Lexical Errors Made by In- Service English language Teachers in Jordan.

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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the types of lexical errors made by in-service English language teachers in Jordan. The sample of the study consists of 50 in-service English language teachers enrolled in the upgrading program at the Hashemite University. The data was gathered from the final exam papers of those enrolled in a course in methods of teaching English. The results showed two main categories of errors: interlingual and Intralingual errors. Interlingual errors accounted for 85% and intralingual errors accounted for 15% of the total number of errors. Interlingual errors respectively take the form of translation, assumed synonymity, wrong collocation motivated by L1, confusion of binary terms, and overuse of some lexical terms. On the other hand, intralingual errors were due to phonic and graphic resemblance and overgeneralization. The implications of the study for English language teaching in Jordan are highlighted and recommendations are suggested.

Introduction

There is a general consensus among researchers on the crucial role of lexis in language learning and teaching. Lexical knowledge in second language is fundamental to the development of second language proficiency. (Harley, 1996). It is also argued that learning lexical items lies in the heart of language learning and that language acquisition whether first, second, or foreign: child or adult, can not take place without the acquisition of vocabulary.(Laufer ,1986). In addition, Hatch (1983) claimed that" when our goal is communication, when we have little of the new language at our command, it is the lexicon that is crucial. The words will make communication possible", cited in Gass (1987). On the other hand, Cameron (1994) reported that "words seem to be a basic level category in learning language and learning about language ". Furthermore, lexical knowledge is important to academic settings, since it is critical to effective writing. (Scarsella and Zimmerman, 1998). However, many researchers maintained that vocabulary acquisition research was neglected and the emphasis was primarily on grammar and phonology. (Richards (1976), Carter (1987), Ellis (1997), and Taylor (1990).

here seems to be debates about what it means to know a word as well as what aspects are involved in this knowledge. Knowing a word implies knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to variation of function and situation; the network of associations between the word and other words in the language; the different meanings associated with the word and the semantic value of the word. (Richards, 1992). On the other hand, knowing a word means knowing how to use it in a non- literal sense or metaphorically. (Maigashca, 1993). Moreover, it is indicated that lexical knowledge is best conceptualized as a continuum between being able to recognize the sense of a word to being able to use it productively. (Clipperton, 1994). Other researchers pointed out that knowing a word implies remembering the orthographic and phonological forms and their corresponding meaning, learning to use words syntactically and pragmatically and learning vocabulary in action. (Gu and Johnson, 1996)

However, lexis is one of the major problems that confront EFL learners and due to their 'anemic vocabulary, they are unable to

communicate their ideas as clearly as they would like to. Also, they are unable to grasp the ideas transmitted to them. Moreover, writing ability is hampered by EFL learners' limited vocabulary. (Al- Kufaishi, 1988). Furthermore, Zimmerman (1997) affirms that lexis presents a serious linguistic obstacle to many non – native English speaking students. The production of lexical errors which lead to "funny" meanings or cause incomprehensibility has been described as "the merciless and indiscriminate fracturing, bruising and mutilation of English".
 (Larik, 1983).

It is an indisputable fact that the teacher plays a crucial role in the learning /teaching process.   Sullivan (2001) believes that foreign language teachers are fundamentally different from other teachers in that they are attempting to teach a second language using that very language as the medium of instruction. Since" the medium is the message," unique challenges arise for English language teachers and learners. Malgorzata (1999) stresses that a level of linguistic competence is for many English language teachers one of the most important sources of their credibility and the bedrock of their professional competence. Similarly, Camp and Heath (1991) maintain that in order for a teacher to carry out his responsibilities in providing his students with the best opportunities to learn, he should be knowledgeable in his subject matter in general and the foreign language in particular. Also, Strevens (1981) emphasizes that the performance of language teachers should be at least error free in classroom. Therefore, it is assumed that one of the prerequisites of a qualified English language teacher is a sound mastery of the skills of that language he is going to employ in the classroom, particularly, if that teacher is a non- native speaker of that language as the case in Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab world. In most of the considerable literature that exists about teaching English as a foreign language, the focus of attention is mainly on the learner of the language and pre-service teachers and other factors involved in the learning/ teaching process.

No attempts have been made to investigate the competence of English language teachers in the Arab World as if English learning /teaching is going smoothly by qualified and competent teachers. Normally, researchers blame the learners and sometimes the textbooks and methods of teaching for the falling standard of English language

education. The deficiency in students' performance has never been attributed to the incompetence of English language teachers!!.

