A research Paper Investigates

Mother tongue interference on speaking skills among EFL learners at Neelain University in Sudan

Submitted by

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Abstract:
This thesis examines the difficulties of speaking that encounter Sudanese learners in general, and the first year students of Neelain University, department of English language.The study aims to figure out to what extend the mother tongue interference has to do or influence the students speaking performance.
The students of this college come to with a considerable knowledge of English language as some of them are mature students. In other words they have already graduated from other discipline and they join the linguistics school for the sake of improving their linguistics competences and performance.
The researcher divided the students into two groups with (25) students in each group then they are given an oral communication classes for two months.
The first group, the researcher was intentionally using the mother tongue in his
Instructions (Arabic), while with the second group English is used fully as a medium of instruction. Then the researcher interviewed both groups by giving them argumentative and open ended questions to let them speak freely.
Then with help of check list in terms of different linguistic aspects the researcher has found that the students of group one suffers from structural pronunciation, and discourse problems as the study proves. In comparison, the students of group two Show some progress, but this leads to another finding which is the time, the students of group two needs to expose the language with the native speakers' breath is supposed to be longer.
Key Words: Pronunciation—language acquisition—native proficiency—mother tongue

Introduction:

The similarities between the language being learnt and mother tongue can be both a help and a hindrance, and will often lead to correct 'guesses' (positive transfer). It can help the learner to get things right. This is a rich area of study, but the researcher want to concentrate here on the role that interference plays in causing learner speaking errors (negative transfer), and on the types of errors that it causes. This is very clear in "Sudanese dialect which has undergone some changes from classical Arabic. These changes are reflected in the following: the interdentally / θ /,/ ð /and /z/.are changed to /s/ and/z/"(Abdul-Rauf, 1977)

Sudanese learners of English language encounter some phonological problems as well as social contextualization ones when they speak. They also use some of the expressions out of their social context applying just the Sudanese social one where in most of the cases misleads the listeners, e.g. when we describe a person in Sudanese colloquial Arabic we say X is green and we mean black. Although this structurally correct but semantically is out of the social context.

In order to learn or to study any language, the learners must be aware to pronunciation skills, and social interactions. In other words the cultural back ground of the spoken English which is for sure different contextually from Sudanese colloquial dialect. Many studies have demonstrated that the errors made by the speakers of other languages who speak English, are something systematic rather than random. For instance, it is demonstrated that Arab students face problems in pronunciation of sounds which the students are not familiar with e.g. /v/, /p/, / ð / noted that the errors of pronunciation that learners of English from different language backgrounds are systematic and not accidental. They substitute sounds that they don't have in their native language with other sounds which are close to them. In the place of articulation they replace /p/ with /b/ and /θ/ with /s/. so this study tries to investigate and describe the impact of the mother tongue interference(Sudanese dialect SAD) among the first year EFL students at Née lain university.

Statement of the problem:

It is closely observed that English learners at Née lain university specially the first year students confused the pronunciation of some set of words. E.g. most of the English words that have sounds which don't exist in Sudanese spoken Arabic e.g. /p/in 'park' / θ / in 'think' and /ð/ in 'the'. It also observed that they don't differentiate between some vowel sound s which have more than one way of pronunciation e.g. vowel in 'fat' and 'fate.'

The replacement of bilabials (b and p) with each other so they usually use /b/ instead of /p/ and rarely /p/ instead of /b/ and also they confuse the pronunciation of the labiodentals' / θ /, / ð. This hinders the fluency and accuracy at the same time. Therefore they do not make the communication process goes smoothly and naturally as some different odd accent are created.

These observations lead the researcher to conduct this study.

Objectives of the study:

The aim of this study is to:

1- Identify the phonological errors caused due to the Sudanese mother tongue interference and how the students can be trained to deal with it.

2- Encourage the students to practice pronouncing the problematic sounds correctly through contrastive phonological drillings.

3- To discover reasons behind these problems.

Literature Review:

Since this study is a kind of contrastive one. There will be a considerable contrastive data about English and Arabic speaking languages as well as some data about native language and its acquisition as it platforms the linguistic road for the study as a whole. The importance of mother tongue interference and its relation with the language and culture is another aspect of the study so the researcher tries to mangle the whole related data in order to set a clear vision of what the study aims to address.

Definition of speaking:

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing *and* receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Burns &Joyce, 1997). For example, when a salesperson asks "May I help you?" the expected discourse sequence includes a statement of need, response to the need, offer of appreciation, acknowledgement of the appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary *(linguistic competence)*, but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways the use of speaking skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act. **Types of Speech:** There are different types of speech

Informative speaking:

Informative speaking seeks to inform. Its goal is that the listeners understand something in the same way that the speaker understands that subject. In this way, the speaker is sharing meaning and ways of understanding. Informative speaking uses facts, data, logic, evidence and other solid information and structured presentations to help the listeners understand and remember the information presented. It may well ask Kipling questions, such as 'Who', 'When', 'How' and 'Where' and then answer with the relevant information. Three types of informative speaking are:

- *Description speeches*: That describes objects or events.
- *Exploration speeches*: That clarifies ideas.
- *Demonstration speeches*: That teaches a process.

