

The inter-lingual transfer of Arabic in the English writings of Arab EFL students

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Abstract:

This paper sheds light on the inter-lingual transfer of Arabic into English writings of Arab EFL learners that happens while learning English as a foreign language, an issue which has not received much attention. Especially, this paper highlights writing errors which consist of grammatical, syntactic, semantic and lexical errors committed by Arab EFL students in their written production because the inter-lingual transfer of Arabic into English. Moreover, this study attempts to cover the following areas :English as a foreign language in Arab countries ,a brief historical review related to inter-language which argues in favour of the use of the term “transfer” rather than “interference” since foreign language learners fall back on their first language as a creative cognitive strategy employed to solve learning and communication either this transfer was positive or negative ,inter-lingual errors , and syntactic comparative study between English and Arabic language in order to clarify and show the negative transfer from the mother tongue . Since Arabic has two varieties modern standard Arabic (MSA) and non standard Arabic (NSA),this study attempts also to answer the following questions” which Variety of Arabic students transfer from?”, and to what extent does inter-lingual transfer account for the errors in their written production? Depending on some previous studies that have been conducted on this area. It is hoped that this research paper would stimulate further interest in this field.

Keywords: Inter-language, inter-lingual, native language, target language, interference, positive and negative transfer, and inter-lingual interference.

Note: Mother tongue: for the purpose of this study, it includes both colloquial (NSA) and standard Arabic.

1. Introduction and background

“There are general outcries about the continuous deterioration of the standards of English proficiency of students among school teachers, university instructors and all who are concerned with English language teaching “ Abdul Haq (1982).

Since English is the most widely taught, understood language, and is extensively used as a second and as a foreign language in several countries in the world, and with the global expansion of English as the language of international communication ,it is not strange to notice that many Arab countries teach and continue to teach this global language at all education levels from grade one at school until university in order to create generation are more literate in this language but those learners of English still face various problems in all the language skills: speaking , writing, listening and speaking. The fact that has been clearly stated by many researchers .i.e. Wahba (1998), Abdul Haq (1982), Abad (1988), and Harrison, Prator and Tucker (1975).In all Arab countries, English is used only as an academic subject, when it is taught in a school or at the university through formal instruction. It is known that English or any other language without practice can not be acquired, Rababah (2003)

Since this study attempts to examine, to what extent does inter-lingual transfer account for the errors in their written production; it is very necessary to give an overview about English as a foreign language in Arab countries in order to know to what extent this language is used.

1.1 English in Arab countries

Teaching English as foreign or second language in the Arab countries can be traced back to the 1920s, when different parts of the region came under the British and French mandates. With the increase in the use of English as a lingua franca, most Arab governments began to recognize its importance by introducing the teaching of English into the school curriculum. At present, in most Arab countries, all students who finish the public secondary school education must have had at least eight years of instruction in English as a school subject. It is also worth noting that formal training in English was and is still compulsory in most elementary, preparatory and secondary Arab private schooling. So, because of the widespread use of English as a second language, the subject of language teaching in general and teaching English as a foreign or second language in particular, has become the focus of attention of most Arab researchers. Al-Khatib (2000)

Rababah (2003) states that, in some Arab countries, English is taught as a foreign language at all schooling stages, colleges and universities .But it is not used in daily situation because Arabic is the language used every where .So, it is more difficult and complicated for some Arab learners of English to communicate in the target language in their real life situation .As a result, the students encounter various problems in both speaking and writing while learning English. All Arab students learn English in their native countries where the native language is Arabic .For example, the only way to learn English in Jordan is through formal instruction .i.e. inside the classroom where also the teachers' language is Arabic. He mentions that there is little opportunity to learn English through natural interaction in the target language. This is possible when students encounter native speakers of English who come to the country as tourists and this rarely happens. They find difficulties in using English for communication .When engaged in authentic communicative situations, they often lack some of the

vocabulary or language items they need to get their meaning across. As a result, Rababah states that “they can not keep the interaction going for an extended period of time.”

