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Writing Competence and Lexical Diversity in EFL Context of Hungarian and Jordanian University Students

Ahmad Naji[1], Ibrahim Rawshdeh[2]
[1]University of Pannonia, Veszprem, Hungary
Veszprem, jozsef Attila u. 34/2, 8200
[1]University of Pannonia, Veszprem, Hungary
Veszprem, Egyetem u.12, 8200

E-mail: [1]naji.ahmad@phd.uni-pannon.hu, [2]rawshdeh@phd.uni-pannon.hu

Abstract
This quantitative correlational study investigates the relationship between lexical diversity (LD) and writing competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among 66 Hungarian and 64 Jordanian university students, balanced for gender and English proficiency and all enrolled in English studies programs. Participants completed a Bilingual Language Profile (BLP), providing information about their English use, proficiency, and attitudes, and then crafted narratives following a silent film. Lexical diversity, assessed using Text Inspector (an online software), was measured through VocD and MTLD. Writing competence was evaluated using the holistic scoring approach. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between writing competence scores and LD measures VocD and MTLD in both groups, with slightly higher scores for Hungarians. The Hungarian group, predominantly at the C1 level, showed higher proficiency compared to B2-level-dominant Jordanians. Although gender differences in LD and writing competence were observed, they were not statistically significant. This research highlights the practical implications for educators, emphasizing the correlation between writing competence and Vocabulary knowledge in an EFL context.

Keywords: EFL; Writing; Vocabulary; Competency; Proficiency

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing as a skill becomes increasingly demanding as writers advance (Myhill & Newman, 2016). Experience prompts writers to invest more effort and reflection in their work (Kellogg, 1994:204). The writing process involves selection, shaping, reflection, and revision which necessitate a growing vocabulary understanding that influences writers' choices (Myhill & Newman, 2016). Learning to write involves active cognitive engagement (Ofte, 2014) and provides learners with control over

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their cognitive processes (Hattie, 2010), fostering awareness of their knowledge and learning processes (Cremin & Myhill, 2012). LD is considered indispensable in written production as it underpins writing at various levels (Cutillas et al., 2014).

Lexical measures play a crucial role in second language (L2) writing research, providing insights into the quality of written texts and a writer's vocabulary proficiency and size (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Addressing lexical quality is significant in instructional settings, influencing curriculum development and material selection decisions. It holds equal importance in writing assessments, offering valuable information about proficiency levels. The literature employs various terms to describe lexical quality, such as lexical range, verbal creativity, semantic abilities, semantic proficiency, semantic factors, vocabulary size, lexical richness, lexical sophistication, lexical variation, lexical density, and lexical diversity (Crystal, 1987; Fradis, Mihailescu, & Jipescu, 1992; Laufer, 2003). However, there exists a degree of confusion and diffusion in nomenclature, as different concepts are used interchangeably, and diverse measures quantify lexical quality, encompassing both language abilities of producers and the quality of products (Yu, 2010). Attempts to unify these concepts led Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, and Kim (1998) to introduce the term "lexical complexity," emphasizing the varied and sophisticated nature of words produced. Similarly, Malvern et al. (2004) employed "vocabulary richness" to encompass both lexical sophistication and lexical diversity, while Read (2000:200) classified lexical richness into components like lexical variation, lexical sophistication, lexical density, and the number of errors (lexical accuracy).

Receptive and productive knowledge distinctions are vital (Laufer, 1998), where receptive knowledge involves comprehension, and productive knowledge includes controlled and free productive vocabulary. Productive knowledge is considered a more advanced skill, requiring understanding of word class, functions, and collocations (Schmitt, 2014). Contemporary perspectives on word knowledge highlight three dimensions: form, meaning, and use (Nation and Meara, 2013). 'Form' involves recognizing spoken and written forms and parts of a word. 'Meaning' encompasses understanding the form-meaning relationship, concepts, referents, and word associations, while 'use' pertains to grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints on word usage.

