

The Negative Cross-Linguistic Influence of Arabic on the English Written Productions of Algerian Novice Learners

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Received 29/07/2024

Accepted 06/11/2024

Published 01/01/2025

Abstract

This study explores the impact of Arabic on the English written output of Algerian pupils. It focuses primarily on disclosing the nature of the influence on the levels of lexis, grammar, and writing conventions of English and attempts to identify the main sources responsible for such linguistic deviations. The methodology involves a qualitative, corpus-based study of written compositions from 98 fourth-grade pupils at an Algerian middle school. The analysis was conducted through the adoption of error analysis and thematic analysis techniques while incorporating aspects of contrastive analysis to detect the sources of interlingual errors. The results revealed that Arabic influences English writing through script code-switching and transliteration, as well as impacting idiomatic choices, leading to significant lexical and semantic divergences. Errors stemming from grammatical differences, such as article omission, copula dropping, and future tense formation, highlighted the contrasts between the Arabic synthetic structures embedded with morphological inflections and English analytic patterns. Additionally, the study identified errors involving prepositions, such as unnecessary additions influenced by Arabic, and writing convention mistakes, including improper capitalization. The findings highlight the necessity of developing strategies to increase learners' awareness of Arabic cross-linguistic interference, thereby enhancing their writing proficiency.

Keywords: Arabic interference; contrastive analysis; English written output; error analysis; interlingual errors.

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Journal of Languages & Translation © 2025. Published by University of Chlef, Algeria.

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Introduction

Acquiring a foreign language (FL) can be a challenging task in educational contexts where multiple languages overlap at a societal level. Such complexity arises because certain aspects pertaining to the individual's first or second language (L1 or L2) can interfere with the learning trajectory of the new target linguistic system. The Algerian context is one of the quintessential situations where such adversities are encountered by learners, as usually displayed in the performances of those who endeavour to master English as a foreign language (EFL). Nonetheless, it is critical to acknowledge that simultaneous multilingual acquisition is not invariably detrimental since numerous cognitive benefits can result from having prior knowledge about how other communicative systems operate (Quinteros Baumgart & Billick, 2018). Being acquainted, for instance, with the grammatical system of a language that is typologically close to the target one can be beneficial (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). Likewise, lexical knowledge related to one language that has been in diachronic contact with another can be facilitative in learning the latter (Cenoz, 2003). One representative case is embodied in the relationship between French and English, which share an extensive lexical repertoire due to prolonged historical and cultural interactions between their respective linguistic communities.

Nevertheless, research has long been focusing on the negative effects of language transfer rather than the facilitative role played by the mother tongue. This research bias is largely due to the relative ease of tracking negative cross-linguistic transfer owing to the conspicuity and noticeability of linguistic interference in learners' performances vis-à-vis its counterpart (positive transfer). All other things being equal, what contributes more to the interest of researchers in the former phenomenon, in comparison to positive transfer, lies in the availability and simplicity of the research tools that promote obtaining empirical evidence regarding interference through either the retrospective or real-time observation and documentation of data. Interlingual errors can be easily traced back to their source language when alien linguistic structures are spotted in the spoken or written output generated by learners. All that a researcher might need for such a research quest is to have adequate knowledge about the two linguistic systems at interplay. Another factor that adds to the feasibility of examining negative transfer is associated with the predictability of errors that might be committed in the target language once what appears to be similar linguistic forms are recognised by the researcher, like the case of the false cognates that many languages share.

The primary outcomes aspired by researchers in this field are to identify the sources of the problems encountered by learners and to raise their awareness about the similarities and differences existing between the languages in their linguistic repertoire. Also, some scholars currently argue that discrepancies between native and foreign languages constitute the main sources of difficulty in learning a second or a foreign language (Azmi, 2013). By identifying the common interlingual errors resulting from L1 and navigating those disparities, language educators can diminish the negative effects of such interference and promote positive transfer. This latter can be achieved by fostering similar structures and forms that function similarly in both languages. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the sine qua non for such an inquiry is having knowledge about how the two systems operate, along with being informed about the cultural nuances and references appertaining to each language. Anchored in this context, the originality of this paper lies in its introduction of a novel taxonomy of interlingual errors. The development of the concerned taxonomy emerged organically through the systematic analysis of the corpus. To the best of our knowledge, the structured classification has not been previously proposed in the literature.

Based on the earlier considerations and foundational insights, the following three main research questions are put forward:

- 1-How does Arabic cross-linguistic transfer impact the lexical and orthographic choices in English writing among Algerian Arabic-speaking learners?
- 2-What are the primary sources of Arabic-induced interlingual errors?
- 3-How do lexical, grammatical and writing conventions errors reflect differences between Arabic and English linguistic systems?

1. Literature Review

1.1. The Evolution and Influence of Arabic: From Proto-Semitic Roots to Modern Standard Arabic

Arabic is a Semitic language descending from the Afro-Asiatic language family (Bishop, 1998). It is widely believed that Arabic has evolved from a proto-Semitic language (Ahmed, 2018), a precursor to other languages like Hebrew, Aramaic, and Amharic (Bishop, 1998). The origins of Arabic can be traced back to the Arabian Peninsula as proven by the oldest available archaeological evidence represented in early scripts, which dates back to the late 5th century and early 6th century (Macdonald, 2000). After the rise of Islam, Arabic of the 7th century CE has been standardised into what we now refer to as Classical Arabic (CA) (Versteegh, 2014). This standardisation took place partially due to its status being the language of the Quran, the Islamic holy book, which was in itself used as a prescriptive benchmark for the standardisation process (Kamusella, 2017). Classical Arabic was not only the language of central administration in the Islamic empire (Bsoul, 2019) but also the liturgical language of the religion (Al Rahim, 2021). Following Islam's expansion, Arabic has become the lingua Franca of the Islamic world extending from Asia to Africa and even some parts of Europe at given epochs, such as Andalusia (southern region of Spain).