By shifting to another Arab country, for example, Egypt, we find that Egyptian learners of English face problems related to pronunciation. Wahba (1998) mentions that “Egyptian students face certain problems related to pronunciation. Some of these problems are related to stress, others are related to intonation. However, most of these problems can be attributed to the differences in pronunciation between English and Arabic”. He found that such these problems are because of inter-lingual transfer.

Generally, the weakness of English language learners in some Arab countries has been attributed to various factors such as:

- Lack of knowledge on the part of school graduates when they join the university.
- School and English language department curricula.
- Teaching methodology.
- Lack of the target language environment and the learners’ motivation.

These facts have been clearly stated by, Mukattash (1983); Zughoul (1983), (1987); Suleiman (1983); and Ibrahim (1983).

After this overview, it seems that the situation of English in Arab countries is difficult and more complicated hence Arab learners of English encounter various problems and difficulties while learning English. One of the difficulties or problems that face them spontaneously is Inter-lingual transfer (i.e. transfer from the mother tongue or any other previously learned language) which happens here because Arabic is the language used every where, even inside the classroom.

Actually, there is no doubt that the native language plays an important role in learning and using another language, especially in foreign-language learning situations where the learners’ exposure to the target language is confined to a few hours per week of classroom instruction. The Arab students learning English in such a situation use the inter-lingual transfer strategy (i.e. transfer from Arabic, the most readily available linguistic knowledge) to solve their learning and communication problems in English. Specifically, the issue of inter-lingual transfer seems to be going up to the other end of a U-shaped curve, starting with the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Lado, 1957), played down by the creative construction hypothesis (Dulay and Burt, 1973, 1977), and brought into focus again from a cognitive and developmental perspective.

Mahmoud (2005) states that this transfer is considered as a major cognitive strategy that learners of foreign language fall back on when their linguistic means falls short of achieving their communicative ends. No need to say that the native language is an additional source for hypothesis formation that the first language learner does not have. The influence of the mother tongue and the pervasiveness of inter-lingual transfer is indisputable, especially in learning situations where students’ exposure to the foreign language is confined to a few hours per week of formal classroom instruction, Mahmoud (ibid). As a result, inter-lingual transfer is considered as a strategy that is readily available to the learners to compensate for the inadequacies when attempting to communicate in the foreign language.

1.2 Literature review

The literature has a plethora of research conducted on this area (inter-language) especially, inter-lingual transfer. The fact that has been clearly stated by many researchers, as Singleton (1987) points out, inter-lingual transfer was a familiar phenomenon before the domination of the behaviorist theory of language learning. The existence of the phenomenon has never been and will never be denied as people continue to learn a second or foreign language after they have mastered a first one.

Diab (1996) has done her research to identify, analyze, and classify the writing errors of Lebanese students; the researcher has collected 73 English essays written by Lebanese sophomore students studying at the American university Beirut. Her purpose of this study was to show and demonstrate through error analysis the interference of the mother-tongue 'Arabic' in the English writings of Lebanese students, which leads to negative transfer. As a result, the analysis of these essays revealed frequent grammatical, lexical, semantic and syntactic errors brought about by the transfer of Arabic linguistic structures into English (55 grammatical, 81 syntactic, 217 lexical, and 100 semantic errors).

In Lebanon, Abisamra (2003) has also talked about errors in Arabic speakers 'English writings, and has talked endeavored to identify, describe, categorize and diagnose Arabic speakers' errors in English essay writing depending on error analysis. Ten essays collected for this purpose, written by ten students in grade nine. Those students were provided with this topic 'what are your plans for the future?', and they were asked to write at least 250 words. They were given sufficient time to write an outline then a first and final draft. After analysis, the total number of errors that the researcher found in the ten essays was 214 errors (29 grammatical, 35 syntactic, 26 lexical, 3 semantic, and 120 substance errors). The most important thing was, the major causes for all of these errors were not only negative L1 transfer "interference" but also intralingual interference.

