An Investigation on the Iraqi Students' Use of Quantifiers in Their Writing

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Article Info	Abstract
	The English quantifier is one of the biggest challenges for L2 learners, especially for the Iraqi learners whose native language has different parameter. Thus, the current study aimed to find out the pattern of grammatical errors regarding the use of quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners in Kufa, Iraq. Through adopting convenience sampling, the researcher collected the data from 20 (10 male and 10 female) Iraqi university students. They were at the third level of university ranging from 21 to 25 years old. The main source of the study was a descriptive essay written by the participants. The descriptive essays on the topic were chosen as a data collection source because it was related to the participants' interest and background, so it could motivate and enable them to write comfortably. A T-unit analysis, and a study analysis framework adapted from Dulay, Burt and Krashan (1982), Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy and Richard's (1971) error categories were used to analyze the data. The frequency and percentage of the committed errors were calculated. In addition, the committed errors by the male and female were calculated separately and compared via independent samples t-test.

1.Introduction

One very important aspect of proficiency has been EFL learners' writing ability (Atai & Fatahi-Majd, 2014). According to experts and educators in the field of second language writing development, writing is considered a complex and interactive process that involves many aspects (Hyland, 2012). Moreover, Canale and Swain (as cited in Hyland 2003) maintained that to produce an effective composition, competence in various areas of knowledge, namely grammatical competence and discourse competence (the competence in genre and rhetorical pattern) is needed. Moreover, linguistics competence (the competence in utilizing acceptable language in several contexts) and strategic competence (the competence in using numerous communicative ways) are necessary for successful writing in L2.

It is believed that teaching writing skills appears to be neglected in main stream educational system of the countries in which English language is learned as a foreign language. The first issue to be resolved is thus to figure out what features of written English learners most need to master. Brown (2001) believes that idiomatic language, decreased forms, performance factors, redundancy clusters, delivery rate, cohesion, and coherence of the writing characteristics that relate to this skill's difficulty. Lazarton (2001) also believes that written English is challenging since it is mostly achieved through interaction with the readers who are absent. This requires considering some variables such as familiarity with the readers' characteristics, thinking about one's own contribution, making the contribution and supervising its impact, etc.

Hojati and Afghar (2016) maintained that "writing skills are under the influence of a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as grammar, vocabulary, pragmatic variables, affective factors, and so forth, which, when combined, compound the problems of writing skills" (p.113). EFL students thus need not only adequate vocabulary skills, but also grammar knowledge due attention to accuracy in order to manage meaningful communication. Shumin (1997) considers writing as a demanding skill for EFL learners, as they need not grammar and semantic skills, as well as socially important language knowledge that can be influenced by the cognitive, social and emotional factors of EFL

learners. For example, Gebhard (1996) suggests that writing is associated with the choice of word, use of grammar, syntax, mechanics and organization of ideas into a coherent and cohesive form. As a specific aspect of grammar, the English quantifier is one of the biggest challenges for L2 learners, especially for the Iraqi learners whose native language has a different parameter.

Jawad (2005) states that choosing the correct quantifier is somewhat not easy, especially on the part of learners of English language as a foreign tongue because of the close similarity of many indefinite quantifiers. Consequently, foreign learners fall in one of two frequent misuses: either neglect using them or choose the wrong quantifier. Therefore, the present study was set out to explore how Iraqi EFL learners use English quantifiers in their writing.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Researching second language writing is considered a challenging task. Being a multidimensional construct, "L2 wiring involves a wide range of subskills and their acquisition depends on various learner-internal (e.g., cognitive abilities, linguistic knowledge) and learner-external (e.g., print-related experience at home, writing instruction, community-wide literacy practices) factors" (Koda, 2012, p. 158). Because of this diversity, no single approach can adequately describe all aspects of L2 writing. As a result, L2 writing is tackled from a variety of perspectives using diverse methodologies. In line with such arguments, Hyland (2003) maintains that while interest in second language writing and approaches to teaching it have increased dramatically over the last decade, teachers are often left to their own resources in the classroom as much of the relevant theory and research fails to reach them. The existing inconsistencies regarding the efficiency of writing instruction approaches can be rooted in the inattention to the sources of writing problems.

