The Effect of Colloquial Jordanian Arabic on Learning the English Definite Article and Negation

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of Colloquial Jordanian Arabic upon the use of negation and the definite article in English. The sample of the study consisted of 100 male and 100 female Jordanian 10th graders in the academic year 2011-2012. The students were randomly selected from public schools in the region of Karak-Jordan. A translation test as well as a gap-fill test were constructed to arrive at the objectives of the study. The study concluded that the students committed more transfer errors in their use of English negation and the definite article than other types of errors in the same syntactic areas as a result of the effect of CJA.

Keywords: language transfer, Colloquial Jordanian Arabic, English definiteness, English negation, Arabic definiteness, Arabic negation

1. Introduction

In Jordanian schools, teaching structures of language is a fundamental part of most English classes. It is worth mentioning that eight years ago, Jordanian government schools began to teach English as a foreign language from the first grade onward. Nevertheless, the students' proficiency in English is far below the desired standards. Students are found to encounter several problems in learning English, especially in the area of syntax. Two areas of syntax in which students face difficulty are the use of the definite article and negation. Fisiak (1981: 207) stated that " the errors or mistakes that students make in the process of learning a second or a foreign language have always been a cause of much concern to the teachers and textbook writers alike". These errors have been found to plague the speech and writing of students learning English as a second language.

Jordanian students, like many other Arab students, learn English alongside their mother tongue. They start learning modern standard Arabic (MSA) as an official language at the school level. In this respect, Cowan (1968) and Ringbom (1987) believe that Arabs are native speakers of non-Standard Arabic (NSA) not Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

Antony (1987) highlighted that many ESL/EFL practitioners realize that the article system (a- an- the- zero article) is a very difficult aspect of English syntax to learn and acquire. Bataineh (2005) supported this idea by stating that the article system is one of the most difficult structural elements for ESL/EFL learners, especially when their native languages employ different articles. In this respect, Master (1997) and Parrish (1987) explained that for learners whose first languages (L1s) lack articles [- ART], the zero article dominates in all environments for articles in the early stages of L2 learning.

Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) pointed out that some of the errors committed by Arab students learning English as a foreign language are due to Arabic interference but they did not specify which form of Arabic is responsible for the committing of these errors.

Several linguists like Ellis (1985), Lado (1964) and Mahmoud (2000) mostly agreed with the assumption that the L1 plays a pivotal role on L2 learning. According to these linguists the errors committed in L2 learning which are the result of the differences between L1 and L2 are called transfer or interference errors. James (1980) explained that what leads to the emergence of the hypothesis of transfer is the observation that previous learning has its own effect on subsequent learning. Faerch and Kasper (1987) believed that transfer is a psycholinguistic process in which L2 learners activate their previous linguistic knowledge to develop and use their interlanguage.

McLaughlin (1987) defined transfer as either a learning strategy or communication strategy. Transfer may be used as a learning strategy for the purpose of formulating hypotheses about the target language or as a communication strategy for the purpose of testing these hypotheses.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Studies on the Role of L1 in Learning L2

Sharwood-Smith (1979) stated that there are three eras which can be clearly defined with respect to the attitudes towards the role the first language plays in L2 learning. The first era is characterized by the influence of structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. In this era, transfer from the native language is taken to be a matter of habit. Negative transfer would be predicted in cases of differences between the first language and the target language. It is also believed that L2 learners could overcome and avoid the negative effects of their native languages by acquiring new and stronger target language habits. The second era is characterized by a tendency towards congnitivism in psychology and language acquisition which, in turns, represents a reaction against the behaviourist habit formation theory. The role that the first language plays in L2 learning is de-emphasized and language acquisition whether native, second or foreign is considered as a creative process which later on has come to be known as a creative construction hypothesis. The third era is considered as a corrective movement within the cognitive approach to language learning. The role of the native language in theory-building has been revived, and the notions of creativity in learning have been extended to include interlingual transfer.

