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ABSTRACT

A study examined the English syntactic problems persistent in the performance of educated Arabs living in the United States for an average of 5 years. The study is seen as significant because it reflects the features that distinguish the Arabs' English as a performance variety that develops where English is used as a foreign language. Subjects were 15 bilingual Arabs, either graduate students or educated individuals engaged in business. Data were gathered in three tasks: a multiple-choice test of verb forms; a translation task; and a picture description task. Results indicate performance problems in the areas of: (1) tense agreement; (2) relative clause construction; (3) indirect questions; (4) perfective tenses; and (5) use of prepositions. It was also found that the degree of deviation in these areas depends on both the amount of time spent in the United States and the educational level of the speaker; the longer the time spent in the United States and the higher the academic achievement level, the less deviation observed. These results are also compared with findings of previous research. The three tasks are appended. Contains 26 references. (MSE)

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ED 378 832

"The syntactic features of English spoken by Advanced Bilingual Arabs[1]

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1.0 Introduction

This study examined the English syntactic problems that continue to exist in the performance of educated Arab users of English living in the US for an average period of 5 years. This type of investigation should be viewed as significant because it reflects the features that distinguish the Arabs' English as a performance variety (Kachru 1983) which develops where English is used as a foreign language.

Three tasks for collecting data were used: a structure test, a translation task, and a picture description task. The problematic areas were found to be: a) tense agreement b) relative clauses c) indirect questions d) perfective tenses and e) prepositions. It was also found that the degree of deviation in the above areas depends on the time period of living in the target community and the academic level of the speakers; that is the longer the period of living and the higher the academic level the less deviations are observed.

2.0 Review of Literature

Like any other non-native English context, the context of English in the Arab countries is expected to have its impact on the type of English that is learned due to the Arabic language interference. Smith (1981), Pride (1982), Bailey and Gorlach (1982), and Kachru (1982) present the identification features of non-native Englishes used in Asian countries like: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Srilanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia and Singapore, and in African countries in the West, South, and East Africa. In those contexts, English seems to be a powerful language and is spoken as a second language for inter and intranational communication.

No studies have been published yet to identify the characteristics of non-native English being used as (EFL) a foreign language because linguists don't seem to have thought of EFL to be recognized as local variety with distinguished features.

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2.1 The type of English used by Arabs

Because English is used only as FL in the Arab countries, research in this area has focussed on the contrastive analysis and error analysis of the written and oral English performance of Arab learners. The purpose of such studies has been to show the areas of strength and weaknesses in the learners' English. As a matter of fact, an educated or uneducated Arab can safely survive in his/her country without English. But at least, a basic knowledge of English is useful and is actually required for university students regardless of their academic area. In this regard, Peter Strevens (1982) says:

"Most people learn as much or as little of a foreign language as they need not as much as they are taught."

For an Arab, a high level of proficiency is needed if the learner needs to specialize in English language for teaching purposes or if he wants to study English or any other subject in an English speaking country.

Arab users of English may have different levels of proficiency according to their needs. That is why it is difficult to describe the characteristics of English used by the Arabs without making reference to the level of the users, i.e., high school, undergraduates, or graduates studying in a native or non-native English speaking country.

2.3 The norm or model for the non-native varieties of English

Kachru (1983) in his article "Models for non-native Englishes" says that it has generally been claimed that being bilingual entails native-like proficiency in a language. Then he argues that a native-like control doesn't apply to English in all situations due to the different goals of performance. Then he comes to the conclusion that "it is rather difficult to define the "norm" for various speakers of English.

Kachru also makes a distinction between the performance varieties where English is used as a foreign language and has highly restricted functional range in specific contexts like tourism, commerce and other international transactions; and the institutionalized varieties where English has an extended sociolinguistic context, register, and style range and nativized English literature. However, he adds that the institutionalized variety always starts as a performance variety.

Given this background, Kachru presents the identification features of English in the South Asian English varieties under the title "Deviation, Mistake and the Norm". The norm is considered as the standard English of a native speaker. The features include the aspec s of Phonetics, Phonology, and Grammar. Relevant to this paper is grammar which has the following identification features:

1. tendency to use complex sentences
2. violating the selection restriction (I am hearing)

3. A deviant patten appears in the use of Articles
4. Reduplication occurs (hot hot tea)
5. interrogatives are formed without changing the position of the subject (What you would like to eat?)