Moreover, the current educational system in the EFL context has several weaknesses including lack of collaboration, stigmatization of failure, ignorance of technology, and lack of mastery (Nami, Marandi & Sotoudehnama, 2015). Finally, low English language proficiency and limited attainment of language skills is a frequently

encountered problem for EFL learners in the Iraqi context, whereby their level of proficiency remains below expectations. Regarding their specific language skills, EFL learners have been found to have serious problems with writing, as evidenced by their low scores for the writing components of the International English Language Test System (IELTS), in comparison to their skills in listening, reading and speaking (Grami, 2010).

Many studied have investigated grammatical errors in EFL learners' language use; However, none of them has identified the grammatical problems of Iraqi EFL learners' writing. Consequently, the researcher is set out to fill the existing gap by identifying the grammatical errors related to the use of quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi senior university students.

Presently, the lack of information prevents the researchers from identifying the actual levels of writing competency and grammatical errors of Iraqi learners. By studying the students writing, this study might reveal the actual sources of errors in the use of quantifiers by Iraqi EFL students. Thus, the current study aimed to find out the pattern of grammatical errors regarding the use of quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners.

1.3. Significance of the Study

English is regarded as one of the most popular foreign languages**.** It is spoken by many people all over the world. In order for learners to fulfill their sophisticated their needs, they have to develop their writing skill. Writing is remarkably challenging and essential skill for most students and it seems learners have difficulties learning it. One of the possible reasons is that writing requires complex skills, not merely conveying ideas visually. Therefore, the present study has some insights for EFL learners in the first place. They would take advantage of the results of the present study by noticing their writing problems.

In order for learners to fulfill their sophisticated needs, they have to develop their writing. Many of EFL students in Iraq appear to have problems to promote and master their writing for different reason. Some scholars believed that there are problems in writing to which teachers should note precisely. Therefore, this study has insights for EFL

teachers, too. EFL teachers can give more attention to EFL learners' points of weakness when teaching quantifiers.

Many scholars in the field of applied linguistics have emphasized the significance of errors committed by EFL learner. Therefore, curriculum and designers might also benefit from this study in the sense that the results would enable curriculum designers to create effective and contextually sensitive materials. Finally, these results may be used to create more nurturing, creative, individualized and challenging classroom environments where teachers adopt multidimensional innovative, exciting and effective teaching approaches based on their grammatical errors. Moreover, error analysis is critical since it is the indicator of language understanding as well as the tool for understanding the language of the learners throughout the learning process. Error analysis can also spot the problems and points of weakness. Consequently, it is worthwhile for instructors in choosing teaching approaches and efficient materials for improving the use of quantifiers among the EFL learners.

Teaching English language to university students in Iraq is of great importance; consequently, the teachers focus on grammar more than the other parts because learners Commit more grammatical errors in written discourse compared to the other parts of the English language. For syllabus and curriculum designers, this study might be a useful platform for additional reference since it was hoped to be able to focus on the grammatical aspects which needed to be highlighted on the students learning in university. Also, educational book publishers who might want to modify their publications by publishing grammar books on several grammatical aspects might base the content of their books on students' needs.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The present study examined the grammatical errors related to quantifiers in the English written discourse of university students who are less proficient in English. The specific objective of the study is to determine the pattern of the errors of written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners. It means that the current study examines the grammatical errors that the learners of English language make when they write a text in English language.

Literature review

The Nature of Writing

Among the four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing), writing can be considered as especially important because writing is one of the most important tools for communication especially in regards to business, professional, and academic communication. By writing, people communicate an array of messages to various readers. Similarly, in language education, writing is regarded as not only a thinking process but also a tool for language learners to express their thoughts and feelings (Chiu, 2006). In other words, by writing, learners can communicate a diversity of messages to various readers. In the modern world, such communication is extremely important whether the interaction takes the form of paper-and-pencil writing or online writing because it is through writing that people can communicate a variety of messages to a close or distant, known or unknown reader or readers.

Thus, viewing that writing is an act of communication, the ability to express ideas fluently, accurately and coherently in writing in native language (L1) or second or foreign language (L2) should be emphasized and cultivated (Olshtain, 2001). Indeed, to prepare students for the ability to compose, during the last 50 years, some pedagogical approaches to the teaching of L1/L2 writing emerged, each representing a different view of the nature of writing. In addition, the emergence of these approaches also reflects the major writing development in the L1/L2 contexts. Several of these teaching approaches will be briefly addressed below regarding its theory and pedagogy.

