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Error Analysis Investigation of English Article
Acquisition.

A Case Study of Second year English Students-License- at Kasdi
Merbah University Ouargla

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Dedication

For my parents above all,

For the beautiful people who made this humble endeavour possible, Mr Ahmed

Noureddine Belarbi, Ms Ahlem Djeddi and Ms Kebdi Kaouther.

Honoured to have you in my life.

Mohamed Amine

Dedication

To my parents,

My family and my friends,

To all my instructors who provided me with knowledge and guidance,

Special thanks are due to my lovely friend Kaouthar,

I do not forget my binom Mohamed for his help.

Ahlem

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Abstract

The present study aims at showing to what extent the awareness about the similarities and differences in the use of articles may help for better usage and to also see whether most EFL students have difficulties in using English articles. Thus, we hypothesize not only the mother tongue may influence the appropriate usage of English articles but the awareness about this later as well. In this work we have followed descriptive and quasi-experimental methods as research instruments. First, the descriptive method in order to observe what is going on in classroom. Second, the quasi-experimental method is included in the study in order to understand what problems and difficulties students have in using English articles. There are two chapters in this thesis: the one of theory and the other of mere practice. The theoretical chapter contains three parts: The first one is concerned with the approaches to language transfer. Whereas, the second part focuses on contrastive error analysis. The last one deals with **articles** and article use. The practical part deals with the methodology adopted in this study. Also, with the analysis and interpretations of the results related to the impact of the mother language on students' perception of English articles. Students tend as well to overgeneralize English rules when dealing with the various and different rules related to every topic.

Key words:

Positive Transfer, Negative Transfer, Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, Articles, Grammar Translation Method.

List of Abbreviations

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

EA: Error Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

KMUO: Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla

L1: Mother Language

L2: Foreign language

MT: Mother Tongue

NB: Number

S: Student

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General Introduction

I-Research Background

Learning a foreign language is a growing need in this age of globalization. Through languages, we can write and speak to people from around the world. However, since people express themselves best in their mother tongue, they are quite often faced with challenges in learning foreign languages, the use of cohesive language devices while practicing is one of these challenges. It is for this latter reason that the issue has become a well-researched topic in second language acquisition field of study. In Algeria, teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task typically with “*article use and / or omission*” system. When teachers deal with the patterns outside of their original contexts the process becomes rather challenging. As to specify the scope, errors within the article system usage have been noted in studies examining L2 learners’ writing, and such errors are present in advanced learners’ texts as well (Lee, 2005).

Since the native language of Algeria is Arabic, which is by no means systematically similar to English, the majority , if not all, of learners come across countless obstacles in learning this foreign language’s patterns. Cross-linguistic influence is a major phenomenon that is attributable to L1 and L2 systems. It seems that transfer of L1 experiences and skills is an unavoidable reality in the process of L2 learning in a way that it affects the learners’ productive skills. This issue has been a central subject of researchers’ discussions throughout the last few decades. Therefore, it is our concern, within this study, to highlight the theoretical background of language transfer and examine its impacts typically on the performances of L2 learners of the article system, and to figure out the reasons that lie behind this incident.

II-Statement of the Problem

Language transfer affects the learners’ performances either positively or negatively. It is clearly manifested in grammar usage, vocabulary, speaking and writing skills. It is assumed, by many linguists and researchers such as Ellis, Hawkins and Miller to be a glitch that impedes learners from achieving advanced levels of language learning. Many students show some sort of difficulty especially, when they want to express themselves or communicate their thoughts whether in a written form or orally. That is, they sorely struggle

to step beyond their communicative problems and, yet, they fail because they are unaware of the attachment and commitment to their mother tongue's systems, mechanisms of thinking as well as their cultural backgrounds which they often use as a reference. Within this paper, the case taken into consideration is the effects of Arabic as a ML on SL which in this case is English, mainly, on acquiring the article system.

III-Aim of the Study

The present study aims to investigate the following aspects: first, to see whether most EFL students have difficulties in using English articles. Second, to identify what kind of errors they make. Third, to see to what extent the awareness about the similarities and differences in the use of articles may help for better usage. Forth, to speculate what can be done to solve the situation and to give some possible didactical suggestion that can improve the situation.

IV-Objective of the Study

Our objective focus on how can we make students of English at Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla be aware of the similarities and differences between English and Arabic in the usage of articles.

V-Research Questions

From all the above mentioned ideas, the questions that help to build up this study and upon which the research will be focused; are as follows:

-Is negative L1 transfer/interference the major cause for errors by students of English at KMUO in their usage of articles?

-Can transfer be avoided? or is it inevitable in leaning /teaching English articles ?

VI-Hypothesis

We hypothesize that not only the mother tongue may influence the appropriate usage of English articles but the unawareness about this later as well may do.

VII-Sub-hypotheses

- Negative transfer is not the major cause for errors when dealing with articles by students of English at Kasdi Merbah University.
- Transfer can't be totally avoided, but can be reduced through making students more

aware of the interferences between the two languages in articles usages.

- we hypothesis that when applying GTM in teaching the use of articles, students will be more aware of the similarities and differences and hence less negative transfer may occur.

VIII-Research Method

In this work, we have followed both descriptive and quasi-experimental methods.

First, descriptive method in order to observe what is going on in the classroom for example: student's behavior; how they deal with English articles. Second, the quasi-experimental method is included in the study in order to understand what problems and difficulties students have in using English articles by controlling the relationship between the variables of the hypothesis. In other word, one group of students is pre-tested, given a training sessions then post-tested.

We conduct a pre-test in order to check students' level before being trained. Then training sessions; we as teachers adopted the grammar translation method as a framework of the work. Then, post-test will be given to this group.

So, observation and quasi-experiment are instruments for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Then, we attempt to draw conclusion about what have been extracted from the scores we may get.

IX-Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of two chapters: Theoretical and Practical. The theoretical chapter contains three parts: The first one is concerned with Approaches to Language Transfer. Whereas, the second part focused on Contrastive Error Analysis. The last one, dealt with Articles and Article Use. The practical part deals with the methodology adopted in this study, the analysis and interpretations of the results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Nowadays, it is common in EFL learning and SLA that students usually face certain problems while they learn a second/foreign language. Among these problems which they are often unaware of, is transfer or, in other words, the interference of their mother tongue in this process of acquisition. The mother tongue can sometimes be presumed as a source of help to enhance learning or just a source of complication and exigency that make their learning even harder. So, this phenomenon, of transfer, has a great deal of discussion during the last decades of the 20th century. This chapter is devoted to discuss the concept of transfer, as its main concern, and its historical development as a subject of study in reference to some theories such as Behaviorism and Cognitivism which happen to be closely linked to language and language acquisition. Similarly, this chapter will introduce an overview about the procedures and theories of investigating such a phenomenon, namely, Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis in addition to articles and their use in both English and Arabic languages and the types of interference as well as the different levels where it can possibly occur e.g., at the grammatical, phonological, lexical, or the pragmatic level.

Part One: Language Transfer

1.1 Historical Overview

Language transfer has been a central issue in Applied-linguistics, second language acquisition and language learning Odlin (1989). Since the 1940s, much research has been devoted to investigating how language learners' L2 acquisition or production is affected by their first L1. Language transfer has been a vibrant area of research and has evolved through several phases of development over the past few decades.

The importance of language transfer in language learning and teaching has been re-evaluated during the last few decades. First, there was the structural behaviorist view of contrastive analysis. During this period, the L1 was called interference or "Negative Transfer" and researchers believed that the effect could be predicted by contrasting learners' L1 and L2. That was reflected in pedagogy which focused mainly on identifying similarities and differences between learners' L1 and L2.

Then came the creative construction phase. This notion of creative construction operated under the key assumption that L2 and L1 acquisition proceeded similarly as result of innate of mental mechanisms learners universally employed. During this period, the role of L1 was minimized, and pedagogy included an over emphasis on grammar (i.e. focus on forms) without considering the relationship between the linguistic competence and communicative competence (i.e., function). In addition to the over emphasis on forms, external factors (i.e., learners' internal mechanisms and the external input and their linguistic environment) were ignored, and the focus was mainly on observable errors.

During the phase of pragmatic-cognitive view of contrastive analysis, the emphasis was expanded from the linguistic focus to the level of discourse and pragmatics. Researchers also recognized that L1 could facilitate L2 learning or use. This development, which was followed by contrastive rhetoric, led to focus on textual analyses in paragraph organization. This involved how writing conventions in one language might influence how a writer organizes a written discourse in another. At the discourse level, over the past four decades, numerous studies undertaken within the area of contrastive rhetoric have served both support and refute of the idea that there are culturally specific, preferred organization patterns within texts.

Schachter (1988) stated that there is much evidence that anyone who looks at the empirical findings cannot be skeptical about the significance of transfer. A look at the literature on language transfer in the field of L2 acquisition shows that transfer has been found to occur on the phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, discourse and pragmatic levels. In recent years researchers have broadened their investigation to look into how transfer interacts with linguistic, cultural, social, and individual variables in language learning and language use e.g. Murphy and Wei (2003).

1.2 The Concept of Transfer

Many definitions have been given to identify what transfer is. Some of which are merely general views while others are mainly concerned with linguistic interference which are attributed to applied linguistics and SLA:

Transfer, derived from the Latin word *transferre*, means to carry, to bear or to print, impress or otherwise copy (as a drawing or engraved design) from one surface to another (Webster Dictionary of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics, 1986). So to speak, when we say technology transfer, we mean the transfer or carry-over of technology from one owner

to another.

Transfer can also mean “the carry-over or generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another”, especially “the application in one field of study or effort of knowledge, skill, power, or ability acquired in another” (Webster Dictionary of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics, 1986). The use of “transfer” in “linguistic transfer” is such an example. By linguistic transfer, we mean what the learners carry over to or generalize in their knowledge about their native language (NL) to help them learn to use a target language (TL). Here transfer does not indicate whether what is carried over is bad or good. This meaning from the dictionary shows that transfer is a neutral word in origin and nature.

According to Ellis (1999) transfer is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language, it is negative transfer. Ormond (1990) has a different point of view. He agrees that transfer is a part of everyday life: individuals encounter new situations and draw on their previously acquired knowledge and skills to deal with them. In fact, transfer is an essential component of human functioning, so it becomes positive transfer. As with all key concepts in the field of Applied Linguistics, researchers often use different terms and phrases interchangeably to refer to the phenomena related to Language transfer: Language mixing, Linguistic transfer, cross-Linguistic influence, cross-Linguistic transfer, cross-Linguistic interaction. Gass and Selinker(1992).

”*Transfer*” was defined by behaviourist psychologists as”the automatic, uncontrolled and subconscious use of past learned behaviors in an attempt to produce new response” (Duly et al., 1982, p.102). It has also been used by educational psychologists to refer to the use of past knowledge or experience in new situations. For example, learners may use their past knowledge in the first language when they learn a second language. If they know to read one language, they do not have to learn written symbols representing sounds in second language. In this case,”the basic concepts and skills involved in reading are said to be transferred to the new language” (Dulay et al., 1982, p. 101).