According to Odlin (1989: 33), in the third era the learner is viewed as an active participant in the process of learning, one who decides which elements of the native language are transferable and which are not. "The distance between the native language and the target language has come to be seen as ultimately in the eye of the beholder". Thus, in this era, the notions of learner expectation and the perceived distance between the native language and the target language are introduced as an alternative to the rigid view of equating linguistic differences with learning problems.

Lado (1964) explained that foreign language learners find some features of the language being learned difficult while finding other features simple. The features that are different from those of their first language will be difficult to learn, whereas the features that are similar to those of their first language will be easy to learn. Zobl (1980a, 1980b, 1982) explicated that first language interference leads to committing different errors by second language learners. These errors may begin as L2 developmental errors that become reinforced by a similar structure in L1 compatible with the developmental errors. He also provided an account of several characteristics that distinguish transfer errors from developmental ones. Transfer errors have the following characteristics: 1) Interference produces errors that are distinct from developmental, 2) Learners are unable to separate L1 and L2, 3) Learner's errors are due to L1 habits, and 4) Learners depend on L1 as a crutch at a low level of L2 proficiency. On the other hand, developmental errors have the following characteristics: 1) Errors are similar to those made by native speakers, 2) Learners try to construct hypotheses about L2, and 3) Learners use the strategies of simplification, generalization and reduction of grammatical redundancy.

Ellis (1985, 1997) and Lado (1964) proposed that interference is the result of proactive inhibition where the old habits of learning get in the way of learning new habits. Ringbom (1987: 60) proposed that if there are similarities between the first and the second language, and if the learner is learning simply to understand the language, then learning the second language should be easy. But it is the similarity that causes interference and thus hinders second language learning, if the learner is learning to produce the language. He further said that "linguistic differences between L1 and L2 may not automatically mean learning problems, but if the learner is able to perceive structural lexical similarities between L1 and L2 there will absolutely essential absence of some important learning problems at the early stages, especially as far as comprehension and vocabulary learning are concerned".

Mahmoud (2000: 134), Taylor (cited in Takashima, 1989), Naser and Raja (1989) explicated that the mother tongue undoubtedly plays a prominent role in learning and using another language especially in foreign language learning situations where learners are infrequently exposed to the target language. Arab learners of English in such situations rely heavily on their interlingual transfer strategy to solve the problems they encounter when learning English.

Larsen and Michael (1991) clarified that the linguistically marked features of the first language do not tend to transfer but the linguistically unmarked features tend to transfer. Moreover, Kellerman (cited in Larsen and Michael, 1991) proposed that the learner's perception of the L1-L2 distance as well as the likelihood of the transferred forms being found in the second language determine whether or not a learner will transfer forms from L1 to L2.

Other researchers in Jordan such as Al-Haq (1982), Al-Naimi (1989), Miqdadi (1997) and Bdour (1989) have conducted several studies as attempts to investigate the role of Arabic on learning the following syntactic areas: noun-phrases, prepositions, relative pronouns. Nearly all of have found that Arabic interference accounts for the most frequent source of errors committed by Arab learners.

2.2 Negation in English vs. Negation in CJA

After examining how negation is used in English as explained by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (cited in Tanareungsak, 2004), Zanittini (1991, 1997), Martin (cited in Coles-White 2004), and how negation is employed is CJA as explained by Al-Wer (1985), the differences in negation between the two languages were discerned and summarized as follows: basically, in English the negative particle is placed before the main verb and thus it is a preverbal negation. For instance, the declarative sentence (John went to school) is negated as follows (John did not go to school). In colloquial Arabic, the negative particle is placed either before the verb or at the beginning of the sentence. For instance, the declarative sentence (Ali jaab kitabu) is negated either as (Ali maa jaab kitabu) or (maa jaab Ali kitabu). In English, the negative particle *not* can not begin a sentence. For instance, the sentence (He is *not* happy) can not be negated as (**not* he is happy). Moreover, when using *not* with any verb except *BE* or a modal verb, the auxiliary verb *DO* is required. The verb *DO*, in negative statements, is an auxiliary verb. In this role, *DO* is conjugated for person and tense. The main verb remains in the *base form* as shown in the examples below:

- ✓ Declarative: He loves his mother too much.
- ✓ Negative: He *does not love* his mother too much.
- ✓ Declarative: They saw an elephant in the circus.
- ✓ Negative: They *did not see* an elephant in the circus.