Lexical knowledge is an essential part of a language. This is one of the major prerequisites for academic achievement given that it is a fundamental building block of language that strongly influences language comprehension and production (Milton & Treffers-Daller, 2013). It has been shown that vocabulary size in infancy strongly predicts cognitive and linguistic abilities at the ages of four (Feldman et al., 2005) and eight (Marchman and Fernald, 2008). Writing has proven to be an excellent means of consolidating and promoting vocabulary growth, and vocabulary is among the most crucial features of writing (Muncie, 2002). Several studies on the interconnectedness of vocabulary and writing have shown that lack of vocabulary negatively affects writing in foreign languages (Leki & Carson, 1994; Uzawa &

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Cumming, 1989). It has also been demonstrated that vocabulary proficiency might best predict the overall quality of written compositions (Astika, 1993). Wilkins (1972) pointed out the surprising neglect of vocabulary in linguistic competence discussions, with linguists having little to offer language teachers in practical terms. This issue was highlighted in subsequent research by Richards (1976), Levenston (1979), Meara (1980), Ellis (2006), and Coady and Huckin (1997). Factors contributing to this neglect include the influence of structuralism and the Chomskyan school of linguistics (Tozcu & Coady, 2004) and the difficulty of integrating vocabulary into a structure-based syllabus (Sinclair & Renouf, 1988). Meara and Buxton (1987) express satisfaction that neglect of vocabulary is changing, and recent observations by Gonzalez-Fernandez and Schmitt (2017) indicate an "explosion in the amount of vocabulary research," with over 30% of research since 1900 published in the previous 11 years according to Nation and Meara (2013). Despite increased research in second/foreign language acquisition, gaps persist, particularly in understanding the link between vocabulary knowledge (both receptive and productive) and productive language skills, such as writing and speaking.

In contemporary second language research, the intricate link between vocabulary and writing skills gains significance. The literature emphasizes varied dimensions of lexical quality, from size and richness to metadiscourse. Notably, the specific connection of lexical diversity (LD) to writing competence in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context lacks thorough exploration. This study aims to fill this gap, investigating how LD correlates with writing proficiency among EFL university students. The cross-cultural dimension compares Hungarian and Jordanian students in English studies, offering insights into LD and writing competence variations. Through these inquiries, the study contributes a nuanced understanding of the broader discourse on second-language writing.

1.1. Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant positive correlation between writing competence and lexical diversity in EFL university students' written narratives?
RQ2: Do variations exist in the scores of LD and writing competence between Hungarian and Jordanian university students enrolled in English studies programs, considering their similarities in age and age of English acquisition**?**

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored the connection between vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary use, and writing quality in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Astika (1993) found that vocabulary accounted for up to 84% of the variance in holistic assessments of writing samples using the Composition Scale of English as a Second Language. Kiliç (2019) demonstrated that vocabulary knowledge significantly affects the writing and speaking abilities of Turkish EFL learners, explaining 26% of the variation in writing performance. Stæhr (2008) emphasized the

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essential role of vocabulary knowledge in writing performance, showing correlations with listening, reading, and writing competencies. Engber (1995) observed a relationship between lexical competence and written composition quality. Further studies (e.g., Daller & Phelan, 2007) have examined the prediction of teachers' ratings of EFL essays by assessing LD and finding strong and significant correlations. Gonzalez (2013) investigated the impact of LD on writing scores in essays by native and non-native English speakers, highlighting the role of vocabulary in writing. Proficiency accounts for the differences in LD and writing quality between native and non-native speakers, as supported by De Haan and van Esch (2005) in their study of native and non-native Spanish learners' essays.

Crossley et al. (2012) found that lexical indices can predict language learners' proficiency levels, with LD increasing with proficiency levels. This study used computational lexical competency indices from Coh-Metrix to categorize second language (L2) texts based on writers' TOEFL and ACT ESL Compass scores. Advanced L2 writers exhibited greater LD than beginners did, supporting the idea that advanced learners use broader vocabulary. Masrai (2022) reached similar conclusions in a study of Arabic-speaking English learners, emphasizing strong positive correlations between vocabulary knowledge, collocational competence, and general language proficiency. Previous studies have also highlighted the significance of vocabulary size and collocational competence in language proficiency (Masrai & Milton, 2018; Milton, 2010; Crossley et al., 2015; Namvar, 2012). However, vocabulary size has been proposed as the primary factor contributing to learners' overall language proficiency (Milton, 2018; Milton, 2010).