The direct contact of the researcher with in-service English language teachers who are holding community college diplomas (two years after the completion of secondary school education) which officially qualified them to teach English at the Basic Education Stage (i.e., grades 5-10) prompted him to conduct this study.

The researcher was assigned to teach them a course in **"writing"** offered by the Department of English at the Hashemite University. The performance of the majority in the course was shocking .For example, one of them wrote: "*I cut the traffic signal and the police gave me a punishment*". Another one wrote: " *I learn English to pupils in primary school*" .The researcher also has the chance to teach another group a course in**" pronunciation and speaking**". Their performance was more shocking .A number of them pronounced *" machine* "as /m∂t∫i:n/. Another student pronounced "*faculty*" as /**fakjulti/**.The above are just few examples of numerous errors they made.

The writer was also assigned to teach a third group a course in **"Methods of Teaching English".** The following are two examples of their errors as they appear in exam papers:" *There is no activity which lit the student discuss and make dialogues or conversation to encourage the student to participate", "the teacher themselves teach the student from past experience and don't take from modern style or process of teaching*".

The above examples clearly show the gravity of the problem. I browsed the TEFL /TESL links on the internet and surveyed most of the theses in the field that are stacked on the shelves of libraries in Jordanian universities. To my surprise, I found no single study that addresses the linguistic competence of Jordanian Arab English language teachers.

Therefore, this study is unique in that it is the first attempt in the Arab world that addresses this neglected area in English language teaching. It will focus on lexical errors made by a sample of Jordanian English language teachers.

Review of Related Literature

Studies of lexical errors have been conducted on learners of English and other languages from various language backgrounds. Duskova (1969) analyzed the errors made by 50 postgraduate Czech students who had already acquired sufficient knowledge of English. The subjects were asked to write a short essay on their last journey and to write the conclusion of a scientific article. Duskova (1969) maintained that lexical errors form less homogeneous material for study than errors in grammar and established a typology of lexical errors deriving from formal similarity, relatedness of meaning, assumed equivalence, and distortions.

Dagut (1977) studied lexical comparisons of both English and Hebrew, where English is taught as a foreign language to native speakers of Hebrew. He found that incongruence in lexical 'gridding' between the native language and the foreign languages were responsible for semantic errors. The idea was that the learner tends to apply first learnt items to the whole semantic area in question assuming the existence of a one –to- one lexical relationship between the native and the target language.

Arabski (1979) studied the lexical errors made by Polish learners of English. The subjects were asked to write a composition in Polish. Once completed, the compositions were collected and the subjects were asked to write the same compositions in English. A week later, they were asked to write translations of their Polish compositions. Arabski found that the influence of L1 in the process of acquiring L2 was obvious. To him, lexical errors are likely to occur when the learner tends to associate a given L1 item with its equivalent translation in L2, using L1 rules with the result of producing a deviant structure. He concluded by providing a typology of eight error types in lexis, namely, use of polish words, morphological similarity, graphic similarity, hyponymy, primary counterpart coinage, semantic similarity, and others.

Azevedo (1980) conducted a study on 14 first-year graduate students of Spanish at the American university. The subjects were native speakers of American English and the data were taken from 61 papers written by the subjects. Azevedo noted that the subjects were at odds with lexical items. He also noted that the interlanguage of his subjects displayed gaps in morphology, syntax, semantics and style. Such gaps, to

quote Azevedo, (1980:223)"…were filled by rules of their own mother tongue."

Channell (1981) cited four types of lexical errors, namely, wrong collocation, native language induced errors, overuse of general terms, and insufficient generalization. She found that lexical errors resulted from the lack of emphasis on vocabulary in most syllabuses

Hamdan (1984) examined lexical errors made by Jordanian second year English majors enrolled at community colleges in the use of Basic English vocabulary. Analysis of the data showed that 63.85% of the subjects' responses were erroneous or inappropriate .The major error types that occurred in the data were: lexical substitution, paraphrase, the use of negative forms, coinage, and translation .Besides, it was found that 48.2% of the overall number of errors were caused by L1, where as 14.6% were induced by L2.

Fareh (1984) also examined the extent to which English language teachers' pronunciation affects that of their students in Jordanian public secondary schools. He noticed that some pronunciation errors made by EFL learners were teacher-based.

Mukattash (1986) maintained that lexical errors are more serious than grammatical errors and they often distort comprehensibility. He cited examples of lexical errors made by his fourth year students in the department of English language and literature at the University of Jordan

Zughoul (1991) studied lexical errors among Arabic speaking students of English at Yarmouk University. He classified errors into thirteen error types which correspond to lexical transfer and over-generalization.

