

Negative Transfer: Arabic Language Interference to Learning English

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Abstract

This paper is a survey of literature review whereby the researcher explored previous studies and pieces of research conducted to investigate the negative effects of Arabic language interference to learning English. Theories of negative language transfer were discussed, definitions of errors and mistakes were highlighted, sources of errors were stated, and different taxonomies of types of errors made by Arab students learning English were listed. It was not a purpose of this paper to discuss the sampling, or the setting of the previous research. Rather, it aimed at pinpointing their findings that can clarify the differences between Arabic and English and how these differences cause Arab learners of English to make mistakes in producing the target language. The researcher elucidated the types of syntactic, lexical, phonological, morphological, and orthographical errors made by the Arab learners of English as quoted from previous literature. Errors in forming tenses, pronouns, relative clauses, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, pronunciation, and punctuation were listed. A lot of examples were used to illustrate these errors. At the end of the current paper, the researcher listed recommendations as a contribution to guide the English as a second language instructors on what might be regarded good pedagogical strategies and techniques to deal with their students' errors.

Keywords: contrastive analysis; errors and mistakes; negative transfer.

1.1. Introduction

According to the Egyptian Demographic Center (2000), Arabic is the mother tongue of about 300 million people (Abi Samara, 2003). Arabic is a descendant of Semitic languages, whereas English is an Indo-European language primarily originated from the Anglo Frisian dialects. As for the number of alphabets, Arabic has twenty-eight letters. ‘Hamza’ the glottal stop is sometimes considered the twenty ninth letter. In contrast, English has twenty six letters. Orthographically, there is no distinction between upper letters and lower case letters in Arabic as it is always written in a cursive form. In English, the matter is different. In English, there is a clear distinction between upper case letters and lower case letters. English words can be written in both cursive and uncial. One of the most noticeable differences between the two languages is that Arabic is written from right to left. English, on the other hand, is written from left to right. Most importantly, there are distinctive differences between Arabic and English in almost all syntactical, morphological, phonological, lexical, semantic, rhetorical and orthographical aspects. (Ali, 2007:3).

All the above-mentioned differences between the two languages, namely Arabic and English cause students to involuntarily and unconsciously make not only mistakes but also errors. Ellis (2006, 165) pointed out that mistakes are inevitable consequence of our previous experience. Ellis (2006, 165) argued that

Our perception of the world is shaped through the lenses of our prior analyses, beliefs, and preconceptions. The environment provides the setting, with all of the stimuli present, but we view those stimuli using previous experience as a lens. P.165

In this respect, it is useful to distinguish errors from mistakes. Ellis (1997) stated that errors reflect gaps in students’ competence. They occur because the student does not know what is correct. Corder (1999) supports the idea that errors are caused by ignorance of the appropriate rule or structure in the foreign language. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance or slips of tongue (Brown, 2007). They occur because in a particular instance, the student is unable to perform what he or she knows. “A mistake, according to Corder (1999), is a problem not of knowing but of application.” (cited in Tafini, 2009). A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are systematic, in the sense that they are likely to occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only teachers or researchers would locate them, learners would not (Gass and Selinker, 1994; Ellis, 1998). Gass and Selinker (2001:78; 2008:102) define errors as “red flags”. This means errors are warning signals which provide evidence of the learner’s lack of knowledge of the second language.

There are several factors that lead students to make mistakes. One of which is the interference of the learner’s native language. Nunan (2001:89) states “Where the first and second language rules are not the same, errors are likely to occur as a result of interference between the two languages.” Another cause of making mistakes is the inadequate teaching methods. Methods that encourage translation, cause students to make mistakes (Yule, 2009; Al-Buainain, 2010). Students’ personal affairs play a role in this field. For instance, their physical, psychological, social and cultural circumstances may lead them to make errors. Ellis (1994) identifies areas where the learners’ external factors as social contexts are related to making mistakes.

There are two sources of errors which are attributed to the learner’s native language or his/her target language, i.e. the language he/she intends to learn. Two thirds of errors are attributed to native language interference and one third to intra-English interference (Bhela, 1999; Ghawi, 1993). Corder (1971) points out that inter-lingual errors are caused when the learner’s first

language habits (pattern, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him/her from acquiring the patterns and rules of L2 (cited in Abi Samara, 2003). If the two languages are drastically different, learners will use the linguistic patterns they have learnt in their native to help them do tasks in L2 as people are usually pattern seekers. Then one could expect relatively high frequency of errors to occur in L2 (Ellis, 1997; Richard & Schmidt, 2000). The other source of errors are related to the target language (TL) the student is learning. These errors are called the "intralingual/developmental errors. These are errors caused by some processes that learners recourse to when learning the TL. These include generalization, substitution and other processes. The learner, in this case, tries to "derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Richards, 1970 as cited in AbiSamara, 2003: 6).