On the contrary, in Colloquial Arabic the negative particles (*laa, maa, miš*) do not change the form of the verb as shown in the examples below:

- ✓ Declarative: ?ana šuftu mbareh. (I saw him yesterday).
- ✓ Negative: ?ana maa šuftu mbareh(I did not see him yesterday).

It's obvious from the example above that the verb "šuftu" remained the same when used in the negative form in CJA.

2.3 Definiteness in English vs. Definiteness in CJA

After examining definiteness in English as explained by Shammas (1998), Avram and Lotem (2003), Quirk et al (1985), Eastwood (1992) and Layons (1999), and definiteness in Arabic as explained by Maalej (2003), O'leary (1979) and Beeston (1970), the differences in definiteness between the two languages were discerned and summed up as follows:

First, English has a tripartite system of determination based on the distinction between the definite, indefinite and zero article. Arabic, however, has a twofold system: the definite determiner (al) and the nill determiner which signals indefiniteness. Second, English uses nouns generically with the definite, indefinite and zero article interchangeably, whereas, Arabic refers generically with (al) only. Third, English forbids the use of the definite article with abstract nouns unless they are modified, while Arabic systematically defines them. Fourth, English may use the definite or indefinite articles with the head noun of an instance of post modification, whereas; Arabic only allows definite head noun phrases in the same syntactic environment. Finally, English uses the definite article either referentially or expressively with the implication that the referent is not known to the hearer, whereas, Arabic uses the definite determiner (al) only referentially.

3. Design and Methodology

3.1 Sample of the Study

The sample of the study comprised 100 male and 100 female tenth graders in the region of Karak in Jordan in the academic year 2011-2012. No one of the informants has been exposed to English in naturalistic setting. All of the respondents study the same curriculum, "Jordan Opportunity".

3.2 Instrumentation

Two tests were employed to elicit a reasonable body of data for this study. The first one was a fill in blank test. This test consisted of thirty sentences adapted and developed from Ekiert (2003), Murphy (2004), Shammas (1998) and Azar (1989). The participants were asked to complete the sentences using (the, an, an or zero article).

The second test was a translation test. It consisted of twenty-five sentences written in colloquial Arabic where the students were asked to translate these sentences into English. All of the sentences were negative. The first twenty sentences were written in CJA and the other five were in SA. This was done intentionally for the purpose of making sure which variety students transfer from.For the purpose of testing the reliability of the two tests, I used cronbach alpha. The value of cronbach alpha in the translation test and the fill-in-blank test was 0.712 and 0.867 respectively, which proved that the tests were reliable and acceptable.

4. Findings and Discussions

I hypothesized that school students would commit more transfer errors in their use of the definite article and negation than committing other types of errors in the same two syntactic areas as a result of their mother tongue influence on learning these two aspects of language structures. For the purpose of testing this hypothesis, a statistical analysis of the two tests: the translation test and the fill in blank test were made. The table below shows students' responses in the translation test.

Table 1. Responses of the students in the translation test

Sentence Number	Right Answers	Means	Standard Deviation	Wrong Answers	Means	Standard Deviation
1	67	0.04	0.50	133	0.96	0.84
2	40	0.37	0.50	160	0.68	0.38
3	24	0.61	0.60	176	0.59	0.84
4	45	0.49	0.43	155	0.69	0.09
5	17	0.59	0.25	183	0.76	0.50
6	39	0.21	0.64	161	0.48	0.86
7	25	0.35	0.09	175	0.55	0.36
8	47	0.47	0.34	153	0.75	0.57
9	66	0.16	0.92	134	0.12	0.63
10	47	0.55	0.67	153	0.82	0.63
11	64	0.02	0.57	136	0.42	0.61
12	40	0.83	0.30	160	0.96	0.53
13	61	0.27	0.78	139	0.56	0.80
14	78	0.70	0.45	122	0.62	0.43
15	65	0.87	0.70	135	0.36	0.93
16	83	0.23	0.57	117	0.68	0.75
17	85	0.79	0.10	115	0.47	0.65
18	45	0.65	0.36	155	0.72	0.30
19	18	0.23	0.07	182	0.40	0.20
20	59	0.27	0.46	141	0.86	0.94
21	61	0.64	0.76	139	0.86	0.36
22	71	0.32	0.32	129	0.74	0.57
23	38	0.53	0.44	162	0.36	0.01
24	40	0.74	0.86	160	0.57	0.63
25	39	0.60	0.20	161	0.48	0.86