Hamdan (1994) analyzed lexical errors made by 100 English major students at Yarmouk University in their responses to a controlled translation task and intuitive lexical judgment task. Analysis showed that 32% of the subjects' responses on the controlled task were incorrect .Major error types found are synonymy, literal translation, similar forms and collocation. Concerning the intuitive lexical judgment task, 34.2% of the subjects' responses were incorrect.

Swan and Smith (1995) gave a detailed account of errors made by speakers of nineteen different L1 background in relation to their native languages.

Diab (1996) investigated the interference of Arabic in the English writings of Lebanese students. The results showed that the transfer of Arabic linguistic structures influenced the English writings of Lebanese students on the grammatical, lexical, semantic and syntactic levels.

Hamdan (1997) examined the extent to which Jordanian/Arab teachers of English at the Basic Education stage can identify and correct a sample of lexical errors. The findings indicated that the subjects do encounter problems in error identification and correction.

Farooq (1998) identified and analyzed two error patterns in written texts of upper-basic Japanese learners in an EFL context. He focused on both transfer and overgeneralization errors.

Okuma (1999) studied the L1 transfer in the EFL writings of Japanese students. The results indicated that most of the lexical errors were due to L1 interference. Errors include translation and collocation.

Szymanka (2002) discusses lexical problems areas in the language of Polish advanced speakers of English. She presented two samples of data drawn from PELCRA learner corpus, representing two groups of students at different proficiency levels. The results show that collocation errors are among the most widely represented error categories in both groups. She suggested that the theory of the bilingual lexicon has to incorporate the collocation restrictions among L1 and L2 lexical items to a larger extent than it has been proposed so far.

Abisamra (2003) also analyzed errors in ten essays written by ten Lebanese students in grade nine .The subjects use English as the language of instruction since nursery and have been taught English by Americans and Canadian teachers. The results show that the total number of errors that were detected in the ten essays was 214. The number of intralingual errors was 137 (64.1%), while the number of interlingual errors was 77 (35.9%).

Wang (2003) maintained that switching between first (L1) and second (L2) languages has been recognized as one of the salient characteristics of L2 writing. However, it is not clear how switching between languages is related to L2 proficiency or how switching to the L1 assists writers with differing L2 proficiency in their composing

processes. She investigated these issues with eight adult Chinese learners of English as a second language with two differing levels of proficiency in English, performing two writing tasks. Analysis of the data shows that the participants' frequencies of language- switching varied slightly by their L2 proficiency, suggesting that L2 proficiency determines writers' approaches and qualities of thinking while composing in their L2. Also, Woodall (2002) conducted a study on using the first language while writing in a second language on 28 adult participants (9 L2 Japanese, 11 L2 English, and 8 L2 Spanish) to observe how language switching was affected by L2 proficiency. The results suggest that less proficient L2 learners switched to their L1 more frequently than more advanced learners.

It is obvious from the above studies that the focus of attention is mainly on lexical errors made by students of different levels. To the best knowledge of the researcher, none of them addressed or questioned lexical errors committed by English language teachers. Therefore, this study is a worthwhile topic of investigation for its theoretical and practical implications for English language teaching in Jordan.

Aims of the study

The aim of this study is to identify the types of lexical errors made by in- service English language teachers in Jordan. More specifically, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common types of lexical errors made by in-service English language teacher?

2. What are the possible causes of these errors?

3. What are the implications of the findings for teaching English in Jordan?

Importance of the study

The importance of this study lies in the area under investigation and the participants chosen for the purpose of the study .It is unique in that it is the first attempt in the Arab world that addresses the lexical errors committed by English language teachers.   In addition, lexical errors are more serious than other types of errors, namely, phonological,

morphological and syntactic errors. (Johanson, 1978). Furthermore, lexical errors are reported to be responsible, in most cases, for all types of misunderstanding or even the total breakdown of communication between native and non-native speakers of English. (Dagut, 1977).

Moreover, the investigation of errors can be diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can tell us about the teachers' state of the language and their linguistic competence and prognostic because it can tell decision makers at the Ministry of Education in Jordan to reorient English language teaching on the basis of the teachers' current problems. Gass& Selinker (1994) defined errors as "red flags" that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the second language.

Definition of terms

Error analysis: a lengthy process which passes through three successive stages: identification of errors, categorization of errors, and finally explanation of errors. (Schumann and Stenson., 1974).

