section of the three skills test as indicated in table (9).

Table (9): Effect Size of the Study Program for the Reading Skills Section

Dependent Variable: Scoring on the Posttest Three Skills Writing Section					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1743.951a	18	96.886	14.988	.000
Intercept	11544.034	1	11544.034	1785.811	.000
Prewriting	1743.951	18	96.886	14.988	.000
Error	523.609	81	6.464		
Total	20818.000	100			
Corrected Total	2267.560	99			
a. R Squared = .769 (Adjusted R Squared = (.718)					

As illustrated in Table (9) that F (18,81) = (14.988), P.= (.000), whereas the Partial Eta Squared "η2" is (.718) which is a large effect size for the program of the study (IPBTSAEL) on developing the participants' writing skills. Consequently, the third question was answered and the fourth hypothesis:There is a positive correlational relationship between writing proficiency in standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) and its counterpart in English language, was tested and accepted.

For more evidence on the effective role of applying the study program (I PBTSAEL) in the enhancement of the participants' English language proficiency skills of speaking, reading and writing, the qualitative interpretations based on the discussion group of the 16 participants semi-structured interviews sustained and supported the statistical results collected from the paired-sample t-tests and the effect size analyses.

While answering the study participants (eight males and eight females) to the three semi- structured interview questions, it was found that there are common themes among them that illustrated the great extent of the relationship and impact of the use of standard Arabic language (Fus`ha) on the proficiency in the three English language skills of speaking, reading and writing. This claim was evidenced and supported through the selection of some responses of the study participants to demonstrate these themes.

Most of the study discussion group participants who were interviewed after the study program application agreed that studying in Standard Arabic (Fus`ha), then studying the same course in English facilitated the process of understanding the academic content and emphasized the close relationship between Arabic language (Fus`ha) and English language. This appeared in the statements of the participants. A female Participant (A) stated that" When the course content was explained in the first half of the lecture in Standard Arabic (Fus`ha), I understood the content, so there was no difficulty when it was explained in English only in the second half of the lecture. I felt that my understanding of the material in Fus`ha helped me a lot in not taking any time to translate vocabulary from English to Arabic in my brain and vice-versa. It is like there is a part in my mind connects Fus'ha and English language".

Another female participant (B) reported that "One of the most important advantages of this program that it helps so much to translate from English to Arabic and vice-versa. Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) is very easy to be translated to English rather vernacular Arabic which makes the person struggles to translate it to English language"

A third male participant (C) stated that " I think that the academic material I read, write or speak in Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) made it easier and spontaneous for me when writing, reading, or speaking the same academic material in English". A fourth male participant (D) mentioned that "After participating in this study program and the benefit I gained as a result of it, I wish that all academic subjects would be taught to us in the same way. I mean half of the lecture should be taught to us in Standard Arabic and the other half in English in all lectures". All this qualitative data went side by side with the quantitative one to prove the interconnectedness and the correlational relationship between Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and standard English concerning the three skills of speaking, reading and writing.

DISCUSSION

The study quantitative and qualitative results revealed the close relationship between Standard Arabic and proficiency in English language and this appeared in mastering the study participants of the three skills of speaking, reading and writing in English language. With regard to the quantitative results, after conducting the paired samples t-tests and calculating the effect size of the study program (IPBTSAEL) on the study participants, the findings proved that there were significant differences between the pre and post-tests of the three skills of speaking, reading and writing in the favour of the post tests. This goes in line with several previous studies (e.g. Abu Ghwaileh, 2014; Dweik and Abu Al Hommos, 2007; Mourssi ,2013; Rahman,2015)

In the meantime, the results of the study, whether quantitative or qualitative, proved that there is a great impact of Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) on the proficiency of the three English language skills of speaking, reading and writing which was not affected by the gender factor between males and females. This is evident in the pre and post test scores for both sexes with regard to the Three-Skills Test. As there is a great similarity between the statistical significance of both sexes concerning their scores of the three skills of speaking, reading and writing in the pre/post-tests. Even in their responses to the semi-structured interview questions, it was found that both sexes are fully convinced that the use of Standard Arabic, as happened during the application of the study program, has a great effect on developing their English language skills of speaking, reading and writing. All this confirms that the study program has demonstrated the close relationship between the use of Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and the enhancement of speaking, reading and writing skills in the English language for the EFL learners.

CONCLUSION

The current study is gaining a great importance in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to non-native speakers, especially in the area of interference between the first language and the learned or target language. Unlike other studies that have proven a negative relationship between the mother tongue and the learned language, the results of the current study have demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between Standard Arabic and English language, especially in developing speaking, reading and writing skills in the English language. This was evident and apparent in the current 100 study participants (males or females) through the application of the study program, integrated program-based three skills of Arabic and English language (IPBTSAEL), which continued throughout the second semester in the academic year 2017/2018.

The statistical significant findings of the study which came through conducting the paired samples t- tests on the study pre-post three skills test (PPTST) as p (.000) ≤.05 in all tests and the accompanied effect sizes measurements ((.872); (.726); (.738); (.718)) indicated that applying the study program (IPBTSAEL) enhanced the participants' English language skills of speaking, reading and writing. All this statistical data was supported with the qualitative data collected from conducting the semi-structured interviews with the 16th discussion group participants (8 females and 8 males). As the

participants in both sexes illustrated in their answers on the interview questions that using Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) during the application of the study program helped them to a great extent to improve their English skills of speaking, reading and writing.

 All this collected data, whether quantitative or qualitative, urged the researcher to call for the necessity of implementing the current study program in all academic courses taught to the undergraduate students specializing in English language in all the EFL Saudi University contexts. This is in addition to all ESP students of the other colleges whose specialization requires mastering English language in addition to Arabic, such as students of the Faculties of Science, Medicine, Pharmacy and Engineering. In other terms, all those undergraduate students with their different disciplines should study their academic courses in Standard Arabic (Fus`ha) and English language according to the current study program to move forward in their English language skills proficiency, particularly those of speaking, reading and writing.

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