Arabic has been influencing other languages due to different sorts of contact such as trade, conquest, and scholarship as attested by the shared vocabulary with other languages like Berber, Persian, Spanish, Turkish, etc. Over time, Arabic has evolved into its contemporary form, known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) which is used in formal speech, official documents, education and media throughout the arab world. Yet, it should be noted that Modern Arabic has non-standard vernaculars or dialectic regional variations that include Maghrebi Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Levantine Arabic, Gulf Arabic, and others (Elnagar, 2021). These are considered the low varieties on the diglossic spectrum in comparison to CA or MSA whose use is mostly exclusive to formal contexts of communication (Amer et al., 2011). Unlike the low varieties of Arabic which are used in daily interactions, the standard varieties of Arabic (CA and MSA) do not have native speakers since they are learned only through formal education (Davies & Bentahila, 2012).

1.2. Typological Divergence Between Arabic and English

Due to the reality that English and Arabic belong to different linguistic typological families, the degree of variation between the two is quite substantial. The two linguistic systems are different in terms of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, idiomatic expressions (Aldahesh, 2013; Ali & Sayyiyed Al-Rushaidi, 2017), cultural norms (Elhadary, 2023) and even their respective writing systems. In terms of morphological classification, Arabic is considered a highly inflectional language within the synthetic category, given that it uses inflectional morphemes to show gender, tense, number, aspect, voice, case, etc. (Farghaly, 2012). Contemporary English, on the other hand, lies on the opposite side of the typological spectrum since it is often seen as an analytic language as it relies mostly on word order and grammatical words to convey grammatical relations and functions (Gelderen, 2014).

Another differential aspect is embodied in the basic syntactic patterns that constitute sentences in Arabic and English, for the former has a V.S.O pattern whilst the latter possesses an S.V.O pattern. The writing system of Arabic uses the Arabic alphabet comprised of 28 letters while English uses the Latin alphabet composed of 26 letters. Arabic script is written from right to left, as opposed to the English writing system written from left to right. Punctuation is believed to be much looser and no distinction exists between upper and lower case letters (Khan, 2019). The cultural disparities between Arabic and English are often attributed to the distinct religious beliefs as well as the unique historical and societal backgrounds of the respective speech communities. The two have different cultural references along with divergent symbols and worldviews (Elhadary, 2023).

1.3. Negative Language Transfer in Multilingual Contexts

Negative language transfer is a phenomenon that occurs when a speaker or a writer incorrectly imports the aspects belonging to one language into another linguistic system. Even though a lot of scholars attribute such incidents of language production to the influence that a mother tongue exerts on the other languages that exist in someone's repertoire, language interference is in fact not exclusively caused by the first language (Murphy, 2003; Odlin, 1989). Such a common attribution might be linked to the reality of language transfer being predominantly studied in situations where bilingualism is the status quo or the default condition, rather than multilingualism, as is the case in the educational context of Algeria. There is an undeniable interplay between all the languages in the repertoire of a multilingual speaker (Hammarberg, 2001). Yet, the intensity with which each language may affect output in the target language is a debatable issue, still to be determined through empirical evidence (De Angelis & Selinker, 2001).

The direction of the interplay on the linguistic spectrum is quite easy to predict since the first language (L1) seems to be the least affected by the other languages, especially when those are learnt at a late stage, beyond the critical period of acquisition and the phase of brain plasticity. What have been long proven to play a part in shaping one's linguistic performance during the quest of learning a new language can range from the proficiency level in that target language to the typological similarities between languages to other variables such as the age of the learner, and how recent was the learning process of other languages, as well as the context (Cenoz et al., 2001) or the socio-cultural situation that characterises the learning environment.

2. Methodology

This qualitative research paper represents a corpus-based study that aims to identify the interlingual errors stemming from Arabic in the written production of EFL novice learners. It represents a descriptive research that makes use of thematic analyses to determine, examine, and report the patterns of linguistic deviations common in pupils' writings. The inspected corpus consists of a collection of compositions submitted at an official examination. These compositions involve an essay where pupils were asked to write an email to a friend, describing their wishes if they found Aladdin's mythical magic lamp. The essays were part of the first-trimester examination for the 2017/2018 academic year at an Algerian middle school.

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study are comprised of fourth-grade pupils studying at a middle school in the province of El Tarf, Algeria. The total number of participants involved in this study is 98 pupils, chosen for their novice level and homogeneity. The inclusion of 98 participants not only exceeds the sample sizes typically found in local studies but also provides substantial representativeness within the demographic of fourth-grade pupils in the concerned province. Also, given that the primary aim is to identify specific transfer patterns rather than to generalize

findings to the whole population of learners, this sample is more than sufficient to meet the outlined objectives. All the involved pupils speak Algerian Arabic as a mother tongue and have studied Arabic for over eight years and French for six years. Their linguistic repertoire includes Arabic, French, and English. As the participants possess a strong foundation in Arabic, they may inadvertently apply its rules and structures when writing in English, leading to significant negative transfer. The sample was selected through a purposive-convenience method, as it was chosen in correspondence with the primary objective of tracking the negative effects of Arabic transfer in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writings. Negative transfer is expected to be particularly evident in the performances of such low-proficiency learners who are concurrently developing skills in both Arabic and English. Additionally, this approach was appropriate as it allowed gaining access to data aligning closely with the study's objectives.

