

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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and not to the Colloquial counterpart of the same construction حتى الامة العربية تأخذ مكانها  
a construction which is closer to English word order in English than to that of SA.

## CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion has revealed that, while it is true that CA does have a role in errors produced by Iraqi Arab learners, this role comes into play only when the structure is the same as in SA.

However, when the two varieties have different constructions, the ones drawn upon by the student are those of SA rather than those of CA. This phenomenon can logically be accounted for if we take into consideration the order in time in which the two varieties of Arabic, and English are acquired by the student. The SA variety is the one learnt immediately before English, it is therefore bound to exert an influence on the performance of the student, since his performance at school, especially his written performance, is carried out through the medium of SA as this variety is the one used in formal education. So at a later stage when he is asked to write a composition, for instance, the student automatically takes it for granted that it is formal constructions that he is required to write, and consequently falls back on SA constructions as he believes these are the ones that he should model his English sentences on.

In conclusion, we find that, although CA is the first variety learnt, it is the SA variety that interferes more in the written performance of Iraqi Arab learners of English.

In CA, however, tense and aspectual contrasts are kept apart. Thus رايح للسوك (I am going to the market) is used to indicate an action in progress, and the same person would say رحى للسوك to indicate both past time and perfect action, and, in order to refer to the future, he will say راح اروح للسوك with the form راح indicating future time.

CA makes a clear distinction between present perfect and present simple tense as in واشوف الفلم, شافى هالفلم which mean (I have seen the film) and (I see the film), respectively.

So, when a student writes: «I am seeing the film» instead of «I see the film», the student seems to be imposing the same distinction as found in CA, but, when a student says: (They are owing the r victory to three things), he seems to be thinking in terms of the SA construction: كانوا مدينين في نصرهم الى اشياء ثلاثة and when the student says: Ali left for Baghdad, instead of «Ali has left for Baghdad», he is drawing upon the SA construction: غادر علي الى بغداد

In conditional sentences CA has some similar constructions to those in English: اذا تجي راح اعطيك الكتاب which corresponds to: If you come, I'll give you the book. In the first example, we find that the future time indicator راح corresponds to «will» and «shall». Yet, the student makes the following error «If you come, I give you the book», which is a translation of the rather infrequent SA sentence اذا تاتي اعطيك الكتاب and the corresponding CA construction does not seem to play a part in the student's production of this error.

However, in modern SA there is an increasing tendency, perhaps under the influence of English to use the future time indicators سوف, - in conditional sentences as in: اذا جئت سأعطيك الكتاب. So if we consider this construction, it would be difficult to attribute the previous error i.e «If you come, I give you the book» to either CA or SA since the construction is the same in both varieties. (see Dr. Aziz 1979, Is Tense a Category of Modern Arabic Verb?)

## WORD ORDER

Errors made in word order are very frequent in the written performance of Iraqi Arab students.

These errors can often be traced back to the influence of SA rather than of CA. When word order is the same in SA and CA, it would be difficult to trace errors such as: «When he will come?» and «How he will do it?» to either of the two varieties, for we believe that an error can be ascribed to CA only if this variety has a word order of its own different from that of SA and the error shows a construction similar to that of the latter. If we take the following erroneous construction: «In order to take the Arab Nation its position, we will find that the word order used corresponds directly to: لكي تأخذ الامة العربية مكانتها

«The love she has for him....» (specific)  
whereas in SA the definite article is used invariably with all non-count nouns :

الحب شعور عظيم  
والحب الذي تكنه له

In this particular instance, as the article usage is the same in both SA and CA, it would be difficult to tell which variety interferes when a student writes :

«The love is a great feeling»

However, on considering the use of articles before titles, one finds that SA comes into play, beyond any doubt Iraqi Arab students write :

The Seargent Jassim  
The Colonel Shakir  
The Professor Palmer

not because he has a similar construction in CA but because this is what is normally said in SA. In the former the normal constructions are :

عريف جاسم  
عقيد شاكِر  
استاذ بالمر

While in the latter the same phrases would be

العريف جاسم  
العقيد شاكِر  
استاذ بالمر

It is obvious then that the erroneous constructions are a direct translation from SA.

## TENSE AND ASPECT

Another area which exhibits the influence of SA, in addition to CA, is tense and aspect. As has been suggested (Beeston, Wrigth) the verb in SA displays an aspectual contrast rather than a contrast of tense. As such, the two verb forms **يُضْرَب**, **يُضْرَبُ** denote perfective/non-perfective with no clearly defined temporal reference; and they can be used to refer to the past, present and future, depending on the type of sentence they are used in and the adverbial that specifies time reference. So, the verb **يَكْتُبُ** «to write» in the sentence :

كان يكتب عندما دخلت عليه

refers to past time, this being made explicit by the verb **كان** and the adverbial clause **عندما دخلت عليه**. However, the aspectual contrast is very clear with the verb **يَكْتُبُ** indicating that the action was in progress. The same verb can show a timeless habitual action as in the sentence **يكتب واجبه دائماً** (He always writes his homework) and the future time as in **يكتب واجبه غداً**

.... تأخذ دورها في . where the appropriate word would be «play» or «have» its role.

