



The Impact of Arabic Transfer on English Language Learners in the Context of Saudi Arabia

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
L1 Transfer First language Interference Contrastive analysis English language/parts of speech	<p>This research paper attempts to explore mother tongue interference in English language learning in the context of Saudi Arabia. Relatively, less research is available, and scanty attention has been paid to the effects of Arabic transfer on English language learners in the Saudi context. The effect is also studied as a crosslinguistic influence (CLI) or interference. First language transfer (crosslinguistic influence) can be negative or positive in second language learning L2. Learning a new language is a complex phenomenon that requires motivation, patience, time consumption, practice and above all academic collaboration to reach a targeted goal, especially for English language learners. English language learning in Saudi Arabia is not a new phenomenon, it dates back to 1930 following the discovery of oil. Since then, the arguments in favour of English language learning (ELL) and English language teaching (ELT) have been growing more and more in post-secondary education in Saudi Arabia with the inclusion of English-based curricula being taught more across all the academic institutions in a highly strict and conservative society. The conceptual paper illuminates some theories such as the behaviourist perspective, innatist view, critical period hypothesis within the Saudi transfer context, and their relevant perspectives on L1 interference. Moreover, the author also evaluates critically seven parts of speech, namely noun, pronoun, preposition, verb, adverb, adjectives, and conjunction to critique how negative or positive cross-linguistic influence from L1 to L2 can have effects on the development of mature/adult language learners if it remains uncorrected and untreated. Finally, some recommendations have been surmised from existing available literature on how to avoid transfer while learning the English language, especially in Saudi Arabia.</p>

Introduction

Language transfer (crosslinguistic influence CLI) is one of the fundamental research areas of English language learning. The process of learning a second language (L2) is comprised of pre-existing knowledge of linguistic structures and rules from the first language (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996). The impact of transfer is always huge for second language learners because it generates more errors in the acquisition of the target language (TL) that result in erroneous information in all areas of language; reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Transfer – or crosslinguistic reference, as Sharwood Smith and Kellerman (1986) suggest as a more specific term – describes the process of applying knowledge from one language to another. “Transfer is the influence from the similarities and the differences between the target language and any other languages that have been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Ellis 1994, p. 301). It distorts the meaning of writing. It changes the message of communication in speaking and listening. The complex sentence structure makes it harder for a learner to gain a better comprehension of reading passages as well. Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) explained language transfer more simply by stating that flawed knowledge of L1 influences the language intake of L2. For example, language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking become intellectually flawed. “Alternatively, L2 learners depend on the knowledge of their native language and general problem-solving strategies to acquire the L2 acquisition grammar” (Al Kafri, 2019 para.2).

All these issues result from transfer when a language learner negatively carries over their mother tongue in the process of language learning. For instance, cognates (the blood relatives) are the best example of transfer. These cognates can be positive if they are learned contextually. Moreover, they can have a negative impact if contextually misunderstood. For example, it is quite a positive transfer as orange (*naarinj*/نارنج) is present in Arabic. Similarly, alcohol (al-kuhuul/الكحول) is also present in Arabic. Now, Saudi English language learners can link these nouns to the target language easily more specifically to English. In addition, the cognates can be negative if they are used out of context. For instance, a telephone has a classical root – *haatif* which means shouting. Now there is no relevance between the two, and it might result in an error while L1 uses it in the wrong context and its implication can be far-reaching. Moreover, the spelling of the Arabic language relies on graphemes and morphemes whereas the English language has a complex sound system which makes it difficult for its learners to understand it in the wrong way. As a result, their mastery of the English language gets delayed and they got stuck in micro details. Now, it can be claimed that transfer, notwithstanding its obstructive role in the learning process of the target language (TL) and whether it is negative or positive in language learning, result in some sort of misunderstanding.

Theoretical Framework of Transfer in Second Language Learning

Kwon and Han (2008) maintain that transfer is the most common sight in L1 or any possible L2s acquired during the language acquisition process. Moreover, the transfer can be bidirectional as well-meaning that an L2 could also impact the L1. This developmental process can be conscious; however, usually, it takes place subconsciously. This paucity of comprehension on the part of the learner can make the presence of transfer exceptionally difficult to detect, as “it at times might present itself in an apparent manner, but usually, it is too tightly interdependent with other developmental factors, especially in child SLA” (p. 306).