2.4 The norm or model for the Arab users of English

The English which is exported to the Arab countries for teacher training and textbooks is mostly produced in Britain. That is why the model is usually seen as the BBC English or the Standard English. There is no local model for the learner to follow because of the restricted use of English. Moreover, English is not associated with the national pride which may give a reason for the officials to foster pride in and give full support to language according to Kachru (1983) and Richard (1982).

2.5 Is the Norm defined?

The native norm which is followed in the EFL contexts is defined and described in books. Any British or American dictionary may be checked for pronunciation, meaning and syntactic behavior of a word. Grammar books are available as well for checking the accuracy of structures. But the non-native norm and model in localized English contexts has not been defined yet because there are different levels of proficiency. The highest educated level needs to be defined and described in books to be taken as a reference and guide for teachers and learners.

2.6.0 Research in the Arabs' English

Research on the acquisition of English by Arabs to date has only dealt with investigating the errors produced by Arab learners of English either at the high school level or the undergraduate freshman level. The reason claimed for this choice of subjects is to diagnose the areas of weaknesses and find a remedy for them at this critical period of college study. Published studies in this field have been of three types: the first type was based on contrastive analysis and error analysis; the second type was based on observations by native speakers engaged in teaching English to Arabs; and the third type was based on the influence of the cultural stylistic aspects of Arabic on learning English.

2.6.1 Studies based on contrastive analysis and error analysis

Samhoury (1966) studied the grammatical problems of the Syrian University students taken from 200 examination scripts. His study was based on a contrastive analysis between English and Damascene Arabic. His results show that under the influence of Arabic, errors were mainly found in the areas of word order, verb formation, tense, sequence of tense, prepositions and articles.

Scott and Tucker (1974) studied the oral and written

production errors of Arab students taking an intensive English course before entering the American University of Beirut. The results show that verbs, prepositions, articles, and relative clauses were the areas of the majority of errors that occurred at the beginning and at the end of the term. Comparing the Arab learners to American native speakers, he found that over the period of four months, the Arabs advanced from an American fifth grade level to an American seventh grade level. However, their use of subordination was below the fourth grade level, while coordinate structures were used as many as American third graders in writing but the level of seventh graders in speech.

Kambal (1980) studied the written errors of the Khartoum University students in the Sudan and found that their errors fell in the areas of tense, verb formation, articles, concord and prepositions.

Kharma (1983) studied the syntactic difficulties faced by the Kuweiti high school students. Like Samhouri (1966), his study was based on contrastive analysis of English and Arabic. He devised a test focussing on the problem areas and sorted out the frequency and types of the structural errors which were mostly related to tense.

Khaleel (1985) analyzed the written errors of Bethlehem University students in the first year of their college education on the West Bank. Khaleel distinguished between grammatical errors, i.e., word order, concord and verb, and semantic errors, i.e., lexis and collocation. The latter was found to impede communication.

These studies were directly concerned with the analysis of Arab learners' errors. Their most relevant findings to this study regarding the areas of syntactic difficulties are the following:

1. Perfect and simple past structures are more difficult than simple present and progressive structures.
2. Arab learners have difficulties in: word order, concord, verb forms, tenses, redundant pronouns, relative clauses, articles, and prepositions.
3. Arab learners tend to overuse coordinate clauses.

2.6.2 Studies based on native speakers observations in teaching Arabs

Yorky (1959) examined the English teaching system in Lebanon, and then presents some recommendations to avoid difficulties in learning the language.

Yorky (1977) designs some grammatical exercises based on his teaching experience in the Arab countries for teaching the problematic structures.

Braton (1967) presents predicted language problems that may face Arab learners of English on grounds of mother-tongue (MT) interference.

2.6.3 Studies related to stylistics and culture

In his article "The influence of the Arabic language on the psychology of the Arabs" which lacks research evidence, Shouby (1951) argues that Arab learners of English are affected by the "repetition" and "vagueness" features of Arabic in their English performance.

Kaplan (1966) discusses some examples from compositions written by Arab learners of English in terms of style patterns. He talks about the effect of language and culture on the type of English used by Arabs. In his comment on one of the quoted examples, he says that while this extensive parallel construction is linguistically possible in Arabic, the English language lacks the necessary flexibility, i.e., eight conjunctions and four sentence connectors were employed in a matter of only 14 sentences. Consequently, he concludes that the foreign student who has mastered the syntax of English may still write a bad paragraph or a bad paper unless he also masters the logic of English.

Koch (1983, 1984) also talks about the stylistic features of English written by Arab learners. She defends the rhetoric devices transferred from Arabic into English as having some strong convincing power, and she believes that they have to be accepted on their own merits of rhetorical power.