2.2. Instruments and Procedures

After getting approval to conduct the study from the administration of the middle school, the data collection procedure was carried out through the use of a digital camera. The sum of the photographed texts represents the corpus based on which the analysis of data was carried out at a later stage. Error analysis was used as a theoretical framework for coding errors, complemented by thematic analysis. The phases of error analysis, as outlined by Corder (1974), included the collection of relevant data, followed by the identification, description, explanation, and evaluation of errors. The data collection procedure was conceived by photographing the texts of learners, thereby establishing the corpus for subsequent examination. The identification of errors required conducting a careful inspection of each text to pinpoint the language forms that deviate from the target language forms. The description phase ensued by classifying each identified error according to three broad linguistic categories: (1) lexical, (2) grammatical, and (3) orthographic errors (violation of writing conventions). Once errors were categorised, explanations that clarify the hypothesised reasons behind the commitment of errors were put forward. The last step of error analysis embodied in evaluation consisted of highlighting the impact of each error type on communication.

It should be noted that though error analysis and thematic analyses are two separate methods of data examination, some of their procedures seem to overlap when applied in parallel, allowing them to complement each other in the context of complex data analysis. In order to carry out thematic analysis, the corpus was thoroughly inspected with the purpose of getting familiar with the data, which formed the foundation for further analysis. The second phase involved the generation of initial codes that appertain to each pattern of errors in a systematic manner. Then, similar patterns of linguistic deviations were collated together into separate themes with each one denoting a specific type of error. These can be listed as follows: (1) script code-switching, (2) transliteration, (3) word choice/idiomatic errors, (4) faulty article usage, (5) erroneous future tense formations, (6) copula absence, (7) subject omission, (8) incorrect usage of prepositions, (9) singular neuter pronoun redundancy, (10) number disagreement with demonstrative pronouns, (11) faulty word order with attributive nouns, (12) coordinating conjunction redundancy, and (13) capitalisation errors. Subsequently, those themes were reviewed by checking how errors fit into each category and ensuring that consistency was maintained in coding errors. The main asset used for ascertaining consistency was to define the characteristics that label each error. Additionally, aspects of contrastive analysis were systematically incorporated into the process of interpreting data and identifying the sources of interlingual errors related to Arabic.

3. Results and Discussion

The findings presented here serve to answer the next research questions: 1-How does Arabic cross-linguistic transfer impact the lexical and orthographic choices in English writing among Algerian Arabic-speaking learners? 2-What are the primary sources of Arabic-induced

interlingual errors? 3-How do lexical, grammatical and writing conventions errors reflect differences between Arabic and English linguistic systems? Through the analysis of the corpus, the interlingual errors resulting from Arabic were classified into three major types: Lexical, grammatical, and capitalisation errors. Each type is separately examined and discussed in detail in the following subsections.

3.1. Lexical Interference in Learners' Compositions

Three different categories of lexical errors are identified: script code-switching, transliteration, and word choice/ idiomatic errors. Excerpts from the corpus are used to elaborate on each type of error, accompanied by the critical analysis of their sources and the interpretation of their occurrence

3.1.1. Script Code-Switching

Script code-switching or code-mixing involves the integration of Arabic lexemes written via Arabic letters into English compositions. Representative observed cases included the incorporation of Arabic words like “أنجح” and “نحفظ”, standing for “I succeed” and “we memorise” respectively, through Arabic script. In standard Arabic, the use of “نحفظ” (we memorise) illustrates a formal or majestic plural form that a speaker can adopt to refer to himself/herself while conveying a sense of grandeur or formality. Yet, such forms where the inflectional pronoun “نـ” (“na”, standing for “we”) is attached to the verb stem are more prevalent in spoken Algerian Arabic, as they are casually adopted to speak about oneself without implying formality. This phenomenon of script code-switching illustrates both lexical and orthographic interference. Lexically, it reflects the incorporation of alien vocabulary into English texts, while orthographically, it involves the use of the Arabic script system in the context of English writing.

Table 1. Extracts of Script Code-Switching, Errors' Source Identification, and Corrections

Category of Lexical Errors	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Script Code-Switching	1-I will wish 'أنجح' (سأتمنى أن أنجح)	1-I will wish to succeed.
	2-The 'finale' wish is 'نحفظ' 'six tine hizbe' of the 'kourane' (الأمنية الأخيرة هي أن نحفظ ستون حزبا من القرآن)	2-The final wish is to memorise the sixty parts of the Quran (the whole Quran).

3.1.2. Transliteration

Transliteration refers to those instances in which learners transcribe Arabic words via the Latin alphabet. For instance, the use of 'kaser' as a transliteration of “قصر” instead of the English equivalent “castle” illustrates this type of lexical deviation. This phenomenon mirrors a transfer of the phonological representation of Arabic words into the target language through the use of English graphemes. That is to say, such words are transcribed in English in a manner that approximates their pronunciation in Arabic. Further representative examples are illustrated in the next table:

Table 2. *Extracts of Transliteration Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Lexical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Transliteration	1- <u>El Hadj</u> (الحج) 2- <u>Kaser</u> (قصر) 3- <u>Tfla</u> (طفلة) 4- <u>ladia</u> (لدي) 5- <u>Alamniate</u> (الأمنيات)	1-Pilgrimage. 2-Castle. 3-Girl. 4-I have. 5-The wishes.