Interlingual errors: those attributed to the native language. There are interlingual errors when the learner's L1 habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him/her, to some extent, from acquiring the rules and patterns of a second language(Corder, 1971)

Interference: is the negative influence of the mother language in the performance of the target language learner (Lado, 1964). It is "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech or writing of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language". (Weinreich, 1953, p.1)

Intralingual errors: those due to the language being learned, independent of the native language. According to Richards (1976) they are "items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on partial exposure to the target language.. The learner in this case, tries to "drive the rules behind the data to which he/ she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Richards, 1976, p.6).

Limitations of the study

1. The study involved a sample of 50 Jordanian English language teachers. The sample may be viewed as a restriction that influences the generalization of results in reference to the population of English language teachers in Jordan.

2. The study is confined to English language teachers who are enrolled in the qualification /upgrading program at the Hashemite University from the Directorate of education in Zarka .

Method and Procedures

The Sample

The subjects of the study were (50) Jordanian Arab English language teachers (35 females and 15 males) who were enrolled in a qualification/upgrading program at the Hashemite University in Jordan. They are holding community college diplomas (two years after the completion of secondary school education) which officially qualified them to teach English at the Basic Education Stage (i.e., grades 5-10).Their teaching experience ranges from 5-10 years, Their mean age was 30 years.

Data collection procedures

The data for this study was gathered from the final exam papers of (50) in-service teachers enrolled in a course in Methods of Teaching English. The final exam comprises questions on methods of teaching language skills. It also comprises an open ended question about the reasons for the deterioration of English language teaching in Jordanian schools.

Ellis (1997: 15-20) and Hubbard et al. (1996:135-141) gave practical advice and provided clear examples of how to identify and analyze learners' errors. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by the identification of errors. The errors are then classified .The next step demands an explanation of different types of errors.

For the purpose of this study and to justify the causes of the errors,

the researcher who taught the subjects discussed the deviant lexical errors with them individually. Each teacher was asked what he meant, and if unable to convey his message in English, he was asked to give his explanation in Arabic.

Following the guidelines offered by Ellis (1997), the responses of the subjects were corrected and lexical errors were identified and noted. Then, a detailed typology of these errors was established according to their possible sources. After that, the possible causes of those errors were determined based on the subjects' explanations of their errors and the researcher's experience as a learner and an instructor of English for three decades. . Finally, the results were discussed and the implications of the study for English language teaching in Jordan were highlighted, and recommendations for improving English language teaching were provided.

Presentation of Results

294 deviant lexical errors were identified and classified according to their possible source of errors. It is important to mention that quantification of errors does not include frequencies of individual lexical items and the types of errors are by no means exclusive. In many cases, they are overlapping. It is also necessary to mention that some sentences may be easily understood by native speakers of English, yet they obviously deviate from academic writing.

The analysis of the data yields two main categories of errors: interlingual and intralingual errors.Interlingual errors accounted for 85% , and the intralingual accounted for 15% of the total number of errors. The table below is a summary of the types of errors and their frequencies and percentages. The result is in agreement with Hamdan (1984) who found that interlingual errors represent the majority of errors but contradicts that of Abisamra (2003) who found that the number of intralingual errors were more than interlingual errors.

Interlingual Errors			Intralingual errors		
Type of error	frequency	percentage	Type of error	frequency	percentage
translation	91.4	31%	Phonic/ graphic resemblance	29.4	10%
Wrong collocation	64.7	22%	overgeneralization	4.7	5%
Assumed synonyms	49.98	17%			
Over use of lexical terms	29.4	10%			
Confusion of binary terms	4.7	5%			
Total	249.9	85%		44.1	15%

To answer the first and the second questions of the study "what are the most common types of lexical errors made by English language teachers?" and "what are the causes of these errors?", the responses of the subjects were corrected and lexical errors were identified and recorded. Then, a detailed typology of these errors was established according to their possible sources. After that, the possible causes of those errors were determined and discussed.

The above table shows that interlingual and intralingual errors are the most common types of errors made by English language teachers. They constituted 85% of the total number of errors, whereas intralingual errors constituted 15% only.

Interlingual errors took the form of translation with 31%, wrong collocation motivated by L1 22%, assumed synonyms 17%, over use of lexical terms 10%, and confusion binary terms 10% . On the other hand intralingual errors accounted for 15% of the total number of errors. They took the form of phonic/graphic resemblance with 10% and overgeneralization 5%.

Discussion of Results

The following is a discussion of each type of errors

Interlingual errors constituted 85% of the total number of errors. The following classification of interlingual errors may be suggested.