Ignorance of the morphological structure of English words has also been noticed to contribute to a great extent to the lexical errors. The student who produced the following erroneous construction :

..... to take its place freely

did not have adequate knowledge of word formation in English. This same construction can also be traced back to Arabic (1) in which the word «freely» could be a translation of

: حُرِّيَّة

A similar unacceptable structure is :

Islam which learns them to bear the suffering where the student has again confused the words «learn» and «teach», a mistake which is very frequent in the students «written and spoken performance.

The interference of the mother tongue is quite obvious in the following ill-formed sentence :

«We all depend on your readiness to stop against conspiracy» of which an Arabic counterpart can be :

نعمتد على استعدادكم العالي للوقوف ضد المؤامرة

where the student has used the word «stop» instead of «stand», since in Arabic, the verb «يقف» covers both «stand» and «stop», hence the erroneous construction «stop against» instead of the idiomatic expression «stand against».

## SYNTACTIC ERRORS

If lexical errors do not tell us much about which variety is the source of interference then syntactic errors possibly do, as will be proved in the following sections.

The area which clearly reveals the influence of SA on the written performance of the Iraqi learner of English is the article system in English. In English there is a distinction between «generic» and «specific» reference when a non-count noun is used, and on this basis the definite article is used when reference is specific, but it is not used when reference is generic in such sentences as :

e.g. «Love is a great feeling» (generic)  
and

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(1) Both Standard and Colloquial.

have been classified into two major groups : syntactic and lexical. The syntactic errors in turn are subdivided into errors of article usage, tense and aspect, and word order. The errors have been identified and interpreted on the basis of the texts referred to earlier. When in doubt, we have asked the student to explain what he meant by the erroneous structure or word that he wrote.<sup>(1)</sup>

## DISCUSSION

A child's mother tongue is acquired through unconscious exposure to the language spoken by his/her parents and the community in which he lives. Since this is so, then for an Iraqi Arab the mother tongue is the dialect (as Ferguson observes) since he learns this at his mother's knees, as it were, and continues to use it until he goes to school. Here another variety (viz. SA) is introduced, which is considerably different from the variety he has used so far in phonology, syntax and lexis. And throughout his school days an Iraqi Arab student gets intensive training in using the latter variety in his written work and to a lesser degree, in his speech. Such training then is bound to establish language habits, which would be of significance whenever a student puts pen to paper.

When it is time for a student to learn a foreign language there are two already well established sets of language habits (those of the Dialect and the Standard) which may interfere with the learning process. Teachers would invariably agree that the sound system of the dialect has a great effect when the student learns the phonology of English. For example, a student who has a voiceless bilabial plosive in his dialect will easily produce the English word «people», though the phoneme /P/ is non-existent in SA, but another student who does not have the sound in his dialect is certain to produce /bi:bl/ instead of /pi:pl/. But, is the source of interference the same when the student is introduced to syntactic structures of a foreign language? That is the question that we shall attempt to answer

As has already been mentioned the errors produced by the students are classified into lexical errors and syntactic errors and the latter have been subclassified into errors in article usage, tense and aspect, and word order.

Lexical errors have been observed to have the highest frequency, Most of the errors in this domain can be traced back to either intralingual or interlingual factors. Thus, the following erroneous sentence :

It will give its great role in civilization instruction

shows that the student has confused the word «instruction» and «construction», and the words «take» and «give», for the student might have intended to say :

to take its role, which is a literal translation from Arabic :

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(1) Many other types of errors, such as misuse of prepositions, wrong agreement etc., have been ignored because they do not reveal much about which variety interferes.

# THE INFLUENCE OF STANDARD ARABIC ON THE PERFORMANCE OF

## IRAQI LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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June 1979

### INTRODUCTION

It is widely held that interference from the mother tongue plays a major part in the performance of foreign language learners. This view has been validated by Duškova 1969, George 1971, and Lance, 1969. Demmergues et al. (1976) have elaborated this further and pointed out that interference is greatest in the early stages but it diminishes in advanced stages when the learner has acquired a better command of the target language, in which case other factors such as false generalizations, misapplication of rules and the like come into play.

An investigation of interference from the mother tongue in the case of Iraqi Arab learners of English is not an easy task because of the great number of variables involved. Apart from the influence that the surrounding languages (i.e. Kirdish, Turkish, Persian, and Syriac) can have on the performance of the Iraqi Arab learner, the situation is further complicated by the fact that there are two forms of Arabic, i.e. Standard (SA) and Colloquial (CA).

Ferguson states that a dialect «the low form» is the real mother tongue as it is the variety learnt first, whereas «the high form» SA is learnt at school through fromal instruction. If this view is correct, then we would expect to find most interference, if there is any, from the dialect rather than from SA. And it is the validity of this statement that we seek to investigate.

### PROCEDURE

The present paper is based on a study of errors produced by Third Year Translation students in the University of Mosul. The students were given Arabic texts to translate into English. In our analysis of the errors produced, we have focussed our attention only on those syntactic and lexical errors that appeared systematically in the students' work. Spelling errors have been excluded from the analysis as they are irrelevant.

In addition to the errors drawn from the test papers of the students, other errors made by the same group of students through out their course work have also been incorporated into the corpus, since they were thought to be relevant to the topic in question. The errors