3.1.3. Word Choice/ Idiomatic Errors

Word choice and idiomatic errors involved the use of phraseological constructs and phrasal formations that do not correspond to the standard idiomatic use of English, like saying “I want to become a big footballer” rather than “I want to become a famous footballer” since the former error is caused by the literal translation of the Arabic expression “اريد أن أصبح لاعب كرة قدم كبير”. These errors underscore the influence of L1 conceptual frameworks on L3 lexical selections and idiomatic expressions. The following table exhibits other cases of Arabic idiomatic interference:

Table 3. *Extracts of Idiomatic Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Lexical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Word Choice/ Idiomatic Errors	1-I dream in the future ‘big footballeur’ (أحلم في المستقبل أن أصبح لاعب كرة قدم كبير) 2-I ‘wish’ give the hands of ‘help’ for the people ‘not have’ a ‘family’ (أتمنى أن أقدم أيدي المساعدة للأشخاص الذين ليس لديهم عائلة) 3-I wish for future in ‘the medicin’ (أتمنى أن يكون لدي مستقبل في الطب)	1-I dream to become a famous footballer in the future. 2 I hope to lend a helping hand to people who have no family. 3-I wish to have a future in medicine.

3.2. Grammatical Errors

Based on the examination of the corpus, grammatical errors are classified into nine categories. These can be listed as follows: (1) issues in the usage of articles, (2) faulty future tense formations, (3) copula omission, (4) subject omission, (5) incorrect usage of prepositions, (6) singular neuter pronoun redundancy, (7) number disagreement with demonstrative pronouns, (8) incorrect word order with attributive nouns, and (9) coordinating conjunction redundancy. Each one of these is discussed separately drawing on the qualitative analysis of data pertaining to the corpus. The following sections are ordered based on their priority determined by the frequency of occurrence of every type of interlingual errors.

3.2.1. Article Usage Issues

Articles-related errors were primarily coded when learners omitted the indefinite article “a” before a generic noun, reflecting the divergent mechanisms for expressing “definiteness” and “indefiniteness” in L1 and L3. In Arabic, the definite article “ال” functions similarly to the English determiner “the”. That is to say, when speaking about a specific thing or concept, Arabic uses “ال” (the) as a prefix to a noun stem, like “رجل” becoming “الرجل”, paralleling and simulating the English construction “the man”. The only difference between how the two languages fulfil this meaning is that in Arabic “determination” or “definiteness” is fulfilled on a

morphological level through prefixation while in English it is realised syntactically by placing the determiner before the noun. On the flip side, indefiniteness in Arabic is quite different since the English indefinite articles “a” and “an” do not have a clear equivalent since indefiniteness is often implied by the mere absence of the determiner “ال” and phonological aspect called “التنوين” (nunation). For this reason, a lot of Algerian pupils tended to delete those indefinite markers when referring to generic things, as their L1 does not necessitate a specific syntactic unit that marks “indefiniteness”. Other examples are illustrated below:

Table 4. *Extracts of Article Omission Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Article Omission	1-I will have big – home (سيكون لدي منزل كبير)	1-I will have a big home.
	2-I ‘wish become’ in the future teacher because it’s -- cool ‘jobs’ (أتمنى أن أصبح في المستقبل أستاذ لأنه عمل جيد)	2-I wish to become a teacher because it’s a cool job.
	3-I will have big -- house. (سيكون لدي منزل كبير)	3-I will have a big house.
	4-I will wish to be -- ‘grat’ person. (سأتمنى أن أكون شخصا عظيما)	4-I will wish to be a great person.

3.2.2. Faulty Future Tense Formations

Two types of future tense errors were observed in the corpus. The first type involved omitting the main verb that must follow the modal verb “will”. This error arises due to the differences in how the future tense is expressed in Arabic where the future tense is indicated by prefixing the verb with “س” (“sa-”) or adding the function word “سوف” (sawfa) before the verb without prefixation. In the first case, the future tense is expressed through morphological prefixation, and in the second case, it is conveyed through the addition of a grammatical word. Unlike English, in both cases, the future tense is denoted by adding one grammatical unit, either a bound morpheme embodied in the prefix “س” (“sa-”) or a free morpheme, specifically the function word “سوف” (“sawfa”) before the verb. In contrast, English requires the use of a two-part construction to denote the future tense: an auxiliary verb (typically the modal verbs “will” or “shall”) followed by a main verb. Pupils seemed to apply their prior knowledge of Arabic to their English usage, deleting the main verb and erroneously assuming that the auxiliary verb alone suffices to indicate the future tense, mirroring the Arabic structure where adding a single grammatical unit, “س” (“sa-”) or “سوف” (“sawfa”), is enough for marking the future tense.