1. *Translation*

What is meant by this category which accounted for 31% of the total number of errors is that the production on the sentence level is a word for word translation from Arabic into English. The translation in this case is systematically based on colloquial spoken Arabic and on Modern Standard Arabic. If translated again into Arabic, the message would represent the learner speaking his own dialect of Arabic. The following errors are thought to reflect the writers' phraseology and processing of their thoughts in terms of Arabic. The findings are consistent with Arabski (1979), Hamdan (1984), Zughoul (1991), Hamdan (1994), Okuma (1999). The following are examples from the data:

1. The teacher does not *carry* the skills for teaching. (**have/possess**)

2. The expert teacher is *full of knowledge*. **(knowledgeable)**

3. The students *took* a bad idea about English. **(had/ formed)**

4. They have not *put the basics* of English in the curriculum.**(included)**

5. The teachers always *put marks* for the students **(give)**

6. How can the teacher *reach the objectives* of his lessons? **(achieve)**

7. When I reach to the new vocabulary, I write the pre-questions on the board. (teach)

8. Finally, the students become in high school without knowing how to write and read. (reached)

9.The students should give aware to instruction. .(be aware of)

10. The teacher does not *take* from modern *styles* of teaching. *(**(adopt/follow/)(technique)**

In sentence 1, the choice of 'carry' instead of "have / possess" is due to the fact that the student is formulating his sentence in Arabic and translating it into English. He was thinking of the word /yahmel/ which is normally used to convey the meaning in this context when talking about qualifications. In sentence 2, the writer hypothesized that the English translation of the Arabic term /malee bilmaerefah/ can be used instead of "knowledgeable". In sentences 3, the writer assumes that the Arabic word /axatha/ (took) will convey the intended English meaning "formed/had ".In sentences 4, 5, ,the writers used one Arabic word /wad9a/ "put" instead of "included /incorporated" and "give" respectively to express two different ideas. The wrong choice of "put" ,/wada9a/ in these two sentences can be attributed not only to translation from Arabic into English but also to the association of the one meaning of the lexical item in English with all meanings which the corresponding item in Arabic supplies. This is also true for sentences 6 and 7.The writer used "reach" /wasala/ instead of the intended meanings "achieve/realize" and "proceed" respectively. In sentence 8, the writer was obviously thinking of the Arabic word /asbaha/and used its English equivalent "became" instead of" reach/is". Sentences 9 and 10 are good examples of translating from Arabic into English. Therefore, they used "give aware "instead of " be aware of" and" take" and" styles" instead of "be aware of "and "adopt/follow" and" techniques/methods" respectively.

Translation also takes the form of the inclusion of some Arabic expressions of modern standard Arabic. The writer, unaware of the nature of the target language, tries to translate expressions from his native language and incorporate them in his writing. The student is under the influence of the myth that the inclusion of such expressions makes the piece of writing more impressive and literary like. This is congruent with Zughoul (1991), Examples of this category follow:

1. English language teaching is going down *over you can imagine*. (**incredibly/drastically**)

2. When we have English exam, all the school *stand on its leg. (**be on alert**)

3. We can not *drop any one* from his responsibility. (**exclude**)

4. The ministry of education *has its hand* in this deterioration *from the*

lowest one in the educational field to the minister of education. (**is accountable/ responsible for**)

5. I use the criterion measure *to stop o*n the strengths of planning. (**determine**)

6. The students *draw* a bad and frightening *face* about English. (**had a negative impression/look**)

7. English is spoken in *all sides of life* in developing countries.

8. We have to solve the problem *on two surfaces*: the teacher and the pupil**. (levels**)

9. There is no supervision to *discover* the weakness of teachers. (**find out**)

10. The teacher *supply* me with good *power.*(**encourages**)

12. The students *wrote* the application and he was *accepted* in the English department *by chance***. (fill)(admitted**)

13. *As I see*, the school is responsible for this deterioration*. (I think)*

14. *I promised my self* to study hard *and take* a good mark *(***decided to)** **(to get)**

15. We must *correct* and *repair* ourselves in order to *correct* the educational process. (**change/improve**) **(reform/develop)**

In the above sentences, the subjects translate expressions from modern standard Arabic (MSA) and Jordanian Arabic into English. The meaning might be understood by native speakers of English but they are obviously deviant from academic writing.

