ABSTRACT

The present work entitled "A Contrastive Study of Modern Standard Arabic and British English with reference to their grammatical systems", reveals the following facts:

It is observed that one of the major problems in the learning of a second language is the interference caused by the structural differences between the native language (L1) and the second language (L2).

English and Arabic, genetically two different languages, share some common features in their structure. However, they exhibit a lot of differences. These differences are the main source of difficulty in learning of English as a second language and vice-versa.

The contrastive analysis of English and Arabic construction types, reveals that both the languages have endocentric and exocentric constructions. They have almost the same types and subtypes of endocentric construction, but differ from each other in the use of markers or connectors and the arrangement of the lexical items.
Arabic uses the additive and alternative markers /wa/ and /?aw, ?am/ corresponding to English 'and' and 'or'. e.g.,

/rajulan wa ?imra?atan/ 'man and woman'
/tawi:lan ?aw (?am) qa:i:rqn/ 'tall or short'

The Arabic adjectives follow the nouns. They are in full agreement with the nouns they qualify in number, gender and case. e.g.,

/bintun jami:latun/ 'a beautiful girl'
/waladun na^i:tun/ 'an active boy'
/?atfa:lun si^jarrun/ 'a little children'

In English, adjectives precede the heads. e.g., 'an honest man'.

In Arabic if the noun is indefinite, i.e. the presence of the nunation /-n/ at the end, the adjective must be indefinite and vice-versa. e.g.,

/rajulun wasi:mun/ 'a handsome man'
/ar-rajulu-ul-wasi:mu/ 'the handsome man'

The English basic sentence structure differs from that of Arabic in the ordering of the constituents. The
constituents order of English is 'SVO'. Whereas Arabic has a 'VSO' order.

Arabic exocentric construction differs from that of English in the predicative type. Arabic predicative construction is suggested by the terms /musnad/ 'M predicate' and /musnad ?ilayhi/ 'MI subject'. The subject is either a noun (substantive or expressed pronoun) or a pronoun implied in the verb. The predicate is a noun (substantive or adjective), a verb (or preposition with its genitive: an adverb). e.g.,

/zaydun ğa:limun/ 'Zaid is a learned'
/?anta sa:diqu/ 'Thou are honest'
/ma:ta ?Ahmadun/ 'Ahmed is dead'
/jahabat/ 'She went'
/sa:limun fi-l-haqi/ 'Salim is in the field'

English predicative construction is suggested by the terms topic (subject) and comment (predicate).

English distinguishes four types of sentence structure, viz, simple, complex, compound and compound complex. Whereas Arabic distinguishes two types of sentence structure, viz. nominal (or Ø copula) and verbal.
The nominal sentences of Arabic consist of two parts: /Mubtada?/ 'a topic' and /xabar/ 'a comment'. Whereas verbal sentences consist of /fi^l/ 'a verb' /fa:li:/ 'an agent' and (/maf6u:l bihi:/) 'an object'.

Arabic uses a non-verbal construction for some verbs in English, the most notable of which is 'have'. Arabic uses the preposition /li:/ 'to, for', or /£indi:/ for 'have', e.g., /li: bintun/, or /£indi: bintun/ 'I have a daughter', /li:his:nun/ or /£indi: hisa:nun/ 'I have a horse'.

English predicative constructions, according to function, are divided into: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory, conditional and optative. While Arabic sentences are divided into: negative and prohibited, interrogative, relative, copulative, adversative, restrictive, conditional or hypothetical and optative.

The contrastive analysis of phrase structure rules, reveals that the 'VP' constituent of Arabic precedes the NP constituent, Whereas in English it follows the NP.

Articles in both the languages are mutually exclusive, i.e. no more than one article can precede a noun
phrase. The Arabic equivalent of English 'this' as a
determiner is always followed by the definite article and
therefore demonstratives are considered predeterminers in
Arabic, e.g.,

'This boy' /ha:ja al-waladu/

Arabic differs from English in having only one
definite article, i.e. /?al/ 'the'. This article when
prefixed to a word beginning with one of the sun letters
/t, th, d, y, r, s, z, s, s, z, t, d, l, n/, the /l-/ of the
article is assimilated to the sound it is annexed to. e.g.,

/ar-rajulu/ 'the man', /a s-sma:?u/ 'the sky',
/aš-Samsu/ 'the sun'.

There is no indefinite article in Arabic, but the
presence of the nunation /-n/ at the end of a noun or
adjective indicates its indefiniteness. e.g.,

/kalbun/ 'a dog'
/sa?i:run/ 'a small'

The definite noun or adjective loses its nunation
when preceded by the definite article. e.g.,

/waladun/ 'a boy'
/al-waladu/ 'the boy'
English nouns show three gender distinctions; masculine, feminine and neuter. Whereas Arabic nouns, adjectives and also verbs are either masculine or feminine and their distribution is very significant.

Arabic nouns have a dual number besides singular and plural. Whereas English number is restricted to singular and plural. Again Arabic nouns have two kinds of plural, viz. sound plural (masc. and fem.) and broken plural.

English has two kinds of auxiliary verbs: primary and modal. While Arabic has only one auxiliary verb /kaːna/ 'he was'. The English copulas 'am, is and are' are not expressed in Arabic. However, 'was' and 'were' are expressed by the perfect of the verb 'to be'.

English nouns are inflected for possessive case (genitive). Whereas Arabic nouns are inflected for three cases: nominative, accusative and genitive. The verb in both the languages with its inflection for tense, person, number and mood is not simple. Particularly verbs in Arabic undergo a number of morphophonemic changes and are derived from the three consonantal roots which is a hard task for the English speaker. English verbs have three tenses: present, past and future. Each of them has four
forms: indefinite, continuous, perfect and perfect continuous. Whereas Arabic verbs have two finite forms denoting complete and incomplete action (perfect and imperfect). Arabic verbs have no indefinite form. The root idea and its derivatives are arranged in the dictionary under the heading of 3rd person masculine singular of a simple verb.

The contrast of English and Arabic transformational rules, reveals the fact that passive transformation in Arabic is complex. The 'by' insertion rule of English does not apply to Arabic. The 'agent', in Arabic passive transformation, is deleted. Arabic distinguishes two types of passive transformation, viz, perfect and imperfect of trilateral verbs and of quadrilateral verbs. The NP2 of Arabic active sentences functions as an object in the accusative case and as a deputy or representative of the agent in the passive sentences referring to the agent.

English affirmative sentences are made negative by the use of 'not' insertion rule. Whereas Arabic uses the particles /lam/ 'did not' for the negative of the perfect, /lan/ 'will never', /la:/ 'don't' for the negative of the imperfect and /laysa/ 'not to be' for nominal sentences.
Both the languages have two kinds of question structures, viz, Yes-No questions and information questions.

English emphatic sentences are generated by Emp^ insertion rule. Whereas Arabic distinguishes two kinds of emphatic sentences, viz, verbal and logical.

There is no such verb in Arabic which plays the role of 'have' as an auxiliary or main verb. The present participle preceded by the auxiliary verb /ka:na/ plays the same role as the present participle plays in the formation of English continuous tenses. The imperfect form of /ka:na/ is generally represented by zero e.g.,

/yaktubu/ 'he is writing'
/ka:na yaktubu/ 'he was writing'

English is more analytical than Arabic. We find that in English one needs three words to say 'he has gone' while in Arabic one word renders the whole sentence /yahaba/.

It has been observed that there are certain significant differences between the two languages. These differences are the main source of difficulty in second
language learning. It is hoped that the analysis and results of the present work would be helpful for language teachers and in the preparation of textbooks of English for Arab students and vice-versa.