Once the hurdles of interest and attention have been surmounted, the biggest question that many informative speakers face is the cognitive ability of their audience to grasp what can be difficult concepts. This is a problem that academic speakers (and writers) face every day.

Invitational speaking:

Invitational speaking is often similar to informative speaking, but adds judgment into the mix. The 'invitational' element is hence an invitation to listeners in agreement or evaluation of some sort. This evaluation may be of an idea, another person, an event, and an object of some kind, an event or anything else that which judgment may be applied. Invitational speaking uses evaluative and judgmental language and rational logic to present the case. As with informative speaking, it may well appear cool and factual and use classical argumentation principles. Invitational

speaking is more difficult than informational speaking as you are asking your listeners to accept particular evaluation criteria and processes of assessment with which they may not agree. Academics perform invitational speaking when they criticize others' research.

Dispositional speaking:

Dispositional speaking is more persuasive in intent than invitational speaking in that it seeks to gain agreement on an attitude, value or belief. This can be a very difficult thing to do as to change such deep drivers can often be, in effect, to change the person and who they are, recreating their identity. It is not surprising, then, that many will resist such attempts, even if clear and logical reason is used whilst academic speakers should not really use dispositional speaking, it can be argued that everything is a belief and that there are unquestioned canons and paradigms that many academics accept without question, and to challenge these can be particularly perilous.

Actuation speaking:

Actuation speaking seeks to get people to act, to perform in some way. In practice this can be easy for simple actions and hardest of all for actions that the person may not normally undertake. In this way, actuation speaking can be considered to be the ultimate in persuasive speaking. In its more difficult form, actuation may well be preceded by other forms of speaking, as you may need people to understand, agree with a judgment and even change what they believe before they will take the actions you propose.

To conclude our example, academics engage in actuation speaking when they persuade those holding the purse strings to provide the precious cash that is needed to pursue their research.

Cultural speaking rules:

Communication is culturally patterned. Speaking rules in different cultures have been studied more systematically since 1960s, particularly in ethnography of speaking (or ethnography of communication), founded by Dell Hymes. A typical example of this approach is the following characterization of Finnish speaking rules, proposed by Donald Carbaugh (1995):

- Do not say the obvious!
- When you speak say something worth of everybody´s attention!
- Do not bring forth conflicting or questionable issues! Try to keep harmonious relationships!
- Be personally committed in what you are saying!
- What you say forms a basis for the subsequent interactions! According to Carbaugh these rules are very demanding. Speech becomes deliberate and perhaps scarce. When people using these kinds of rules meet others from different cultures, such as mainstream Americans, misunderstandings are possible.

Carbaugh goes further in describing that in the USA there are many cultures, each with their own speaking patterns and rules. According to him, in general it is important for the Americans to be able to express oneself by speaking. Everyone has the right to speak and to be heard. The social worth of the speech is less important than its personal significance. In these kinds of circumstances the amount of speech is large, and the topics of conversation are often personal experiences, thoughts and feelings. This may contribute to members of cultures representing other speaking patterns perceiving the Americans as being "superficial" (Carbaugh 1995).

Factors affecting speaking skills:

Speaking is an important part of effective communication. We need to concentrate on encouraging not only students, teachers, but ourselves, to exhibit good listening behaviors and strategies. Listening is a process that involves actively hearing what another person is communicating and attending to that communication. Listening is how we receive the verbal portion of a person's message. By listening, we can show concern and interest in understanding both the person and the situation.

Environmental factors such as noise, temperature and uncomfortable seating can cause us to focus our attention on other factors beside what the speaker is saying. Try to control environment factors whenever possible. Try adjusting

the thermostat, finding another seat, or moving to a quiet place to continue the conversation. It is hard to focus attention when we are constantly distracted by outside forces.

As we receive a message, we must attend to it or we will lose it. Some people have trouble remembering points to discuss when the speaker is talking. Try taking notes as the speaker talks, or use a cue to help you remember what you were going to say. If you find your attention wondering, concentrate on what the speaker is saying, and rehearse how you will answer, or what you are going to say to keep in your mind on the task at hand. Ask questions to clarify and to become involved in the conversation. Concentration helps you receive accurate information and indicates that you are interested in what speaker is saying. Don't be like this!!!

Many times we catch the drift of what the speaker is saying and we begin to rehearse a response, thereby missing parts of the message. Other times we may be anticipating our turn to speak and will spend time mentally or Physically reviewing notes and will miss what the speaker has said. We are capable of receiving and processing information more rapidly than a speaker can deliver it. This causes us to have spare time to think or daydream, and if we don't concentrate on the message being delivered, we will find ourselves drifting or daydreaming.