Weinreich (1953) states that crosslinguistic influence or transfer can be an aberration from grammatical rules and regulations of any language because the bilingual communicator has some conformity with grammatical rules of the target language (TL). Similarly, Odlin (2003) speaks of transfer as “similarities and differences” (p. 341) resulting from the influence of target language (TL) and First language (L1). In simpler words, it is an interlanguage in the process of achieving to learn target language (TL). Nevertheless, Ellis (1997) states the phenomenon of transfer as the impact of L1 in the acquisition of L2. Gass and Selinker (2001) support Ellis’ definition and put some more added to it by including the influence of prior knowledge of the mother tongue in the acquisition of the target language (TL).

Furthermore, Corder (1983) discussed at length the same issue of transfer by saying that it is mother tongue interference because of its inescapable bearing on the speakers of second language learners. Finally, Kellerman and Sharwood Smith (1986) mention the transfer as cross-linguistic influence or cross-linguistic generalization. Given the theoretical framework regarding LI interference/ transfer to the target language /, it is understandable that the unavoidable phenomenon of language transfer is a controversial issue in the process of second language learning, especially for Saudi language learners.

Keeping given transfer in the above-mentioned discussion, it is noteworthy here that the first language influences the second language learning process in some way or the other. For example,

Schachter (1988) compares Chinese and Japanese English language learners in terms of their usage of relative clauses. He says that Chinese and Japanese students make few errors in using relative clauses as compared to Arabic learners who produce more clauses in their language learning process. In addition, Arabic has 28 consonants and 8 vowels as compared to English which has twenty-four consonants with five vowels and eight diphthongs. The conflicting phonological systems also make it difficult for Arabic language learners to understand and transition smoothly from L1 to TL which is English in this case.

Types of Transfer in English Language Learning Within Saudi Context

First language transfer is a debatable issue in second language acquisition. There has been a continuous reassessment of transfer and related theories time and again by different linguists in this connection. For example, linguists mention L1 transfer as “a major factor in second language acquisition (SLA)” (Ellis, 1990, p. 297). Now, there are two types of language transfer; it is either negative or positive. In the following lines, these two types will be discussed to display Arabic language learners’ tendencies towards transfer.

Negative Transfer

Negative transfer often mentioned in second language literature is “obstruction of or interference with new learning because of previous learning, as when a U.S tourist in England learns to drive on the left side of the road” (Ellis, 1994 p. 300). It is an obstructive tendency of the human mind to mix old knowledge with new pieces of information gained during the process of learning new knowledge. According to Sweet (1899), complete knowledge of the first language enables second language learners to learn the target language. In this connection, some research reveals that Arabic students are prone to mother tongue interference. For instance, a study was conducted in Morocco whose findings show how those Arabic students of the English language “prefer to go back to their previous knowledge of Arabic and apply it in their writing” (Hamadi, 2015 pp. 7-8). The same

study goes on and divulges that Arabic students' transfer of L1 knowledge pushes them to commit grave grammatical errors (Hamdi, 2015). Some examples are from research conducted by Salim (2015) in terms of nouns. For instance, English uses teacher as masculine or feminine but in Arabic, it has many infections such as;

- Mu'allim (singular masculine)/ Mu'allma (singular feminine)
- Mu'allimuun (plural masculine) /Mu'allimein(dual masculine)
- Mu'allimat(plural feminine)
- Mu'alimataan ;Mu 'allimatayin ;(dual feminine) (Hamadi, 2015)

Interesting enough is the aspect of applied linguistics which is more concerned with negative transfer than positive transfer in case of transfer in Saudi English language students. The simplest example is the target language accent that is hard to tackle and L1 spills all over the L2 accents unintentionally. As a result, Arabic language speakers commit common errors in the pronunciation the of simplest of English language words (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2017). For example, the T sound of the English alphabet in Arabic gets mixed the up with Arabic alphabet “ت”. This communication problem of transfer makes words of English look unfamiliar in the eyes of native or near-native speakers, especially with people with a British accent. In phonology, for instance, tower should be read as t stressed with *er* omitted in the end. Its phonetics is like 'taʊə. Now if Arabic speakers will use the same, its phonetics will look like this; Tower will become θaʊə(r). A native speaker will understand tower as Sawa which means cellphone in Arabic. In case, they use er in tower, it becomes θaʊə(r). Finally, the sound of p and b are also confusing for Arabic language learners as they are used interchangeably and have a direct impact on the transfer from L1 to TL. Moreover, there is no “p” sound in Arabic which confuses communicators more and more. For example, parking /'pa:(r)kiŋ/ will be pronounced as barking /'ba:(r)kiŋ/ which is a direct L1 transfer.