The second type of future tense errors occurred in compound sentences, where learners used the future marker only with the first verb in the initial clause and omitted it in the subsequent clause, despite it being necessary for both actions. To be more specific, learners used the future marker only with the first verb embedded in the first independent clause and omitted it in the second clause where it is also necessary. For instance, in the statements “I will rub it and then I wish three wishes” and “I will be a doctor and I gain money”, the modal verb “will” preceding the respective main verbs “wish” and “gain” is missing. The pupils producing the former clauses were projecting their Arabic grammatical knowledge since the former structures are similar to saying “سأحك المصباح ثم أتمنى ثلاث امنيات” and “سوف أصبح طبيبا و أحصل على المال”. It is worth noting that the concerned faulty grammatical construction could have been rendered correct had

the learners used complex instead of compound clauses by removing the repeated subject pronoun “I”, such as stating “I will rub it and wish three wishes” and “I will be a doctor and gain money”. Further examples are shown below:

Table 5. *Extracts of Faulty Future Tense Formations, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Future Tense Construction	1-I will rub it and then I -- wish three wishes (سأحك المصباح ثم أتمنى ثلاث امنيات)	1-I will rub it and then I will wish three wishes.
	2-I will -- happy my family (سأسعد عائلتي)	2-I will make my family happy.
	3-I will -- to future happy (سأكون في المستقبل سعيدا)	3-I will be happy in the future.
	4-I will -- happy because it is my dream (سأكون سعيدا لأنه حلمي)	4-I will be happy because it is my dream.
	5-I will be a doctor and I -- gain money (سوف أصبح طبيبا وأحصل على المال)	5-I will be a doctor, and I will gain money.

3.2.3. Copula Absence

Another observed type of interlingual error is embodied in dropping the linking verb “to be”, which directly stems from the disparity between the grammatical rules of Arabic compared to English. Many learners generated sentences where the linking verb was removed, especially after the use of a demonstrative pronoun, like writing “this my dream”. The former faulty structure literally translates in Arabic as “هذا حلمي” (hādhā ḥulmī), consisting of the demonstrative pronoun “هذا” (this), the noun “حلم” (dream), and the possessive pronoun “ي” (my) that appears as an inflectional suffix. As can be observed from the Arabic sentence structure above, a meaningful idea can be conveyed through a subject (e.g. هذا) and a predicate (e.g. حلمي) without a need for the inclusion of a verb, a syntactic structure known as a nominal sentence. This explains why such errors occur since Arabic grammar allows the use of such grammatical constructions where meaning can be effectively conveyed via verbless sentences due to its zero copula or non-copulative nature, especially in the present tense. The same source of error can be attributed to the rest of the instances characterized by copula omission, as shown in the next table:

Table 6. *Extracts of Copula Omission Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Copula Omission	1-This -- my dream (هذا حلمي)	1-This is my dream.
	2-This -- a first ‘wisch’ (هذه أمنية أولى)	2-This is my first wish.
	3-This -- a second ‘wisch’ (هذه أمنية ثانية)	3-This is my second wish.

3.2.4. Subject Omission

One of the most noticeable errors committed by pupils involved starting sentences with a verb rather than a subject which reflects the influence of Arabic sentence structure on their English language production. Subject omission was spotted in multiple texts because in Arabic pupils use an inflectional form of verbs to express that the action is performed by the first person singular subject pronoun without a need for resorting to the use of a discrete syntactic unit (“I”) as it is the case in English. The standard sentence structure of Classical Arabic (CA), MSA and

relatively formal writing takes a verb-subject-object (VSO) pattern. The syntactic transfer of the former pattern to English can lead to producing sentences that violate the SVO structure of English typically used in the indicative mood. Multiple learners displayed such an effect by initiating sentences with verbs as portrayed in statements like “. -- may find the Aladdin magic lamp”; “. --will be ‘realise’ my dreams” or “. --rub it the genie comes out” where sentences start with a verb as is the case in Arabic. Yet, it should be noted that pupils did not use the standard VSO pattern of Arabic since they omitted the subject in all those instances of production.

It seems that learners kept applying only the initial unit of the pattern by starting with a verb while dropping the subject. This can be associated with the fact that in Arabic, the subject in all those utterances is affixed to the verb through the prefix “أ” indicating that the action is done by the first person singular pronoun. That is to say, the verbs “وجد” (find), “حقق” (realise), and “حك” (rub) can go through an inflectional morphological process of affixation that involves adding “أ” to get “أجد” (I find), “أحقق” (I realise), and “أحك” (I rub). As can be easily noted, this morphological process has a similar function to adding the English pronoun “I” before a verb. Yet, because in Arabic both the subject and verb are entrenched in the same word and because in English there are no such morphological inflections that serve the same function, it seems that pupils tended to write only the verbs whilst omitting the subject since they tend to be reluctant to convey the same function on a syntactic level rather than a morphological one. Even though it might be daring to say that learners were ignorant that such a meaning can be conveyed only in English by adding a syntactic unit (free morpheme), the repetitive occurrence of such errors may suggest that pupils were at least subconsciously affected by their L1.

Table 7. Extracts of Subject Dropping Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Subject Omission	1- . -- ‘ <u>may</u> find’ the Aldaddin magic lamp... (لو وجدت مصباح علاء الدين السحري).	1-If I may find the Alladdin magic lamp...
	2- . --‘ <u>will</u> be realise’ my dreams (سأحقق أحلامي)	2- I will realise my dreams.
	3- . --‘ <u>rub</u> it’ the genie comes out (أحكه فيخرج العفريت)	3- I will rub it to summon the genie.
	4- . -- ‘ <u>maght</u> wach’ slim not fat for good ‘helthe’ (يمكنني تمني النحافة عدى السمنة من أجل صحة جيدة)	4- I wish to be slim rather than overweight for the sake of my health.
	5- . --‘ <u>will</u> be’ future ‘dirvers’ (سأكون سائقًا مُستقبلاً)	5-I will be a future driver.