Table 2. Frequency of each error type and its percentage in the translation test

Error Type	Means	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage
1	0.81	0.56	768	20%
2	0.02	0.77	141	4%
3	0.75	0.65	4	0%
4	0.14	0.42	4	0%
5	0.97	0.29	77	2%
6	0.00	0.69	776	21%
7	0.78	0.89	4	0%
8	0.26	0.20	56	1%
9	0.85	0.95	1950	52%

From the table above, it is very clear that the percentage of transfer errors in the use of the definite article (type 1) and of transfer errors in the use of negation were the highest. The percentage of transfer errors in the use of the definite article was 20% where the percentages of omission and substitution error types scored 4% and 0% respectively. The percentage of transfer error type in the use of negation was 52%, while the percentages of other error types in the use of negation were less than 52%.

Regarding the transfer errors committed in the use of negation, it was found that most of the students' wrong answers which proved to be the result of their first language influence in using negation took the following form: (not or no+verb/noun/adjective). The following are examples of the students' answers in the first test:

* *Yousef not ill*

* *The life not rain*

* *no go Faisal to school*

* *students much not pass the exam yesterday*

* *no water in well*

We can readily notice from the above-mentioned examples of the students' answers for translating sentences number 3, 12, 21, 4 and 10 respectively, that they relied heavily on their mother tongue structure to translate the equivalent Arabic sentences into English. They kept using *not* or *no* as negative particles to negate the sentences but it did not happen that any of the students used both particles in his/her answers. Only one particle dominated all of the answers. For instance, a student who used no to negate one sentence used the same particle to negate all of the other sentences. The reverse is also true when analyzing the use of not.

Other types of errors were mostly concentrated in the wrong use of the auxiliary, mentioned in the table above, that the percentage of such errors was 21%. The following are examples of students' wrong answers which were classified under this type of error (errors of type six):

1* Ahmmad do not do homework yesterday

2* Ali speaks English good but his brother is not speak English good

3* my friend does not send the message to me but one this year

4* yousef was not ill

5* Anas did not travel to Saudi Arabia next month

Examining carefully the students' answers of translating the equivalent Arabic sentences number 2, 9, 25, 3 and 19, it is obvious that in each sentence the students used the wrong auxiliary. In the first, do *not* is used instead of *does not*; in the second, is *not* is used instead of *does not*; in the third, does *not* is used instead of *did not*; in the fourth, was *not* is used instead of *is not*, and in the fifth, did *not* is used instead of *does not*. Such errors are not attributed to the effect of the first language because in all of the students' wrong answers which were classified under this type of errors, the students seemed not to be influenced by the structure of Arabic so they are not transfer errors. Otherwise, I hypothesized here that such errors were committed as a result of insufficient knowledge on the use of negative particles and their agreement with singularity and plurality of subjects of sentences. So, Littlewood's (1984) classification of errors was adopted here and those errors were labeled as errors to the effect of teaching which are part of intralingaul errors.