The occurrence of errors can be explained by referring to learning theories and language theories. The effect of Proactive-Retroactive Inhibition (PI/RI) is the learning theory in this case. The storage of new experiences interferes with memories encoded earlier in time. Therefore, it is hard to learn a new phone number and car registration because the old ones tend to compete and come to mind instead. Proactive Inhibition PI is the effect of prior learning inhibiting new learning (Ellis, 2006:174). This reflects interlingual errors. On the other hand, Retroactive Inhibition (RI) refers to the difficulty in recalling old information because of newly learned information. This reflects intralingual errors (Ellis, 2006). On the other hand, three language theories are used to illustrate why errors are made by Arab learners of English. The Interference or Transfer Theory is one of them. Ellis (1997:51) refers to interference as "Transfer", which he says is "The influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2". According to Jie (as cited in James, 2007), transfer is 'the carrying-over of learned responses from one type of situation to another.' Transfer can be of two types: positive transfer and negative transfer. The positive transfer refers to the process of using rules from L1 which facilitates or has a positive influence on learning L2. This transfer is mostly due to similarities between L1 and L2. In contrast, negative transfer is the transfer of rules from L1 which impedes or has harmful influence on the command of rules of L2. This is due to differences between L1 and L2. Another language theory which is used to explain language errors is the contrastive analysis. It is the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences (Johansson, 2008:9). If the two languages are drastically different, learners will use the linguistic patterns they have learnt in their native language to help them do tasks in learning L2. A third theory that has been used by many researchers to identify the errors made by second language learners is "Error Analysis". Richards and Schmidt (2002:184) define "error analysis as the study of errors made by L2 learners, with the purpose of identifying the causes of these errors." Researchers suggested different taxonomies for error analysis. Keshavarze (1994) cited in Shekhzadeh and Gheichi, (2011) suggest a taxonomy of the inter-lingual errors: phonological errors, morphological errors, grammatical errors lexo-semantic errors, and stylistic elements. James (1998:304) has designed a Taxonomy of Error Analysis that has been used by many researchers to record all the errors made by the Arab learners of English.

1. Grammatical and syntactical errors (prepositions, nouns, pronouns, word order, articles, reported speech, singular/plural forms, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, concordance, and possessive case).
2. Lexical errors (word choice)

3. Substance errors (mechanics: punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).
(Abi Samara, 2000; Diab, 2003; Ali, 2006; Shabeer and Bughio, n.d.).
4. Morphological errors (derivatives, both inflectional and derivational in the forms of affixes: suffixes and prefixes)

In this current literature review, a bulk of previous studies have been traced and analyzed according to their findings to find differences between Arabic and English that causes Arab learners of English to make mistakes in relation to the aspects of James' taxonomy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Misuse of Singularity, Duality and Plurality of nouns

In a study by Salimi (2013: 131) on morphological errors in noun system between Arabic and English, their findings reveal that

English nouns have two numbers: singular and plural. Whereas, Arabic nouns have three numbers: singular, dual and plural. The plural is also of two kinds: sound plural (masculine and feminine) and broken plural. In contrast to English, Arabic syntax has singular, dual, and plural for feminine and masculine nouns. Salimi's study also revealed that English has three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. Gender is solely confined to personal pronouns, whereas Arabic has only two genders: masculine and feminine. Furthermore, English nouns are inflected for genitive case. Whereas, in Arabic, nouns are inflected for three cases, namely, nominative, accusative, and genitive. These cases are distinguished by changing the vowel ling of the final consonant.

Based on the researcher's knowledge and experience in teaching English to Arab learners, the following examples can be given to illustrate Salimi's findings.

In Arabic, we say:

- *Mu'allim*(Singular masculine) / *Mu'allma* (singular feminine)
- *Mu'allimuun* (plural masculine) / *Mu'allimein* (dual masculine)
- *Mu'allimat* (plural feminine)
- *Mu'alimataan; Mu'allimatayin;* (dual feminine; acting as: subject and object.

In English, we say: Teacher (feminine and masculine) / teachers (dual/plural for feminine and masculine).

Thus, some Arab students learning English may not use English plural nouns correctly. Instead, they use numbers to indicate duality or plurality. The following are examples. They may say, "The two child are crying." Others may misuse the noun after numbers because in Arabic a singular noun is used after numbers "three –ten". Thus, the beginner Arab students learning English may say, "He has eleven cousin." Or "There are 21 student in my class."