-Odlin (1989) defines”transfer” as”the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin, 1989, p. 9). Based on this definition, two types of language transfers are distinguished: positive and negative transfers.

1.2.1. Types of Transfer

1.2.1.1. Negative vs. Positive Transfer

Learning in one situation facilitates performance in another situation; we say that positive transfer has occurred. For example learning basic mathematics procedures should facilitate one's ability to balance a check-book. Learning principles of reinforcement should improve a teacher's ability to modify student behavior. On the other hand, when something learned in one situation, this hinders one's ability to learn or perform in a second situation, then negative transfer has occurred. Individuals accustomed to driving a standard transmission who then find themselves behind the wheel of an automatic transmission often step on a clutch hat isn't there. People who learn a foreign language typically apply patterns of speech production characteristic of their native tongue, thus giving them a foreign accent Schmidt and Young (1987).

1.2.2. Levels of Transfer

A. Phonological

It is manifested in speaking and reading and is usually indicated by recourse to word stress, intonation and speech sounds typical of Arabic. The learner may exhibit phonological interference; for example, he may not master the necessary physical articulation in the production of certain phonemes in English, so he/she uses the rules which belong to Arabic.

As a case, the two sounds /d/ and /t/ exist in both languages Arabic and English, but they are pronounced differently, i.e the place of articulation is not exactly the same. The final [s] or [z], represented by the letter "s" are often not pronounced in reading exercises although students certainly see the graphic manifestation of these sounds. This happens no matter whether at the end of the word there is an accumulation of fricatives or not and the tendency applies to all parts of speech. Arab learners of English also have a problem with letter [h]. They have developed a habitual error in generalising the case of pronouncing this letter whenever it is found within the word. e.g : in words like honest, hour and honour , the "h".That is, letter is always mispronounced. Algerian learners of English in particular have problems with pronouncing The "ch" grouping of letters is sometimes pronounced as [ʃ] instead of [tʃ] because of they are being influenced by their second language "French" , e.g.: achieve [ə'ʃi:v] instead of [ə'tʃi:v]. The influence of French is probably to blame in such cases taking into account the pronunciation of French words such as Chablis [ʃab'li], chose [ʃoz] and linguistics. [Linguistique].

It is a common error that the voiceless bilabial letter [p] is rather pronounced the same way as the bilabial letter [b] by the majority of Arab learners of English due to the absence of [p] sound in their native language. Supra-segmental patterns, which are units that extend over more than one sound in an utterance, e.g. stress and tone, in English are of high importance. For instance the stress pattern.

Because Arabic is among the languages that are not stressed, the EFL Arab learner tends to pronounce all the words in the same way so they do not emphasize the tonic and emphatic stress of syllables. There is a general rule in English which says that in words which contain more than one syllable, there is always one syllable which receives stress.

Stress greatly affects the utterance meaning we are trying to get across. A very slight shift in stress placement can change the nature of the word from a noun to a verb; For instance, the word „ record “ can be a noun and a verb at the same time; if it is stressed on the first syllable, it is a noun; if not, it is a verb, depending on the place where the stress falls. It also seems that Arab learners of English tend to have problems with the pronunciation of words consisting of silent letters such as ”knife, listen, talk, acknowledge”...etc ,which are often pronounced as they are written because in Arabic all that is written must be pronounced, except in case of connected speech such as assimilation. Doubtlessly, there are many other repetitive pronunciation patterns but it seems that the above-mentioned ones are most frequently manifested.

B. Lexical

Lexical interference is manifested in speaking and writing. It may happen when the learner translates a word from Arabic into English; what causes later interference at the semantic level. Semantic interference becomes very clear when the learner uses words that fit Arabic, but after translation in English, they make deviations in sense. For example, an Arab learner uses the two adjectives „ tall-طويل- “ and „ long-طويل- “ interchangeably, since the two express the adjective „ طويل “ in Arabic, and he says: “my father is a long thin man. Though, this utterance might seem syntactically correct but semantically it is not.

Another instance of lexical interference is the transfer of function words such as prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, and pronouns, which most often happens unintentionally. The Arab learners under study tend to misuse the correct preposition for the right context since they heavily rely on translation of the prepositions. e.g: They use ”at”

instead of "on" and "in" instead of "at"...and so on.

C. Grammatical

Grammatical or syntactic interference occurs at above-word level, that is, at syntax level. It appears when the EFL learner uses one of the syntactic rules of Arabic in producing English, whether in speaking or in writing. L1 influences L2 in terms of word order, use of pronouns and determiners, tense and mood.

There are modifications to word order attributable to the influence of Arabic, most often illustrated in the placement of adjectives after nouns in noun phrases. In Arabic, most adjectives go after the word they modify. Such word order is not typical of English where few clichéd phrases.

In both languages, Arabic and English, word order in the sentence is generally the same: subject + predicate, which is called a "nominal sentence" in the Arabic language because it begins with a noun. All declarative sentences in English are nominal; however, in the Arabic language, there are three types of sentences: nominal, verbal, and verbless. The two last types do not exist in English. Verbal sentences are sentences which start with a verb, while verb-less sentences do not contain a verb. The pattern of verbal sentence is "verb+ subject (doer)" which is very common in the Arabic language. Verbless sentence is a sentence which may have a pattern like "noun+ noun+ adjective". This pattern exists only in Arabic AlKhuli (2007). Concerning word order at the sentence level, Arab students tend to place the verb before the subject in English but this is probably due to native language interference; this leads to the generation of sentences that are formally English and statically Arabic.

D. Orthographic

It is manifested in writing and involves alteration of the spelling of words under the influence of French which is Algerians' second language:

The addition of an extra "-e" at the end of words, e.g.: closenesse instead of closeness, groupe instead of group, seniore instead of senior, Greeke instead of Greek, etc. in which case the English word acquires a silent "e", as in make, wake, cake, and so on. It is worth pointing out that the silent "e" might also occur in a post-morphemic position, as in postgraduate. The adoption of a French suffix such as -ique, -eur, and -oire, e.g.: refrigeratoire and refrigerateur instead of refrigeration.

E. Pragmatic

Trying to reach a comprehensive and sound definition of pragmatic transfer is problematic since both component parts of the phrase are, in themselves, problematic as they have been used with the different meanings and with similar meanings but under different labels. As to the notion of transfer, we have seen its evolution, and alternative labels that have been suggested by different researchers and finally commented on how this notion is understood nowadays. As the notion of pragmatics, there is a disagreement about how to define the scope of interest properly. Although pragmatic transfer has been referred to as sociolinguistic transfer Wolfson (1989), transfer of L1 socio-cultural competence or cross-linguistic influence Beebe et al. (1990), transfer of conversational features or as discourse transfer Odlin (1989) reflecting the different ideas about pragmatics and about transfer and the different objects of study, the term of transfer will be maintained in this paper as it is understood by Kasper (1992) who refers to the influence that previous pragmatic knowledge has on the and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge .

Pragmatic transfer is the transfer of L1 norms and forms of performing speech acts. Pragmatic transfer may result in the inappropriate transfer of forms or expressions from the L1 to the L2 as well as level or range of politeness or indirectness in the L2. Pragmatic transfer in inter-language pragmatics shall refer to the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information (1992p.207). Pragmatic knowledge is to be referring to "a particular component of language users' general communicative knowledge, viz. Knowledge of how verbal acts are understood and performed in accordance with a speaker's intention under contextual and discursal constraints" Faerch and Kasper (1984p.214).

1.3. Understanding Transfer

Language transfer is a crucial issue in the field of SLA, therefore, the study of the different theories of language interference, such as Cognitivism, Behaviourism, and others; is a pre-requisite to understand how this phenomenon occurs. Accordingly, it has been differently viewed by the following theories or perspectives:

1.3.1. The Cognitive Perspective

Cognitive theory views that language learning as a cognitive process which heavily

relies on mental activities and performances. Thus, contemporary cognitive psychology became a part of second language learning. That is, second-language learning is viewed as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. To learn a second language is to learn a skill, because various aspects of the task must be practiced and integrated into fluent performance (McLaughlin (1988)). Learning is a cognitive process because it is thought to involve internal representations that regulate and guide performance.

In the case of language acquisition, these representations are based on the language system and include procedures for selecting appropriate vocabulary, grammatical rules, and pragmatic conventions governing language use. As performance improves, there is constant restructuring as learners simplify, unify, and gain increasing control over their internal representations (Karmiloff-Smith (1979) in this regard, Lightbown (1985) pointed out that second-language acquisition is not simply linear and cumulative, but is characterized by backsliding and loss of forms that seemingly were mastered. She attributed this decline in performance to a process whereby learners have mastered some forms and then encounter new ones that cause a restructuring of the whole system. i.e, old acquired linguistic knowledge and the new one are mutually influential affecting one another. As a result, they create new mental and cognitive structure.

In their discussion of transfer, SLA theorists have argued whether bilingual individuals have two separate stores of information in long - term memory, one for each language, or a single information store accompanied by selection mechanism for using the L1 or the L2 (McLaughlin (1988)). In this regard, O'Malley, Michael (1987) pointed out that if individuals have a separate store of information maintained in each language, they would select information for use appropriate to the language context. To transfer information that was acquired in the L1 to the L2 would be difficult because of the independence of the two memory systems. Hence, the independence of the two systems within the individuals' mind limits the contact between them and so the possibility of transfer will be. An individual in the early stages of proficiency in the L2 would either have to translate information from the L1 to the L2 or relearn the L1 information in the L2, capitalizing on existing knowledge where possible (p.291).

A contrast to this argument for separate L1 and L2 memory systems, Cummins (1984) has proposed a common underlying proficiency in cognitive and academic proficiency for bilinguals. Cummins argues that at least some of what is originally learned through the L1 does not have to be relearned in the L2, but can be transferred and expressed through the

medium of the L2. L2 learners may be able to transfer what they already know from the "L1 into the L2 by (a) selecting the L2 as the language for expression, (b) retrieving information originally stored through the L1 but presently existing as non-language specific declarative knowledge i.e., not belonging to any specific system, and (c) connecting the information to the L2 forms needed to express it. Learning strategy research indicates that students of English as a second language consciously and actively transfer information from their L1 for use in the L2.

1.3.2. Sociolinguistic and Social Psychology Perspective

In this part, the perspective shifts from a purely linguistic analysis of the second language learning process to one that emphasizes sociolinguistic and social psychology factors as well. While transfer is primarily a psychological phenomenon, its potential effect on acquisition may be large or small depending on the complex variation of the social setting in which acquisition takes place. Specifically, Lado (1957) stated that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture; both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by the natives. Learners transfer forms and meanings which they are already equipped with in L1 to L2 social contexts and use these forms in their productive and receptive skills in order to achieve social integration and successful interaction.