The fifth type of errors, wrong use of two auxiliaries, constituted 2% of all other types of errors. Such were committed, from my own point of view, as a result of misunderstanding the structure of negating sentences in English. So they fall within the same classification of the sixth type of errors, intralingual errors (errors to the effect of teaching). The following are examples of students' wrong answers which were taken to be considered as errors of the fifth type:

* Ahmmad does not can swim well/ Ahmmad did not can swim well

* Fadi does had never gone to Petra

The use of double negation also constituted 1% of all types of errors. Again, these errors were not classified as transfer errors; they were committed as a result of faulty teaching methods and misunderstanding of negation. Thus, they fall within the same category of the fifth and sixth types of errors. Therefore, they were intralingual errors. The following are examples of the students' wrong answers which were taken to be considered as errors of the eighth type:

* Fadi had not never gone Petra

* Nobody did not pass the exam yesterday

* No one in class did not write English well

* Neither Ahmmad nor Kalled did not go to party in the hotel

Now let's discuss the errors committed in the use of the article system in the same test. These errors were classified into three types: transfer, omission and substitution. In this test, transfer errors constituted 20% of all other types of errors. In each wrong answer, the students used *the* whenever the Arabic sentence contains a noun that begins with (?al). The following are examples of students' wrong answers which were taken to be errors of transfer:

* not sky rain in *the summer* in *the   ordan*

* Anas does not want to travel to *the Suadi* in next month

* Fadi never visited *the Petra*

* Faisal not go *the school* yesterday

* Mohammad and Ali did not get *the Arabic book* with them to *the school*

Omission errors constituted 4% of all types of errors. In this type of errors as seen in the examples below, the students omitted the use of the definite article the in places where its use was obligatory. The wrong phrase is written in italic:

* Ahmmad did not do *homework* yesterday

* do not write name on *exam paper*

* All girls did not go on picnic

* Ahmmad and kalled did not go to *party* in *hotel*

Errors which were absent in the translation test were: substitution errors in the use of the English article system, and errors which did not fall into any of the categories mentioned in the classification of errors committed in the use of negation.

Kai Square (X2) test was used to see whether the results of the translation test supported or rejected the hypothesis. The value of X2 test was 14.85 at α:0.05 which is a significant value indicating that transfer errors in the use of the English definite article and negation were the highest, and thus the hypothesis was supported.

The following table shows the students' responses to the use of the *zero article* in sentences number (1, 6, 14, 16, 19, 12, 30, 29, 18, 17, 2).

Table 3. Students' responses to the use of the zero article

Sentence Number	Right Answers	Means	Standard Deviation	Wrong Answers	Means	Standard Deviation
1	38	0.91	0.84	162	0.12	0.20
6	72	0.21	0.61	128	0.12	0.19
14	70	0.27	0.56	130	0.72	0.13
16	50	0.01	0.40	150	0.76	0.89
19	48	0.73	0.73	152	0.73	0.03
12	51	0.60	0.16	149	0.87	0.16
30	81	0.35	0.65	119	0.55	0.51
29	56	0.18	0.77	144	0.11	0.29
18	54	0.34	0.43	146	0.64	0.45
17	88	0.85	0.21	112	0.66	1.00
2	80	0.16	0.34	120	0.16	0.07

The students' wrong answers in the use of the *zero article* were of substitution error type. In other words, the students replaced the zero article with *a*, *an* or *the*. The following are examples of the students' wrong answers in the use of the zero article:

1*Are you going out this evening? Yes, after *the dinner*.

2* *The beef* is a kind of meat.

3* The trip I took to *the Aqaba* was the only vacation I had all year.

4* All of us like *the beauty.*

In all of the examples above, it is clear that *the* was used instead of the *zero article*. The errors committed here were classified as transfer error type due to the fact that in all of the phrases written in italic, the Arabic translation for each phrase contains a definite marker (?al). In (1), the Arabic translation of the word (dinner) is (?al-asha?). In (2), the Arabic translation of the word (beef) is (?al-lahem). In (3), the Arabic translation of the word (Aqaba) is (?al-aqaba). In (4), the Arabic translation of the word (beauty) is (?al-jamal). Thus, those who used *the* instead of the *zero article* in these sentences and other similar sentences seemed to be influenced by the structure of Arabic.