Abdullomoneim (2005) has also collected 42 essays written by males and females third-year Arabic speaking university students majoring in English. They were given a list of topics, were let free to write on any chosen topic, these essays written as a homework assignment. A total of 420 errors were found in 42 essays. The researcher has emphasized that the sources of these errors could be attributed to negative inter-lingual transfer. These errors indicate that EFL students depend on inter-lingual and intralingual strategies to facilitate learning.

In a study of syntactic and semantic errors in the written composition of Arab EFL Learners, Obeidat, H.A. (1986) has investigated, identified and analyzed syntactic and semantic errors among a group of Arab EFL students. The data of this study was written composition by 120 Arabic L1 students majoring in English, it was found that students committed inter-lingual errors in prepositions usage, resumptive pronouns in relative clauses, missing subjects, copula, determiners usage and word order. They were also committed inter-lingual errors in proverbs, forms of address, prefabricated expressions. Intralingual (inter-language or learner system) errors were also found in wh-questions, subject-verb agreement, relative pronouns and verb forms.

Khreshah (2006) has collected 20 essays written by male and female first year Arabic speaking university students majoring in English. The aim of this study was to show and clarify through error and contrastive analysis the negative transfer of the mother tongue "Arabic" in the English writings of

Jordanian students. The major focus of this study was on syntactic errors made by Jordanian undergraduate EFL student. A total of 123 syntactic errors were found in 20 essays. The researcher has emphasized that the main source of these errors could be attributed to negative inter-lingual transfer. He also found that those students depend mainly on inter-lingual strategy to facilitate their learning process.

2. Interlanguage

For the importance of this area of the study, a good number of the studies which yielded important findings related to inter-language. Selinker (1969) and Corder (1971) refer this term to the highly individualized linguistic system of the second language learner which is characterized by items found in the learner's native language of the target language. This transitory system is constantly changing as it is being improved up on by the learner in the process of mastery the target language.

This term was also introduced by Selinker (1972), he coined the term 'interlanguage' to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both these learner's L1 and the target language. The term has come to be used with different but related meanings:

- (1) To refer to the series of interlocking systems which characterize acquisition?
- (2) To refer to the system that is observed at a single stage of development ('an interlanguage'),
- (3) To refer to particular L1/L2 combinations (for example, L1 French/L2 English v. L1 Japanese/L2 English).

Nesmer (1971) cited in Al-Tamimi (2006: 27) adds another definition to the inter-language system. He calls this system as "Approximative Systems" which refers to "the deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilise the target language". **Figure 1** below illustrates the notion of inter-language.

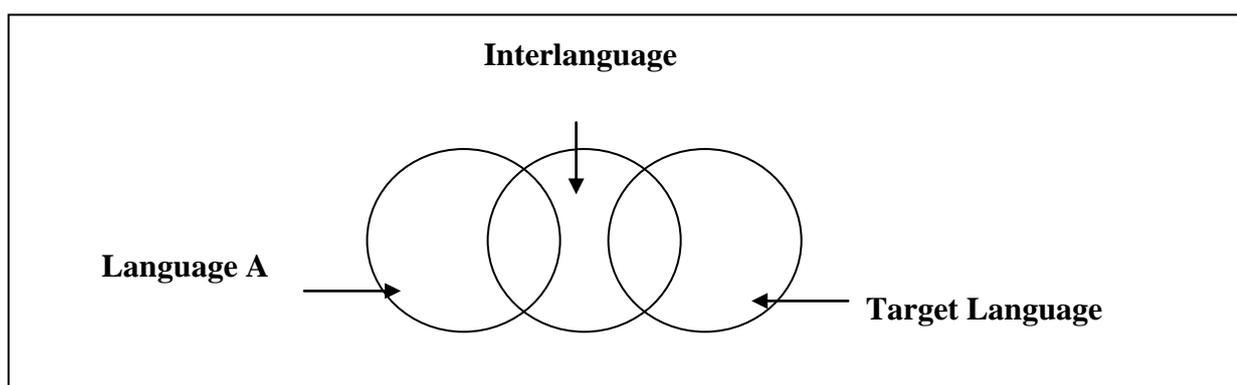


Figure 1 the Notion of the Interlanguage, Adopted From Corder (1981: 17)