3.2.5. Incorrect Usage of Prepositions

The identified deviations in the utilisation of prepositions encompassed both instances of addition and misuse. In many cases, the pupils added prepositions because the Arabic equivalent of those utterances included a preposition, like mistakenly adding the unnecessary preposition “in” within the statement “I will enjoy in my life”. The former error stems from the direct mapping from L1 during the generation of output, since the same Arabic equivalent expression “سأستمتع بحياتي” includes the preposition “بـ” (/bi/) which can translate to “in” in certain contexts. For instance, the sentence “I live in Algeria” can be translated into Arabic as “أسكن بالجزائر” or “أسكن في الجزائر”. Similarly, Arabic constructions employing “بـ” can correspondingly translate to

English using “with”, as evidenced by “ضربت الباب بالمطرقة” translating to “I hit the door with the hammer”. This same translational rule was evident in the pupil’s statement “I will marry with my girl” in which “with” is unnecessarily added just because it parallels the Arabic sentence, “سأتزوج بفتاتي”, where the preposition “بـ” (/b/) is present. These observations suggest a generalisation among learners that if an Arabic expression necessitates a preposition, a similar requirement holds in English. Further prepositional deviations are shown below:

Table 8. Extracts of Prepositional Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Prepositional Errors	1- I will enjoy <u>in</u> my life (سأستمتع بحياتي)	1-I will enjoy my life.
	2-I will marry <u>with</u> my girl (سأتزوج بفتاتي)	2-I will marry my girl.
	3-The dream ‘ <u>of my</u> ’... (الحلم الخاص بي)	3-My dream.

3.2.6. Singular Neuter Pronoun Redundancy

The superfluous occurrence of the English neuter pronoun “it” represented another prevalent type of errors in the corpus. We posit that the insertion of the neuter third-person singular pronoun by several students is attributable to the cross-linguistic influence of Arabic. In their L1, such pronouns are necessary to render utterances grammatically coherent, as shown in examples 1 and 2. In the statements “The first wish it is the happiness” and “the dream ‘of my’ it is”, the superfluous “it” was included due to its equivalence to the Arabic pronouns (feminine: هي & masculine: هو) in the corresponding Arabic constructions “الأمنية الأولى هي السعادة” and “الحلم ‘الخاص بي هو أن ...’”. The unnecessary syntactic unit is reflective of the case where L1 grammatical rules are replicated in L3 production, a testament to interlanguage development. In Arabic the pronoun “it” can be also maintained through an inflectional form “هـ” (object pronoun in the accusative case). Thus, in the statement “it is the job I like it”, the mistakenly added “it” stems from the Arabic equivalent “إنه العمل الذي أحبه” where the Arabic object pronoun “هـ” is suffixed to the verb “أحب” (I like), resulting in the inflectional form “أحبه” which literally stands for the independent clause “I like it” in English. Overall, the former examples highlight the influence of L1 morphosyntactic features on L3 as they indicate a lack of competence in distinguishing between obligatory and non-obligatory pronouns in English syntax.

Table 9. Extracts of Neuter Pronoun Redundancy, Source Identification, and Correction

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Neuter Pronoun Redundancy	1-The dream ‘of my’ <u>it</u> is ... (الحلم الخاص بي هو أن ...)	1-My dream is ...
	2-The first wish <u>it</u> is the happiness (الأمنية الأولى هي السعادة)	2-The first wish is happiness.
	3-It is the job I love <u>it</u> (إنه العمل الذي أحبه)	3- It is the job that I love.

3.2.7. Number Disagreement with Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronoun number agreement errors were associated mainly with failing to use the plural demonstrative pronouns (these/those) when referring to plural nouns. Pupils mistakenly inserted the singular demonstrative pronouns “this” and “that” before nouns such as “wishes”, “dreams”, and “plans” in a way that simulates how such ideas are expressed in L1. In Arabic, the demonstrative pronouns "هذه" (which can mean either "this" or "these") and "تلك" (which can mean either “that” or “those”) can precede both singular feminine nouns and plural nouns that refer to non-sentient entities. For instance, in Arabic, one can use the same demonstrative pronoun "هذه" to say "هذه وردة" (this is a flower) or "هذه ورود" (these are flowers). As observed in these examples, the same demonstrative pronoun is used for both singular feminine nouns and plural nouns, and both sentences remain grammatically correct. Therefore, we argue that pupils were operating through that L1 rule when they produced sentences like “I can achieve this wishes” and “This is my dreams and plans” which literally translate to Arabic as “يمكنني تحقيق هذه الأمنيات” and “هذه هي أحلامي و خططي”. These incidents shed light on how this linguistic aspect is transferred during this stage of interlanguage development. Other examples are illustrated below:

Table 10. Extracts of Number Agreement Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Number Agreement Errors with Demonstrative Pronouns	1- I can achieve <u>this wishes</u> (يمكنني تحقيق هذه الأمنيات)	1-I can achieve these wishes.
	2- <u>This is my dreams and plans</u> (هذه هي أحلامي و خططي)	2-These are my dreams and plans.
	3- ...anyway <u>that’s my life wishes</u> (على أي حال تلك هي أحلام حياتي)	3-Anyway, those are my wishes in life.
	4- <u>This is my three ‘dream’</u> (هذه هي أحلامي الثلاثة)	4-Those are my three dreams.