2.2. Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Many uncountable nouns in English, such as "information, money, damage, housework, equipment", are countable in Arabic. So Arab learners of English tend to pluralize them and use plural verbs after them. The following are examples of students' versions:

- The informations I received were useful.
- Housewives do a lot of houseworks.
- I bought many equipments.

2.3. Misuse of Definite Article

Arabic has one definite article "the". It consists of two letters: "al". It is attached to the beginning of nouns and their adjectives. However, Arabic has no indefinite articles. The definite article is redundantly used by Arab learners of English with nouns that require the definite article in Arabic but not in English. There are three types of errors in the use of articles by the Arabic-speaking learners of English (Diab, 1996).

1. Omission of the definite article

- INCORRECT: Arms of soldiers are guns and daggers.
- CORRECT: The arms of soldiers are guns and daggers.

In the above sentence, the definite article "the" should be used before "arms", but has been dropped because it is not used in Arabic, as it is in the genitive case.

2. Omission of the indefinite article "a".

- INCORRECT: My father works in bank.
- CORRECT: My father works in a bank

In the this sentence, the indefinite article "a" should be used before the noun "bank" in English; but it is dropped, maybe because in Arabic such article is non-existent.

3. Wrong Insertion: Arab students tend to use "the" before nouns which are not normally preceded by this definite article, such as names of most diseases, names of days, names of some places, and in many idiomatic expressions. The reason for this is that in Arabic such nouns are usually preceded by the definite article. In English, abstract words referring to ideas, attributes, or qualities are used without the article 'the'. In Arabic, however, such abstract words are preceded by the definite article equivalent to 'the' in English. (Diab, 1996). The following are examples of INCORRECT sentences which have been formed by Arabic-speaking learners of English.

- The happiness doesn't come from the money.
- People can work in the agriculture or in the industry.
- He went to the Doha.
- He is still in the bed.
- My father suffers from the cancer.
- He was filled with the sadness.
- He studies the music.
- He works in the agriculture.
- When the evil comes, people will die.

The CORRECT forms of all the above sentences should be without the use of the definite article "The"

2.4. Misuse of Prepositions

Essberger (2000) notes differences between Arabic and English prepositions:

- The number of prepositions in Arabic is limited: *min* (from), *'ila* (to), *'an* (about), *'alla* (on,over), *ba/bi* (by, with), *la/li* (of, for), and *fi* (in, into).
- In Arabic, some adverbs can be used as prepositions, such as: *khalfa* (behind), *amam* (in front), *bayna* (between), and many others.
- In English, there are approximately 150 prepositions.

The problems in using English prepositions for Arab students learning English result from two factors. First, not every Arabic preposition has a definite equivalent in English and vice versa. Secondly, not every English or Arabic preposition has definite usage and meaning.

Arab students learning English sometimes make the following errors in using English prepositions (Hamadalla and Tushyeh, n.d.; Zughoul, 1973).

1. Unnecessary insertion: They use prepositions with words which do not need prepositions.
 - INCORRECT: I will practice on making the exercises.
 - CORRECT: I will practice doing the exercises.

The Arabic equivalent is: *anna sawfa atadarabu 'alla (on) al-tamareen.*

2. Omission of necessary prepositions: They omit these prepositions from words which need them.
 - INCORRECT: I waited the bus two hours.
 - CORRECT: I waited for the bus two hours.
3. Wrong substitution: They do not use correct prepositions: The preposition “on” is used in places of “over”, “above”, “at”, and “onto”.

Arab learners of English tend to say “ashamed from, composed from, object on, blame on, where (of, of, to and for) should be used respectively.

- We were interested with the film. “*nahnu istamta'na bilfilm.*”

The misuse of the preposition “with” instead of “in” in the above example occurs because it is equivalent to the Arabic preposition “bi” – which indicates the meaning of “with”.