As mentioned earlier, Selinker (1972) hypothesized the existence of the term IL as a result of the dissimilar utterances, as observable data, of the same sentence produced by second language learners and native learners of the TL. Selinker (1972: 214) determined three sets of utterances, which are the psychologically relevant data of second-language learning, and theoretical prediction in a relevant

psychology of second-language learning, to be the surface structures of IL sentence. They are as follows:

- Utterances in the learner's native language (NL) produced by the learners.
- IL utterances produced by the learners.
- TL utterances produced by native speakers of that TL.

By determining these three sets of utterances, Selinker (ibid) states that investigation in the psychology of second-language learning can study the psycholinguistic processes which establish the knowledge that underlies IL behavior. In consequence for this, he posited the following five central processes:

- Language transfer.
- Transfer-of-training.
- Strategies of second-language learning.
- Strategies of second-language communication.
- Overgeneralization of TL linguistic material

As a result from these definitions; we can consider interlanguage as a type of language produced by second and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language ,and as an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language who has not become fully proficient yet but is only approximating the target language And the learner creates an inter-language using different learning strategies such as language transfer, overgeneralization and simplification. (The free encyclopedia online).Since this study investigate learner's errors in their written production, it is essential to mention such these errors are caused by several different processes. These include:

- Borrowing patterns from the mother tongue.
- Extending patterns from the target language.
- Expressing meanings using the words and grammar.

The fact that the native language plays an important role in foreign language learning is, as Swan (1985) says, "a matter of common experience". Overwhelming evidence has been presented supporting the central place which inter-lingual transfer occupies in foreign language learning, (see e.g. Cook, 2003; Gass and Selinker, 1983; Odlin, 1989).

The availability of the native language to the second or foreign language learner brings about a difference between mother tongue and other tongue learning in the sense that the native Language is an additional source of linguistic knowledge not available to the mother tongue learner for hypotheses formation, (Rutherford, 1987). Evidence for the pervasiveness of inter-lingual transfer is indisputable particularly in foreign language learning contexts where the learners' exposure to the language is confined to the limited input provided through formal instruction, and where the native language is excessively used in explaining unfamiliar lexical and grammatical items. The widely documented influence of the native language at all linguistic levels and in both formal and informal learning situations might have led some researchers (e.g. Rivers, 1983) to believe that the foreign or second language is filtered through the native language.

Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1978) express the possibility that “the assumption of word-for-word translation equivalence as a working hypothesis ... is the only way a learner can ever begin to communicate in a second language”. From the above brief account, we can conclude that the interlanguage of foreign-language learners exhibits the influence of their first language at all linguistic levels, especially if the target language is learned in a formal classroom context where the learners’ exposure to that language is limited to a few 45-minute class periods per week.

2.1 Interlingual interference

It occurs when the learner negatively transfers the knowledge of her/ his L1 in the learning of the target language (Lim, 2003). According to Lado (1957), wherever the structures of the Native language and those of the target language differ, there would be inter-lingual interference. Brown (2000:224) argues that inter-lingual interference is “a significant source of errors for all learners”. He further adds that, the early stages of L2 learner are characterized by a good deal of L1 interference. This is because, according to him the L2 learner is not fully familiar with the TL system and the L1 is “the only previous linguistic system up on which the learner can draw.”

