

Second Language Writing and Culture: Issues and Challenges from the Saudi Learners' Perspective

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Abstract

The focus of this article addresses and explores English L2 writing difficulties and challenges among foundation year Saudi foreign language learners up to intermediate level students. Saudi, English foreign language (EFL) learners are commonly stereotyped as poor writers of English, the target second language (L2). How does the Saudi context uniquely un-level the playing field in contrast to non-Arab contexts in its response to personal written expression? The researcher attempts to understand and explain contextually significant challenges the Saudi learner contends with on a subtle, yet powerfully influential level. Implications are made in the conclusion of this article for focused approaches to the writing task and skill development with awareness to Saudi learner identity and history. This article is a theoretical literary review of writing and the Arab learner; and is divided into four parts. First, the context is the Saudi learner whose educational experience has taken place in Saudi Arabia; and second, the term 'Arab learner' refers to subject participants cited in research articles that may or may not specifically be from Saudi Arabia. Part one begins with an introduction to the aims and the rationale of the article. Part two describes Arab learner attitudes towards the complexity of foreign language writing. The third part defines the term 'culture' and its influence on the Arab learners' English writing development. Part four then examines the potentially contentious effects of religious conformity and cultural resistance to self-expression. The article closes with a conclusion and implications for the Arab learner'.

Keywords: The Saudi learner and writing; second language writing; Arab identity and writing; challenges for Saudi L2 writers