A number of researchers studying second language acquisition without formal instructions have been struck by the relationship between social psychological acculturation and degree of success in learning the target language. In this regard, Schumann (1978:169) characterized the relationship between acculturation and second - language acquisition in the following way: "Second language acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target-language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language". In other words, the degree of target language learners' acculturation determines their proficiency. In this view, acculturation and, hence, second-language acquisition is determined by the degree of social and psychological 'distance' between the learner and the target-language culture. Social distance pertains to the individual as a member of a social group that is in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. Psycho-logical distance is the result of various affective factors that concern the learner as an individual, such as resolution of language shock, culture

shock, and culture stress.

It is assumed that the more social and psychological distance there is between the second - language learner and the target - language group(community of natives), the lower the learner's degree of acculturation will be toward that group. It is then predicted that the degree to which second - language learners succeed in socially and psychologically adapting or acculturating to the target - language group will determine their level of success in learning the target language. More specifically, social and psychological distance influence second-language acquisition by determining the amount of contact learners have with the target language and the degree to which they are open to the input that is available. In a negative social situation, the learner will receive little input in the second language. In a negative psychological situation, the learner will fail to utilize available input.

1.3.3. Behaviorists' Perspective

As in any other theory, behaviourists stand for their own perspective to explain this linguistic phenomenon. However, within Behaviourism, there appeared two distinctive perspectives. They came successively, i.e. an early behaviourist standpoint and a late one; they are as follows:

1.3.3.1 An Early Behaviorist Perspective: Thorndike's Identical Elements

Edward Thorndike views that language transfer takes place whenever there are, as he calls, *Identical Elements* which characterize the learners' tasks. Whenever there is a commonality between two subjects matter or there is similarities between two learning situations, learners tend to realize high achievements by mobilizing and referring back to L1 skills. That is; learning, under L2 circumstances becomes facilitated. As a result, L2 learners easily integrate and adapt themselves in new target language environments.

1.3.3.2 A Later Behaviorist Perspective: Similarity of Stimuli and Response

Since Thorndike's work, behaviorist views of transfer have focused on how transfer is affected by stimulus and response characteristics in the original and transfer situations. In general, Osgood cited in Ormrod (1990) principles of transfer which have emerged from behaviorist lit-erature include the following:

When stimuli and responses are similar in the two situations, maximal positive transfer will occur, i.e easy learning takes place.

When stimuli are different and responses are similar, some positive transfer will occur.

Here, the learners face difficulties in coping up with the different L2 situations of learning.

When stimuli are similar and responses are different, negative transfer will occur.

1.4 Mechanisms Leading to Negative Transfer

There are many factors that may lead to the negative transfer. The devices for it can be analysed in the following aspects:

1.4.1 Aspects of Language

A language is a system of signs expressing ideas and transmitting information. In the course of the form and development of languages, each language has its own principles, rules and regulations to organize the language to communicate. The form of the linguistic rules is objective, once the rules are accepted by a language community; it has its own protecting function, which is stable, unique and conventional.

In second language learning, when the rules of the two languages contact, it is likely for their own protecting functions to resist. Two results might be caused when one language rules try to conquer the ones of another language: (1) positive transfer or negative transfer when learners apply the knowledge and skills of their native to the second language; (2) on the contrary, when the second language rules conquer the learners' native language, the linguistic proficiency of the second language learners has enabled him/her to overcome the negative transfer. It is evident for the beginner to transfer their own language rules to the second language because the protecting function of their mother tongue has rooted in learners' mind. Interference occurs easily at the beginning of second language learning because learner's native language rules always try to make the rule of the second language suitable to the ones of their native language.

Then, L1 conventions are not yet flexible in the beginner learners' faculty of thinking; that is, they seem to be resisting and accordingly they are applied in the second language situations and contexts of use. So, negative transfer is likely to take place.

1.4.2 The Aspect of Cognition

Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental structures and processes involved in the acquisition and use of language. Some theorists re-conceptualized transfer within a cognitive framework, which was begun by Larry Selinker. In his formulation of inter-language theory he identified language transfer as one of the mental process responsible for fossilization.

Subsequently, there has been a widespread acknowledgement that second language learners depend on their native language (L1) in forming inter-language hypotheses. Learners do not construct rules in a vacuum; rather they work with whatever information is at their disposal. This includes knowledge of their L1. The L1 can be viewed as a kind of input from the inside. According to this view, transfer is not interference, but a cognitive process Ellis (2000) In this aspect, the term transfer is a psychological one.

Cognitive theory can account for the fact that differences between the target language and native language do not always result in learning difficulty. A cognitive theory of language acquisition sees linguistic knowledge as the same as in kind other types of knowledge, and views the strategies responsible for its development as general in nature, related to and involved in other kinds of learning. In cognitivist position language transfer is regarded as a cognitive process, that is, second language (L2) learners make strategic use of their L1 in the process of L2 learning. Wang (2008) pointed out that the use of L1 in L2 learning comes to be seen as an element of learning strategies, i.e, L1 prior knowledge is just a means and a part of L2 learning process. As Corder (1981) suggested that the learner's L1 may facilitate the developmental process of learning a L2 by helping him to progress more rapidly along the 'universal' route when the L1 is similar to the L2, this case is for positive transfer. And Krashen (1981) thought that learners can use the L1 to initiate utterances when they do not have sufficient acquired knowledge of the target language for this purpose. Hence, those who are not yet competent in using target language tend to resort to their L1 knowledge to bridge the so-called information gap.

Both Corder's and Krashen's proposals refer to L1 as a learning strategy. Only when learners' knowledge of the target language is not enough and need to make up for it or when learners believe that they may make use of their native language to infer the features of the target language, learners would transfer their L1. Therefore, language transfer is a cognitive means to use the knowledge of their native language for the second language learners.

1.4.3 The Aspect of Information Theory

According to Longman linguistic Dictionary, information theory explains how communication systems carry information and which measures the amount of information according to how much choice is involved when we send information. "One well-known model describes communication as a process consisting of the following elements: the information source, i.e. a speaker, selects a desired message out of a possible set of messages.

The transmitter changes the messages into a signal which is sent over the communication channel it is received by the receiver and changed back into a message which is sent to the destination. In the process of transmission certain unwanted additions to the signal may occur which are not part of the message and these are referred to as noise. The information content of a unit is measured according to how likely it is to occur in a particular communication. The more predictable a unit is, the less information it is said to carry. The unit of information used in information theory is the binary digit or bit. The related concept of redundancy refers to the degree to which a message contains more information than is needed for it to be understood” Longman Dictionary (2005, p, 332).

From this definition content or information theory, we can conclude that communication is a process of exchanging information, which can be expressed in the following model:

- Context
- Information
- Speaker / Hearer
- Contact/Exposure
- Code

In this model, there are six elements governing the communicative process. The first element is information, then goes to the speaker and hearer and the contact between the speaker and the hearer. The sending and receiving of the information can be realized through the code switching, which is a change by a speaker or writer from one language or language variety to another one. Code switching can take place in a conversation when one speaker uses one language and the other speaker answers in a different language. A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of their speech, or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence. Code switching can be a sign of cultural solidarity or distance or serve as an act of identity. This is the fifth element governing the communicative process. And the last is the context, occurring before or after a word, a phrase or even a longer utterance or a text. The context often helps in understanding the particular meaning of the word, phrase, etc. The context also may be a broader social situation in which a linguistic item is used. Influenced by the context and the communicators (i.e. the speaker and the hearer), the messages cannot be sent exactly to the hearer sometimes, this is called the information gap.

1.4.4 Aspect of the Relationship between Language and Culture

Culture can be approached from different perspectives and consequently defined in quite different ways. Culture can be, according to Longman dictionary, the set of practices, codes and values that mark a particular nation or group: the sum of a nation or group's most highly thought of works of literature, art, music, etc. Culture and Language combine to form what is sometimes called Discourses, i.e. ways of talking, thinking, and behaving that reflect one's social identity. This inclusive definition of culture implies that culture covers virtually all the aspects of human life and their correspondent behavior, linguistic and nonlinguistic, such as traditions, conventions, social norms, customs, and social habits, patterns of thinking, beliefs, values and language." Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2005, p, 332).

Culture is often bound up with language and thought, which are interrelated. A nation's culture and language often symbolize and shape the nation's spirit and mind. Language and culture are closely and historically related and dependent on each other. The native language is acquired with the ways, attitudes and patterns of behaving of the social group and these ways, attitudes and behaving patterns find their expression through language. Language and culture evolved and developed together, and therefore have been interwoven and mutually dependent throughout their history. Neither of them can exist nor develop without the other

Part Two: Contrastive Error Analysis

Cross-linguistic interference has been the main concern of many researchers in the field of applied linguistics. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis are the two major approaches that come as reaction to deal with this linguistic phenomenon; nevertheless, each one has a distinctive method of analysis.

2.1 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

"In the 1950s and 1960s the favored paradigm for studying FL/SL learning and organizing its teaching was Contrastive Analysis" James (2001, p.4). "Contrastive Linguistics has been defined as "a sub-discipline of Linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of language in order to determine both differences and similarities between them "Fisiak(1981,p.1). James(1971) maintained that Contrastive Analysis is a necessary component of a second language learning model which reliably

forecasts that the speaker of an arbitrary first language is liable to produce grammatically deviant second language sentences, the structural descriptions of which will resemble those of analogous first language sentences.

The American linguist C. C. Fries initiated the study of contrastive linguistics in 1945. This assumption was taken up by Robert Lado more than ten years later in his book, “*Linguistic Across Cultures*” (1957) in which the theoretical foundation of C.A was laid down. The supporters of CA claimed that the similarities and differences between various languages were enough to deal with the problem of teaching these languages. Lado(1957) claimed that for the students whose target language is second or foreign language, those elements of the tar-get language that are similar to his/her native language will be simple for him/her and those elements that are different will be difficult. i.e, the big difference between MT and TL causes greater difficulties and hardships to L2 learners. Therefore, Contrastive Analysis gained much importance to investigate learner errors in the field of second language acquisition, in which two languages were systematically compared to each other during the 40’s and 50’s.

The various studies based on CA have attempted to compare the systems of the native and target language either within the framework of the structure models of language description or within the framework of syntactical and productive model. The contribution of contrastive analysis relevant to second language pedagogy is: “The description of practical grammar which is made up of sum of differences between the grammar of the source language and that of the target language” Nickel (1971, p.9).

2.1.1 The Objectives of the CAH

The objectives of CAH are summarized in Els, et al (1984p.38) as follows:

- a. Providing insight into similarities and differences between languages;
- b .Explaining and predicting problems in L2 learning;
- c .Developing course materials for language teaching.

2.1.2 Different Versions of C.A.H

Wardhaugh (1970) Suggested that the CA hypothesis can exist in two versions:

- A strong version claims that the difficulties of the learner can be predicated by a systematic comparison between L1 and L2 and teaching material can then be designed to meet those difficulties.