Positive Transfer

According to Bardovi-Harlig and Sprouse (2017), “the positive transfer was equated with good habits carried over from the native language” (p. 2). It is useful in the event of finding linkages in terms of cognates or false friends. Now, the positive transfer can be helpful as almost all languages have some similar characteristics. It may have identical patterns of vocabulary, phonetics or syntax. However, Arabic and English are typologically different languages (AL- Malik, Majid & Omar, 2014) which means their symbols, pronunciation, grammatical rules, phonology, and phonetics are different from one another.

Here, it makes a very strong case that both negative and positive transfers do not serve the interest of Arabic students or English language learners. Before further discussion is carried out, it will be better for us to explore more about positive transfer in the English language by Arabic-speaking students. A little literature can be found either in the library or in electronic format concerning the transfer. This is no similarities in English-Arabic sentence structure, adjectives and pronunciation. Now, the individual focus will be given to these above-mentioned components of the English language in conjunction with Arabic language sentence structure, phonology and pronunciation. English sentence structure is different from the Arabic language sentence structure. Usage of the preposition “on” instead of “over” is frequently used by English language learners. For instance, the following sentence entails more concern when LI interference takes place.

- We were interested with film. “ nahnu istamta na bilfilm”.(Hamadi, 2015)

The sentence mentioned above is resulting from a positive transfer where the student wants to use “in” as a preposition but L1 interference takes place and the user uses “with” instead of “in” as a preposition. This entire transfer happens because the Arabic “bi” is identical to the preposition “in” (Sabbah, 2016). Similarly, adjectival usages and issues come up on the surface as soon as Arabic speakers begin to use them. For example, Arabic users put noun first and then adjectives which make a sentence like this;

- Wrong: Laila beautiful
- Correct: Beautiful Laila.
- Wrong: Tom happy.
- Correct: Happy Tom.
- Wrong: I have car blue.
- Correct: I have a blue car.

The following example sample of adjectives makes it clear that positive transfer is not so positive when it comes to the Arabic language. Finally, the aspect of pronunciation will be investigated about the positive transfer. The Arabic language does not have the *IvI* sound which they mix with the *IfI* sound. For example, the value will be pronounced as *falue*. In addition, judge /dʒʌdʒ/ will be pronounced as judch /dʒʌtʃ/.

Multiple Approaches in Second Language Acquisition and Transfer

Language transfer is profoundly defined by three main approaches; behaviourist position, innatist perspective and critical period hypothesis (Lightbown & Spada, 2013) on the undecided issue of L1 transfer. Second language teaching and learning is undoubtedly a daunting task for both teachers and students. It is time-consuming, challenging, repetitive, laborious and last but not least monotonous at times if not always. On the part of a teacher, it requires a set of skills such as command over the subject area, unique teaching strategies, and time management techniques for the better accommodation of learners who have already been seriously battling to overcome invisible anxiety and hidden frustration. Moreover, the acute process of second language learning wants its learners as well to practice more rules alien to the learners and their first language. All the three above-mentioned hypotheses will be discussed in light of Saudi Arabia.

Behaviourist Hypothesis and Transfer Within Saudi Context:

According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), behaviourists believe in positive reinforcement and imitation by second language learners. The authors further their viewpoint by stating that the “quality and quantity” (p. 15) of the target language will help the second language learners form solid views on the acquisition of TL. The behaviourist school of thought attaches credence abundantly to the conducive environment for the acquisition of a second language. Given the behaviourist perspective within the Saudi context, Al Seghayer (2014) maintains interesting views for Saudi youth are unwilling to participate outside English language class. Thus, it makes a strong case for the behaviourists that there is no favourable atmosphere even for imitation in Saudi EFL classrooms. According to Liton (2012), the motivational factor is seriously missing in Saudi English language students. Most of the EFL teachers are just concerned with the delivery of their instructional materials without serious regard for the development of students. Liton (2012) moves on to further maintain that the Saudi education ministry has been facing “tardy progress” (p. 131) in EFL classrooms. Regarding these bold statements, one can easily uphold that L1 interference is most likely to occur as a result of student-teacher reluctance in the event of second language

acquisition. In addition, students tend to resort to old habits at the cost of developing new language-learning strategies. All these processes of learning affect their abilities to cope with the uphill task of second language learning as the EFL classroom is not good enough to be exploited. Eventually, Saudi English students feel exhausted and began to give up on language learning.