3.2.8. Incorrect Word Order with Attributive Nouns

Errors of word order involved placing attributive nouns, functioning as adjectives, after the nouns they modify. Some instances of such faulty productions are reflected in stating “happiness future” (السعادة المستقبلية) instead of “future happiness”, and “show the E.X.O lives” (عرض الاكزو لايفز) rather than “the E.X.O lives show”. Those patterns follow identically the Arabic word order used for expressing the same meanings. Thus, those pupils appear to be ignorant of the fact that attributive or adjunct nouns must be placed before the nouns they modify since they function as adjectives in the target language as they can be also called noun premodifiers. Here it is important to note that another type of word order errors was observed in the corpus where words that have both the form and function of adjectives were placed after the nouns they modify but were traced to French (L2) rather than Arabic (L1). The consideration was that French is much typologically closer to English than Arabic and therefore, pupils might have been more influenced by the former when generating those errors. Hence, those errors fall beyond the scope of this study as they will be tackled in another paper. Attributive nouns, on the other hand, are relatively atypical of French grammar, and for this reason, it is posited that such faulty constructions did stem from Arabic, where attributive or adjunct nouns are expressed through a similar structure known as “إضافة” (idāfa), a form of genitive construction. In this structure, the

first noun (المضاف, al-muḍāf) is the head noun, and the second noun (المضاف إليه, al-muḍāf ilayh) acts as a modifier. The second noun in Arabic provides specificity and qualification to the first noun, which explains the linguistic deviations shown in the table below:

Table 11. *Extracts of Word Order Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections*

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Word Order	1-I will have money 'by' happiness, watch <u>show the E.X.O lives</u> (سأشاهد عرض الاكزو لايفز').	1-I will have money in order become happy and watch the E.X.O lives show.
	2-...He is the "roots" of "live" for <u>happiness future</u> (هذه هي قواعد الحياة للسعادة المستقبلية).	2-...Here are the life principles needed for future happiness.
	3-... <u>exam BEM</u> (امتحان شهادة التعليم المتوسط)	3-BEM examination.

3.2.9. Coordinating Conjunction Redundancy

Coordinating conjunction errors related to Arabic were also frequent among pupils. The redundant use of the conjunction "and" was observed in English texts when describing a sequence of events or listing items. Normally, when listing three or more items, serial commas are used to separate each item and a coordinating conjunction (usually "and" or "or") is inserted just before the last item of the list. Yet, since Arabic tolerates the usage of multiple coordinating conjunctions such as "و" (and) or "أو" (or) in a sequence, pupils tended to simulate that rule by incorporating "and" after each listed item. This is mirrored in statements like "I will be a doctor, and I gain money, and travel around the world". Similar faulty constructions are demonstrated below:

Table 12. *Extracts of Conjunction Redundancy, Errors' Source Identification, and Corrections*

Grammatical Error	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Coordinating Conjunction Addition	1- If I find the 'magic lamp the Aladin' <u>and</u> I pick it up and rub it (إن وجدت مصباح علاء الدين السحري فسألتقطه و أحكه)	1- If I find Aladdin's magic lamp, I will pick it up and rub it.
	2- I will have big home is 'sout' Korea <u>and</u> musical band the E.X.O and marry 'the' KRIS Wu. (سأمتلك منزلا كبيرا في كوريا الجنوبية و فرقة 'الاكسو' الموسيقية و) (أتزوج 'بكريس و')	2-I will have a big home in south Korea, the E.X.O musical band, and marry Kris Wu.
	3- 'my dream teacher of english' <u>and</u> meet 'balkyun' <u>and</u> 'chanyeol' and Kris (حلمي هو أن أصبح أستاذة لغة انجليزية و ألتقي 'بباليون' و) (شانيوال' و 'كريس')	3- My dream is to become a teacher of English, meet Baekhyun, Chanyeol and Kris.
	4-I will 'merrie and,' I will have a family <u>and</u> live in good condition and finally before my 'dead', I will go to Mekka. (سأتزوج و أمتلك عائلة و أعيش في حالة جيدة و في النهاية قبل موتي) (سأذهب الى مكة)	4-I will marry and have a family, live in good condition, and finally, before my death, I will go to Mecca.
	5- I will be a doctor, <u>and</u> I gain money, and travel around the world (سأصبح طبيبا و أكسب المال و أسافر حول العالم)	5-I will be a doctor, gain money, and travel around the world.

3.3. Case Sensitivity Issues: Capitalisation Errors

Four types of capitalisation errors were observed in the corpus. These can be categorised as follows: Sentence-initial lowercase errors, post-interrogative lowercase errors, paragraph-initial lowercase errors, and uncapitalized proper nouns. The first type denotes beginning sentences via lowercase letters, mirroring the orthographic conventions of Arabic, on which capital letters are not utilised, such as writing “I wish to be happy forever. ‘happiness’ is a great thing”. The second type involved using lowercase letters following interrogative marks, as noted in expressions like “Are you ‘okey’? ‘today’ if I rub the magic ‘lamb’...” which can be once again associated with L1 since Arabic orthographic conventions are typographically neutral regarding case sensitivity. The third type is embodied in starting paragraphs with lowercase letters, like ending the letter by writing “good bye my friend” at the bottom of the page. The fourth type is associated with the non-capitalization of proper nouns, exemplified in statements like “I want to travel to ‘london’ ” or “the ‘aladin’ magic lamp”. Other examples are displayed below:

Table 13. Extracts of Capitalisation Errors, Source Identification, and Corrections

Writing Conventions	Examples of Errors/Sources of Errors	Corrected version
Capitalisation Errors	1- I wish to be happy forever. <u>h</u> appiness is a great thing (أريد أن أكون سعيدا إلى الأبد. السعادة هي شيء رائع)	1-I wish to be happy forever. Happiness is a great thing.
	2- I can volunteer my time to organizations to help achieve world peace. <u>t</u> hat is the key to getting your wishes fulfilled. (يمكنني التطوع بوقتي للمنظمات للمساعدة في تحقيق (السلام العالمي. هذا هو المفتاح لتحقيق رغباتك)	2- I can volunteer my time to organizations to help achieve world peace. That is the key to getting your wishes fulfilled.
	3- . Are you ‘okey’? <u>t</u> oday if I rub the magic ‘lamb’...	3- Are you Okay? Today if I rub the magic lamp...
	4- ‘good bye’ my friend (مع السلامة يا صديقي)	4-Goodbye my friend.
	5- . I <u>d</u> on’t want to have millions of dollars. because this money don’t change me لا أريد أن أحصل على ملايين الدولارات. لأن تلك الأموال لن (تغيرني)	5- I don’t want to have millions of dollars, because money won’t change who I am.
	6- ...the ‘ <u>a</u> ladin’ magic lamp (مصباح علاء الدين السحري)	6-The Aladin magic lamp.
	7- I want to travel to ‘ <u>l</u> ondon’ (أريد السفر الى لندن)	7-I want to travel to London.

4. Conclusion

This study has aimed to identify the common interlingual errors committed by pupils in relation to Arabic and diagnose the sources of problems encountered during their EFL learning journey. The reported lexical and idiomatic errors highlight the importance of explicitly teaching learners about the proper usage of idiomatic expressions and contextual vocabulary, along with raising their awareness of the lexical disparities between L1 and L3 through the adoption of contrastive analysis techniques. Grammatical errors related to the omission of articles pointed

out to the morpho-syntactic interface between the two linguistic systems as attested by the incorrect expression of “indefiniteness” by learners. The observed incompetence in using the English future tense implies that educators need to stress the critical role of employing both auxiliary and main verbs to ensure correct future tense marking. They need to provide ample practice targeting the proper usage of the future tense with compound and complex sentences in order to help pupils internalise the grammatical distinctions between L1 and L3.

To address the issue of copula omission, targeted instructional strategies should be implemented to highlight the role of the linking verb in English sentence structure. Language educators should emphasise the necessity of the copula in English sentences, especially in contexts where Arabic permits verbless constructions. The influence of the typical sentence structure of Arabic (VSO) was noticeable in sentence constructions that began with a verb instead of a subject, indicating a transfer of Arabic syntactic forms. The source of these errors was the mistakenly simulated Arabic forms, which commence with verbs or affixed stems that integrate a verb (free morpheme) with a prefixed subject (bound morpheme). Hence, it is recommended to make pupils familiar with the SVO structure inherent to English in order to mitigate subject omission errors. The redundancy of the English neuter pronoun indicates a need to improve the pupils' understanding of obligatory versus superfluous pronoun use in the target language.

Additionally, errors with prepositions entail the cruciality of shedding light on the fact that English forms do not always align directly with Arabic in terms of use and meaning. Language curricula and textbooks should advocate for the implementation of exercises aiming at enhancing the proper usage of prepositions. Syntactic errors related to word order stress the necessity of guiding learners to recognise that English typically uses pre-nominal modifiers (e.g. adjectives or attributive nouns preceding nouns) rather than post-nominal modifiers as is the case in Arabic. To address this, activities that involve reconstructing sentences from Arabic to English with a focus on word order can aid learners in internalising the correct syntactic patterns of English. Demonstrative pronoun number agreement errors reflected difficulties in matching demonstrative pronouns with the number and the specificity of the nouns they modify in English. Furthermore, the superfluous use of coordinating conjunctions in place of serial commas suggests a need for targeted instruction on this aspect of English grammar. This can be achieved by explicitly comparing and contrasting the use of conjunctions in both languages.

Finally, the majority of pupils showed insensitivity to orthographic case distinctions as most of the texts were embedded with errors related to capitalisation, as attested by the deficiency in the proper use of upper case letters. This points out that learners struggled to either internalise or consistently apply the English capitalisation rules. Regardless of the underlying cause, increased focus on activities that clarify the differences between the Arabic and English writing systems is necessary. Overall, the findings from this study provide valuable insights into the cognitive processes underlying learners' interlanguage development, such as the influence of L1 transfer and the mechanisms of grammatical acquisition. Further research is still needed to gain a more profound understanding of the mechanisms leading to interlingual errors and to develop robust strategies that mitigate the negative impact of L1 transfer. Due to the lack of empirical studies in the local context, it is hard to deny the urgent need for researchers to approach the phenomenon from two main perspectives: the frequency of each type of interlingual errors, and the severity of their impact on communication. Additionally, comparative studies need to be conducted to probe the difference between the degree of influence exerted by the first and second language on the process of learning EFL in Algeria. This can be partially attained through the comparison of the degree of cross-linguistic interference exerted by Arabic and French on both the written and spoken English output of Algerian learners.

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