- A weak version claims that no more than an explanatory role for contrastive linguistics:

Where difficulties are evident from the errors made by the learners, so, the weak version unlike the strong one tries to investigate and explain those errors made by learners.

2.1.3 Criticisms to Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis was criticized by the proponents of error analysis; they have argued that Contrastive Analysis focus on differences between L1 and L2 and ignore factors which may affect the second language learners' performance such as his learning and communication strategies, training- procedures, over generalization, etc. It shows certain difficulties which do not actually apparent in the learners' performance and conversely and does not predicts many problems which are apparent in learner's actual performance.

“The value and importance of Contrastive Analysis lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors. Not all errors are the result of interference. Psychological and pedagogical, as well as other extra linguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors. Fisiak (1981, 7 p42)”

A number of researches of learner's errors have been carried out by several researchers in the field of error analysis indicated that the influence of the L1 was much less than that said by Contrastive Analysis. Thus, all the mistakes of the language learner are not due to the make-up of his mother tongue. Researches show that factors such as analogical replacement, sheer muddle are cause of errors. Replacement based on analogy often causes the learner to make mistakes when he or she sets out to apply the rules of second language which he has learnt indiscriminately. Sometimes ignorance of the correct pattern, bad teaching or inadequate practice or a combination of the two yield samples of errors. It is not surprising to see the decline of Contrastive Analysis in the 1970 and replaced by other explanations of learning difficulties such as error analysis and inter-language.

2.2 Error Analysis

In recent years, studies of second language acquisition have devoted much efforts analysing learners errors based on the belief that those errors allow for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. In this way, teachers can be made aware of the difficult areas to be encountered by their students and devote special care and emphasis to them. Error Analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and that

target language itself. Error analysis emphasizes the significance of learners' errors in second language. Thus, it presents an explanation for the reason behind making those errors. It is important to note that Interference from the learner's mother tongue is not only reason for committing errors in his target language. Another concept of error analysis is given by Brown (1980:160 in Hasyim, 2002:43). He defined error analysis as: "The process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner".

2.2.1 Sources of Errors

To analyze students' errors, it is necessary to determine the sources of errors. There are two main sources of errors according to Brown (2000p.224). They are: interlingual and intra-lingual.

-Interlingual (Interference) Errors

Errors resulted from first language interference are called interlingual or transfer errors. Those errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. The term interlingual was firstly introduced by Selinker (1972p.201). He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language. Abi Samra, (2003p.5). In other words, it is the influence that happens between two linguistic systems.

Kavaliauskiene (2009), states that transfer of errors may occur because the learners lack the required information in the L2 or the intentional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine. Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative. The positive transfer can be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar. i.e., facilitation, or it may be unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different – that case is called negative transfer or interference Wilkins (1972). Interlingual errors may occur at different levels such as transfer of phonology, morphological, grammatical, lexical and semantic elements of the native language into the target language.

- Intra-lingual (Developmental) Errors:

Intralingual errors are the ones which result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer Keshavarz (2003). It is the case when

learners are not comprehensively familiar with their L2 or they do not have a good command of the target language. Erdogan (2005p.266) comments:“Intra-lingual errors occur as a result of learners’ attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it”.

These errors are common in the speech of second language learners and they are often analyzed to see what sorts of strategies are being used by the learners. Intralingual errors include: overgeneralization, simplification, communication-based and induced errors. Here the L2 learners try to generate new structures and forms in the target language depending on the newly acquired system.

2.2.2 The Practical Uses of EA

The EA is part of the methodology of language learning that provides with remedial analysis of the students’ difficulties. By analysing the learner’s errors, teachers can possibly provide learners with description of errors which can be referred to as feedback to decide the follow up program. Sujoko (1989, p. 48) states that the practical uses of EA are as follows:

-Errors provide feedback; so they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques.

-They show the teacher, the parts of the syllabus that have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention.

-They enable the teacher to decide how much time and effort needs to be devoted to which areas. This is the day-to-day value of EA.

-They provide the information for designing a remedial syllabus or a program of re-teaching.

From the above explanation it can be concluded that EA is an activity to analyze the errors of learners to reveal something of the system, through observing, classifying, identifying, separating and describing. As above-cited , the practical uses of EA are of high importance both to the teacher, in a way that they give him her with information about his her teaching; and the learner to know about his her progress and it also helps facilitate as well as improve the English mastery. It means that the teacher analyses the errors and corrects them.

2.3 Difference between Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis

Since CA and EA have different methodologies in dealing with language interference, there must be certain differences between them which are as follows:

-Contrastive analysis starts with a comparison of systems of two languages and predicts only the areas of difficulty or errors for the second language learner, whereas error analysis starts with errors in second language learning and studies them in an analytical and critical way in order to determine and discover their sources and significance.

-EA unlike CA provides data on actual attested problems and so it forms a more efficient basis for designing pedagogical strategies.

-EA is not confronting with the complex theoretical problems like the problem of equivalence encountered by CA.

-EA provides a feedback value to the linguist, especially the psycho-linguist interested in the process of second language learning in ascertaining: [a] Whether the process of acquisition of first language and second language learning are similar or not? [b] Whether children and adults learn a second language in a similar manner or not?

-EA provides evidence for a much more complex view of the learning process- one in which the learner is seen as an active participant in the formation of and revision of hypotheses regarding the rules of the target language.

-CA studies Interlingual error (interference) whereas EA studies intralingual errors besides Interlingual.

2.3.1 Errors vs. Mistakes

Many language users tend to mistakenly use the words “error” and “mistake” interchangeably, however; these key concepts pedagogically and linguistically different.

First step in error analysis is to make a clear distinction between what Pitfalls are: the things that go wrong or may cause problems (errors) on the one hand and lapses and slips (mistakes) on the other hand. In the Applied Linguistics field, the term “error” is taken to mean some idiosyncratic or “non-nativelike” piece of language produced regularly and systematically by a foreign language learner. According to Chomskyian dichotomy “competence” and “performance”, errors are rather systematic and chiefly attributed to competence i.e when a learner makes an error, it means that he has a malfunction or inaccuracy in knowledge of the TL structure, which he can not be able to correct them later when signaled or sorted out to him. Whereas mistakes are non-systematic

and closely linked to performance. They come out of certain psychological circumstances such as stress, fatigue, anxiety random guess, memory lapses, physical conditions, slip of tongue/pen etc. That is performance errors are mistakes, adventitious and not serious, because students themselves can correct them when their attention is drawn to them. Also errors are systematic reflect the competence of L2 learner (his lack of knowledge of the TL, i.e., linguistic transitional competence). They refer to idiosyncrasies in the inter-language of the learner, which are direct manifestations of a system within which a learner is operating at the time. Errors are significant, persistent, and, consequently, serious; their treatment requiring careful analysis to discover their cause (Ibid, 1986). Richards et al. (1992p.105) state:

“A learner makes a mistake when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Mistakes can be self-corrected when attention is called”, while an error (error of competence) is “the use of linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning”.

In other words, it occurs because the learner is not aware of what is correct, and thus he cannot correct himself. Ellis (1994) stated that any deviation from the TL norms may reflect either a problem (error) in competence or (mistake) in performance. Ellis added that when a learner is asked correct a mistake and he does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self-corrected, it is then an error. Similarly, Bose (2002) says that competence errors are caused by the misuse of TL rules and the errors related to performance are the result of mistakes in language use and they occur as false starts, corrections, or slips of the tongue, etc. To sum up, errors are the systematic and regular mistakes made by the second/foreign language learners at competence level due to linguistic reason.

2.4 The Hierarchy of Errors

Errors can be hierarchically classified, and they are as below:

Coalescence: it is the case when two or more items in the native language become coalesced (come together) into one item in the target language. (Here our source language is Arabic and target is English). Example:

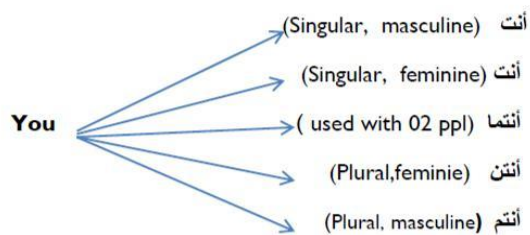


Figure1. *Coalescence of Errors. Adapted from Chazala [2008.P142]*

Under-differentiation: Here, an item in the native language is absent in the target language, example: In Arabic, it is possible that a sentence starts with a verb and then the subject comes after and so do the rest of components. Again, the subject can be used implicitly unlike English.

Reinterpretation: An item that exists in the native language is given a new shape or distribution. It is similar to a given item in the target language but not the same. Here, it can be best represented in prepositions which are usually thought to be of right usage.

Over differentiation: A new item in target language (English) which is absent in native language (Arabic). Example:

In English, abstract words that express ideas, concepts attributes «or qualities are used without the article “the” to refer to that idea or concepts, etc. In Arabic, however, such abstract words are preceded by a definite article equivalent to “the” in English. As a result,

L2 learners transfer this sort of L1 knowledge and generalize it in L2 learning: e.g., *Life*, which means in Arabic الحياة, is an abstract noun that is used without the definite article “the”. Therefore; Arab learners tend add this definite article which is certainly an error.

Present perfect continuous (have been + ing) in English = absent In Arabic Future in the past (would + infinitive without to) in English= absent in Arabic Past perfect continuous (had been + ing) in English = absent in Arabic

Split:an item in the native language (Arabic) has more than one equivalent in target language (English),example:

- a- The word (رئيس) has many distributions or rather many meanings and equivalents: president, director, boss, chief, chairman, chancellor, dean, master...

b- The word (كبير) [kabi:r] can be translated into many different meanings depending on the contexts it is used in ,examples:

Big (mistake); great (man); large (house); major (problem).

2.5 Examples of Negative L1 Transfer Errors

The negative transfer of L1 rules results in a number of errors that are grammatical, lexical, syntactic or semantic:

2.5.1 Grammatical Errors

Articles

One of the problematic aspects of the English noun phrase for native speakers of Arabic is definiteness. Zoghoul (2002) in a study about Inter-language Syntax of Arabic-Speaking Learners of English: The Noun Phrase: states that the most frequent errors in the noun phrase area are in the use of articles (38 percent); they formed 12.5 percent of the total number of errors, and he ascribed the majority of errors to learners' L1 interference. In his error analysis study on Arab students. Willcott (1972) concludes that definiteness problems were far more frequent than any other problem in English syntax faced by Arab students.

- Honesty is *virtue: الامانة فضيلة omission of the article in Arabic.
- When "the" evil comes : عندما يأتي الشر : use of article in Arabic.

In English, abstract words referring to ideas, concepts attributes or qualities are used without the article "the" to refer to that idea or concepts, etc. which belong 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).

Prepositions

Example: I congratulate her on her success: اهنتها لنجاحها.

Grammatical errors such as prepositions pose a great difficulty for an EFL learner since they are various in English that have the same function. As a result, they tend to make students confused and not sure which preposition to use in a certain sentence, they often compare that sentence with its Arabic equivalence as shown above in the example,

giving a literal translation of that Arabic preposition in English. So, they use for instance “for” instead of “on”. An Arabic preposition may be translated by several English prepositions while an English usage may have several Arabic translations.