Table 1 below displays some errors in the use of prepositions that are made by Arab learners who are learning English, with their equivalents in Arabic. (Hamadalla and Tushyeh, n.d.; Zughoul, 1973)

Table 1: Errors in the use of prepositions made by Arab ESL learners

Errors in English	Arabic equivalents
He jumped on the wall. (over)	<i>qafaza 'alla aljedar.</i>
He jumped on the wall. (over)	<i>qafaza 'alla aljedar.</i>
We sat on the table. (at)	<i>nahnu jalasna 'alla atawela.</i>
I will come in 7 o'clock. (at)	<i>anna sawfa atti fi alsa'ati alsabe'a.</i>
I like to pick roses with many colors. (of) He died from hunger. (of)	<i>'ohibbu 'ann altaqeta wardan bi'edati alwan. huwa Matta minaljuu'.</i>
We have lived in Doha from 1975. (since)	<i>nahnu na'eesh fi aldoha min sanat 1975.</i>
One from my brothers is a doctor. (of)	<i>wahed min ikhwati tabeeb.</i>

2.5. Adjectives and Adverbs

Arabic-speaking learners of English find much confusion between adjectives and adverbs in Arabic and English. Arabic adjectives agree in gender and number with nouns, which might be the reason for these learners to make mistakes. (Marpaung, 2014; Al-Aqad, 2013).

- He is a man tall. (Arabic: *hua rajulun taweelun*)
- They are soldiers brave. (Arabic: *hum junuudun shuja'aan*).
- These are girls beautifuls (Arabic: *hunna fataiaatun jamilaatun*)

Some Arab learners of English might use adjectives plus nouns to express adverbs (Marpaung, 2014; Al-Aqad, 2013). This is attributed to the Arabic use of adverbs as they can be formed in two ways. For instance, the word “quickly” can be translated into Arabic in two ways: "Bisur'a" or ' bishaklen saree3). The following are some examples of such errors.

- INCORRECT: The temperature rose a sharp rise.
- CORRECT: The temperature rose sharply.
- INCORRECT: He drove with so fast speed.
- CORRECT: He drove so fast.
- INCORRECT: The singer performed a wonderful performance.
- CORRECT: The singer performed wonderfully.
- INCORRECT: Prices have increased a gradual increase.
- CORRECT: Prices have increased gradually.

In the above examples, the Arab students' versions represented in the ‘incorrect’ versions are related to the Arabic grammatical rule about unrestricted or absolute object.

2.6. Errors in Using Some English Modal Verbs

1. Deletion of the Copula (verb to be) or substituting it with “verb to do”: As there is no “verb to be” in Arabic, Arab learners of English tend to delete them when forming their English sentences. Hence, we can find such sentences in their writings:

- INCORRECT: Huda happy.
- CORRECT: Huda is happy.
- INCORRECT: While my mother cooking, I preparing the table.
- CORRECT: While my mother was cooking, I was preparing the table.
- INCORRECT: Does he your teacher?
- CORRECT: Is he your teacher?

All INCORRECT versions above are students' versions.

2. Omitting the third person singular morpheme -s (Muftah1 and Rafik-Galea, 2013). Here are few examples of students' versions and their CORRECT forms:

- INCORRECT: My mother work in a school.
- CORRECT: My mother works in a school.
- INCORRECT: My friend speak English.
- CORRECT: My friend speaks English

3. Omitting the auxiliary “verb to do”. Here is an example.

- INCORRECT: My father not drive a bus.

- CORRECT: My father does not drive a bus.
4. Replacing only the auxiliary form of “verb to do” with ‘verb to be’.
- INCORRECT: **Is** Bob **wears** a suit today?
 - CORRECT: Does Bob wear a suit?

2.7. Word Order

Arab ESL learners make errors in word order when forming English sentences. The following are some examples which are traced in the literature review earlier in this article. Some of the errors the researcher of the current study noticed in her students' writing.

1. Unlike English sentence word order, the basic word order in classical Arabic is V-S-O where the verb precedes the subject:

- INCORRECT: Hoped the committee to solve the problem.
- CORRECT: The committee hoped to solve the problem.

However, in colloquial Arabic, the word order of the sentence is S-V-O

2. Arabic uses the secondary clause which acts as object and starts with ‘that’ where English uses the infinitive:

- INCORRECT: I want that you stay. (Following the Arabic structure).
- CORRECT: I want you to stay.

3. There are no auxiliary verbs in Arabic. So Arabic-speaking learners of English might not use “verb to do” to form a question. Here is a student’s version and its equivalent CORRECT form:

- INCORRECT: Where Huda spend her summer vacation?
- CORRECT: Where does Huda spend her summer vacation?

4. In Arabic, personal pronouns are often incorporated in the verbs, i.e. certain morphemes are used to indicate what the pronoun is. This makes Arab students learning English use two subjects. Here is an example.

- INCORRECT: Her father he lives in California.
- CORRECT: Her father lives in California.