Innatist Perspective and Transfer within Saudi Context:

According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), innatist views mainly forwarded by Noam Chomsky hold that imitation is not so important in the logical acquisition of second language learning. The Innatists hold that Universal Grammar (UG) ingrained in a child's brain will help them to acquire language as they accomplish other human tasks such as walking, eating and finally talking. Innatism promotes child qualities to use a language that the child does not have. The theory of innatism can easily be scraped in view of adult English language learning within the Saudi context. Adult language learners are mature enough that they can not adopt the natural flow of language. Moreover, they are unable to reach the level of acquisition as they have passed the age where acquisition would favourably occur. In other words, they have crossed a critical period of language acquisition which acclaims that the best age for language acquisition is below the age of 13 years (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Critical Period Hypothesis and Transfer Within Saudi Context:

Lightbown and Spada (2013) state that the critical period hypothesis maintains that human language learning capacity is best available at their early stage of life. Here it is tremendously important to note that English language learning takes place in Saudi Arabia at the ages of 13 to 18. Most of the EFL students have come of their ages at this stage as they would join educational institute at a very mature age which contradicts the critical period hypothesis. In this scenario, L1 interference will intentionally or unintentionally occur. A normal EFL class schedule lasts for 13 to 15 weeks in a community college in Saudi Arabia where adult students would sit to face from 250 to 300 hundred instructional hours. During these teaching hours, there is a definite English language syllabus to follow and finish on time. This contradicting scenario promotes unhealthy language learning.

Practical Implication of L1 Transfer with Regards to English Parts of Speech

The English language has eight parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, prepositions, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, conjunction and interjection and together they make grammar, semantics and pragmatics. The process of language acquisition is not only painstaking but also consumes a lot of time in the event of acquiring a whole lot of linguistic components or eight parts of speech. As mentioned above adult English language learners in Saudi Arabia are at stake due to their mature age factor. It is considered that adult EFL learners must overcome these linguistic barriers with the help of a teacher who is not a native speaker of the English language in most cases. If students and teachers anticipate acquiring or learning the English language given the fundamental English components, the linguistic transition might be successful and smooth and their chances of "tardy progress" (Liton, 2012 p. 131) will be slim. As Gadalla (2000) states, Arabic speakers of L2 have a fair chance of success, notwithstanding the differences in dialects in the Arab world. He continues to further his stance that it is due to uniformity. The following pages will discuss critically fundamental linguistic components or seven-eight parts of speech to help adult language learners in the Saudi context they can overcome these linguistic barriers.

- **Nouns and Arabic Transfer**
- **Pronouns and LI interference**
- **Prepositions and Mother Tongue Interference**
- **Adjectives and L1 interference**
- **Verbs and Arabic Transfer**
- **Adverbs and Influence of L1**
- **Conjunctions and Arabic Transfer**

Here, it is remarkable that Arabic has only three parts of speech such as noun, verb and particle (Weiss, 1976). Considering the complexity of the Arabic three parts of speech, one can easily conclude that more L1 interference would entail in the event of making an English sentence. Additionally, more confusing transfer issues will arise as a result of interference. According to Weiss (1976), “the most fundamental classification of words recognized by the medieval Arab grammarians is the well-known three-fold classification into a noun (*ism*), verb (*fi'l*) and particle (*harf*)” (p. 23).

Nouns and Arabic Transfer

According to Frank (1972), “nouns are the names of people, places, things and ideas. Nouns function as the subject of the sentence” (p. 2). They have also so many functions such as objects, complements, appositives, and modifiers. On the other hand, the Arabic noun “signifies a meaning for its own sake and for this reason stands by itself as a self-sufficient unit of significance (*mustaqill bi-l-mafhuimiy*)” (Weiss, 1976, p. 25). Many noncount nouns in English are countable nouns in Arabic. As a result, overgeneralization occurs. Let us take a look at the following sentences and Arabic speakers’ overgeneralization.