As LD is known to increase with proficiency and it is well-established that language proficiency influences writing quality (Al Ghamdi, 2010; Cumming, 1989; Sasaki, 2004). Cumming's (1989) study, which assessed writing ability and second-language proficiency of 23 young adults across three composition tasks, revealed a significant positive impact of proficiency on writing performance. A substantial proportion of the variation in text quality is attributed to language proficiency, indicating that L2 proficiency contributes to the overall writing quality and enhances attention to various aspects of writing. These findings suggest that writing performance advances as learners gain proficiency in their second language, resulting in more effective writing skills. Al-Saadi's (2020) recent investigation focusing on Omani Arabic-speaking learners of English as an L2 further supports the mediating effect of language proficiency and writing fluency on text quality. The study demonstrated that English proficiency significantly accounted for the variance in participants' writing quality, with female learners exhibiting superior text quality and writing fluency due to their higher L2 proficiency. However, these findings contrast with those of Mirshekaran et al. (2018), who reported that L2 writing competence was not significantly influenced by L2 proficiency.

Crossley and McNamara's (2011) study investigated the complex interactions between cognitive abilities, vocabulary knowledge, and reading skills. Although not

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directly related to writing, this study offers insights into how cognitive factors and vocabulary influence language skills, which can be extended to writing competence.

The issue of vocabulary size is significant, with Nation (2006) suggesting that 2,000-3,000-word families provide 95% coverage in everyday conversation, while 6,000-7,000-word families offer 98% coverage. However, setting size requirements for writing or speaking proves challenging due to individual differences in vocabulary usage effectiveness (Gonzalez-Fernandez & Schmitt, 2017). Laufer and Nation (1995) also examined vocabulary size and its use in second-language writing. It explores the relationship between lexical richness and written production quality, aligning with your investigation into the correlation between LD and writing competence.

Cremer et al. (2010) emphasize that vocabulary knowledge involves more than knowing words; it requires various types of knowledge about each word and the creation of semantic networks among lexical items. Freebody and Anderson (1983) distinguish between the 'breadth' (quantity) and 'depth' (quality) of vocabulary knowledge. Gonzalez-Fernandez and Schmitt (2017) note that breadth and depth grow non-parallelly but contribute to each other.

Milton & Meara (1995) analyzed vocabulary use in Nigerian newspapers, providing insights into LD and frequency in written texts. Although not directly linked to the participant group, this study's focus on vocabulary patterns and diversity is relevant to this research.

In a pioneering 2019 study by Bax, Nakatsuhara, and Waller, metadiscourse in general second language learner writing was investigated. This study analyzed 281 metadiscourse markers across 900 exam scripts at CEFR B2-C2 levels utilizing Text Inspector (Bax, 2012) and human analysts. Notably, higher-level writers used fewer metadiscourse markers compared to lower-level writers, but they exhibited a broader range within 8 of the 13 marker categories. This study underscored the critical importance of analyzing both the entire class and individual metadiscourse items. The findings are significant for those engaged in CEFR assessment scale development and educators dedicated to supporting learner development.

Despite considerable research investigating the impact of vocabulary on reading and listening skills, there exists a noticeable gap in the exploration of its relationship with writing. Studies by Astika (1993), Engber (1995), and Daller and Phelan (2007) have demonstrated significant correlations between various vocabulary measures and composition quality. Additionally, Laufer and Nation (1995) and subsequent research (e.g., Stæhr, 2008; Milton et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2016) have confirmed a close association between vocabulary size and written work. However, these studies predominantly focus on general vocabulary measures and composition quality, leaving a research gap concerning the specific link between lexical diversity (LD) and writing competence in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This research aims to establish connections between vocabulary knowledge and the assessed proficiency in writing skills. It adopts a quantitative correlational study design, seeking to discern the association between vocabulary knowledge and written production in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were university students between the ages of 19 and 24, all of whom were enrolled in English studies programs within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study included two distinct groups: Hungarian participants (N=66, 36 males and 30 females), and Jordanian participants (N=64, 21 males and 43 females). All participants were the native speakers of their respective languages. Furthermore, both groups demonstrated a comparable level of English proficiency, as they were Bachelor's students in their last year of English studies. These factors ensured a level playing field in terms of language proficiency and academic background, making the comparative analysis of Lexical diversity writing competence between the two groups more meaningful and insightful. This linguistic environment allows participants to interact with English in various social, academic, and professional contexts, thereby contributing to their language exposure and usage.

3.3 Data Sources and Research Instruments

This study employed a combination of established tools to collect comprehensive data to facilitate in-depth exploration of the relationships between LD and writing.