The table below reflects the students' responses to the use of the indefinite article *an* in sentences number (3, 15, 20, 25, 27)

Table 4. Students' responses to the use of the indefinite article (An)

Item	Right Answers	Means	Standard Deviation	Wrong Answers	Means	Standard Deviation
3	85	1.00	0.37	115	0.45	0.25
15	41	0.98	0.64	159	0.14	0.90
20	69	0.97	0.81	131	0.14	0.55
25	49	0.33	0.35	151	0.56	0.49
27	64	0.45	0.88	136	0.69	0.70

The students' wrong answers in the use of the indefinite article *an* were substitution –type errors where the students used *a*, *zero article* or *the* for the indefinite article *an*. The following are examples of students' wrong answers in the use of the indefinite article *an*:

* Jill likes riding *the elephant* rather than a horse.

* She was upset when *a honest* mistake was made

* Jill plays a violin in *a orchestra*

In the examples above, the students who used the definite article *the* in (1) with the word (elephant), seemed to be influenced by their mother tongue since the Arabic translation of (elephant) is (?al-feel). Thus, such errors were classified as transfer errors. It is also clear from the table above that the least number of correct answers was in sentence number fifteen where only 41 students answered the sentence correctly. In this sentence, the students who used the indefinite article *a* instead of the indefinite article *an* seemed to overgeneralize the rule which says "before an indefinite word that begins with a consonant, *a* is used". Thus, the errors committed in this sentence could mainly be attributed to overgeneralization and students' inability to distinguish between the usage of *a* and *an*.

The students also committed several errors in the use of the indefinite article *a*. The table below shows the students' responses to the use of the indefinite article *a* in sentences number (8, 11, 21, 26, 28)

Table 5. Students' responses to the use of the indefinite Article (A)

Sentence Number	Right Answers	Means	Standard Deviation	Wrong Answers	Means	Standard Deviation
8	125	0.67	0.98	75	0.93	0.92
11	106	0.76	0.28	94	0.74	0.74
21	73	0.39	0.98	127	0.16	0.51
26	91	0.19	0.71	109	0.39	0.99
28	140	0.75	0.64	60	0.11	0.30

The students' wrong answers in the use of the indefinite article *a* were also substitution- type errors. The following are some examples:

* He used to be *the lawyer*

* Martin comes from *the large family*

* The police officer was not wearing *an uniform* when she arrested a suspect.

It is also apparent that the students who used the indefinite article *an* instead of the indefinite article *a* in sentence number 26 seemed to overgeneralize the rule which says "before an indefinite noun that begins with a vowel, *an* is used". Therefore, such errors were also a result of overgeneralization and students' inability to distinguish between the usage of *a* and *an.*

The table below articulates the responses to the use of the definite article.

Table 6. Students' responses to the use of the definite article (the)

Sentence Number	Right Answers	Means	Standard Deviation	Wrong Answers	Means	Standard Deviation
4	115	0.26	0.16	85	0.70	0.05
5	124	0.71	0.50	76	0.59	0.40
7	81	0.24	0.37	119	0.60	0.88
9	103	0.35	0.06	97	0.45	0.12
10	83	0.47	0.67	117	0.91	0.38
22	69	0.15	0.97	131	0.41	0.14
23	81	0.59	0.40	119	0.40	0.88
13	133	0.60	0.86	67	0.06	0.35
24	103	0.40	0.60	97	0.13	0.85

The students' wrong answers in the use of the definite article were of omission and substitution error types. The following are examples of students' wrong answers in the use of the definite article:

1* *A highest* mountain in the Alps is Mont Blanc.

2* Did you have fun at *a picnic* yesterday?

3* He had *best grade* in his class.

In all of the above-written examples, the errors could be mainly ascribed to the students' inability to distinguish between the usage of the definite article *the* and the indefinite articles *a* and *an.*

The following table demonstrates the means, standard deviation, frequency and percentage of transfer, omission and substitution error types in the fill in blank test.