- My teacher gave me informations.
- Oil companies buy a lot of industrial equipments every year. (Hamadi, 2015)

Overgeneralization from L1 to L2 leads the second language learners to commit grammatical errors resulting in poor sentence structure and illogical semantics. Similarly, the cases of transfer in using the number are interesting as Arabic speakers use singular nouns following numbers such as two, three ten and eleven will take singular nouns. Here the comparison is being made between English and Arabic.

- English: I have five cars.
- Arabic: I have five car
- English: I have two cousins at Harvard university
- Arabic: I have two cousin at Harvard University.

These issues of transfer hinder the language progress of students. As a result, “learners follow certain language strategies such as literal translation and substitution” (Khresheh, 2012 p. 78).

Pronouns and LI interference

According to Haslam (2018), pronouns are usually small words that stand in place of a noun, often to avoid repeating the noun. They include words such as I, you, he, we, hers, they, it. On the other hand, Arabic pronouns are subjects and objects; mostly subject’s pronouns are dropped (Subject and Object Pronouns in Standard and Egyptian Arabic, n.d). Here it is noteworthy that the fact of frequent omission of pronouns makes their speech quite funny in tone. Let us analyze some sentences. The following conversational scenarios have been witnessed personally at the time of teaching.

- Student: Teacher bathroom.
- Teacher: Ahmed (student), you can go to the bathroom.

Here, the students want to say that he wants to go to the bathroom, but what he does is the unintentional dropping of the subject and abridges his sentence.

- English: I am from the U.S.
- Arabic: Amrikii (he is American) Arabic translation (ana min amrikii)

(conversation adapted from *Subject And Object Pronouns In Standard And Egyptian Arabic*, n.d)

In the above-mentioned sentences, Arabic speakers intentionally use his/her literal translation and drop the pronoun which, according to Arabic speakers, is an obvious case of a subject. These issues of L1 interference can be seen in the following sentences:

- Student: Teacher, you go to the bathroom.
- Teacher: Ahmed, you can go to the bathroom.

It is interesting to note here the context of the conversation between a teacher and a student. The student is asking for his teacher's permission to go to the bathroom. In this connection, he says "teacher, you go to bathroom instead of "please teacher may I go to the bathroom?". These grammatical errors are a direct result of literal translation from L1 to L2. The scope of this discussion can also be extended to the writing, where L1 interference replaces pronouns and makes the entire sentence illogical.

Prepositions and Mother Tongue Interference

According to Plain English Campaign (n.d), prepositions come before nouns or pronouns and usually show a connection while in Arabic prepositions come from particles (Hamdallah & Tushyeh,1993). Similarly, Arabic has far fewer prepositions as compared to English which has around 128 prepositions (Mohammed, 2011) making it difficult for Arabic EFL learners to draw a logical connection between English and Arabic prepositions (Hamdallah, & Tushyeh,1993). Some examples will clarify how it is the most disturbing linguistic phenomenon for Arab EFL learners. Essberger (2000) states the differences between Arabic and English. He explains that Arabic prepositions are limited whereas English has around 150 prepositions. This varying degree of prepositional presence in English is indeed a challenge for Arabic EFL students. For instance, the following sentences will tell us as to how Arabic EFL students insert prepositions in their conversations.

- Wrong: I will sit on the car.
- Correct: I will sit in the car.
- Wrong: I am waiting the car.
- Correct: I am waiting for my car.

Keeping in view of the above-mentioned sentences and unnecessary usage of a preposition, L1 interference is logical on the part of the EFL students as they are unavoidable. Here Muhammad (2011) regards the misuse of prepositions due largely to the influence of transfer from Arabic to English.

Adjectives and L1 interference

According to Anward (2001), the adjective describes nouns while in Arabic, adjectives are used to describe nouns and modify nouns. This could be the most obvious impact of L1 during the speech process of L2 acquisition. Here it is better to explain first how adjectives are used in Arabic. In Arabic, it is the opposite to the English semantics where adjectives come first as in a "blue

whale” whereas, in Arabic, the same sentence will look something like this” whale blue”. Let us analyse some examples.

- Wrong: I have a car black. (Arabic literal translation)
- Correct: I have a black car.
- Wrong: She is girl beautiful. (Arabic literal translation)
- Correct: She is a beautiful girl.

The above-mentioned examples are very common in the context of L1 interference when EFL students use the target language more specifically English.