2.2 Language transfer vs. interference

This part of the present study discusses the phenomenon of language transfer and interference in relation to the learner’s inter-language. First language transfer may refer to either the positive transfer or the negative transfer for the items from the first language to the second language of learner. According to Faerch and Kasper (1987) transfer is a psycholinguistic process whereby second or foreign language learners activate their previous linguistic knowledge in developing or using their inter-language. According to Bose (2002), language transfer, is a process which involves items and rules in the learner’s language being directly traceable to her/his. Furthermore, Abdulmoneim (2000) states that transfer from native language is taken to be a matter of habit, and negative transfer or interference would be predicted in cases of difference between the native and the target language –the contrastive analysis hypothesis. Oldin (1989) defines the term of transfer, “it is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired.” Most of the definitions of this term come from the psychological principles that previous learning is relied upon to facilitate subsequent learning. For example, according to Gass and Selinker, (1983) define this term as “either a learning strategy or a communicative strategy” used by a large number of EFL students who used this transfer in order to facilitate their learning.

And Interference refers strictly to the negative influence of the first language on the second language resulting in errors being committed by the learner. According to Lado (1957) L1 interference can occur at the levels of production and reception. Inter-lingual is also considered as interference happens when “an item or structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from and some degree of similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the learner’s first language” (Jackson, 1981; Corder (1973); Jakobovists (1970): have emphasized that when the learners don’t know how to express something in the foreign language, they will directly revert to their native language interference. Corder (1983) agrees with Gass and Selinker (1983) that the term interference should be avoided because it may imply that inter-lingual transfer inhibits the learning of the target language. Indeed it is the word 'interference' that can be discarded as being associated with the behaviorist theory

where the negative effect of inter-lingual transfer is seen as an evil that should be eradicated. It seems very necessary to mention and differentiate between two types of transfer that have been identified in language learning. The first one is called positive transfer, and the second one is called negative transfer.

2.3 Positive transfer

Not all effects of language transfer are negative - indeed, we may consider that without some language transfer, there would be no second language learning. According to Oldin (1989,2003) positive transfer facilitates language learning, it may occur when the native language and the target language have the same form. For example, both Arabic and English have the definite article "al" and "the" respectively. Therefore, the Arabic learners are expected to use the English article "the" correctly in expressions such as "the boy", "the girl" and so forth.

2.4 Negative transfer

The second type is negative transfer which refers to a rule pattern in the native language that leads to an error in the target language. Corder points out, "one explanation of L2 errors is that the learner is carrying over the habits of his mother tongue into the second language" for example, an Arab learner may produce the inappropriate utterance "she not work" instead of the correct one "she does not work" due to the Arabic sentence "hia la ta'mal" literally means "she not works" (Al-Tammi,2006). Until the morpheme studies of Dulay and Burt, it was often assumed that most errors were derived from transfer of the L1 to the L2 - this was referred to as interference. It is now no longer clear where errors derive from. As we have seen, Dulay and Burt believe that the majority of errors are not based on transfer. However, it is not always a simple matter to decide whether an error is L1 based or not. Another definition for Interference or (negative transfer): is, as Lado said, the negative influence of the mother language (L1) on the performance of the target language learner (L2), (1974).

Marton (1988) differentiates between negative transfer and interference errors. According to him negative transfer errors are due to the formation of incorrect hypotheses on the basis of the perceived distance between the native and the target language. Interference errors, on the other hand, are the result of forcing the learner to produce the target language forms which have not yet been automatized. However, when the negative influence of the native language is observed in the learner's language, it may be difficult to say whether it is due to negative transfer or interference.

2.5 Inter-lingual errors

Those errors that are caused by the interference of the learner's L1 when producing the TL are called inter-lingual errors, Richards (1974). Such inter-lingual interference is considered to be a significant source of errors for all ESL/EFL learners (Brown 2000, and Abdullomoneim 2005). Moreover, Abbot (1980) argues that inter-lingual errors are sometimes called interference errors or external interference and language transfer. According to Corder (1971) defines Inter-lingual / Transfer errors which happened because inter-language as follow: "those attributed to the native language (NL). There are inter-lingual errors when the learner's L1 habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him /her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language."