Table 7. Frequency and percentage of transfer, omission and substitution errors

Error Type	Means	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage
Transfer	0.45	0.47	1384	39%
Omission	0.65	0.53	1273	36%
Substitution	0.86	0.21	858	25%

It is apparent from the table above that transfer errors constituted the largest percentage of errors in this test where it reached 39%. X2 test was used to see whether the results of this test supported or rejected the first hypothesis. The value of X2 test was 10.52 at α: 0.05 indicating that it is a significant value which gave support to the first hypothesis. In all of the students' wrong answers, in this test, which were classified as transfer errors it was found that the students used the definite article *the* with the English word whenever its Arabic translation has the Arabic definite marker (al). The following are examples of the transfer errors committed by the students in this test. The ungrammatical phrase is written in italic:

*All of us like *the beauty.*

*The trip that I took to *the Aqaba* was the only vocation I had all year.

**The math* is more difficult than biology.

**The birds* can fly.

The engineers build bridges.

In all of the above-written examples, the noun phrases that are in italic require the use of the zero article, but the students used the definite article as a result of the fact that the equivalent Arabic words for the English words beauty, Aqaba, math, birds and engineers are: ?al-jamal, ?al-aqaba, ?al-ryaðyat, ?al-asafeer and ?al-muhandseen, respectively.

The percentage of *omission errors* in the fill-in-blank test was 36%. Below are some examples:

* *French* were against the war in Iraq.

* Whale is *largest* mammal on earth

* There are nine planets traveling around *sun.*

* *Beef* we had for dinner last month was excellent

5. Implications and Limitations

5.1 Implications for Teaching Based on the Findings

In the light of the findings of this study, I suggest that EFL learners be made aware of their errors, how their first language interferes with their production of the second language, and the differences between their L1 and English. This would sharpen their awareness of the fact that they cannot apply what is in their L1 to the FL they are learning, English in the current study. Consequently, it would help them avoid or at least reduce the amount of their L1 interference on the FL they are learning. However, EFL instructors should be very careful about the way they do it. It should be done in a way that helps EFL learners develop stronger new learning habits to overcome those existing old learning habits. This suggested technique should take place in learning environments at the beginning of each learning session. Once the overlap in any linguistic area between L1 and L2 is clearly explained, learners start their productions of the linguistic area they have learned. At this point, EFL instructors shouldn't, under any circumstances, stop learners to rectify errors they committed. If the instructor does so, the learners might feel offended and get discouraged. Thus, they will refrain from responding to their instructors' questions which undoubtedly will deprive them of a very valuable learning opportunity.

A very beneficial and effective correction approach to follow and employ in L2 environments is the delayed correction. In this approach, the errors committed by EFL learners are not corrected immediately. Instead, after each leaner responds to the instructor's question, the committed errors could be written on the board. They could be classified as transfer errors and non-transfer errors. The former could be avoided by asking the strong leaners in the learning environment to correct them and then the rest of the learners say the correct version and start producing similar versions. The latter could be avoided by employing teaching approaches that cater for the different learning preferences. In the end of the day, what EFL instructors are after is to help their learners enhance their target language use, so the way they diagnose and deal with the committed errors should give them an aid to arrive at their pedagogical objectives and they should bear in their minds that their way of tackling these errors must not lay an obstacle on the learners' way of EFL learning.

The above teaching/learning/-related suggestions are applicable not only when teaching the English definite article and negation. They can be of great help when teaching any language aspect to EFL learners. Needless to say, desirable results should accrue from attempting to utilize them in their classes.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1. Generalizations of the findings are limited to the tenth grade students in the borough of Karak, so the findings can only be generalized to similar population.

2. Generalizations of the findings are limited to the effect of CJA on learning the English definite article and negation. Other linguistic areas are excluded.

3. The two tests used in the study are limited to the tenth grade students in Karak.

4. The findings of this study are associated with one age group (i.e. tenth grade students). Other age group could show more or fewer results.