5. In English, adjectives precede nouns, whereas they follow nouns in Arabic, as in the following example.

- INCORRECT: classroom large. (Following the Arabic structure)
- CORRECT: a large classroom. (Proper English structure)

2.8. Tenses

There are clear differences between Arabic and English, leading to several mistakes which are made by Arab learners of English. In Arabic, there are only two tenses: the perfect (only the past) and the imperfect (the non-past, simple present and simple future), whereas English has many tenses by conjoining these two tenses with aspects (perfective and progressive). (Ali, 2007; Aoun, Benmamoun, and Chueiri, 2010). Arab learners of English cannot produce progressive and perfect tenses so easily. They use simple present instead. So, we might find such errors in their writing:

- INCORRECT: I eat my sandwich now.
- CORRECT: I am eating my sandwich now.

Another example is this.

- INCORRECT: I didn't see you since last Christmas.
- CORRECT: I haven't seen you since last Christmas.

2.9. Relative Clauses

Unlike English relative pronouns, Arabic relative nouns (Asmaa Mawsuula) vary according to the nouns they describe. There are relative nouns for masculine, feminine, singular, dual, and plural. They also vary according to their position in the sentence: subject, object, and predicate. Following is a list of these relative nouns.

Allathi (singular masculine), *Allathan* (masculine dual subject), *Alathein* (masculine plural object), *Allati* (feminine singular), *Allatein* (object dual feminine), *Allataan* (dual feminine subject), *Allawati* (plural feminine)

There are several errors which are made by Arabic-speaking learners of English when forming English relative clauses (Ali, 2007:7-8; Hamadalla and Tushyeh, 1998).

1. Insertion (or not omitting) of the connected pronoun because in Arabic this pronoun is not omitted.
 - INCORRECT: That's the teacher whom I met him.
 - CORRECT: That's the teacher whom I met.

Arabic: *thalika huwa almu'alim alathi qabaltuhu*. The detached pronoun "hu' at the end of the word "qabaltuhu" is the resumptive pronoun that should be deleted when forming an English relative clause. The following are other examples of such errors.

- INCORRECT: The girl who she came helped me in doing my homework.
- CORRECT: The girl who came helped me in doing my homework.
- INCORRECT: The driver whom the police gave him a ticket was driving too fast.
- CORRECT: The driver whom the police gave a ticket was driving too fast.
- INCORRECT: The man that I gave a gift to him is my cousin.
- CORRECT: The man that I gave a gift to is my cousin.
- INCORRECT: I lost the key which I opened the door with it.
- CORRECT: I lost the key which I opened the door with.

- INCORRECT: The lady whom her purse was stolen reported to the police.
- CORRECT: The lady whose purse was stolen reported to the police.

In all the above sentences, the underlined pronouns should be omitted in the CORRECT English versions.

2. Arabic-speaking learners of English make mistakes in subject-verb agreement in subordinate or secondary clauses:

- INCORRECT: The teachers who is lecturing this morning is clever.
- CORRECT: The teachers who are lecturing this morning are clever.

2. They omit “who” which means ‘allathi or allati’ because it can be omitted in some Arabic sentences.

- INORRECT: Ahmad is a student in our class got the highest average. (English version as some Arabic-speaking learners of English may write it.)
- CORRECT: Ahmad, a student in our class, got the highest average. (The Arabic version of the sentence.)
- CORRECT: Ahmad, who is a student in our class, got the highest average.
- INCORRECT: Saladin, was the Muslim leader, led the Battle of Hitten.
- CORRECT: Saladin, the Muslim leader, led the Battle of Hitten.
- CORRECT: Saladin was the Muslim leader who led the Battle of Hitten

4. In Arabic, relative pronouns are used with no human/ nonhuman distinction; and the connected pronoun acting as object is retained in a restrictive adverbial clause. Thus, Arabic-speaking learners of English might make the following error:

- INCORRECT: Here is the student which you met her last week.
- CORRECT: Here is the student who you met last week.

In Arabic, the relative pronouns ‘allathi or allati’ are used with human and non-human nouns.

2.10. The Use of Pronouns

Al-Jarf (n.d.) conducted an error analysis of Saudi students' use of English pronouns. Al-Jarf (n.d.; 4) stated that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has two forms of subject pronouns: An independent detached form and an attached form, i.e. a clitic pronoun or a pronominal affix depending on the verb tense which is an integral part of the verb. The Independent Subject Pronouns in Modern Standard Arabic as quoted from Al-Jarf are: 'ana (I); huwa (he); hiya (she); 'anta (you – masculine singular); 'anti (you – feminine singular); nahnu (we); 'antunna (you –feminine plural); humaa (they – dual); 'antumaa (you – masculine dual); hum (they – masculine plural); 'antum (you – masculine plural); hunna (they – feminine plural).