Adjectives

“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 Jordanian students” (Diab, 1996).

2.5.2 Syntactic Errors

Among the frequent syntactic errors are those of word order, coordination and omission of the copula. A common syntactic error that Arab students commit as a result of transfer is wrong word order. In English attributes precede the nouns they modify. However, in Arabic, they generally follow them.

Example:

- Here are three pairs very delicious. *Instead of:* Here are three delicious pairs.

A similar mistake occurs with the use of adverbs as an adverb that modifies an adjective or another adverb generally precedes that adjective or adverb. However, in Arabic, this is not the case. Hence students write the following:

- Every person almost has a laptop. *Instead of:* Almost every person has a laptop. Following the Arabic word order.

Coordination

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”. Accordingly, the following sentence is correct in Arabic: I bought a pen and a pencil and a copybook and a ruler, but quite anomalous in English.

Omission of the Copula

There is no copula in Arabic at the surface structure it is rather implicit; therefore, Arab students neglect the use of copula in English structures.

For example: The garden beautiful, instead of: The garden is beautiful.

This is a common mistake whose source is the mother tongue.

2.5.3 Lexical Errors

Owing to students' restricted vocabulary, they often translate words from Arabic to express a certain idea in English, unaware of English collocations, that is, word "A" in a certain English sentence coexists with word "B" and not with "C" even though "B" and "C" may be synonymous. Hence the student has to decide which one collocates with the meaning expressed in the sentence. For examples:

- Patients should have physicians describe medicine to their patients.
- Animals are usually very afraid of **high** sounds. اصوات عالية
- **For me** achieving these goals makes me happy. ... بالنسبة لي
- However each person must succeed to his ability. حسب قدرته
- In my free time I **will practice** on improving my basketball fundamentals. اتمرن على

2.5.4 Semantic Errors: Literal Translation

Semantic errors occur when students use literal translation to convey in English Arabic expressions, idioms or proverbs...etc. The outcome is as follows:

- I cut a promise to do better in discourse analysis next time. Instead of : I promise you to do better in discourse analysis next time
- My cousin made an accident and could not study. Instead of: My cousin had an accident.
- By accomplishing these plans, I will insure myself an outstanding life. Instead of: By accomplishing these plans, I will have a life insurance policy.

2.5.5 Capitalization and Punctuation

Arabic alphabets do not have a capitalization system, i.e., no distinction is made between upper and lower cases. Punctuation conventions are different from those of English.

2.6 Criticism to Error Analysis

Despite the fact that Error Analysis Hypothesis might have many merits, it has not escaped criticism at the hands of certain linguists. The main allegation laid against it is that it makes no allowance for avoidance phenomena. That is, when speaking or writing a second/foreign language, a speaker will often try to avoid using a difficult word or structure, and will use a simpler word or structure instead in order to get right (Schachter 1974). CA predicts difficulties and therefore does not face this avoidance problem. Another reason for weakness of EAH is due to what Ellis (2008.p233) mentioned: “weaknesses in methodological procedures, theoretical problems, and limitations in scope”.

Schachter and Murcia (1977) argued that the Analysis of errors in isolation focuses the attention of the investigator on errors and thus excludes the other corpus from consideration, the classification of errors that are identified is not usually proper, statements of error-frequently are quite misleading, the identification of points of difficulty in target language is usually not very correct, the ascription of causes to systematic errors may not be right, and the biased nature of sampling procedures supplies another point of criticism of EA. It meant that so far the collection of data from a number of informants is considered, the very nature of data collection and selection of informants is biased. Therefore trying to draw statistically significant findings from such samples may be a questionable practice.

Part Three: Articles Use and Omission

Learners experience difficulties in mastering the English article system. This section then provides an overview of the above mentioned system in comparison to its counterpart Arabic, it does also provide definitions of the terms definiteness, specificity and genericity in English and Arabic. This is in order to offer readers more information about the article systems in both languages and show them various options regarding how they are viewed.

3.1 The English Articles

Articles are the most common determiners in English. They are characterized as definite the and indefinite a (n) and Ø. For some linguists. McEldowney(1977) English articles are a (n), the, Ø, and some; for others (e.g. Master, 1994) English articles are a(n), the and zero (Ø).

3.1.1 The Indefinite Article a/an

It is called indefinite because it is usually used to refer to something in a less specific manner. A/an can be used only before singular count nouns. Essentially, a and an mean one, thus they cannot precede plural or uncountable nouns. The choice of a/an depends on phonology. The selection of a/an can be determined by phonetic rules rather than by spelling rules.

3.1.2 The Zero Article

The zero article can be used before plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns. According to Master (1997, p. 222), “the zero article is the most indefinite of the articles. Its general function is to remove the boundaries that make nouns discrete”.

3.1.3 The Definite Article

The definite article is expressed through “the” which is a free form. It is called definite because it usually precedes a certain or previously mentioned noun. It can be used before singular/ plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

3.2 The Arabic Articles

Arabic expresses definiteness in three forms:

3.2.1 The Definite Markers

Unlike English, in which there is only one definite article (i.e. the), Arabic uses two forms: the use of the article al- and use of a genitive construction (Rydin, 2005 and Al-Kulaib 2010). Mansouri (2000, p. 22) stated that in Arabic ‘definiteness is usually achieved by procliticisation i.e. the use of the prefix al-or any of its allophones, all of which represent the equivalent of the English the.’

3.2.2 Indefiniteness and Nunation (Tanwiin) in Arabic

Although the definite article al-is visible in Arabic script, the indefinite article does not have an overt form to indicate its presence. Instead, an indefinite marker is considered a zero article that can be pronounced with the suffix -n(Nunation), it is pronounced Nuunsound and it is not written. Nunation is a morphological marker that can be found at the end of both nouns and adjectives. The suffixed -n functions as an indefinite marker and can be indicated by means of one of three case endings: the nominative case, the accusative case and the genitive case Nasr (1967), Qafisheh(1977) and Schulz (2004).

3.3 Definiteness in English

A number of linguists, philosophers and logicians, Chafe (1976) ; Hawkins (1978) Bickerton, (1981); Heim (1982); Quirk et al (1985) and Lyons (1999) have defined definiteness as a semantic property from different points of views. For instance, according to Russell (1905), cited in Hawkins (1978) definiteness is based on uniqueness vs. existentiality. Other linguists Heim (1982) have defined definiteness in terms of anaphoric properties, familiarity identifiability vs. locatability. Moreover, linguists such as Egli and Heusinger (1995) defined definiteness in terms of the situational use of the definite determiner phrases.

3.4 Specificity in English

According to Brinton (2000, p. 292), “information is specific if it denotes a particular entity in the real world, whereas it is nonspecific if it denotes no particular entity in the real world.” To Brinton, specific refers to particular members of the set. Both definite and indefinite articles can be used in specific and generic phrases. According to Bickerton (1981), the difference between the article the and a/ zero can be realized in terms of two features: [\pm Specific Reference] and [\pm Hearer Knowledge]. The former means that the article and the noun phrase which arises jointly with it may or may not have a specific reference. The latter refers to whether what is mentioned in a sentence is known to the speaker and hearer from a context or previous discourse.

3.5 Genericity in English

Genericity has more than one form. The three forms of the articles, the, a(n), and zero can be used to express genericity. Some researchers (e.g. Lyons, 1999, Longobardi, 2001) believed that genericity refers to an entire class as a whole. Class refers to all objects which satisfy the description of the noun. Additionally, Quirk et al. (1985, p. 265) stated that “the reference is generic, since we are thinking of the class without specific reference”.

3.6 Specificity in Arabic

When a noun phrase is specific, it means that there is “a particular object which the speaker is thinking of as motivating the choice of description” Lyons, (1999p.166). According to Ionin (2003) Arabic is an article-based language and its articles encode the distinction [\pm definite].

3.7 Genericity in Arabic

According to Krifka et al. (1995) a generic use refers to an entire class of an entity and contains the general properties of that class as a whole. Arabic differs from English in the way it expresses a generic reference. There is not an indefinite article in Arabic. Arabic uses the definite article *al-* and its absence marks indefiniteness. Unlike English which allows generic reference through the definite article *the*, the indefinite article *a/an* or the zero article, Arabic allows a generic use only through the definite article *al-* with both singular and plural noun phrases. This generical is called *al- al-jinseyah*. When a noun is attached to this *al-*, it refers to the whole class, i.e. it represents (all) the class.

3.8 Error Patterns of L2 Article Acquisition

3.8.1 Article Omission

Article omission stands for the absence of “a” or “the” when either article should be overt. It is different from the zero article, which refers to the non-overt indefinite article. The zero article is grammatical. Article omission is usually treated as ungrammatical errors.

3.8.2 Article Overuse

Huebner (1983) studies one adult Hmong-speaking learner of L2 English. Huebner finds that the learner supplied “the” across all environments in the beginning period. But this learner supplies “the” with the context of [+HK] later. Master (1987) investigates the production of L2-English learners from five different L1 backgrounds. Master also claims that “the” is associated with [+HK]. Parrish (1987)’s longitudinal study of English by an LI-Japanese speaker argues that it is not totally random although article choice of this learner is not target-like. Parrish finds 9.4% the overuse in the contexts of [+SR, -HK]. Thomas (1989) investigates the acquisition of English articles by L1 and L2 learners. Thomas finds that child L1 learners frequently supply the definite article in referential indefinite contexts and adult L2 learners also overuse the definite article. Although Huebner’s and Master’s findings suggest that “the” is related with the contexts of [+HK], Thomas (1989) argues the data from both of the studies show overuse of “the” in indefinite [+SR, -HK] contexts.

Conclusion

Transfer of learning is one of the most universally applied principles of education and rehabilitation. Thus, this chapter, mainly, tackles thoroughly the concept of language transfer of the English article system acquisition as being the process of applying what has been learned in one situation to one's learning or performance in another situation whether it was negative or positive. A brief historical background about this issue is highlighted in this chapter's first section starting from around 1940s up-to-date and moves forward to identify its key concepts and the different ways of how it was perceived by linguists and et al. Then, a presentation of transfer levels, mainly Grammatical, Lexical, Phonological, Morphological and pragmatic was thoroughly explained. And the other point is about the mechanisms that lead to negative transfer. In the second section, this chapter, also, deals with the two most famous approaches of language transfer which are Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. These two approaches are such remarkable endeavour in the field of SLA for they help make language learning more effective, accurate, and significantly progressive. As for the third section of this research, it includes the major points related to articles and their use such of definitions, error patterns of L2 acquisition and a brief comparison in between the Arabic article system and its English counterpart. So, all the above-cited description is the theoretical side of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

PRACTICAL PART

Introduction

This study aims to see to what extent the awareness about the similarities and differences in the use of articles may help for better usage .on this ground, we adopted a quazi-experimental method where one group of students has a pre-test, training sessions and a post-test. First, they are pre-tested to evaluate their level in English article as following: Definite articles"the", indefinite articles"an-a" and omission. Then, they had training sessions were we have used rules of English articles basing on GTM method .Finally, students were given a post-test in order to check to what extent they are aware of the usage of English articles.