Azar (1978) talks about the problems that face students coming to the U.S. from the Arab word and Iran in learning ESL. Thompson and Thompson and Thompson and Thompson (1983) talk about "The least you should know about Arabic" to have better techniques of teaching ESL to Arabs. They base their arguments on examples taken from other published studies like Kaplan (1966) and discuss the effects of the Arabic writing system, spelling, vocabulary and syntactic features on the English written performance of the Arab students.

The most relevant findings of those studies to this study are the following:

1. Arab learners of English use coordination and repetition more than subordination.
2. Mastering the syntax of English will not help learners without the familiarity of cultural patterns of the native speakers of the target language.
3. General confirmation of the fore-mentioned findings has been pointed out.

As said before, these specific difficulties were found to face Arab learners beginning their college education. Investigating which of these areas may continue to persist after college seems to have been ignored. The reason may be that such Arab learners have survived college and consequently there is no need to worry about perfection in English. However, identifying the features of English used by those who succeed in their education, business and social life, especially in a country like the U.S. should be considered an important objective for research because a sample of the final product of learning English at an advanced level could be revealed.

3.0 Subjects

15 bilingual Arabs participated in this study. Some of them were graduate students and others were highly qualified engaged in business. English is the language of study and communication in interacting with the Americans in social and business domains. In fact 11 of them rated their proficiency in English as high and 4 of them rated it as intermediate according to the proficiency chart in Naiman et. al (1978).

4.0 Method of Collecting data:

The following three tasks were used to collect the data:

4.1 The Structure Test (See appendix I)

It is a multiple choice objective test made up of 40 items distributed over the various verb-tense forms, i.e, -s form (simple present), -ed form (simple past), present have -en form (present perfect), past have -en form (past perfect), future have -en form (future perfect), and be-ing forms (progressive).

This test was designed by Kharma (1983) and was given to test the proficiency of 1000 Kuwaiti high school students (50% of them from other Arab countries). Selecting the items was based on a contrastive analysis of the verb systems for two aims: the first aim was to measure how higher the success of Ss was, compared to that of the Kuwaiti high school students. The second was to identify the problem areas that continue to exist in the English performance of Arabs living in the US given that they were educated in the U.S. Comments on the limitations of the test will be given later in the discussion of the results.

4.2 The translation task

To replicate the findings of error analysis and contrastive analysis it has been decided to use a translation task with the aim of eliciting the possible problematic English structures transferred from their Arabic counterparts. This method was thought of as being easy to administer and more direct in eliciting the needed structures. 22 sentences were designed to elicit the following syntactic structures: copula and subject verb agreement, relative clauses, indirect questions, preposition, articles, tense agreement and coordinate clauses. The Grammar Book by Muricia and Freeman (1983) was used to help in selecting suitable sentences for this translation task.

4.3 The picture stories (see appendix II)

Since neither the structure test nor the translation task can provide a natural context for eliciting a natural response, it was decided to use 5 picture-stories taken from Bryne (1979) to elicit connected pieces of discourse. It was hoped that this task would

provide evidence to prove or disprove the findings of the other tasks. Each story was made up of 4 plain pictures (A, B, C, and D). The themes were of general interest to people.

4.4 The administration of the tasks

The three tasks were administered in the presence of the researcher either at his home or at the S's place as an office or a house. The structure test was the first task given with the instructions: "Circle the best choice a, b, c, or d". The second task was the picture-stories with the instructions: "Try to describe each story in as short as possible, 4-5 sentences". The third task was the translation task which required Ss to simply translate the Arabic sentences into English.

5.0 Method of analysis

The results of each task were analyzed in a particular way to identify the characteristics of the problematic structures and to see how each task may support or deviate from the findings of other tasks.

5.1 The structure test

The analysis included computing percentages of correct answers for the following parts of the test: 1) each of the 40 items 2) each of the 6 sections and 3) the test as a whole A percentage of the wrong answers accepted as correct answers by native American speakers was also computed.

5.2 The translation task

The number of errors (X) for each syntactic category (s) was counted according to the number of occurrences in all the translations produced by all Ss. For example, 4 sentences eliciting subject verb agreement were translated by 11 Ss yielding 44 instances.

% of X in S = X x 100/44

5.3 The picture stories

A search was made for the types of errors across all the descriptions of each picture-story told by all Ss. Here it was found difficult to compute percentages because there was no fixed model to check against. However, the number of occurrences for each type of error was counted.