3. Method

Research Design

The design of the current study was quantitative and descriptive in nature. To gather the required data, the written essays of the students were analyzed in order to find out the common grammatical errors related to the use of quantifiers in written discourse. Some variables including the participants' L1, gender, age, proficiency level, and the target type

of grammatical errors (quantifiers) were controlled or moderated to enhance the external validity of the study.

Participants

In this study, the researcher collected the data from 20 (10 male and 10 female) Iraqi university students. They were at the third level of university ranging from 21 to 25 years old. Due to the importance of accessibility criteria for subject selection, convenience sampling was conducted. Therefore, for this investigation, the data collection from the participants was performed through convenience sampling method. All of the participants were Iraqi native speakers.

Instruments

Three research instruments were used in this study, a descriptive essay, a T-unit analysis, and a study analysis framework adapted from Dulay, Burt and Krashan (1982), Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy and Richard's (1971) error categories:

Dulay, Burt and Krashan's (1982) taxonomy was used in particular since it was expected to identify the language acquisition process that Iraqi students employed in their writing construction. Thereafter, the researcher started examining the source of quantifiers errors generated within 20 writing essays. These sources are argued to be either from inter-lingual or intra-lingual source.

The descriptive essays on the topic were chosen as a data collection instrument because it was related to the participants' interest and background, so it could motivate and enable them to write comfortably.

The T-unit was used as a data analysis instrument to analyze sentences in students' written essays; its usage was to determine the sentences whether they consisted of a single unit of the sentence or more, and to identify those units whether they were a dependent clause or an independent clause.

Na-ngam's (2005) error taxonomy was also employed to identify grammatical errors into different types. It consisted of 23 types of grammatical errors: incomplete sentences (fragments and omissions), run-on sentences, comparison, word order, there-be, tenses, voices, agreements, infinitives and gerunds, nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns,

modals and auxiliaries, possessive's, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, punctuations, capitalization and spelling.

Richards' (1971) error categories were manipulated and modified to match the purpose of this study. It originally consisted of ten types: omission of quantifiers, incorrect use of quantifiers, number errors (singular vs plural modifiers), compound/ complex sentence structure, word order, "there" structure, fragment, run-on sentence, and word-by-word translation. Since this study aimed at investigating quantifier errors and L1 interference errors, the above frameworks were then combined. However, there were six types of L1 interference errors in Richards' error categories that overlapped with some of the error types in Na-ngam's error taxonomy.

According to T-unit analysis, moreover, there were two types of errors in the merged framework that could not be considered as grammatical errors, and they needed to be eliminated from the framework; they were capitalization errors and spelling errors. Therefore,

the study analysis framework, consisted of 26 types of errors ; they were incomplete sentences (fragments and omissions), run-on sentences, comparison, word order, there-be, tenses, voices, agreements, infinitives, gerunds, nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, modals, auxiliaries, possessive's, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, punctuations, incorrect verb construction (serial verb construction), compound/ complex sentence, word by word translation and others (errors that were too complicated to be grouped or had unknown sources).

In summary, among the 26 types of grammatical errors, there were 10 types which were also considered as L1 interference errors. However, after this framework was tried out, four more types of L1 interference errors were added to the researcher's framework as they could be found in Iraqi students' written work. These four extra types of L1 interference errors were sub-types under some of the 26 types of grammatical errors. For more clarity, the four extra types of L1 interference errors were: 1) misuse of quantifiers (a sub-type of tenses), 2) moun-quantifier agreement (a sub-type of agreement), 3) omission of modifier (because in Arabic sometimes nouns signify numbers), and 4) omission of some punctuation marks (comma/ period/ question mark) (a sub-type of punctuation). Therefore,

the adapted framework included 14 types of L1 interference errors. The interlingual sources are those caused by negative transfer or interference from the learners' mother tongue, while the intralingual sources are those caused by interference within the target language itself (Dulay et al. 1982).

4. Results

Table 4.1.