The investigation was conducted at the English language department Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla. This study uses a sample of 25 students of second year license. To achieve the aim of our study, we have adopted descriptive and quazi-experimental method. This chapter deals then with description of research participants (students), methods and procedures.

1.1. Method

In this work, we followed a descriptive and quazi-experimental method as research instruments. First, the descriptive method in order to observe what is going on in classroom. For example: students' behaviour; how they deal with English articles. Second, the quazi-experimental method is included in the study in order to understand what problems and difficulties students have in using English articles.

1.2. Sample Population

Our case study took place in English language department Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University. The sample consists of second year licene of the academic year 2016/2017.

The sample includes 25 students. They are of both genders: male/female. Age and sex are not taken into account; they have studied English for 7 years as pre-university education plus one year at university studying grammar as a module.

1.3. Procedures

1.3.1. Pre-test: in this step, we conduct a pre-test in order to check students' level before being trained. We divided it into two activities. Each activity comes along with some specific aims in which we ask students to answer.

In the first activity, we asked them to read the questions and tick the right answer.

Whereas, in the second activity they were asked to write a short paragraph in which we have focused on the form rather than the content.

A. The Analysis of Pre-test's Results:

On the basis of our assessment procedures, we have divided the pre-test into two activities. Each activity has a certain aim. The scores are tabulated as follows:

Table1. Pre-test's First Activity Percentage of the Correct Answers.

	N	Percentage
First activity	15	60%

The first activity consists of 10 sentences; each sentence lacks one of the articles that a students should fill it with. The exercise aims at to what extent they are aware of the appropriate use of these articles. After correcting the test we concluded with the following results:

- 15 out of 25 students have correctly put the appropriate article in the fitting gap. That is to say 60 %. However, we can notice that most of students do it out of guessing because we have asked them after finishing the test about some rules and the majority did not know anything and remember nothing about them.
- We can hence say that most of the correct answers were done so out of guessing. However, the wrong ones are all due to the interference between their mother language "Arabic" and the language they learn "English" .
- 10 out of 25 did it wrong because they thought the usage should be similar to their mother tongue and by consequence, they put them altogether the same.
- Some students chose the right articles because they memorize the rules; others did it wrong though they know the right rules.
- We conclude that it is not enough to memorize the rules but to be aware of them.
- The interlingua similarities between Arabic and English are not that strong, however; most of students in this test did it right and chose the articles as should be.
- If we follow the logic pattern of the negative and positive transfer we may say that most of students may commit errors for the favor of their mother tongue, but only less than the half did it. This explains that students either do it out of guessing, or they might copy each other's answer.

- Positive transfer may be of help for the tested students if the usage was the same in most of the sentences, but as we saw the sentences we chose were more different and reflect more negative transfer.
- Consequently, our samples do not know the rules; their use of the articles is just a random one; their mother language played a negative role in identifying the right answer.

B. Interpretation

1- Omission of article

According to the chart above we see that the majority of students did not answer correctly. 15 out of 25 were wrong i.e. 60% did not appropriately know where to omit the article.

For e.g most of them chose to add the article to "work" in the sentence N°2: Sally goes to.....by car. The students were given three options: a work- the work – work" We saw that 60 % of them used "the" as an article that goes with "work"

The rule says that whenever we mention the word "work" we do not associate it with any article since it means the activity or the job done by someone and not the place where someone exercises this activity.

We think that most of them did it wrong because of the negative transfer from the mother language "Arabic" to "English". In Arabic, to express the same above-mentioned idea we say: "سالي تذهب الى العمل". We notice that in Arabic it is mandatory to use the definite article with the word "work" عمل. SO the students here did apply the rule of their mother tongue on the language they learn. This is due to the influence of the mother tongue on the second language. This is called "Negative transfer" it occurs whenever the rules in the two languages different.

Some students did answer the first sentence right. However; they did it wrong with the 8th sentence. The sentence N°8 says: Helen has eggs and bacon forbreakfast. They were given three options as follow: breakfast – the breakfast- a breakfast. We noticed that same students who chose to add the article "the" before the word" work" did not do it with the word" breakfast" though it is used with a definite article in Arabic language . هلين تناولت بيضا . "ولحما في الفطور". Hence, we think that such students either they translated "breakfast" to فطور "الصباح" that is not associated with "ال" in Arabic and consequently this right choice is due to the positive transfer between the languages in question. So, we say that the similar the usage is the right the choice will be in such cases. However, those who used the definite article "the" with the word" breakfast" did not translate it into "فطور الصباح" but rather into "الفطور" and

hence it is always the negative transfer that hinders students to recognize the difference.

If we take the sentence N° 6 we can notice the following: All of the students did precede the word “home” with the definite article. The sentence says: We arrivedhome at 6 O'clock inmorning.

The rule says that omission should occur with the word” home” because it expresses abstract notion ‘family’, but if it denote the physical building “house” the use is a must. The reason behind the error in all the 25 answers is due to the negative transfer between the two languages. All students read in their language: ”وصلنا المنزل على الساعة 6 تماما”. All students translated automatically the expression into their mother tongue and chose to use “the” as their language requires. In the other hand, all their answers but one did add the definite article to the time expression “morning”. This is mostly due to the positive transfer because we say: "الصباح"with a definite article in Arabic. The only wrong use of the article here chose to add no article before “morning”; we think that this student does not know the rule or he just did it out of guessing since he himself answered the first sentence right.

2-The definite article « the »

This article enjoys the most correct answers by students. The majority did correctly use this article with a percentage of 68 percent i.e. to say 17 out of 25 students.

in the sentence N°8,The train to Liverpool will depart from.....in ten minutes. The options given were: a **platform 7 – the platform 7 - platform 7.**

Most of students ticked the article the according to the rule that says: The definite article is used when the noun preceded is specific or particular. Here the noun is already precized with N° 7 which distinguishes it from the other platforms. We suppose that they did rely upon positive transfer in ticking the right article, since in Arabic language we use the definite article when we also specify a given object. So, we talk here about a positive transfer in both grammar and usage.

Generally, the use of the definite article does not actually pose a problem for students of our sample because their mother language shares more similarities than differences with English in this matter. However, the students sometimes commit errors when they over-generalize the English rule thinking that it is applicable the same all the time with all the various and different forms. For instance, with sentence N° 10, some students, though it is similar to the Arabic form, did commit a mistake and omit the article. This due to the fact that they have in mind expressions like: They go to school, and hence they apply the same

structure as it is with such expressions without paying attention to the rule.

8 out of 25 did wrongly omit the article which cannot be considered here as a negative transfer since Arabic does not omit in that case.

With “the “usage, students do not guess; they either positively transfer or they over-generalize the rule of one of the two languages in questions.

If we rethink the sentence N° 7, we find that all students but one did correctly answer it. The sentence says: Be careful. Radiation fromcan cause skin cancer. We gave students 3 options to choose: a sun- the sun – sun. All the students but one did choose the second option “ the sun” . This is due to:

- The positive transfer, since their mother language uses this word with a definite article “THE” and hence they do not find any difficulty in spotting the right article.
- The wrong answer that chooses to pick “sun” and omit the article can be explained as follow: This students when asked why did he choose to omit the article , he answered that he did it randomly without even thinking why did he do it and consequently we can say that this choice is just out of guessing.

3-The indefinite article « a & an »

The use of the indefinite articles « a & an » does not actually make a lot of trouble for UKMO students since it is firstly similar in function with the “indefiniteness” النكرة in Arabic. That is why, we found that 15 out of 25 students did it well.

The sentence N° 4: My friend isperson “Honest – an honest – a honest “ All students did choose to take option ‘B’ that is to fill it with “an” . The rule says that after the verb “to be” the noun takes an indefinite article if precedes a noun that acts as a complement and potentially mentioned for the first time. The reason why all students did answer it right is that:

- It is exactly similar to the use in Arabic language that is to say a direct positive transfer from the mother language as we can say” صديقي شخص” and hence, it is a very easy direct “copy” of the original text in mind.
- The sentence N° 5 caused a lot of difficulties for our sample because mostly , students do not distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns and potentially may make and commit some errors in this regard. In this sentence, students were given three options as follows : a terrible mess- terrible mess- the terrible mess. The sentence is : Please clean upyou left.....terrible mess.

Half of the students i.e. 13 out of 25 did choose the wrong choice as to add an indefinite article to the word” terrible mess” thinking negatively relying upon their mother language that also uses a particle of indefiniteness that we call النكرة . Students do automatically translate in mind the sentence in Arabic taking it for granted similar to the one in their mother tongue as “لقد خلفت فوضى مريعة”.

The other students who did choose the right option did it eventually for the following reasons:

- They know that “mess” is an uncountable noun and hence it should not be preceded by any indefinite article.
- They did it out of guessing, because they do not actually remember the rule.

All in all, the students of our sample are not actually aware of the differences and similarities that exist between the two languages. They choose the article according to the following:

- Because they memorized the rule.
- Because they do not know the rule and just choose out of luck
- Because of positive transfer directly taken from their mother language
- Because of negative transfer directly copied from their mother tongue.
- Because of an overgeneralization of the rule in English.

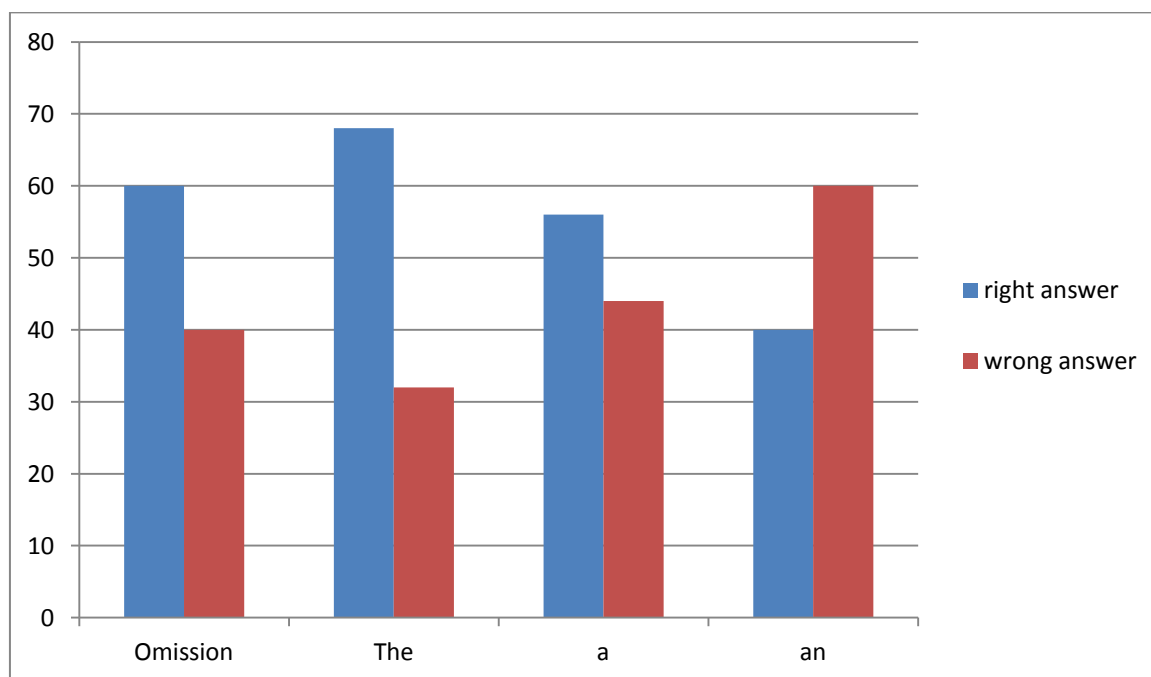


Figure2. Pre-test's First Activity Percentage of Answers.