2. Assumed Synonyms

It has been generally argued in semantics that there are no real synonyms in language and that no two words or sentences have exactly the same meaning. Palmer (1976:60) maintained that it seems unlikely that two words with exactly the same meaning would both survive in a language. Words that are considered synonyms especially those used in dictionaries are in fact different in meaning in some respect. The difference in meaning among synonyms may be, according to Nilsen

(1975:155) a difference in geographical distribution, in styles or register, in collocation, in connotation, and possibly some other ways. This can be demonstrated with a substitution test. For example; *Sphere, globe, and orb* are broad synonyms. Any one of the three could be used in the sentence: The earth is a great………..However, if we were to talk about, for example: *a….….of influence, a map of the ……, a scepter and……*, then we see that the three words are no longer interchangeable. In addition, many words have only a loose sense of synonymy, and are either close in meaning or their meaning overlap. For example, *mature-adult, ripe, perfect*. We can see from this that perfect synonyms are extremely rare; indeed they probably do not exist at all in our daily speech. Most synonyms are equivalent in some contexts only. In addition to the problem of specifying synonymy and differences of meaning in English, we have to be aware of the difficulty of comparison and contrast between English and Arabic. An Arab learner who uses the adjective /Taweel/ to describe a man, a road, and a tree, and /alee/ to describe a building, and learns the English equivalents *long, tall, and high* is at a loss to know which word to use in which context. Is he to use mature or ripe to describe a fruit and a man? Furthermore, The Arab learner of English who is always encouraged to learn synonyms and who is dependent on the monolingual or bilingual dictionaries tends to assume that a number of related words are synonymous to the extent where they can be used interchangeably. On the other hand, glossaries, which give vernacular equivalents of isolated English items and false analogy, are responsible for this type of error. This matches Hamdan (1994) and Zughoul (1991). Examples from the data:

1. The teacher *transits* the information and ideas to the student. (**pass**/ **impart/transmit**)

2. They do not *improve* the idea in student's *brain* that English is difficult. (**change) (mind)**

3. The teacher must *treat* the weakness of his pupils. (**remedy/ tackle/deal with).**

4. This deterioration in English language teaching *returns* to the teacher and the student. *(is because of/ owing to)*

5. At the end of the semester they students go to the instructor and *beg*

him to pass the *material. (asked) (course)*

6. Practice helps teachers to be more *educated* and *self- trust.* (**efficient/ knowledgeable)(confident**)

7. The deterioration in our school *retrieves* to the way of teaching (**is because of/owing**)

8. There is no *exercise* of the language in labs and in the classroom. (**practice**)

9. The school *abilities* are very limited. (**facilities**)

10. The supervisors do not evaluate the teachers' *job* in the classroom. (**work/performance**)

11. The *facilities* that the *material* needs are not available. (**equipment)(course**)

12. We can solve such problems by *training* the language. (**practicing**)

13. There is no *chance to demonstrate* English language. (**practice**)

14. English language teachers use conventional *mediums* in his lectures and this is boring for *simple* pupils (**methods)(young**)

15. English language teaching is deteriorating because of many *questions.* (**reasons).**

In sentence 1, "transit" is used instead of "pass/impart/ transmit/".In fact, in an English –Arabic dictionary, the above words have the equivalent /yankul/ in Arabic .It might have been assumed by the writer of this sentence that they are synonyms and can be used interchangeably. Also, sentences 2, 3, 5,6, 8,10, 12, and 14. In a bilingual dictionary, the items "brain" and "mind" have the equivalent of /aqel/ , "treat" and " remedy" have the equivalent of /yualej/, "beg" and "ask" have the equivalent of /yaTlub/, "material" and "course" have the equivalent of/ maddah/, "trust" and "confidence" have the equivalent of /theqah/, "exercise" and "practice" have the equivalent of /yatadarab/, "job" and "work" have the equivalent of /9amal/,"training" and" practicing" have the equivalent of/tamri:n/", and" medium" and " method" have the equivalent of /Tari:kah/.In all the above cases, the writers assume that they are synonyms and can be used interchangeably.

3. *Wrong Collocation motivated by L1.*

Wrong collocation is one of the main sources of lexical errors made by Arab learners of English .Collocation seems to be a language-specific phenomenon, i.e. each language appears to have its own collocation patterns although some of these might be similar in two or more languages. We expect to find a great deal of interference from a mother tongue like Arabic which is not historically related to English, in the student's learning of the use of lexis with reference to collocation.

The wrong choice of collocation in the following examples can be attributed to translation from Arabic to English and to the dependence on monolingual dictionaries that offer one word synonym without explanations or examples. This result is in agreement with that of Channell (1981), Hamdan (1984), Zughoul (1991), Hamdan (1994), and Szymanka (2002). The following errors may be ascribed to both varieties of Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and spoken Jordanian Arabic.