The attached form of pronouns in Arabic are those that are attached as prefixes or suffixes to the verbs to indicate tense, such as “*katab + tu*” (back-translates: wrote I) “*'ana + 'aktub* (back-translates: I write). Thus, it can be noticed that in Arabic, the second person pronoun has various forms: singular, dual and plural; feminine, and masculine. These are used depending on whether we are speaking to one person, two or more people, and also depending on whether we are speaking to males or females. In English, there are no attached or clitic pronouns. Like Arabic,

English has subjective, objective and possessive pronouns. The only English pronoun which can be used for plural, singular, feminine and masculine in the position of subject and object is the pronoun "you". Only the context of the sentence will help learners to identify the pronoun "you" as plural, singular, masculine, or feminine. Thus, Some Arabic-speaking learners of English sometimes make the following mistake: "You is smart." (Obviously, you are smart.)

Based on the researcher's 30-year experience as an instructor of English for Arabic-speaking students, I believe that the best solution for all the grammatical mistakes that are made by our learners is to explicitly compare Arabic structure to English structure where possible. We have to draw the learners' attention to such differences. Besides, intensive practice is said to be a recommended solution. At the end of this paper, the researcher suggested other solutions.

2.11. Redundancy in Writing Essays

Hatim and Mason (1997:127) state that Arabic argumentation uses repetition for emphasis and stylistic effectiveness. In contrast, repetition weakens the argument when used in English essays. Hatem and Mason (1997: 127) state the following examples:

- Mona lives alone with no one.
- The problem is very serious in the nature of it.
- The boss advanced forward the date of the meeting.

In the previous examples, the words "with no one, in the nature of it and forward" are examples of redundancy. Johnstone (1990: 230) argues "An Arabic text proceeds horizontally rather than vertically, in which ideas of equal importance for an argument are chained together."

Mohamed and Omar (1999) compare a number of Arabic and English texts with reference to organization. In addition to the previously-discussed concepts of repetition and co-ordination, the study has found that Arabic sentences tend to be much longer and contain more clauses than those in English. Here is an example extracted from a students' narrative essay.

Thahaba Jawadun 'ila albeit wasa'ada alsalaalema mubasharatan 'ila altabiq althani haithu kanat omuhu biintetharihi wahi'a mustalqeitun fi firashiha mut'limatun min awjaa'en fi kul jasadeha bisababi kibari seniha wa'adami woujudi man yusa'eduha fi alqeamu bi'amaal albaeit almurheqa walkatheera.

The English translation of this sentence is: "Jawad went home. He immediately went to the second floor where his mum was lying on her bed waiting for him. She was having pain in all her body because of her old age. She also does not have anyone to help her in the house chores."

The above Arabic excerpt consists of one long complex sentence, whereas its English equivalent consists of a group of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

2.12. Punctuation

Punctuation, as an orthographic area of languages, includes capitalization, use of comma, full stop, semi-colon, colon, hyphens exclamatory and question marks. This current review is limited to discussing the differences between Arabic and English only in the use of capitalization and coma

There is no capitalization in Arabic. So, some students may forget to capitalize the first letter in the beginning of a sentence or with names of countries, people, places, nationalities, organizations, institutions and organizations. No distinction is made between upper and lower

case in Arabic (Sofer and Raimes, 2002). Therefore, they write names of countries in small letters.

- I will get a job in the united states.
- The arabs are good people.

In English, items in a series, i.e. enumeration, are separated by commas; and the conjunction “and” is used just before the last word. In Arabic each item in a series is preceded by the conjunction “wa” (و) (Diab, 1996; Muhammad and Omar, 1999).

- INCORRECT: I went to the market and I bought two shirts and a dress and a skirt and a beautiful pair of shoes.
- CORRECT: I went to the market and I bought two shirts, a dress, a skirt, and a beautiful pair of shoes.

Another example is the following:

- INCORRECT: They should not hate me and they need to respect me and realize how much I love them and how hard I work for them. (Repetition of “wa”) and (redundancy).
- CORRECT: They should not hate me. They need to respect me. They should realize how much I love them and how hard I work for them.

2.13. Lexical Errors

Abi Samara (2003) listed some examples on lexical errors made by Lebanese students in their writing. Due to literal translation from Arabic, students might use “stay on” instead of “continue” or “keep on”; they might use inappropriate equivalent. The following are some examples of lexical errors.