Frequency and percentage of the committed errors

	Verb	Quantifier Preposition	Articles	Amount/number	Negative form	Morphological Errors	Total
Frequency	53	48	59	56	65	71	352
Percentage	12%	11%	14%	13%	22%	28%	100

According to Table 4.2, the most commonly errors committed by EFL Iraqi learners included morphological errors related to quantifiers (71, 28%). Some instances of this error taken from the participants' writings are given below

mores* than two <u>year</u> ago   ـ منذ أكثر من عامين

He has <u>mores</u> brothers and sisters   لديه إخوة وأخوات أكثر

Getting much money need a lot of working   الحصول على الكثير من المال يحتاج إلى الكثير من العمل

ioMany people has this problem   كثير من الناس لديهم هذه المشكلة

Considering the use of verbs, 53 errors (12%) were spotted in the participants' writings. Two instances of this error types are presented below:

Getting much money <u>need</u> a lot of working   الحصول على الكثير من المال يحتاج إلى الكثير من العمل

ioMany people <u>has</u> this problem   كثير من الناس لديهم هذه المشكلة

As with the incorrect use of articles, 59 errors (14%) were spotted in the participants' writings. Two instances of this error types are presented below:

<u>One of days</u> of my childhood   يوم من أيام طفولتي

<u>a lots of</u> schools need English teachers   تحتاج الكثير من المدارس إلى مدرسين للغة الإنجليزية

The participants had also problem with the amount and number. Indeed, 59 errors (14%) related to amount and number were spotted in the participants' writings. Two instances of this error types are presented below:

An adult person should have <u>few fruits</u> each day   يجب أن يتناول الشخص البالغ بعض الفاكهة يوميًا

<u>two or three</u> furniture were damaged when we moved   تضرر اثنان أو ثلاثة من قطع الأثاث عندما انتقلنا

The incorrect use of quantifiers in negative propositions was also very common. Indeed, there were 65 errors (22%) of this type in the participants' writings. Two instances of this error types are presented below:

some teachers <u>have not no</u> knowledge in this subject   بعض المعلمين ليس لديهم أي معرفة في هذا الموضوع

<u>Does nobody</u> has any idea   هل لدى أي ولد فكرة

The incorrect use of prepositions for quantifiers was also observed in the corpus. There were 48 instances (11%) of this error in the corpus of the study.

In the first session the teacher taught <u>two of pages</u>   في الجلسة الأولى قام المدرس بتدريس صفحتين

There was a lot from the old and the young people   كان هناك الكثير من كبار السن والشباب

In addition, the committed errors by the male and female were calculated separately and compared via independent samples t-test. Table 4.2 illustrates the results.

Table 4.2.

Independent sample t-test for Iraqi male and female groups

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
								95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	2.58	.111	19	1.436	.154	1.233	.859	-.46	2.93
Equal variances not assumed				1.436	.154	1.233	.859	-.46	2.93

As shown in Table 4.3, due to the fact that Levene's Test result is not significant (p> *0.*05) the *equal variances assumed* was considered. In t-test for equality of means, since *p*< 0.154 is more than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, and therefore, it was concluded that the means two groups was not significantly different.

Therefore, considering the first research question of the study, the analysis of the data indicated that applying the negative form of quantifiers and morphological errors were the most frequent quantifier errors in the writing of Iraqi EFL learners.

Table 4.3.

The adapted framework for the current study

Verb	Quantifier Preposition	Articles	Amount/number	Negative form	Morphological Errors
Subject-verb disagreement	Omission of proposition	Omission of "the" or "a/an"	Using count and non-count quantifiers interchangeably	Misuse of "no" and "any"	Omission of plural ending "s"
Using uncountable quantifiers with plural form of verb	Addition Of proposition	Addition of "the" or "a/an"	Comparative and superlative forma of quantifiers	Misuse of quantifiers in negative and interrogative sentences	Misuse of plural errors and addition of the plural ending "s"
Using countable quantifiers with singular form of verb	Misuse of proposition	Misuse of "the" and "a/an"	Using plural quantifiers when singular ones are needed	Misuse of little/a little; few/a few	Using singular quantifiers with
	Omission of "of"	Addition of "a/an"		Omission of the Quantifier	Incorrect use of comparative adjectives

The third research question was concerned with the frequency of each quantifier error. These errors, based on the frequency of them are explained here. As it was maintained above, morphological error was the most frequent error type in the corpus of this study. There were 71 instances (28%) of this type of error. In this type of error, the participants had added or omitted a morpheme from the quantifier. The second frequent quantifier error was related to using quantifiers in the negative or interrogative form. In this type of error,

the learners seemed to use 'any' and 'no' interchangeably, without considering the negative or the interrogative sense of the sentences. There were 65 instances (22%) of this type of error in the