1.3.2. Training Sessions

- The grammar-translation method of foreign language teaching is one of the most traditional methods, dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was originally used to teach 'dead' languages (and literatures) such as Latin and Greek, and this may account for its heavy bias towards written work to the virtual exclusion of oral production. As Omaggio comments, this approach reflected "the view of faculty psychologists that mental discipline was essential for strengthening the powers of the mind." (Omaggio 89) Indeed, the emphasis on achieving 'correct' grammar with little regard for the free application and production of speech is at once the greatest asset and greatest drawback to this approach.

The major characteristic of the grammar-translation method is, precisely as its name suggests, a focus on learning the rules of grammar and their application in translation passages from one language into the other. Vocabulary in the target language is learned through direct translation from the native language, e.g. with vocabulary tests such as:

The house = المنزل

The mouse = الفأر

Very little teaching is done in the target language. Instead, readings in the target language are translated directly and then discussed in the native language, often precipitating in-depth comparisons of the two languages themselves. Grammar is taught with extensive explanations in the native language, and only later applied in the production of sentences through translation from one language to the other, e.g.

Did you buy the book? = هل اشتريت الكتاب?

عن أي كتاب تتحدث. = Which book are you talking about?

As Omaggio describes is, "testing of the students is done almost exclusively through translation: "students had learned the language well if they could translate the passages well." (Omaggio 90)

- Translation in groups can encourage learners to discuss the meaning and use of language at the deepest possible levels as they work through the process of understanding and then looking for equivalents in another language.

- Translation is a real-life, natural activity and increasingly necessary in a global environment. Many learners living in either their own countries or a new one need to translate language on a daily basis, both informally and formally. This is even more important with the growing importance of online information.
- Whether we encourage it or not, translation is a frequently used strategy for learners; if we accept this, we need to support them in developing this skill in the right way, e.g. by discussing its role.
- Translation can be a support for the writing process. Research has shown that learners seem able to access more information in their own L1, which they can then translate.
- Discussion of differences and similarities during the translation process helps learners understand the interaction of the two languages and the problems caused by their L1. It also helps learners appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the L1 and L2, for example in the comparison of idiomatic language such as metaphors.

1.3.3. Post Test

After having finished the training sessions we handed the participants a test in which we aimed at seeing the extent to which this adopted method was helpful to students in terms of the understanding and awareness of the proper usage of the English article system. The test was made up of two tasks, the first task was about filling the gaps with the following articles: **a, an, the** and **zero article**. The second task was about free writing. What we ended up with was quite encouraging results as we measured considerable progress in the sense of the awareness of the results.

A. The Analysis of the Post-test Results

Basing on the training sessions, we have set a post test consists of two activities; each activity has a certain aim. The scores are tabulated as follows:

Table 2. Post-test's First Activity Percentage of the Correct Answers.

	N	Percentage
First activity	21	84

B. Interpretation

We think that students answered successfully not just out of guessing, but they become more aware and conscious about the different usages of the English articles.

- Students after being taught with GTM became more conscious of the differences and similarities between the two languages and hence they were able to correctly answer the

right ones.

- Students not only put the appropriate article as it should, but they –enlightened with GTM- could spot the common and different wheres and whens of the articles.

- We see clearly that a percentage of 84 is a very good score for the post test to prove and to validate our hypotheses.

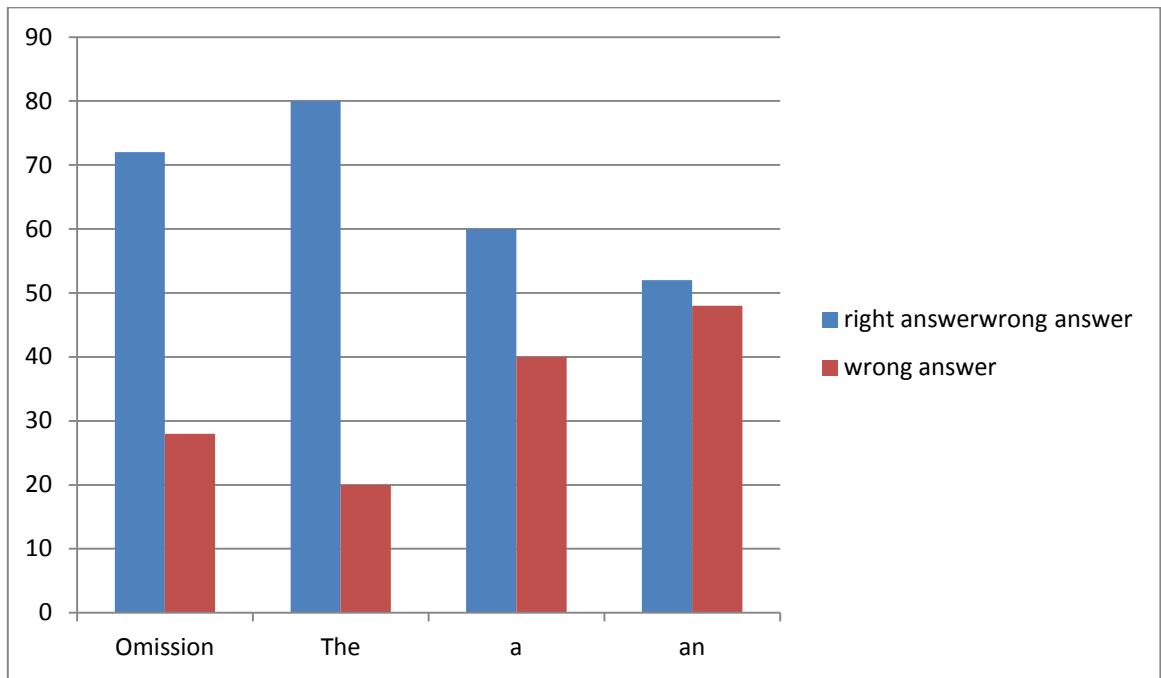


Figure3. Post-test's First Activity Percentage of Answers.

1.3.4. Comparison of Pre and Post-tests' Results

The two tables below show the difference between the results of the pre-test and the results of the post-test

Table3. Number of Students in Pre-test's Results.

Students	Scores out of 20
S1	12
S2	09.5
S3	07
S4	10
S5	11.5
S6	12
S7	14
S8	07
S9	11
S10	08
S11	08

S12	09
S13	14
S14	13
S15	10
S16	15
S17	13
S18	16
S19	13
S20	10
S21	09
S22	10.5
S23	12.5
S24	13.5
S25	09

Table4.Number of Students in Post-Test's Results.

Students	Scores out of 20
S1	12
S2	14
S3	13
S4	09.5
S5	09
S6	10
S7	17
S8	18
S9	11
S10	11
S11	10
S12	12.5
S13	12
S14	13
S15	11
S16	15
S17	16
S18	12
S19	13
S20	09
S21	11
S22	12
S23	14
S24	18
S25	10

If we just have a look at the tables without even have a deep mediation, we find that the post-test did really succeed in making the students 'progress. Table one give us 07 as the worst mark while 09 says something very valuable; that even the worst mark is the best

one. The highest mark got in the pre-test is 16 while it is 18 in the post-test. The progress is really clear. If we count how many ones got the average in the pre-test we find just 18 out of 25. Even if it is more than the half, but compared to the post test with 23 students out of 25 makes it distinctively far different.

N.B: students are classified randomly. S1 in table one and S1 in table two do not forcibly mean that they refer to the same student.

After we set students' scores of the pre-test and the post-test, we use standard deviation statistical analysis to compare their results. To determine the standard deviation, we will follow this rule:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - U)^2}{n}}$$

- σ Refers to Standard Deviation
- X Refers to each score
- μ Refers to the Mean
- n Refers to the number of students

Table 5. Comparison of Pre and Post tests' Results.

Variables	Numbers of students	Median	Mean	Standard deviation
Students' scores in the pretest	25	11	11.18	2.16
Students' scores in the posttest	25	12	12.50	2.61

A. Interpretation

The results obtained from both tables show that we have witnessed an increasing improvement from 11.18 to 12.50. The difference shows a satisfying improvement in students' awareness about the usage of the articles; this increasing ratio expresses the contribution that GTM leads to.

1.4 Findings

Omission

The majority of UKMO students of our sample tend to omit articles when addition is needed. More advanced students tend to be aware of their ignorance of the rules and rather than omit only some, they resort to compensatory strategies to express their idea (Kasper and Kellerman, 1997). For example, "a" is left out in the sentence.

Reasons of the actual errors

Language errors according to Norrish (1983, p.21-42) arise from carelessness, interference from the learners' first language, translation from the first language, contrastive analysis, general order of difficulty, overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, material-induced errors and a part of language creativity.

- 1) False analogy: Learners assume that the new item B behaves like A: they know that "School" when used for the primary reason takes no article and assume that "theatre" (B) behaves likewise, when it is used for the primary purpose so they omit "the".
- 2) Misanalysis: Learners out of misunderstanding, use the wrong article instead of the right one. They, for instance, use "the" in 'He was thrown in prison' by misanalysis of the purpose whether it is primary or secondary.
- 3) Incomplete rule application: This is the converse of overgeneralization or We may call it under-generalization as the learners do not use all the rules. They change or decrease the complicated rules to simpler rules as they aim at Simplification rather than attempt to get the whole complex structure as in adding the indefinite article to avoid pluralizing an "uncountable noun".
- 4) Exploiting redundancy: This error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy. This is shown throughout the system in the form of adding unnecessary articles.
- 5) Hypercorrection: This results from the learners' over cautious and strict observance of the rules. Especially when students are under stress as in exams; they fear commit mistakes to the point that they themselves commit stupid mistakes.
- 7) Overgeneralization: This error is caused by the misuse of articles. An example is the

generalization of the use of "the" instead of omission.