1. Language Profile (BLP): The Language Profile (BLP) was adapted from Birdsong et al. (2012) to gather essential information about the participants' linguistic backgrounds and their use of English, proficiency, and attitude.
2. Written Production Task (Silent Film Narrative): The silent film is titled 'Happiness' by Tuomas Tuppurainen, a media professional and designer from Finland. The study's chosen film is accessible at the following link: "https://youtu.be/_OHDssbQPlY?si=7FOeUBoH1tSP8QAA". The film showcased linguistic diversity and offered participants exposure to various language structures, vocabulary, and context. Its complexity struck a balance, providing linguistic challenges while remaining accessible. Furthermore, the film was readily available and was ethically sound for use in this study. Collectively, these considerations ensured that the silent film chosen for the task served the study's research goals effectively.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

Bilingual Language Profile was administered in a paper-based format. Subsequently, the data collected through the BLP were transferred to an Excel

spreadsheet to facilitate further analysis in the later stages of the study. After the participants had filled out the BLP, they were shown a 3-minute animated silent film and immediately afterward were asked to write a narrative of the film and a personal reflection. The 130 narratives were typed on Word docs to be further analyzed.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the narrative writing task were subjected to comprehensive quantitative analysis and underwent correlation analysis using SPSS to unveil significant correlations.

1. Data collected from BLP assessments provided valuable information on participants' language proficiency, language use, and language attitude in both their native languages (Hungarian or Arabic) and English
2. Holistic Scoring of Written Narratives: The narratives crafted by our participants underwent a meticulous holistic scoring process. This process entails rating narratives on a scale ranging from one (indicating weaker performance) to five (reflecting excellence). Our holistic assessment considered a spectrum of factors encompassing sentence length, complexity, use of various clause types, vocabulary breadth, idiomatic language usage, and overall accuracy. By employing this comprehensive approach, we aimed to capture the many aspects that reflect participants' writing competence in a real-world context.
3. Control for Interrater Reliability: Maintaining the credibility and trustworthiness of the assessments was paramount. To ensure the consistency and reliability of the evaluations, the procedure was subjected to control measures. All the written texts were evaluated holistically by two raters, and this scoring encompassed various dimensions of English proficiency. This holistic approach was adapted from (Verspoor, Schmid, and Xu, 2012; and Lowie and Verspoor, 2019). The control framework reinforced the credibility of the collected data and fortified the validity and interrater reliability of the study.
4. LD and the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) Levels: The assessment of LD in written narratives was conducted using the advanced lexical profiling tool, "Text Inspector," developed by Bax (2012). With over 200 metrics calibrated against the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR), CEFR levels are assigned to narratives, and LD is measured by both Vocabulary Diversity (VocD) and Measure of Textual Lexical Diversity (MTLD). High VocD values indicate a broad vocabulary range, while MTLD, standing for Measure of Textual Lexical Diversity, provides a nuanced measure of lexical diversity across different segment lengths. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough evaluation of lexical richness.

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4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics (BLP)

As can be seen from Table 1 below, The BLP results indicate that the Jordanian and Hungarian groups have similar mean ages. Jordanians started learning English slightly earlier than Hungarians. Hungarians reported a higher mean percentage of English language use than Jordanians. Furthermore, both groups demonstrated good English proficiency and attitude towards English.

Table 1: BLP frequencies for Age/ Age learning English/ English use/ English proficiency/ English Attitude and number of languages in both Jordanian and Hungarian groups.

Groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age Hu	66	19	25	21.507
Age Jo	64	18	24	21.312
Age learning English Hu	66	6	10	6.667
Age learning English Jo	64	3	10	5.734
English Use/week % Hu	66	30.00%	60.00%	42.91%
English Use/week % Jo	64	20.00%	60.00%	37.58%
English Proficiency/ 6 Hu	66	4	6	4.841
English Proficiency/ 6 Jo	64	3	6	4.703
English Attitude/ 6 Hu	66	3	5.5	3.909
English Attitude/ 6 Jo	64	1	5.5	4.023
Languages Hu	66	2	5	3
Languages Jo	64	2	4	2.7

Bilingual language profile analysis revealed that both groups were relatively homogeneous in terms of age, onset of learning English, English use, English proficiency, and English attitude. These results suggest that the linguistic backgrounds and language learning experiences of the participants were reasonably similar, thus mitigating potential confounding variables.