- INCORRECT: He has a right health. (Arabic: *huwa bisehaten jayedaten*.)
- CORRECT: He is healthy.
- INCORRECT: He has a strong disease. Arabic: *huwa yamtaleku maradhan shadeedan*.
- CORRECT: she has a severe illness.
- INCORRECT: I am afraid from high sounds. (Arabic: ‘anna ‘akhafu minalaswaat al’aaliya.)
- CORRECT: I am afraid of high sounds.
- INCORRECT: For me, to be counted as a good mother is important. (Arabic: *binnesbati li, minaal muhem ‘an o’utabara ummun*.)
- CORRECT: For me, it is important to be considered as a mother.

2.14. Lexico-Semantic Usage

Certain words that have distinctive meanings in English, like special and private have only one equivalent in Arabic. Students, therefore, are likely to say:

- My brother went to a special hospital.
- This is a very private occasion.

Also, there is the sentence ‘He cut the street’ which is used instead of ‘He crossed the street’.

2.15. Pronunciation

Arabic has only one letter for each sound. For example, the English sound /θ/ which is represented by two letters /th/ is represented in Arabic by one letter only /ث/, so spelling might

be easier in Arabic than it is in English. Unlike English, Arabic has a grapheme-phoneme correspondence. (Bhela, 1999; Grami and Alzughabi, 2012). Shabeer (n.d.: 77) listed sounds that do not exist in Arabic, hence the Arab students substitute or borrow them from some other sounds in English. The following table shows some examples on these errors:

Table 2. Examples on mispronounced sounds in words

Actual Sound	Borrowed Sound	Actual Sound	Borrowed
/V/ serye	/f/ surf	/G/ galaxy	/J/ jalaksy
/P/ park	/b/ bark	/tʃ/ chair	/ʃ/ share
/P/ pregnant	/b/ brignent	/p/ stupid	Istobbid /b/
/ð/ that	/θ/ θat	/dʒ/ judge	/tʃ/ judch

Al-Badawi (2012:537) pointed out that Saudi students substitute the voiced bilabial stop /b/ for the voiceless bilabial stop /p/.

Arabic does not have the sound /v/, and the velar sound /ŋ/, so Arabic-speaking learners of English pronounce /v/ as /f/ and /ŋ/ as /k/ or /ʒ/ (Amer: n.d.). To form an adverb of manner, Arabic native speakers tend to use a phrase. For example, “quickly” is expressed as "with speed", and “dangerously” as "in a dangerous way” (Bhela, 1999; Ghawi, 1993). Arabic native speakers tend to use an adjective plus a noun both derived from the main verb instead of using an adverb. Arab learners of English find difficulty in pronouncing English initial and final clusters of a word. “Consonant clusters differences have resulted in a phonetic phenomenon called vowel intrusion or epenthesis. It is a phonetic phenomenon of inserting a vowel in between the clusters.” (Na’ama, 2011:147; Hall, 2003 as cited in Al-Samawi, 2014: 264). Arabs insert a vowel to separate a cluster of consonants. Following are examples on epenthesis:

Table (2): Examples on epenthesis

Text	vs.	/tekist/.	Next	vs.	/nekist/
Film	vs.	/filəm/	Milk	vs.	/milik /.
splendid	vs.	/splendid/	Plastic	vs.	/bilastic

2.16. Differences between Arabic and English Vowel System

Concerning vowel system, Scott 1962 (cited in Ali, 2007: 6) states that the vowel system of Arabic is totally different from that of English. English has five vowels a, e, i, o, u. Sometimes, h and y are pronounced as vowels.

Arabic has three short vowels :(a, u, and I); and three long vowels.

- ا ('alef) has 3 possible sounds: aa, ou, ei.
- و (waw) has 3 possible sounds: wa, wou, wi.
- ي (ya'a) has 3 possible sounds: ya, you, yi.

In a study conducted by Al-Badawi (2012: 537) on Saudi students, he found that "Saudi students substitute the vowels /ə/ for /ɔ/, /ə/ for /ʊ/ and /ɛ/ for /ɪ/. Here are few examples:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. (how) for (who) | 2. (set) for (sit) | 3. (bell) for (bill) |
| 4. (boat) for (boot) | 5. (books) for (box) | 6. (put) for (pot) |

There are many diphthongs in English such as [ei] ray, [ai] ride, [au] how, [oi] boy, and [ou] no; but there are two diphthongs in Arabic: αw and αy. As a result of this lack of distinction, Arab learners of English mispronounce boot, boat and bought. (Javed, 2013).