6. Conclusion

In this article, I examined the effect of CJA on learning the English definite article and negation. Interestingly, I have revealed that the percentage of interference errors committed by the study respondents was the highest percentage in both syntactic areas: definiteness and negation. These errors occurred in the students' responses in

both tests as a result of proactive inhibition where the old habits of learning got in the way of learning new habits. In all of the items constructed in both tests, Arabic shares a meaning with English but expresses it in a different way which resulted in the students transferring their realization device from CJA into English.

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Appendix 1. The Fill in Blank Test in Its Final Draft

The Fill in Blank Test in Its Final Draft

Use a suitable article (a, an, the, zero article) and fill it in the blank(s) given in each sentence.

1. All of us like ………… beauty.

2……… Engineers build bridges.

3. Jill likes riding ……… elephant rather than a horse.

4. Whale is……… largest mammal on earth.

5……… Beef we had for dinner last night was excellent.

6……… Beef is a kind of meat.

7. Did you have fun at ………picnic yesterday?

8. He used to be……….. lawyer.

9. ………French were against war in Iraq.

10. There are nine planets traveling around………… sun.

11. Last month we went to…… wedding. The Bride was beautiful.

12. The book on that table is an interesting one about……… history.

13. He had…….. best grade in his class.

14. The trip I took last year to… Aqaba was the only vacation I had all year.

15. She was upset when ………honest mistake was made.

16. Are you going out this evening? Yes, after……… dinner.

17.……… Math is more difficult than biology.

18. I would like to listen to ……… music too much.

19. Why are not your children at …………school today? Are they ill?

20. Jill plays the violin in ………orchestra.

21. Martin comes from……….large family.

22. Have you been to Canada or……… United States?

23……….. Highest mountain in the Alps is Mont Blanc.

24. ………Dishwasher quit his job because he was making only four dollars per hour.

25. She opened……….. account at……… local department store.

26. The police officer was not wearing…….. uniform when she arrested the suspect.

27. It is raining, so you should bring …………umbrella with you.

28. We rented …….boat last summer. Unfortunately, the boat hit another boat and sank.

29……….. intelligence can be measured by different means.

30……… birds can fly.

Appendix II. The Translation Test in Its Final Draft

The Translation Test in Its Final Draft

1.   خالد ما بقدر يسبح زين

الترجمة:---

2.   احمد ما حل وظيفته أمس

الترجمة:---

3.   يوسف مش مريض

الترجمة:---

4.   ما في مي بالبير

الترجمة:---

5.   مو كل البنات راحوا بالرحلة

الترجمة:---

6.   الطقس مو حلو اليوم

الترجمة:---

7.   أنا ما بعرف شي عن الموضوع

الترجمة:---

8.   هم مو قاعدين بدرسوا هساع . قاعدين بلعبوا تنس بالملعب

الترجمة:---

9.   علي بحكي انجليزي زين بس أخوه ما بحكي انجليزي

الترجمة:---

10. طلاب كثير ما نجحوا بالامتحان أمس

الترجمة:---

11. لا تكتب اسمك ع ورقة الأسئلة

الترجمة:---

12. الدنيا ما بتشتي

الترجمة:---

13. ولا واحد نجح بالامتحان أمس

الترجمة:---

14. علي ومحمد ما جابو كتب العربي معهم على المدرسة

الترجمة:---

15. لا تحكي مع صباحك بصوت عالي

الترجمة:---

16. فادي ولا عمره راح على البترا

الترجمة:---

17. لا أحمد ولا خالد اجوا على الحفلة بالفندق .

الترجمة:---

18. أنا بحب القهوة كثير بس اخوي ما بحبها

الترجمة:---

19. انس ما وده يسافر على السعودية الشهر الجاي

الترجمة:---

20. ما في ولا حدا بالصف بكتب انجليزي زين

الترجمة:---

21. لا يستطيع علي رفع هذا الكرسي

الترجمة:---

22. لم يذهب فيصل إلى المدرسة البارحة

الترجمة:---

23. لا يريد يوسف التحدث مع علي

الترجمة:---

24. لا تمطر السماء في فصل الصيف في الأردن

الترجمة:---

25. لم يرسل لي صديقي إلا رسالة واحدة هذا العام .

الترجمة:---

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