2.6 Which Variety of Arabic students transfer from?

For the importance of this study, it is essential to mention here that Arabic language has two varieties: Modern standard Arabic (MSA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) the issue which lead us to this question “which Variety of Arabic students transfer from?” There are many cases where both varieties, MSA and NSA, lead to the same error in English simply because the two varieties are linguistically similar and the error analyst can not tell which variety the learner transfers from. Using translation as an elicitation method may help in resolving this problem.

This fact has been clearly stated by Abdilmoneim (2000) who has researched to focus on the problem of language transfer among Arabic -speaking students learning English as a foreign language. The purpose of his study was to answer the following question “Where do Arab students of EFL transfer from?” using two varieties of Arabic: Modern standard Arabic and Non standard Arabic .For this purpose, 50 third year secondary- school students were asked to translate into English two versions of a short Arabic text. One NSA (Non-standard Arabic) and the other MSA (Modern standard Arabic) containing fourteen relative clauses. As a result, the researcher found that those students transfer various features from both MSA as well as NSA depending on the distances between these varieties and English and found that the analysis of these errors indicates that the instances of transfer from NSA (37%) were a little more than those from MSA (20%).The researcher also confirms that, to determine and know which Variety of Arabic Arab students tend to transfer from their writing, we need larger samples of errors for further research.

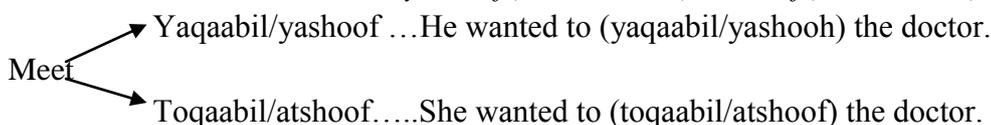
Furthermore, Scott and Tucker (1974) hypothesize that learners transfer from MSA when writing and from NSA when speaking in English. However, there are errors in the written English of Arabic-speaking students which can be attributed to transfer from NSA. For example, the error in “I met him by yesterday” could be due to transfer from MSA and not NSA. Had the learner followed NSA, he might not have added ‘by’.

Examples:

- He/She wanted to meet the doctor.

-MSA: *yaqaabil*(refers to him) /*toqaabil*(refers to her)= to meet,

-NSA: *yashoof*(refers to him)/ *atshoof*(refers to her) = to see



Note: in Arabic, the verb is formulated according to the pronoun as above examples.

- ... lead the bike to the garage.
-MSA: *qood*= lead,
-NSA: *soog*= drive
- ... they came by yesterday.
-MSA: *bi* = by,
-NSA: *jaauams*= they came yesterday
- ... in a second city ...
-NSA: *taanya*= second,
-MSA: *ukhra*= another

3. Syntactic comparative study between Arabic and English

To show or clarify the inter-lingual transfer which happens from Arabic into English, it seems important to make comparisons between Arabic and English, using the contrastive analysis approach, at the level of syntax. Before giving these examples, it is necessary to mention that the taxonomy of these syntactic errors is taken from Richards and Sampson (1974), who suppose that the level of syntax includes on coordination, sentence structure, nouns and pronouns, and word order. (The examples mentioned here are adopted from Khresheh (2006).)

3.1 Coordination

It is known that Arabic language favors coordination over subordination; sentences often begin with *and* or *so*, and each item in a series is preceded by the conjunction *'wa* which is equivalent to *'and*. On the other hand, in English, items in a series are separated by commas, and the coordinate conjunction *'and* is used only before the last word Diab (1996). For example, some students write the following:

- * I spent a very hard day and a very hard feeling and I couldn't sleep that night.
- * Without water people and animals and plants can not survive.
- * Technology in the education is very important and useful and effective to be nowadays everything happened and necessity to be special educate and it's helps the learner to complete education.