1. The students *take* low marks in English**. (get)**

2. We *made* our exams in methods of teaching**. (took)**

3. The instructor *offered* an interesting lecture on the objectives of teaching English. (**gave**)

4. How can we *literate* ourselves in the *concerns* of our daily life. (**educate**) (**matters**)

5. I *hold* every opportunity to speak English with others**. (** *seize)*

6. We do not travel *abroad* Jordan to use English. *(***outside**)

7. The Ministry of Education presents *short* support to schools and teachers**. (little)**

8. Nowadays, English language is *counted* as the best means to communicate with the world. (**considered**)

9. Our teachers stick to the traditional *mediums* of teaching English. (**methods**)

10. The ministry of education should reform the educational *discipline*. *(system)*

11. I *presented* an English Examination*. (took/sat for)*

12. I **have gained** a very good result in English**. (got)**

13. My marks have *decreased* a little. (**declined**)

14. I am a very *fun* person. (**pleasant/joyful**)

15. The exam *limited* if I can go to the university or not (**determine**)

A look at sentences 1 and 2 shows that the wrong choice of "take", "made", are clear examples of translating from Arabic into English assuming that a collocation in Arabic is similar to a counterpart in English. The writer was thinking of the Arabic /yaakhuth/, and /9amela/. The lexical errors in sentences 3-15   might be due to the fact that one lexical item in Arabic corresponds to more than one lexical item in English. Because of the extensive reliance of Arab learners on monolingual dictionaries, they pick up the first lexical item that comes to their mind ignoring the fact that some combinations may be semantically incompatible and that resulted in producing uncommon, possibly unacceptable collocations. This can be attributed to the lack of extensive reading of contemporary English prose where the learners may acquire and build up the competence to use appropriately the lexicon of the target language.

4. *Confusion of Binary terms*

According to Palmer (1976), there are lexical items which are usually categorized as "relational opposites". These words generally exhibit the reversal of a relationship between items rather than "oppositeness in meaning". Erdmenger (1985) includes these items under binary opposites such relations as antonyms as in big and small, complementary relations as male-female and directional relations as in come and go. Such words tend to be confused and used as substitutes for each other by Arab students.

1. Teachers *learn* the pupils the rules of writing**. (teach)**

2. The parents do not *learn* their children continuously especially in the elementary stage**. (teach)**

3. How shall we *literate* ourselves in the concerns of life**. (educate)**

4. In -service teachers who are *learning* at the Hashemite University face many problems. (**studying**)

5. There are many teachers who are not competent in *education.* (**teaching**)

As shown in the above examples," learn" is used as substitute for " teach" in sentence 1, "teach" is used as substitute for " learn" in sentence 2. "educate" is used as substitute for " literate "in sentence 3, In addition, some errors may be attributed to the lack of distinction occurring in the learner's dialect. That is, the learner's underdifferentiation of his L1 items is transferred into L2. The subjects of this study could not differentiate "learn" and "study" as in sentence 4, and "education" and "teaching" in sentence 5. Learn / bit9alam/ and study / bidrus/, education /ta9leem/ teaching /tadrees/ are underdifferentiated in Jordanian Arabic. Interestingly enough, the examples cited here were confirmed by Arabski (1979), Hamdan (1994), and Zughoul (1991).

5. *Overuse of some lexical terms.*

A major source of lexical errors reported by other studies on EFL/ESL learners (Zughoul 1991) and was confirmed in this study is the overuse of the four particular lexical items good, bad, big, and small. The use of *good* typically substitutes for all the terms reflecting any intended positive quality. Some of these combinations may be acceptable in English, but the overuse of good reduces variety of usage; *bad* covers the other end of the spectrum. On the other hand, *small* covers the area of little, few, a little, and a few; while **big** covers the meaning of much and many. Channel (1981) maintains that the overuse of a few general items is a source of error in lexical choice and describes the production of the learner as characterized by" flat, uninteresting style, and a failure to express the variety of ideas he wants to communicate". Some examples cited below were confirm by Zughoul (1991) and Channell (1981). The following are examples from the data:

1.The direct method is not a *good* process.

2.The students had a *bad* idea about English.

3.The teacher must do a *good* plan.

4.Planning is a guide to *good* teaching.

5.Teachers do not have *good* knowledge in English.

6.They give us *big* passages to read.

7.They encouraged us with *good* words.