6.0 Results

6.1 The structure test: Let us look at table 2 and 3 that follow:

Table 2: A comparison between the % of correct answers in this study (U.S) and in the Kuwaiti study (KT)

Item #	% of correct answers U.S	Kt
I. Simple Present		
1.	60	42
2.	33.3	5.6
3.	100	92.8
4.	100	87.6
5.	80	62.8
Average	U.S=74.7	Kt=58.2
II. Simple Past		
6.	73.3	20
7.	100	40.4
8.	46.7	23.6
9.	80	36.8
10.	80	36.8
11.	6.7	22.4
12.	40	51.6
13.	73.3	51.6
14.	46.7	45.6
15.	66.7	23.2
16.	33.3	35.2
17.	33.3	17.2
	U.S= 56.7	Kt=51.2

Item #	% of correct answers U.S	Kt
III. Present Perfect		
18.	66.7	62.4
19.	100	77.2
20.	40	10.8
21.	60	72.8
22.	46.6	22
	U.S=62.7	Kt= 49
IV past perfect		
23.	40	28.8
24.	73.3	65.2
25.	60	31.6
27.	26.6	24.8
	U.S=53.3	Kt= 46
V Future Perfect		
28.	73.3	38.8
VI Progressive		
29.	80	64.8
30.	100	84
31.	66.7	46.8
32.	100	23.6
33.	86.7	46.8
34.	66.7	52.8
35.	86.7	16.4
36.	86.7	76.8
37.	93.3	78
38.	73.3	45.6
39.	80	44.4
40.	60	14.8
	U.S=81.7	Kt=33

% Average on the whole test: U.S = 67.2%; Kt= 45.15%

Table 3: The order of difficulty in each section of the test for both U.S. study and the Kuwaiti study from most difficult to least difficult

Section	% of success		rank of difficulty	
	U.S.	Kt	U.S.	Kt
Simple Present	74.7	58.2	5	6
Simple Past	56.7	33	2	1
Present Perfect	62.7	49	3	4
Past Perfect	53.3	46	1	3
Future Perfect	73.3	38.8	4	2
Progressive	81.7	51.2	6	5

The first point to be discussed is the overall average of success. Ss in the U.S. study got (67.2%) correct while the Kt Ss got (45.15%). However, a more significant improvement was expected in the U.S. study as Ss had an average of 5.8 years of living in the U.S. interacting with the American speakers at both the academic and social levels. The reasons for this may be because the items of the test seem to be bookish artificial examples deprived from contexts which made some of them confusing even to the native speakers as seen in the following examples:

Item #34- I feel (am feeling) tired.
Item #39- I am not paying (am not going to pay) a dinar for a worthless article like that.
Item #40- I am taking (shall take) the children to the zoo on Friday.

3) The writer of the test seems to have only accepted the answer as correct if it complied with the British rules of grammar. This has resulted in counting the correct answers according to the American English rules as wrong. Quirk (1985) was checked for some answers. Therefore, the results don't seem to reflect the real proficiency of Ss who certainly followed the American norms in their choices. The following examples show the two accepted answers; the second is counted as wrong by the test but is accepted by the American native speakers:

Item #12 - Suppose we (went 40%) (go 46.6) to see the show.
Item #20 - I (have been 40%) (went 46.7%) to the cinema twice this week.

Six more items have two accepted answers (2;5;18;21;27;40). These answers make up an average of 12% which will raise the average from 67.2 to 79.2%. Though the second average looks more reasonable, one may say that in the absence of the other reason (mentioned above) we can get even a rather significantly higher percentage.

The second point to be discussed is the order of difficulty for the tested syntactic areas (see table 3). The most difficult area was found to be the past perfect (53.3). Five items (23-27) were included in the test for this structure. Two of them seem to offer a second accepted choice.

Item #25: They (had known 60%) (knew 33.3%) each other when they started to quarrel.
Item #27: I (had hoped 26.7%) (was hoping 73.3%) to catch the 8:30 train but found it was gone.

Scott and Tucker (1974) report that their Ss very seldom used the past perfect, though this structure had been taught to the students before. One of the given reasons is that Arabic has the perfected/imperfected actions that correspond to past/present actions in English which may result in negative transfer. In fact the results of the translation task support this argument. Ss gave 22 instances

of two sentences meant to elicit the perfect structure but non of them included such structure.