3.2 Sentence structure

In English, there are three types of sentence structure: simple, compound, and complex sentence. The basic type or the most natural sentence structure is the simple sentence, which contains only one clause. The second type is compound sentence, which consists of two or more independent clause and joined by co-ordinating conjunction like *'and*, *'but*, and *'or*, and the last type is complex sentence, which contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. In comparison, Arabic has two varieties, as we mentioned, MSA modern standard Arabic and NSA non-standard Arabic (colloquial) and each variety has sometimes different structures. This different structure between the two languages indirectly influences their English writing especially, when they make a negative inter-lingual transfer from Arabic which has different structure to English. For example students write the following:

- * I hope it will be very interesting the programme...
- * At that time, I learned a lesson in this life that any body must have never ever give up
- * My friends always ask me what you want to be?

3.3 Nouns and pronouns

In English, the distinction between masculine and feminine is limited to people and, occasionally, other living things (these living things such as, English nouns, adjectives, and articles have no gender), but objects are neuter. English nouns are divided into either singular or plural form, and plural form is created simply by adding the letter *'s* in most cases. In Arabic, all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and determiners are classified into either masculine or feminine and there are no neuter. Moreover, all Arabic nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs are classified into three numbers: singular, dual (two), plural (more than two). Arabic has an additional number which not found in English between singular and plural. This difference between Arabic and English makes an EFL learners are unable to

determine whether a certain English word is singular or plural based on its form alone . In addition, some words that sometimes end with the plural form 's' are singular in number, and others indicate a singular or plural number while maintaining the same form. This fact has been clearly reported by some researchers such as, Kinneavy and Warriner, (1993). The problem occurs here when EFL students recur to literal translation from their own native language (Arabic) when they try to determine whether a certain English word is singular or plural. For example,

* The computer has many informations

* The doctors in this university ask the students a lot of homworks.....

3.4 Word order

It is also known that word order differences between English and Arabic represent one of the problems faced by learners of English language. Word order can be defined as a part of grammar which has to do with the order words are in sentence .Actually, the word order is often different between languages such as Arabic displays more flexibility in the movement and distribution of its components although Arabic assumes variations in word order, so we can consider Arabic is more tolerant of variations in word order , and the basic order in this language is V S O Diab (1996) .But English has a pragmatically controlled word order , and the most common sentence patterns in English is S V O. Thus, changing the word order can either change the meaning of the sentence .In Arabic, for example , we can say :

	Akalat	al-bento	tufahaten	
Arabic:	(V)	(S)	(O)MSA
	Tufahaten	al-bento	akalat	
	(O)	(S)	(V)NSA
	Al-bento	akalattufahaten		
	(S)	(V)	(O)NSA
	Tufahaten	akalat	albento	
	(O)	(V)	(S)NSA
English:	The girl	ate	an apple	
	(S)	(V)	(O)	

According to the adjectives, English adjectives usually precede the nouns (ADJ N); in contrast Arabic adjectives follow the nouns (N ADJ), Kinneavy and Warriner (1993), as follow:

	Madraston	jamelaton
Arabic	(N)	(ADJ)
	A beautiful	school
English	(ADJ)	(N)

From this example, we can conclude that the difference between Arabic word order (mother-tongue for the subjects of study) and English word order (the foreign language for the subjects of study) causes confusion among the majority of the students who use their own native language to express their thoughts in English as a foreign language. This transfer from Arabic to English is attributed to negative inter-lingual transfer from Arabic; moreover, this difference makes them commit a lot of errors. For instance, students write the following:

- * computers are part now from our life, and in the future it will be part also from our daily live.
- * smoking has four effects very dangerous
- * there are some solutions fortuintly to shortage water

4. Pedagogical Implications

From the pedagogical perspective, Inter-lingual transfer may be considered as a learning strategy that most foreign-language learners fall back on, especially in acquisition-poor classroom situations where exposure to the language is confined to a few hours per week of formal instruction. Accordingly, there are many language teachers and researchers have talked about making use of the mother tongue in the classroom (see e.g. Mohammed, 1997, 1998). Making use of the mother tongue (L1) in the teaching of foreign-language makes for a psycholinguistic technique based on the learners' tendency to have confidence in their previous linguistic knowledge in formulating hypotheses about the target language (TL). One of the most widely suggested uses of the learners' mother tongue is the presentation of contrastive comparisons of the two languages to make the learners aware of the differences and similarities between them. This technique is believed to be helpful in that the learners will know when to transfer from their native language and when not to.