To solve the pronunciation errors, it is recommended to record students' speech or conversations and let them listen to them again. Teachers can also let their students listen to English native speakers' recorded conversation. Encouraging learners to watch English films without reading the translation is another solution.

2.17. Spelling

According to Shabeer and Bughio (n.d.) and Emery (2005), there are three causes of spelling errors which are made by Arabic-speaking learners of English. ESL

1. Arabic has one letter for each sound so spelling in Arabic is much easier than it is in English.
2. Arab students tend to make spelling mistakes in their writing. They usually misspell the words like 'half' 'care' and 'knowledge' etc.
3. "Elision": Some English speakers swallow some sounds while speaking.
4. The homophones: some English words have the same pronunciation but different spelling, such as "whole/hole/ and sole/soul."

Arabic-speaking learners of English and even English native speakers might make the same spelling errors. The National Foundation of Educational Research, the NEFR (Brook et al, 1993 as cited in Shabeer and Bughio, n.d.:76; Al-zuoud and Kabilan, 2013) classified spelling mistakes into:

1. Insertion of extra letters, such as the <l> added to "until" instead of "until".
2. Omission of letters, such as the <r> missing from "occurring" instead of "occurring", "now" instead of "know".
3. Substitution of different letters, such as <a> instead of <i> in "definite" instead of "definite".
4. Transposition of two letters, such as <ei> for <ie> in "friend" instead of "friend".
5. Grapheme substitution as in "thort" for "thought" (Cook 2002 as cited in Shabeer and Bughio, n.d.: 76)

3.1. Pedagogical implications and recommendations

"To use two languages familiarly and without contaminating one by the other, is very difficult," said Samuel Johnson in 1761." (Cited in Cook, 2002; Abi Samara, 2003).

Making mistakes while learning any new skill is something natural as it is part of using the best of talents and potentials to reach a good level of professionalism. This is exactly the case when

learning languages. The teachers' wisdom can be practiced in such situations to guide their students in an attempt to make mistakes a source of learning, not a factor of frustration. Following are some recommendations for teachers on how to deal with their students' mistakes. More focus will be given to the situations of ESL in the Arab countries.

1. Retuning selective attention: Terrell used the term "Explicit Grammar Instruction" and defined it as "the use of instructional strategies to draw the students' attention to or focus on form and/or structure." (Terrell, 1991:53). Form-focused instruction or consciousness raising is a good solution to grammatical errors. "Focused attention may be a practical (though not theoretical) necessity for successful language learning" (Schmidt, 2001 as cited in Robinson and Ellis, 2008: 389).
 2. For redundancy in writing, the duty of the teacher is to explain to his/her students that simple, direct and non-redundant sentences are preferred to complicated, indirect and redundant ones. (Egyptian Forum, 2009)
 3. Cook (1999) discussed different strategies to teach pronunciation. Teachers should give students sufficient practice and drills. Teaching should focus on both recognition and production i.e. teachers should recognize the pronunciation errors and correct them and teach the students how to pronounce these sounds correctly (Hassan, 2014). Students need to be exposed to intensive listening activities, minimal pairs (pie/bye and pride/bride), heteronyms (two words with the same spelling but different pronunciations), homonyms, and homophones.
 4. As "most humans' brains are pattern-seekers" (Lawery, n.d.: 3), it is useful to provide students with rules and patterns when explaining grammar. "Use" should precede "usage".
 5. Teachers are advised to use the correction strategies as follows: student's self-correction, peer correction and finally teacher's correction. Teachers should correct errors which are directly related to the objective of the lesson.
 6. Teachers need to check that students are using English as a means of communication in their group work.
 7. Most importantly, teachers of English to Arabic-speaking learners have to show respect and acknowledgement to their students' native language. For example, they can ask their students how they use a rule in Arabic.
 8. Arabic-speaking learners of English need to be given some well-defined essay writing rules (for the thesis statement, introduction, conclusion, transition words, etc.), and some samples of their writings need to be transcribed and distributed to them for correction and analysis. They would be learning from their errors (Abi Samara, 2003: 78).
 9. Stylistic and lexical differences should be brought to the students' mind in order to avoid making such errors. (Mason and Hatem 2005).
 10. The teachers' attitudes towards errors should change. They need to know when and how to correct the students' errors. They ought not to frustrate students by correcting every error. Teachers should CORRECT high frequency errors.
 18. When dictating Arab students for spelling quizzes, teachers should use Standard English and not vernacular accents.
- Finally, it is worth quoting Von Humboldt's speech, "We cannot really teach language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way (Corder, 1967 as cited in Shabeer, 2007:80)

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