The present perfect which is rated as third most difficult seems also to be avoided by Ss whenever there is a chance of a simple past alternative as in example #16 and #20 above. There is only one sentence about the future perfect which did not seem to be highly problematic (73.3%)

The Kuwaiti high school students found it the third most difficult and the present perfect 4th most difficult. The future perfect was found the second most difficult. In general the perfective structures seem to be difficult to both Ss but the degree of difficulty is different in each case. The Kuwaitis may have had fresh memory of those taught structures unlike Ss in the U.S. who may have been affected more by the frequency of such structures and their functional use which (at least to Ss) could be substituted by other structures. Kharama attributes the difficulty of the perfective structures to having no counterparts in Arabic and in many other languages also; and that is why they cause difficulty to almost all foreign learners of English.

The other striking point about the order of difficulty is that the simple past which has its counterpart in Arabic is ranked as the highest difficult for the Kuwaiti students and the second highest for the U.S. subjects. These results were never expected on the basis that it is available and frequently used in both languages. Kharma was not disappointed by his results because 59.2% of his Ss chose the predicted mistake through Arabic interference. But there are other things to be considered to validate this claim. Let's look at the types of sentences that were included in this part of the test as simple past items #6-17.

1- Items #6 and #7 require perfect infinitive:

#6- Twenty aeroplanes are said ... down yesterday.
a. were shot b. to were shot c. to shot d.to have been shot
#7- You .... him yesterday.
a. must saw b. must see c. must have seen d. must be seeing

2- Items #11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 require subjunctive forms:

#11- I'd rather you .... me now.
a. pay b. will pay c. paid d. to pay
#12- Suppose we .... to see the show.
a. went b. go c. will go d. were go
#13- I wish I .... the fellow's name so that I can tell you.
a. knew b. will know c. have known d. know
#14- God ... you.
a. helps b. helped c. help d. has helped
#15- I hereby .... you my daughter in marriage; she is your wife now.
a. gave b. give c. have given d. giving

3. Item #16 requires present perfect:

#16- Remember the favors I .... to you.
a. did b. have done c. had done d. has done

4. Item #15 and 17 require the present simple: give and agree.

#17- Historians .... that the very quick spread of Islam was a kind of miracle.
a. agree b. agreed c. are agreeing d. agreeing.

5. Items #8, 9 and 10 require the genuine simple past form: wrote, listened, and drove.

#8- While her husband was in the army, she ... to him once a week.
a. wrote b. was writing c. was wrote d. was write

#9- Yesterday, from six to seven, we ... to an interesting play on the radio.
a. were listen b. listening c.listened d. have listened

#10- They sang happily while they .... home.
a. were drive b. drive c. driving d. drove

The above classification shows that it is not logical to make a generalization about the -ed form on the basis of such sentences. Thus making the simple past as second most difficult seems to be no more valid because not all the given sentences represent the simple past and some of them have a second correct answer which certainly makes the success percentage higher on this part. Support for this argument is found in the results of the translation and picture-story tasks which do not indicate any difficulty in the simple past.

6 2 The translation task

Let's look at table 4 which shows the percentages of errors made in the different tested points:

Table 4: Syntactic points in the translation task; number of occurrences; errors and their % and rank of difficulty

Category	#of occurrences	#of errors	%	rank
Copula & Subj verb Agreement	44	4	9	4
Relative clauses	55	0	0	0
Indirect Questions	22	18	82	1
Prepositions	33	7	21	2
Articles	55	9	16.4	3
Tense agreement	22	0	0	0
Coordinate clauses	55	5	7.4	5

The largest number of errors was found in forming indirect questions. The following two sentences were considered the ideal translations for the Arabic versions:

a) I asked Abdu what the homework was.
translated as
"I asked Abdu what was the homework."

b) Can you tell me where the post office is.
translated as:
"Can you tell me where is the post office "

82% of Ss deviated from the standard order where there is no inversion for the copula. The reason may be that Ss never found that the incorrect word order impeded communication for them and the community with whom they interacted never corrected them on such mistakes, though this kind of structure is highly frequent in communication. A slightly different deviant behavior was found by Kachru (1983) in his discussion of the identification features of English in South Asia where interrogatives being made without changing the position of the subject, i.e.,

"Where you would like to eat?"

Word order in questions seems to be problematic even in the local dialects of the U.S.. Guinzburg (1990) looked at "indirect questions" in New Jersey and found that for the Standard English form:
"Jack asked Ann whether she went to the store yet"

a New Jersey speaker would say:
"Jack asked Ann did she go to the store yet."
And the standard English in saying:
"Did you ever wonder if Ann goes to the store every day."
as
"Did you ever wonder does Ann go to the store every day."