4.2 Findings related to the first research question: lexical diversity and writing competency within each group

The results related to the correlation between lexical diversity and writing competency within the Hungarian group of participants reveal several significant findings. Table 2 shows a statistically significant positive correlation between writing competence scores and both measures of lexical diversity, MTLD (Pearson Correlation = 0.336, p = 0.008) and VocD (Pearson Correlation = 0.367, p = 0.002), suggesting that as the overall writing competency increases, there is a tendency for higher lexical diversity. These findings shed light on the relationship between writing competence and lexical diversity within the Hungarian group.

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Table 2: Correlations between lexical diversity and writing competency in the Hungarian stories

		writing competence	MTLD	VocD
writing competence	**Pearson Correlation**	1	.326**	.367**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.002
	N	66	66	66
MTLD	Pearson Correlation	.326**	1	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.000
	N	66	66	66
VocD	Pearson Correlation	.367**	.617**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	
	N	66	66	66

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the relationships between measures of lexical diversity (MTLD and VocD) and writing competency in the Jordanian stories. The results show a significant positive correlation between writing competence and MTLD (Pearson Correlation = 0.337, p = 0.006) as well as VocD (Pearson Correlation = 0.292, p = 0.019), suggesting that higher writing competency is associated with increased lexical diversity. These findings suggest that in Jordanian stories, as in Hungarian stories, higher levels of writing competency are associated with greater lexical diversity.

Table 3: Correlations between lexical diversity and writing competency for the Jordanian stories

		writing competence	**MTLD**	**VocD**
writing competence	**Pearson Correlation**	**1**	**.337****	**.292***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		**.006**	**.019**
	N	**64**	**64**	**64**
MTLD	**Pearson Correlation**	**.337****	**1**	**.730****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.006**		**.000**
	N	**64**	**64**	**64**
VocD	**Pearson Correlation**	**.292***	**.730****	**1**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.019**	**.000**	
	N	**64**	**64**	**64**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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The scatter plot matrices below (Figures 1 and 2) show the relationships between Writing Competency and lexical diversity measures, VocD (Vocabulary Diversity), and MTLD (Measure of Textual Lexical Diversity) in both groups. In each scatter plot, dots represent individual data points, and the proximity of dots illustrates the strength of the correlation between the corresponding pair of variables. The density of dots provides insight into the prevalence of specific correlation values, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the interconnected relationships between Writing Competency and lexical diversity. The matrix offers a visual tool to analyze multiple bivariate relationships simultaneously.

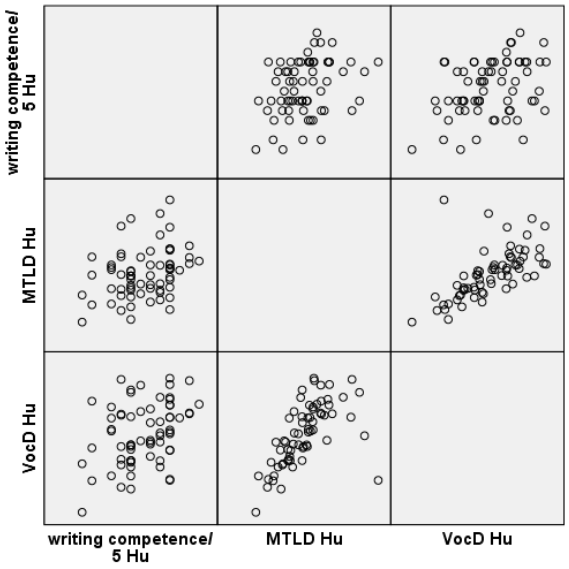

Figure 1: Scatter plot matrix of writing competency and lexical diversity measures in the Hungarian narratives