Participants' writings. The third frequent quantifier error was related to misusing, adding, or deleting the articles which are used with quantifiers. There were 59 instances (14%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. The fourth frequent quantifier error was related to confusing the count and non-count quantifiers. In this type of error, the learners were using non-count quantifiers (e.g. much) for count nouns (e.g. books) and vice versa. There were 56 instances (13%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. The fifth frequent quantifier error was related to incorrect verb forms. There were 53 instances (12%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. Finally, the least frequent type of error was omission or addition of a proposition to the quantifier. Among the existing quantifier errors, this error was mainly observed in the use of quantifiers like: a lot of, lots of, as much as, etc. in which the quantifier contains a proposition. The learners tended to omit the proposition. There were 48 instances (11%) of this type of error in the participants' writings. Some further instances of quantifier errors, along with the explanations, are presented below.

e.g. (1)

…….. Follow <u>in my father's many footsteps.</u> (على خطى أبي)

Prepositions of quantifiers pose a great difficulty for an ESL learner since there are various prepositions in English that have the same function. As a result, when students are not sure which preposition to use with a certain quantifier, they often compare that sentence with its Arabic equivalence, giving a literal translation of that Arabic preposition in English. However, according to Scott and Tucker, (1974), "prepositions seldom have a one to one correspondence between English and Arabic. An Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations" (p. 85).

e.g. (2)

Evil is▼ force that can enter a person's soul and conquer it. (الشرّ قوّة) => Omission of the article in Arabic

When all <u>the</u> evil comes (عندما يأتي الشرّ =<< use of article between 'noun' and 'quantifier' in Arabic)

In English, abstract words referring to ideas, attributes, or qualities are used without the article 'the' to refer to that idea or attribute, etc. which belongs to everybody or everything. In Arabic, however, such abstract words are preceded by a definite article equivalent to 'the' in English. Hence, errors pertaining to the misuse of the article 'the' occur (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (3)

......, <u>what's my one destiny</u>? (أتساءل ما هو مصيري)

Calling the all kids to come. (مناداة الأولاد الآخرين)

"In Arabic, adjectives agree in number with the nouns they modify. As a result, agreement errors of this type occur in the English writings of Lebanese students" (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (4)

For, those not to hate me they need to respect me so much <u>and</u> a lot realize how much I love them <u>and</u> how hard I work for them. (Repetition of "wa")

"In English, items in a series are separated by commas, and the coordinate conjunction 'and' is used just before the last word. On the other hand, in Arabic, each item in a series is preceded by the conjunction 'wa' which is equivalent to 'and'" (Diab, 1996).

e.g. (5)

I have learned the one lesson in my life that is you should never ever give up (تعلّمت درساً في حياتي ، وهو ...)

<u>What I want to be</u>? (ما أريد أن أكون ؟)

In Arabic, personal pronouns are often added to verbs.

e.g. (6)

Semantic Errors: (Literal translation)

When I <u>secure some job</u> my goal is to become partner and have a quarter office. (عندما أؤمّن عملا)

e.g. (7)

Substance (Mechanics + Spelling):

Punctuation

However, ▼evil has its many shape and form. (...لكنّ الشرّ)

It is known to be, that a person would be more appreciated, and treated better▼ if he were a much educated individual than a failure.(...من المعروف أنّ)

e.g. (8)

Capitalization (No capital letters in Arabic). The first letter of the quantifier was not capitalized something else, last but not least, united states, Next I transfer to Wall Street. Arab   Lack of capitalization in the Arabic alphabet and very different punctuation

5. Discussion

The current study was set to investigate the common grammatical errors related to the use of quantifiers among Iraqi male and female EFL learners in the written discourse. The findings revealed that the common grammatical errors of quantifiers consisted of morphological errors, verbs and quantifier agreement, articles, amount/number, verb, and preposition, respectively. In addition, there was no difference between the male and female Iraqi EFL learners in terms of the quantifier errors in written discourse. The findings can be attributed to the fact that interference from L1 and inadequate components of L2 are the main source of errors. These results are argued to be very essential in learning the target language since the sources of errors within the context of this study were identified so that remedial teaching design can be easily prepared depend on these results generated.

Furthermore, it investigated the sources of grammatical errors related to quantifiers in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners. It was found that two main sources of the grammatical errors in the written discourse of Iraqi EFL learners included interlingual interference, intralingual interference, limited knowledge of English grammar, and carelessness.

