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## **EXPLORING PATTERNS OF SIMPLE SENTENCE STRUCTURE USED BY ARABIC LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

*The article focuses on the most common patterns of simple sentences in English produced by Arabic speakers to identify possible errors made due to the negative language transfer. All the examples were found in the process of teaching English to Arabic students at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the Sultanate of Oman.*

*Key words: Arabic speaker; English language; simple sentence; word order; pattern.*

**Introduction.** Arabic and English are two distinct languages that belong to two different language families: Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family; English belongs to the Indo-European language family. As a result, there are immense differences between the two languages regarding each structural level (for more, see [Albalawi 2016; Alhussain 2018; Al Towity 2021]). Being analytic, English has a fixed simple sentence word order which looks as follows: S + V + O. Arabic is a synthetic language. As for the word order, it exploits two patterns: V + S + O and S + V + O. The VSO pattern is considered as a verbless sentence, while the SVO pattern is a nominative sentence. The aim of this paper is to reveal the most common patterns of simple sentences in English produced by Arabic speakers to identify possible errors due to the negative language transfer. All the examples, provided below, were found in the process of teaching English to Arabic students at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the Sultanate of Oman.

**Main part.** In their either spoken or written forms, Arabic speakers apply some rules of their mother tongue to produce English sentences, e.g. *Use many people technology nowadays*. The example shows that Arabic speakers may start an English sentence with a verb that is not commonly permissible in the English language (the correct version is *Many people use technology nowadays*). The occurrence of such a wrong sentence comes due to the influence of Arabic which allows the verb to start a sentence.

In the case of using the verb *to be*, Arabic speakers may produce a simple sentence by omitting the verb *to be* due to its absence in similar Arabic sentences:

(1) *They students* (the correct version is *They are students*).

(2) *Life beautiful* (the correct version is *Life is beautiful*).

(3) *I 18 years old* (the correct version is *I am 18 years old*).

The structure like *She girl beautiful* may also occur (the correct version is *She is a beautiful girl*), as Arabic speakers deviate from the English language rules by unconscious adopting the Arabic style structure in performing a simple English sentence that has an adjective. In Arabic, the adjective is always located after the noun in a sentence. It is possible therefore to say *Rajulun Shaeb* (literally «man old», the correct version is *an old man*), and *Baitun jamil* (literally «house beautiful», the correct version is *a beautiful house*).

Arabic speakers find it difficult to use the perfect aspect (for more, see [Alqadi 2020]), so they often ignore the auxiliary verbs *have/has/had*:

(4) *He worked on the computer for three hours.*

(5) *I am living in Oman since 1994.*

(6) *I went shopping before my two friends came to visit me.*

In the pattern of a simple sentence *Always he is busy*, Arabic speakers tend wrongly to put the adverb at the beginning of the sentence.

Instead of the well-structured sentence *I called the person who you told me about* Arabic speakers tend to create a sentence *I called the person who you told me about him*. The source of this pattern lies in the fact that in the Arabic language the third person singular feminine or masculine pronoun is used at the end of a sentence, after a preposition. For example, a typical sentence in Arabic looks like *Kabl alrajulu alathi akhbartani anh ams* (literally «Met the person that you told me about him yesterday», the correct English version is *I met the person who you told me about yesterday*).

Arabic uses the passive voice less frequently which leads to improper English sentences with the absence the auxiliary verb:

(7) *The letter posted* (the correct version is *The letter was posted*).

(8) *The marriage contract ratified last Monday* (the correct version is *The marriage contract was ratified last Monday*).

In contrast to English, Arabic passivization is indicated through melodic overwriting, where the vocalic pattern of the active verb changes. While imperfective verbs adopt the *u-a* pattern, perfective verbs change their vocalic pattern to imitate the *u-i* pattern.

Misordering of indirect objects is another pattern of English simple sentences produced by Arabic speakers, e.g. *he is a dear to me friend* (the correct version is *He is my dear friend* or *He is a dear friend to me*).

**Conclusion.** The source of all the errors mentioned above is the negative transfer of Arabic. Among the patterns explored, Arabic speakers make the

most frequent error that is linked to the absence of the verb *to be* in a simple sentence. The second most common error refers to locating adjectives after the nouns they modify. Displacement of adverbs of frequency and direct and indirect objects may also quite often occur which do not lead to failures in communication, though.

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