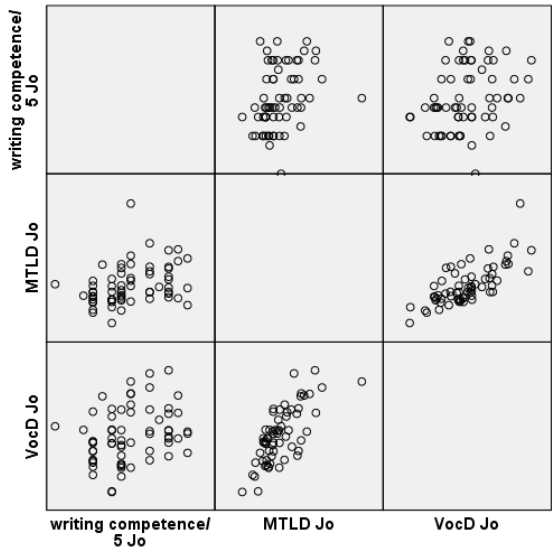

Figure 2: Scatter plot matrix of writing competency and lexical diversity measures in the Jordanian

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narratives

4.3. Findings related to the second research question: CEFR, lexical diversity, and writing competency between groups (Jordanians and Hungarians)

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels measured using Text Inspector for Jordanians and Hungarians in this study. Among Jordanians, the majority of participants fall under the B2 level, with 40 individuals. Additionally, 13 Jordanian participants are at the C1 level, and 11 are at the B1+ level.

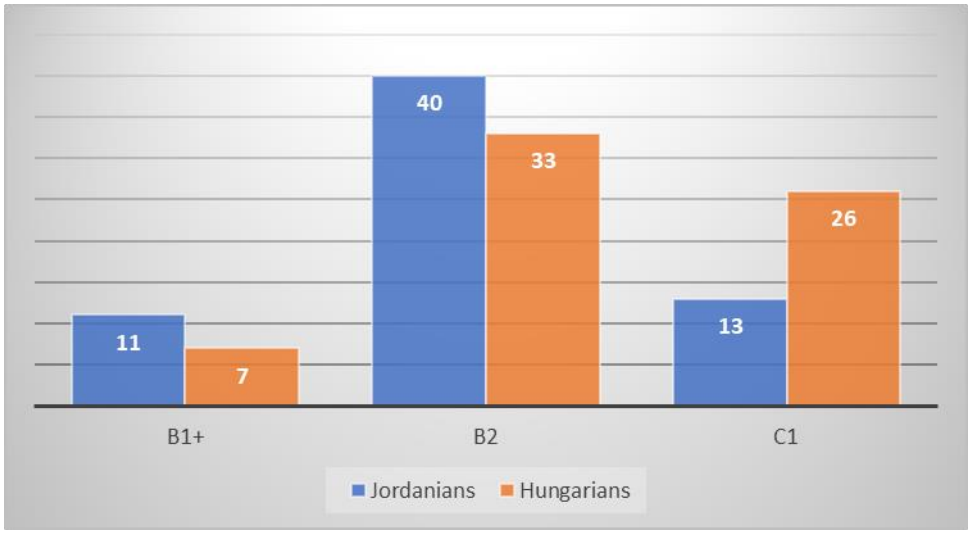

Figure 3: CEFR levels according to text inspector

The results in Table 2 below indicate differences in writing competency and lexical diversity between Jordanian and Hungarian participants. Hungarians scored higher in both writing holistic (Mean = 3.33) and lexical diversity measures, specifically in MTLD (Mean = 70.25) and VocD (Mean = 70.87), compared to Jordanians who scored slightly lower in writing holistic (Mean = 2.99), MTLD (Mean = 65.13), and VocD (Mean = 59.81). However, these differences in means were not statistically significant.

Table 4: lexical diversity and writing competence between Jordanians and Hungarians

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
writing competence Hungarians	66	1.8	4.8	3.33	0.7087
writing competence Jordanians	64	1	4.5	2.9883	0.82427
MTLD Hungarians	66	39.05	117.53	70.2514	15.9178
MTLD Jordanians	64	35.03	129.8	65.1255	15.662
VocD Hungarians	66	35.63	95.87	70.8729	13.8754

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VocD Jordanians	64	29.62	93.93	59.8059	14.4288

4.4. Findings related to differences between males and females

An independent sample t-test was conducted for males and females in terms of VocD, MTLD, and Writing competence and the results indicate no evidence of a significant difference for both Hungarian and Jordanian narratives combined. As can be seen from Table 5 below, the p-values for all measures are greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05.