Difficulty #2 is with the prepositions. Arabic interference may be one of the reasons besides the nature of the inherent difficulty in learning the prepositions themselves. For example, the sentence which was meant to be translated as:

"She cried <u>at</u> the bad news." translated as .... <u>from</u> the bad news.

This seems to be the literal translation of the Arabic `min' meaning `from'. In a survey of the teaching problems of ESL teachers in the Los Angeles area, (Covitt, 1976) quoted in Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983) found that prepositions emerge as a serious problem in teaching, ranking as number two problem after articles.

Though articles emerge as number one teaching problem in ESL, they emerge here as problem #3; the obvious reason is that the

English articles don't have direct correspondence with the Arabic articles which is confirmed by (Kachru 1983).

The fourth problem is the copula and subject verb agreement. Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983) present evidence showing that some cases of subject-verb agreement are puzzling mainly to nonnative speakers, and that several cases cause difficulty for native and nonnative speakers alike. The following examples are taken from Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983) quoting Van Shaik (1976) and Farhady (1977) in their survey of the performance and preferences of large numbers of native speakers:

* Non of the costumes he has tried (fit-50%; fits-50%) him.
* Either your eyesight or your brakes (was-31%; were-69%) at fault.
* The boy not his parents (is-88%; are-12%) being punished.
* Neither of them (is-66%; are-34%) ready for marriage.
* I am one of those who (favor-35%; favors-65%) equal rights.

These bring us to where we stand regarding prescriptive and descriptive rules of grammar. And these observations my cause confusion to students and teachers of English who strictly adhere to the traditional rules of grammar. The structure test of Kharma (1983) is an example of this confusion. Therefore, teachers should be aware of these discrepancies to bring them to the attention of their students.

6.3 Picture stories

The descriptions of each of the five picture stories by all subjects were checked for the deviant structures. The purpose, as said before, was to see if the same problems found with the other two tasks (the structure test and the translation task) are found in a continued discourse. Therefore, the occurrences of each of the structure points discussed earlier were counted and the percentage of the deviant instances for each structure was computed. The first story "A truck hit a biker" was searched for these points and tabulated in table `5' below.

Table 5: Types of deviation in story #1 "A truck hit a biker"

Category	#of occurrences	Wrong instances	%
Tense agreement	14	7	50
copula	31	5 missing	16
Articles	95	1 missing	1.5
Verb forms	83	4	4.7
Prepositions	27	4	14.8

In table `6' that follows we have the results of the all the stories across all the descriptions.

Table 5: Major types of deviation in all stories (70 descriptions

Category	#of occurrences	Wrong instances	%
1. copula	108	18 missing	16.6
2. Tense agreement per each description	70	22	31.4
3. Relative clauses	12	6	50
And	48	in an average of 400 sentences	

(It is difficult to decide which is considered right and which is considered wrong as the description was oral not written)

The most salient incorrect syntactic feature is the lack of tense agreement. In describing the stories, Ss switched from the present to the past tense and vice versa with no obvious reason. Even Arabic doesn't allow for such incorrect switching when a story is described. Therefore, it seems difficult to explain such a problem. The following are some examples to illustrate this:

1. He hits the truck, fell down .... a man saw him.
2. He is riding .... he didn't see .....
3. The man realized that he is .....

The second problem is the missing copula. Out of 108 instances of possible uses 18 were missing (15.7%)
Examples:

1. A truck intersects with where he .... going.
2. Suddenly a truck .... crossing his, he hit ....
3. A blind man using a cane ... crossing the street.

Arabic interference may be one of the reasons for this type of mistake as found in Scott and Tucker (1974). The other reason which may have caused this error is that `is' may not affect communication or meaning of the sentence. According to Tomiyana (1980), such mistakes may not lead to communication breakdown with the native speakers as it proved true when such examples were checked with some of the American students.

The third problem is with relative clauses. They seem to be generally avoided. Only 12 occurrences were noticed in all the descriptions of stories (approximately 400 sentences). Six of them were wrong which means that this structure is highly problematic.
Examples:

1. The driver of the lorry called the hospital who took the injured man ......

2. The driver of the truck calls the ambulance picking up the injured biker .... (which picks)

However, Ss in the translation task did not misuse this structure in any single instance. The reason may be that Arabic sentences

were short and the corresponding Arabic counterpart for who/which allaDi was there to remind them of using the correct relative structure.

Other structure points like articles and verb forms don't seem to present a serious problem as the relative clauses. Prepositions (14.8) seem also to be a relatively low problematic area which has support in the result of the translation task (21%).