8) Transfer plays a crucial role in ticking the right choice. Students do more commit mistakes with 'omission' more than with 'addition' for addition is similar to Arabic while omission is not even used in their mother tongue.

9) Students when are aware of the differences between both languages they produce less mistakes.

1.5 Pedagogical Implications

Having established a picture of the practical usage of the English articles by Kasdi Merbah's L2 students of English, we suggest actions to be taken. Here are some pedagogical implications that we would like to put forward to help the learners improve their use of articles to achieve a higher accuracy, and in the end, to get closer to native-like proficiency in using them.

Firstly, English articles have to be taught to the students in a systematical and continuous way. Students along the different learning periods receive limited education about the use of English articles. Therefore, it is hard for the students to improve their ability to correctly use English articles. Indeed, most students have difficulties using the English articles. Thus, a systematical and continuous way of teaching English articles can help them gradually improve their ability to use English articles.

Secondly, the rules of article usage should be instructed based on understanding of the categories of English nouns. The results show that most students do not clearly know what kind of determiner, especially what kind of article, should be attached to a particular noun. Some fixed noun phrases call for the students' repetition and memory, for example, "I am going to work".

Thirdly, the rules of article use should be instructed together with examples and contexts. Extensive reading should also be required in order to develop the learners' language sense.

Finally, teachers should help students to realize the importance of acquiring the English articles and using the English articles. Most of time, the students make errors in using English articles just because they do not care about the use of English articles, for they think a wrong article will not change much meanings of their utterance. Therefore, students should be required to pay attention to the use of the articles in their discourse. Proper exercises are also needed to check up on as well as to reinforce the learning process. However, measures should

also be taken to counteract the effects of language negative transfer.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out about the influence of the mother tongue on the learners' acquisition and performances of the English article system. We tried to describe, analyze, and explain the errors made by second year license English students in their usages in the light of an error analysis approach. The examination of those errors reveals incorrect samples of article usage produced by the students. Students transfer what they know in the mother tongue into English language. When students pick up what they know in the native language (Arabic) and transfer it into the foreign language (English), at the same time old habits are transferred.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Transfer is a reality in the process of second language acquisition. If we consider previous research and current studies, we come to realize that more than 40 years have elapsed since the early days of Contrastive Analysis; great advancements have been made in the study of transfer, yet the role of any prior linguistic knowledge remains one of the most problematic discussed issues in the literature and its continuous discovery keeps opening new pages to better understanding of second language learning process.

Therefore; Teachers of second languages should be able to identify this phenomenon in order to prevent the errors which may arise or use them in a constructive way. Differences between language and Cultures should be taken into consideration in order to deal with transfer and then, teaching will be more effective. Moreover, errors made by learners will help teachers to foresee what may be difficult or easy for them, and will provide clues of how to act.

On the other hand, teachers of second languages should also take into account the similarities between the native and target language. Thus, they will also take advantage of this positive transfer in order to ease the learning process.

In this research paper, we focused on the concept of language transfer and its effects on the acquisition of the English article system for Algerian students of English as a second language, the case of L2 undergraduate students at KMUS, Department of English. L1interference should not be considered as a negative aspect n the process of teaching English as a second language.

Nevertheless, teachers may use positive transfer to motivate their students and create a feeling of self-confidence in the English class. Furthermore, negative transfer may be seen as a constructive way of approaching student's efficiency.

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الملخص

لقد كان مفهوم "النقل" وما يزال مفهوماً يسيل حبر الجدل والنقاش في حقل اللسانيات التطبيقية و كذلك في حقل اكتساب اللغة الثانية. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الخلفية النظرية للتأثير اللغوي للغة الأم واللغة الثانية على موضوع تعلم اللغة وكيف تطور هذا المفهوم في بحر العشريات الأخيرة من القرن العشرين وبداية القرن الواحد والعشرين . ينقسم البحث إلى فصلين اثنين متكاملين: يحتوي الجزء الأول منه على مقدمة عامة للموضوع نتناول فيها مفهوم "النقل" بكل تفاصيلها وكيف تناولته المقاربتان كلاهما " التقابلية " و " تحليلي الأخطاء " . أما الفصل الثاني فهو الجزء التطبيقي من المذكرة وفيه أجرينا دراسة شبه تجريبية على عينة من طلبة السنة الثانية من قسم اللغة الانجليزية ما قبل التدرج. نحاول من خلاله التعرف على الأسباب و الدوافع وراء النقل اللغوي لأدوات التعريف والتنكير استعمالاً وحذفاً من خلال ما ينتجون من نصوص كتابة أو/ومشاهدة و قد أظهرت النتائج المحصل عليها ما للغة الأم من عميق تأثير على الطلبة في فهمهم لأدوات التعريف و التنكير في اللغة الانجليزية كما أظهرت مدى تعميم الطلبة لقاعدة معينة على كل استعمال آخر يشبهه في الشكل أو الوظيفة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحويل الموجب , التحويل السالب , التحليل التقابلي , ادوات التعريف و التنكير , المنهج التحويلي الترجمي.

Résumé

La présente étude vise à montrer dans quelle mesure la prise de conscience des similitudes et des différences dans l'utilisation des articles peut aider à une meilleure utilisation et aussi voir si la plupart des étudiants EFL ont des difficultés à utiliser des articles en anglais. Ainsi, nous supposons non seulement que la langue maternelle peut influencer l'utilisation appropriée des articles en anglais, mais aussi la prise de conscience à ce sujet. Dans ce travail, nous avons suivi des méthodes descriptives et quasi expérimentales comme instruments de recherche. Tout d'abord, la méthode descriptive afin d'observer ce qui se passe dans la salle de classe. Deuxièmement, la méthode quasi expérimentale est incluse dans l'étude afin de comprendre les problèmes et les difficultés rencontrés par les étudiants dans l'utilisation des articles en anglais. Il y a deux chapitres dans cette mémoire: celle de la théorie et l'autre de la simple pratique. Le chapitre théorique contient trois parties: la première concerne les approches du transfert de langue. Alors que la deuxième partie se concentre sur l'analyse des erreurs contrastives. La dernière traite des articles et de l'utilisation de l'article. La partie pratique traite de la méthodologie adoptée dans cette étude. En outre, avec l'analyse et les interprétations des résultats liés à l'impact de la langue maternelle sur la perception qu'ont les étudiants des articles en anglais. Les étudiants ont également tendance à sur générer les règles anglaises lorsqu'ils traitent des règles différentes et différentes relatives à chaque sujet.

Mots clés:

Transfert positif, transfert négatif, analyse contrastée, analyse des erreurs, articles, méthode de traduction grammaticale.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Error Analysis Investigation of English Article Acquisition

Pre-test:

Activity one:

1- Tick the write word

1. Sally goes to _____ by car.
a) Work b) a work c) the work
2. _____ starts at eight o'clock.
a) School b) A school c) The school.
3. We need to protect _____ from pollution.
a) environment b) some environment c) the environment
4. My friend is _____ person.
a) honest b) an honest c) a honest
5. Please clean up _____ you left.
a) the bathroom b) a bathroom c) bathroom
6. We arrived _____ home at six O'clock.
a) the home b) a home c) home
7. Be careful. Radiation from _____ can cause skin cancer.
a) a sun b) the sun c) sun
8. Helen has eggs and bacon for _____.
a) breakfast b) the breakfast c) a breakfast
9. The train to Liverpool will depart from _____ in ten minutes. Will passengers board the train now ?
a) a platform 7 b) the platform 7 c) platform 7
10. Sarah went to _____ with some friends to see the speaker's Hamlet.
a) theatre b) the theatre c) a theatre

Activity two:

What are you planning to do on the upcoming spring holidays? (Write at least 100 words).

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NB: Please make sure that you fill in all the blanks.

Appendix 02

Training sessions

Session One: Indefinite Usage

- 1- Ali ate **an** apple.
- 2- اكل علي تفاحة
- 3- Youcef forgot to send his parents **a** message.
- 4- نسي يوسف ان يرسل الى والديه رسالة
- 5- I need **a** mobile.
- 6- احتاج هاتف
- 7- He wants **a** bicycle.
- 8- يريد دراجة هوائية
- 9- Do you have **a** driver's license?
- 10- هل لديك رخصة قيادة

Strategies: Students are asked to first read aloud the sentences one by one. After, they translate them accordingly into Arabic and conclude with identifying articles in both versions of each example, of course, this would logically lead them to analyze and consequently compare in between English and Arabic usages of articles.

- ✓ After going through the cases and discussing them adequately, students end up agreeing on the following set of rules :

Rule: We use the indefinite articles “a” and “an” when we have nouns (concrete and countable ones) in order to quantify them. In addition, we use them when talking about a thing which is new, unknown, or introduced to a listener for the first time. Besides, “a” and “an” are used when asking about the existence of something.

Session Two: Definite Usage and Omission

- 1- Soundous goes to school every day at 8 o'clock.
- 2- سندس تذهب الى المدرسة يوميا في تمام الساعة الثامنة

Strategies: Here, Students are asked to read aloud the sentence. Then, they translate it into Arabic. Afterwards, they identify articles in both cases.

3- Soundous visited **the** school where her younger brother studies.

4- سندس زارت المدرسة التي يدرس فيها اخوها الاصغر

Strategies: The same procedures are taken in here. Students read, translate and then identify articles.

For further input:

5- Ahmed goes to Mosque to pray.

6- احمد يذهب للمسجد للصلاة

7- Ahmed went back to **the** Mosque because he left his keys there.

8- عاد احمد الى المسجد لانه نسي مفاتيحه

✓ Students up to this phase conclude with the below stated rule :

Rule 1: Primary purpose (like when going to buildings such of school, hospital ...etc.) no article is mentioned.

Rule 2: Secondary purpose (when going to buildings such of school, hospital ...etc) the definite article is mentioned.

Rule 3: Arabic sentence does not differentiate between primary and secondary purposes.

Appendix 3

Error Analysis Investigation of English Article Acquisition

Post- test:

Activity one:

1- Tick the write word

1. I don't know what to do. It's _____ problem.
a) Quite difficult b) a quite difficult c) quite a difficult.
2. _____ is my favorite sport.
a) Football b) a football c) the football
3. My flat is on _____ first floor.
a) The first b) first c) a first
4. There is a major problem with _____ nowadays.
a) a crime b) the crime c) crime
5. We spent a lot of time swimming in _____ on holiday.
a) a sea b) the sea c) sea
6. _____ of the United State was elected last year.
a) President b) a president c) the president
7. An atheist does not believe in _____
a) a God b) the God c) God
8. Where is Ann? She is in _____
a) kitchen b) a kitchen C) the kitchen .
9. Tom is _____
a) Interesting person b) the interesting person c) an interesting person
10. his birthday is on _____ of may
a) The third b) third c) a third

Activity two:

You certainly have heard of the terrible earthquake that hit the city of Boumerdes in 2003. Write a short paragraph in which you depict and describe that natural disaster and its consequences (write at least 100 words).

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NB: Please make sure that you fill in all the blanks.