As a result from the pervious studies, this study indicates that Arab learners of English transfer from both MSA and NSA. If the Arabic language has a role to play in teaching English, then which variety of Arabic should be taken into consideration in this respect? Until further research reveals more about the source of transfer, both Varieties of Arabic (i.e. MSA and NSA) could be considered when presenting the learners of English with contrastive comparisons, when analyzing students' errors and correcting them, and when designing contrastive analysis courses for teacher training purposes.

Furthermore, since this study tended to shed light on the errors committed by Arab EFL learners as an attempt for knowing to what extent does inter-lingual transfer account for the errors in their written production .It seems important to mention that knowledge of such these errors might provide school teachers and university instructors guidelines how to cope with this problem in order to make them able to pinpoint the weak points of their students .This study may help the teachers of foreign language to be become familiar with the concept of inter-language, this concept which tell us a lot about where our students are in terms of grammatical ,syntactic, semantic and lexical development .Finally, these errors are not problem to be overcome or evils to be eradicated , they are part of learning and reveal the strategies that learners use to learn a language, Ranganayki(1983).

5. Conclusion

As a result from the recent studies, Inter-lingual transfer either was positive or negative seems to be the most readily available *strategy* in foreign language situations where learners may not use the intralingual strategies due to their low proficiency in the language. The lower the students' proficiency level in the target language, the more inter-lingual errors they tend to make, and the evidence of the existence of inter-lingual transfer is indisputable particularly in foreign language learning contexts where the learners' exposure to the target language is confined to the limited input provided through formal classroom instruction. In such situations, interlingual transfer is used as a *learning strategy* to form hypotheses and as a communication strategy to test those hypotheses. Learners transfer from

their native language to fill in linguistic gaps in their communication and confirm or modify their hypotheses based on the feed back they receive.

This study indicates that Arabic -speaking students' negative grammatical, syntactic, semantic and lexical rules transfer from both modern standard Arabic (MSA) and Colloquial Arabic (NSA) into the English language system in order to solve their learning and communication problems which face them while learning English .Furthermore, most of these errors in their writing are because of the interference of their first language in the process of writing in English. The researcher, through the recent studies, found that the native language plays an important role in the learning process of foreign language. This fact has been clearly proved by Arab students using their native language 'Arabic' as a learning strategy while learning and acquiring English as a foreign language .In addition to, the committed errors by those students indicate that EFL students depend mainly on *inter-lingual strategy* to facilitate their learning process .Finally, as the researcher mentioned, Since their own native language is 'Arabic', the transfer of Arabic linguistic structures will influence their English writing; from this point this study intended to highlight grammatical , syntactic , semantic , and lexical errors made by Arab students .

Moreover, these errors(that happens because transfer from Arabic in its both varieties) provide valuable insight into the language learning process in order to help all the teachers of foreign language infer how much the students have learnt and in order to give an indications as whether they are ready to learn what the teachers want to teach them next .Actually, no one can learn language without committing errors .These errors are considered as apart of their students learning process and without committing errors ,no one can achieve competence in any language.

Finally, the conclusions reached are far from being decisive, because this study gives its results accordingly to recent studies that have been conducted on the same area and no case study here. So it is hoped that these results of this study may lead to recommendations that will improve the EFL teaching – learning process, where this piece of research will be helpful for teacher of English as a foreign language applying the same English curriculum to re-evaluate the English textbooks and their teaching methods.

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