7.0 Conclusion

The following conclusions may be pointed out:

1. Investigating the syntactic features that identify the English of highly educated Arab users living in the U.S. or Britain has been neglected.
2. This type of investigation should be viewed as significant because it reflects how the ultimate learning of English by Arab learners may look like.
3. Despite success in using English for Academic and social purposes by Arab users in the U.S. there are some deviations that may characterize their English in areas like: a) tense agreement b) relative clauses c) indirect questions d) perfective tenses and e) prepositions.
4. The degree of difficulty in the above areas depends on the academic level and living in an English native speaking country or in an Arab country.

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[19] Hornby, A. S., *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*, p. 100.
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Chapter 5

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Appendix I

Structural Test

Encircle the letter a, b, c, or d which precedes the *best* completion of each of the following sentences:

1. I ... an aeroplane there.

   a. am seeing b. seeing c. will see *d. see**

2. I was sitting in my room, reading, when suddenly the door..(1).. open and in ..(2).. a man and ..(3).. his pistol at me.

   a. burst (1), came (2), aimed (3) b. has burst (1), has come (2), has aimed (3)
   c. *bursts* (1), *comes* (2), *aims* (3) d. bursting (1), coming (2), aiming (3)

3. I feel hungry; I want ...

   a. I eat b. eat *c. to eat* d. that I may eat

4. Ali ... to the party last night.

   a. not went b. he not go *c. did not go* d. do not went

5. It is already 9 o'clock, but the guest ... yet.

   a. has not arrived b. not arrived
   c. did not arrive d. not arrive.

6. Twenty aeroplanes are said ... down yesterday.

   a. were shot b. to were shot c. to shot *d. to have been shot*

* The best answer is written in italics in this version of the test, not in the test actually given to the students.

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7. You ... him yesterday.

a. must saw b. must see c. *must have seen* d. *must be seeing*

8. While her husband was in the army, she ... to him once a week.

a. wrote b. was writing c. was wrote d. was write

9. Yesterday, from six to seven, we ... to an interesting play on the radio.

a. were listen b. listening *c. listened* d. have listened

10. They sang happily while they ... home.

a. were drive b. drive c. driving *d. drove*

11. I'd rather you ... me now.

a. pay b. will pay *c. paid* d. to pay

12. Suppose we ... to see the show.

a. went b. go c. will go d. were go

13. I wish I ... the fellow's name so that I can tell you.

a. knew b. will know c. have known d. know

14. God ... you!!

a. helps b. helped *c. help* d. has helped

15. I hereby ... you my daughter in marriage; she is your wife now.

a. gave *b. give* c. have given d. giving

16. Remember the favours I ... to you.

a. did *b. have done* c. had done d. *have done*

17. Historians ... that the very quick spread of Islam was a kind of miracle.

a. agree b. agreed c. are agreeing d. agreeing

18. Look what you ... !!

a. did b. done c. *have done* d. had done

19. I ... here since 1928.

a. have been living b. am living c. still living d. live

20. I ... to the cinema twice this week.

a. went b. go c. am going *d. have been*

21. George ... out.

a. has just gone b. just went
c. is just gone d. just now went

22. Wait till I ... my coffee.

a. have finished b. finished c. finishing d. shall finish

23. When we arrived on the field, the match ... already started.

a. has b. was *c. had* d. (no words required)

24. I was told that he ...

a. had gone b. has gone c. went d. is gone

25. They ... each other for years when they started to quarrel.

a. were know b. were knowing *c. had known* d. knew.

26. If he ..., he would have come.

a. knew *b. had known* c. were knew d. know

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

27. I ... to catch the 8.30 train, but found it was gone.

a. was hoped b. have hoped c. was hoping d. *had hoped*

28. I ... my homework by ten o'clock tonight.

a. have written b. am wrote *c. shall have written* d. shall be wrote

29. Ahmad ... in a comfortable chair reading a book.

a. is sitting b. sat c. sitting d. sits

30. Why are you in such a hurry? Where ... ?

a. are you going b. you go c. do you go d. going

31. When she returned, the servants ... the table.

a. were clear b. were cleared *c. were clearing* d. clearing

32. He ... two letters every week.

a. was write b. was writing c. was wrote *d. used to write*

33. In another year I ... tea in Ceylon.

a. am grow b. am growing *c. shall be growing* d. shall be grow

34. I ... tired.

a. feel b. am feeling c. feeling d. am feel

35. He ... fault with whatever I do.

a. is always finding b. always find
c. always finding d. finds forever

36. ... that house over there?