Verbs and Arabic Transfer

Anward (2001) states verbs as actions or ‘doing words’. They can also show us ‘having’ or ‘being’ whereas Arabic verbs are either perfect or imperfect (Hamadi, 2015). This puzzling scenario makes Arabic EFL students commit serious mistakes. Mostly Arab EFL students omit or delete their verbs which makes the speech and writing confusing. All of this is a direct result of L1 transfer affecting the performance of L2 acquisition. Contrastive analysis of Arabic EFL students shows that there are no such similarities in Arabic verb forms but rather they have more differences. Let us take a look at some examples of deletions.

- Wrong: I not go to school.
- Correct: I do not go to school.
- Wrong: My mom good cook.
- Correct: My mom is a good cook.
- Wrong: Am I drive the car?
- Correct: Do I drive the car?

Adverbs and Influence of L1

Frank (1972) maintains that adverbs provide us additional information about how, where or when a verb happens whereas Arabic adverbs can change any part of speech other than nouns. The problem of Arabic EFL students is that they mixed Arabic verbs and nouns. According to Al Aqad (2013), the “position of Arabic adverbs is more changeable than English in terms of tense and manner. Arabic sentences have multiple meanings in relation to the adverbs which leads to the nominal, adverbial or adjectival sentence” (p. 73). In this connection, the examples from the same study have been utilized for the better clarification of L1 interference in using English adverbs.

1. Zaid hit a child lately (as per Arabic placement of adverbs)

1. طفل ضرب مؤخراً زيد.

2. A child lately hit Zaid (as per Arabic placement of adverbs)

2. طفل ضرب مؤخراً زيد

3: Lately Zaid’s child hit (as per Arabic placement of adverbs)

3. طفل ضرب مؤخراً زيد

(Adapted from Syntactic analysis of Arabic adverbs between Arabic and English: X bar theory AL-Aqad, 2013)

The above-mentioned sentences have totally different meanings in the English language but according to the Arabic placement of adverbs, they are fine and make complete sense. If the comparison is drawn, the Arabic sentence structure is the same but the English changes.

Conjunctions and Arabic Transfer

According to Frank (1972) and Weiss (1976) conjunctions join words, sentences or parts of a sentence in a holistic way that makes complete sense whereas Arabic “overuses a small set of conjunctions (basically *wa*, *fa* and *thumma*)” (Dendenne, 2010 p. 14) each of which, usually, has so many different literal meanings. This scenario is confusing for the Arabic EFL students as they might resort to the literal translation of these words which might result in using conjunction as nouns, linking verbs or adjectives. Connectors bring coherence to text and present logical connectivity in syntax. It is quite interesting to find that Arabic connectors get carried over in the process of English language learning. As a result, EFL learners make illogical sentences. According to Mahmoud (2014), most of the errors in using conjunctions are influenced by transfer / L1 interference. For instance, the following sentence will show how over-statement and repetition in the Arabic language will unintentionally spill over into English.

- I think it is dangerous *and not* safe because... (As mentioned in Mahmood, 2014)

There is no logic behind using *and* in the above sentence but the Arabic EFL learner’s mother tongue is interfering which not only confuses a speaker in a sentence structure but also makes the discourse complex and redundant.

Pedagogical Implication and Recommendations:

Contrastive analysis of seven parts of speech in Arabic and English reveals that L1 transfer is inescapable for EFL students within the Saudi context. EFL teachers must take into consideration that English and Arabic are typologically two different languages that are not only dissimilar in sentence structures but also their grammatical rules and regulations are diametrically opposite. English typology is Subject+Verb+Object whereas Arabic typology is Verb+Subject+Object. In English, there has to be a subject in a sentence and if it is absent; it changes the sentence from being a statement to being an imperative sentence. On the other hand, there is no such ground rule in Arabic where at times subject is understood and its absence makes complete sense. L1 interference in writing is more challenging as it presents a complete set of data for the EFL learners to digest. It is considered that more care should be taken towards academic writing tasks for EFL students as more is at stake because these students of English language chose different fields, for instance, engineering, medicine, accounts, liberal arts, computers. If there is a gap in the initial stage of their language learning, there will be a gap in their understanding that will result in flawed comprehension and illogical connections. This poor state of affairs has been clearly obvious since IELTS test takers with Arabic background are among the lowest scorers both regionally and internationally. (Grami & Alzughaibi, 2012).

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