Additionally, the present study explored the role of their L1 structure in the production of errors. The findings showed that errors which were related to the use of quantifiers in the written discourse were mostly related to simple sentence structure word order due to the influence of their L1. In fact, the errors were ascribed to the interference from the two

structural varieties of their L1 (i.e. Standard Arabic (SA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) structures).

The findings of the current study are in line with previous findings such as Zawahreh et al. (2012), Abushihab et al. (2011), and Nawar Diab (2014). They all found that the most frequent types of errors included prepositions, morphological errors, articles, verbs, active and passive and verbs. In addition, the transfer of Arabic linguistics structure affects the writing of Arab learners during learning English.

Corder (1986) maintains that the term error should refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e., his transitional competence. He uses the term systematic to identify errors, and asserts that the difference between systematic and non-systematic has an important significance. Non-systematic refers to performance of the L2 learner due to random guess, memory lapses, physical conditions, slip of tongue/pen etc. He also asserts that performance errors are mistakes, adventitious and not serious, because students themselves can correct them when their attention is drawn to them. On the contrary, errors are of importance and the learner would not normally be able to correct them as s/he has an incomplete knowledge of the TL structure involved. Also errors are systematic reflect the competence of L2 learner. They refer to idiosyncrasies in the interlanguage of the learner, which are direct manifestations of a system within which a learner is operating at the time. Errors are significant, persistent, and, in consequence, serious; their treatment requiring careful analysis to discover their cause. In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected. Ellis (1994) stated that any deviation from the TL norms may reflect either an error in competence or mistake in performance. Ellis added that when you ask the learner to correct a mistake and he does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected, it is an error. Similarly, Bose (2002) says that competence errors are caused by the application of the rules of the TL wrongly and the performance errors are the result of mistakes in language use and they occur as false starts, corrections, or slips of the tongue.

6. Conclusion

Interest in the teaching of English as a global language has been growing throughout the Arab world, and most Arab governments began to introduce the teaching of English as compulsory subject 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 (Mahmoud, 2002). 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 many Arab researchers (Al-Khatib, 2000).

Language is a very important means of communication among human beings. One can communicate his or her desires, ideas, emotions, beliefs or feelings to another as they share the common code that makes up the language. Nobody denies that there are several other means of communication used by human beings, e.g., miming gestures, short-hand, flags, sirens, nods, Braille alphabet, etc. But all these means of communication are extremely limited or they too, in turn, depend upon language. They are not as flexible, comprehensive, perfect and extensive as language is. Language learning process is actually a process of trial and pitfall, in which a learner forms a hypothesis, and later proves it, abort it or adjust it, based on his knowledge of the target language. In the speech or writing of a second/foreign language, pitfall is the use of a linguistic item (e.g., a word, grammatical item, speech act, etc.) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete (Richards, 2002).

After a systematic exposure of learners to a body of knowledge in English, the teacher, essentially, will want to know the performance or the learning outcome of students. He does this by exposing learners to a corresponding body of tests. Language tests help to elicit from language learners the extent to which the taught skills have been mastered. Language testing is, therefore, the systematic process of getting information from learners regarding their levels of acquisition of certain skills (Alderson, 1981; Carroll, 1981).

The results of this study revealed that interlingual errors committed by the Arab learners with respect to simple sentence structure word order may be due to the influence of their L1. More importantly, the errors could be ascribed to the interference from the two

structural varieties of their L1 (i.e. Standard Arabic (SA) and Non-standard Arabic (NSA) structures). In other words, these errors could either be attributed to the influence of SA structures or NSA structures.

The findings revealed that the participants' errors resulting from the influence of SA were more than those due to NSA influence. In addition, it can be assumed that interlingual errors with respect to simple sentence structure word order were caused as a result of word-for-word translation (literal translation) from Arabic, namely SA and NSA structures. In this case, the learners linked the English sentence words with Arabic structures. This type of errors reflected the learners' inability to think in English. Spontaneously, they utilized their first language (L1) as a crutch to understand English. Some Arabic structures of word order are different from those of English. Briefly, the Basic English sentence structure is the simple sentence, with one clause representing the structure SVO (Subject-Verb-Object).

Finally, though carelessness seemed to be the source of the least errors, it would not be ignored. Raising EFL writers' awareness of the disadvantage of carelessness might help reduce errors in their writing. Some EFL learners are cognizant of the underlying grammatical rules and structure; however, they do not pay attention to such rules whenever they start writing.

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