a. See you *b. Do you see* c. Are you seeing d. You seeing

37. I ... you are right.

a. am knowing b. knowing c. am know *d. know*

38. I ... there next week.

a. going b. go *c. am going* d. am going to go

39. I ... a dinar for a worthless article like this!

a. am not paying b. shall not pay
c. do not pay d. am not going to pay

40. I ... the children to the Zoo on Friday.

a. shall take b. taking *c. am taking* d. take.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

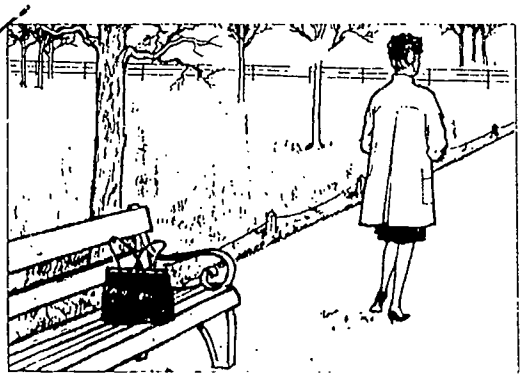
A

B

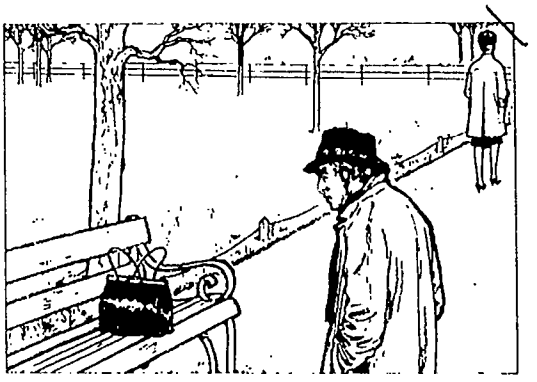
C

D

A



B



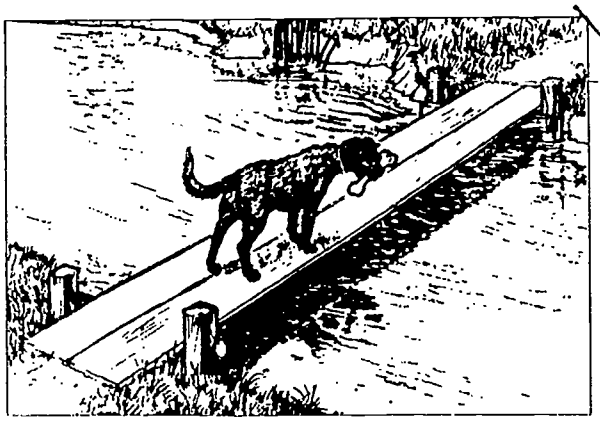
C

D

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A

B



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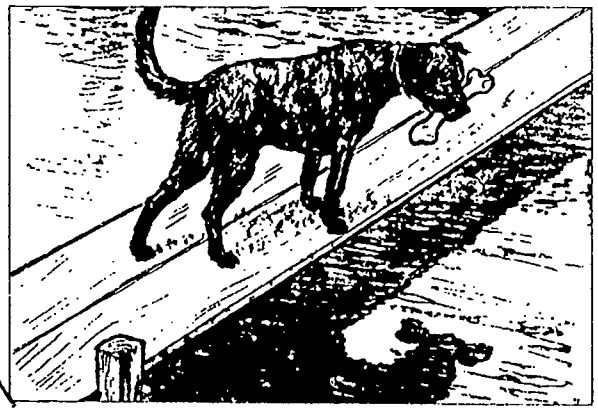

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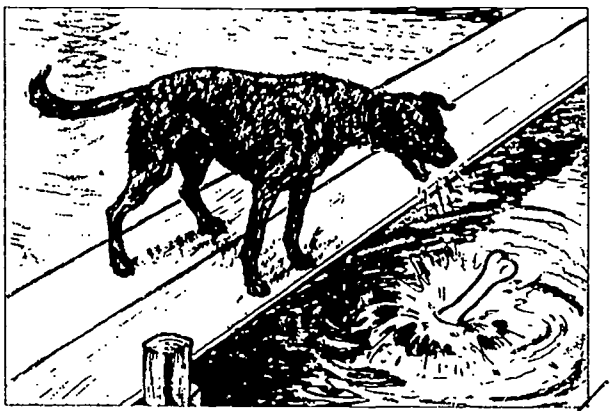

A

B

C

D

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