Table 5: Independent t-test Analysis for VocD, MTLD, and Writing Competence between Male and Female in both groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		**t-test for Equality of Means**		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Writing Holistic	.299	0.456	-1.005	128	0.317
			-1.015	124.224	0.312
MTLD	1.782	0.633	0.845	128	0.4
			0.839	116.852	0.403
VocD	.046	0.117	1.272	128	0.206
			1.252	112.243	0.213

**No significant difference

The results of the independent sample t-test are supported by the means outlined in Table 6 for both Jordanian and Hungarian narratives. The table provides details on mean scores, standard deviations, and standard error means for writing competence, MTLD, and VocD among male and female groups in both populations. It is observed that Jordanian females tend to exhibit slightly higher mean scores in writing competence, MTLD, and VocD compared to males. Conversely, in the Hungarian group, males demonstrate slightly higher means than females. However, the overall results do not reach statistical significance.

Table 6: Sex means for Jordanians and Hungarians

	Sex	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
writing competence Jordanians	**Male**	21	2.9167	0.91969
	Female	43	3.0233	0.78265
MTLD Jordanians	**Male**	21	62.9886	13.00138
	Female	43	66.1691	16.85397

VocD Jordanians	**Male**	21	57.9962	16.37624
	Female	43	60.6898	13.49601
writing competence Hungarians	**Male**	36	3.403	0.6716
	Female	30	3.242	0.7528
MTLD Hungarians	**Male**	36	72.1803	17.80467
	Female	30	67.9367	13.23457
VocD Hungarians	**Male**	36	72.1456	14.02634
	Female	30	69.3457	13.77167

5. DISCUSSION

The present study contributes valuable insights into the relationships between lexical diversity (LD) and writing competence among Hungarian and Jordanian university students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). The findings shed light on key aspects of language learning and writing development in an academic context, offering practical implications for educators and curriculum design.

The study aligns with the existing literature emphasizing the significance of vocabulary knowledge in language proficiency and academic achievement (Laufer & Nation, 1995; Milton & Meara, 1995). The participants, irrespective of their nationality, demonstrated high English proficiency, indicating a robust language learning environment. The Bilingual Language Profile (BLP) results reinforced the homogeneity of both groups, ensuring a fair comparison in terms of language exposure, proficiency, and attitude.

Consistent with prior research (Astika, 1993; Kiliç, 2019; Stæhr, 2008), this study establishes a statistically significant positive correlation between writing competence and lexical diversity measures (MTLD and VocD) in both Hungarian and Jordanian narratives. The positive relationship underscores the importance of a rich and varied vocabulary in enhancing writing quality, emphasizing that as writing competency improves, so does lexical diversity.

Despite slightly higher mean scores in both writing competence and lexical diversity measures for the Hungarian group, the differences were not statistically significant. This suggests that, while there are variations in individual scores, both groups exhibit a comparable level of proficiency in writing and lexical diversity. The distribution of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels also supports this, with both groups demonstrating proficiency at the B2 and C1 levels, indicating a solid foundation in English language skills.

Exploring gender differences within each group revealed nuanced patterns. In both Hungarian and Jordanian groups, females generally scored higher in writing competence and lexical diversity measures, although these differences were not statistically significant. These observations add depth to our understanding of potential gender influences on language production within an EFL context.

The study underscores the interdependence of lexical diversity and writing competence, providing educators with insights to enhance language learning strategies. The robust correlations found in both Hungarian and Jordanian groups suggest that fostering a rich vocabulary may positively impact writing skills. Furthermore, the homogeneity observed in linguistic backgrounds among participants highlights the potential for implementing targeted interventions in language education.

6. CONCLUSSION

This study investigated the correlation between lexical diversity (LD) and writing competence among Hungarian and Jordanian university students enrolled in English studies programs, responding to two key research questions. In addressing the first research question, a significant positive correlation surfaced between writing competence and LD measures (VocD and MTLD) in both groups. Despite the slightly higher mean scores for Hungarians, the disparities between the two groups, as explored in the second research question, were not statistically significant. The absence of significant differences is noteworthy given the careful balancing of factors – both groups share similar ages, English proficiency levels, enrollment in English studies programs, and English as the language of instruction. Notably, gender analysis indicated higher scores for females, although without statistical significance. These findings underscore the fundamental role of a diverse vocabulary in effective writing skills within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Educators can leverage these insights to enhance language learning outcomes by integrating targeted vocabulary-building strategies into curricula. While acknowledging these contributions, it's essential to consider study limitations, and future research could further explore diverse proficiency levels and longitudinal studies for a more nuanced understanding.

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