8.The ministry of education presents *small* help to the schools.

9.Some teachers have *small* knowledge in teaching English.

10.We have *very small* time to speak English in the classroom.

Intralingual errors.

The number of errors thought to be induced by L2 constituted 15% of total error production. They can be classified into the following categories:

1.   Phonic/ Graphic Resemblance

Errors in this section share phonic/graphic resemblance with the targeted lexeme. The subjects dragged from their passive lexical repertoire a word that share the same phoneme / grapheme thinking that he has the correct choice. These errors differ in one or two phonemes/ graphemes. Laufer (1986) used the term 'synophones' to refer to similar errors. The following are some illustrative examples:

1.   Methods of English in our schools are *quiet* weak. **(quite)**

2.   I *thing* that the university should train the teachers how to teach**.(think)**

3.   It is the responsibility of the *stuff* in the university.**(staff)**

4.   There are no activities to *lit* the students participate in the discussion**.(let)**

5.   We must provide schools with *type* recorders.**(tape)**

6.   I think, *whole* teachers should be given training in teaching.**(all)**

7.   The teacher should *talk* many things into consideration.**(take)**

8.   If we want to *desolve* the problems of teaching English, we should repair the educational system.**(solve)**

9.   The teacher *attend* to teach efficiently**.(intend)**

10.   What is the *progression* they have made in learning**.(progress)**.

The writer of sentences 1-10 was evidently thinking of "quite" but he confused it with "quiet", "think" is confused with "thing"," let" with "lit", "tape" with "type", "all" with "whole", "take " with "talk"," dissolve" with " solve" , "intend" with "attend" ,and "progress" with "progression"

2. Overgeneralization

Richards (1992) claimed that overgeneralization is associated with redundancy reduction. It covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the

target language. The writer coins new nouns, verbs or adjectives along the line of existing paradigms. This is in agreement with Farooq (1998), Hamdan (1984), and Zughoul (1991). The following are examples of overgeneralization:

1. The teachers teach students *wrongs.*

2. The students hate English and the *hates* continue with them.

3. Our life is always changing and we need new *necessaries.*

4. All are *responsibles* for this deterioration in teaching.

5. I usually give my students some good *advices.*

Obviously, the writer of sentence 1-4 hypothesized that he /she can coin new nouns by adding "s" to the singular noun. They over generalize this rule to adjectives and verbs as shown in the above sentences.

Implications of the study

In the light of the results, the study implies the following:

1. Lexis constitutes a problem to in-service English language teachers and it will be negatively reflected on English language teaching in the classroom.

2. It is sensible to believe that teachers might be a major factor in the declining standard of English language teaching.

3. The findings have serious implications for English language teaching in Jordan taking into account the fact that the subjects of the study are in-service English language teachers holding a community college diploma. In addition, a considerable number of English language teachers in the Basic stage are community college graduates. The gravity of the problem exacerbates if we consider the huge numbers of students who have been taught throughout the years and will be taught in future by those teachers who made such errors. If the teachers of English in our schools commit such deadly errors, then , we do not have to blame their students.

4. Serious efforts should be exerted by The Ministry of Education to remedy this exceedingly devastating situation.

Recommendations of the study

The following are some recommendations based on the results of the study.

- This study was confined to lexical errors, other studies are recommended to identify phonological and syntactic errors with a

larger sample.

- Selection of English language teachers needs to be based on a policy that brings about in the classroom linguistically competent teachers who are properly qualified academically and professionally. In this respect, measures need to be taken to attract able entrants to the profession. The Ministry of Education should establish criteria to recruit English language teachers.

- Departments of English provide much of the future teacher's content-knowledge preparation. One should not assume that the satisfactory completion of Bachelor degree in English implies that the student has obtained reasonable content- area knowledge; on the contrary, the construct of English language knowledge is far more complex and encompasses a far larger picture than just the college major. It is the acquisition of the subject- matter knowledge that is essential for teaching a foreign language.

- Serious efforts must be exerted to upgrade the level of English language teacher especially community college graduates.

- Remedial courses should be conducted for those teachers in all language skills and special attention should be given to lexical choice and English grammar, and the phonetics of English.

- Study plans for English language teachers in the upgrading programs in Jordanian universities should emphasize on language skills and the needs of those teachers in the classroom.

- Training courses for teachers of English should make provision for preparing competent classroom teachers who would be able to successfully teach realistically designed English language syllabuses. Training programs must be conceived of in such a way that prospective teachers receive training that enables them to meet the professional demands of the job.

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