We all have certain words that we react to. Sometimes when a speaker uses a hot word in his or her message we will concentrate more on the meaning or the word, or its implications for us. Consequently, we tend to lose sight of what is being said by the speaker. Many times we will be asked to attend a seminar where we exhibit little or no interest in the topic. As listeners, we tend to listen to get an overview of what is going to be presented and then simply tune out the rest of message.

Listening comprehension is a very basic skill one must have in order to be a good English speaker. Why? One of the most common and critical mistakes non-native speakers of English make is focusing their time and effort in improving their English speaking skills without first assessing and practicing their English listening comprehension skills. A lot of them actually know grammar rules pretty well and can construct even complex sentences. Surprisingly, just when you thought they can communicate well in English, they suddenly come to a halt when asked questions. Some nonnative speakers cannot understand the question/s, because the one asking speaks too fast or because of the speaker's accent (in case of an Australian or a British speaker for example). They would often ask the speaker to repeat the question several times or to speak more slowly, before they finally understand the question. Some, on the other hand, answer the questions impressively (with not many mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, good explanations and examples) just to find out in the end that he or she misunderstood the question, and therefore gave an in appropriate answer.

The importance of Mother tongue:

"[Leonard] Bloomfield (1933) defines a **native language** as one learned on one's mother's knee, and claims that no one is perfectly sure in a language that is acquired later. 'The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language; he is a native speaker of this language' (1933: 43). This definition equates a native speaker with a mother tongue speaker. Bloomfield's definition also assumes that age is the critical factor in language learning and that native speakers provide the best models, although he does say that, in rare instances, it possible
For a foreigner to speak as well as a native. . ."The assumptions behind all these terms are that a person will speak the language they learn first better than languages they learn later, and that a person who learns a language later cannot speak it as well as a person who has learned the language as their first language. But it is clearly not necessarily true that the language a person learns first is the one they will always be best at ......"
(Andy Kirkpatrick, 2007)

The mother tongue helps the learning of English:

Research has shown that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the second language. So, for example, if your child has developed good reading skills in Korean, she is likely to be able to apply these skills when reading English. (One useful reading skill is the ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. Another one is the ability to decide which new words in a text are important to look up in the dictionary and which words can safely be ignored.) For this reason it helps if you can encourage your child to read good fiction and non-fiction in her

own language. Similarly, the skills of being able to plan out a piece of writing or develop an argument in a persuasive essay can be applied in the second language once they have been learned in the first.

Contrastive Analysis and possible problems:

Some Arabic speakers perform oddly on a range of experimental tasks which involve word discrimination. All these tasks involve discriminating words with identical consonant patterns, but differing in their vowels. Some Arabic speakers, it seems, are conspicuoulsy inaccurate in handling vowels in English words, and are much more prone to make errors involving vowels than subjects of other L1 backgrounds. One possible explanation for these effects is that Arabic speakers may transfer to English a set of psycholinguistic strategies that are more appropriately deployed in processing Arabic words. In Arabic, vowels are of secondary importance both in script and in word building, and the word recognition system depends heavily on the tri-consonantal roots which are the basis of most Arabic words. Word families in Arabic are made up of sets of words which all share a common set of three consonants, but vary in the way vowels are placed within this consonantal framework. Thus, **katab***he wrote*, **yiktib***he writes*, **kaatib***clerk*, **kitaab***book*, **maktab***office*, **maktaba***library*, etc, are all variations on a single tri-consonantal theme, K-T-B (Mitchell 1962). Such a writing system works well with Semitic languages, but creates problems for readers when they start learning a language which follows different structural rules. A system which encourages the reader to focus on the consonantal framework of a word does not allow sufficient discrimination between words when it is transferred to the lexical system of English, where consonants are not the only key signals for a reader. Thus r-d-r is an inadequate representation for 'reader', since this consonantal code is shared with several other unrelated words (*raider, rider, rudder, ardour, ordure, order, redraw,* etc...). It was suggested that a substantial number of Arabic speaking learners of English may be using inappropriate word recognition strategies of this sort. Most Arabic learners will use a system of this sort in the early stages of learning English, although we do not have hard evidence to back this hunch up. Most learners, it seems, succeed in developing a word-handling system that is appropriate to English in the long run. However, a number of learners continue to have difficulties with English words, and continue to make confusions like "dismal numbers" for "decimal numbers". Indeed, some may never get past this problem (Ryan &Meara, 1996).

When teaching pronunciation to Arabic-speaking students, there is a difference in the comparative force of pronunciation of stressed and unstressed syllables in English and Arabic. In English there is a great difference in force: unstressed syllables can be pronounced very weakly; stressed syllables can be fully pronounced. In Arabic this difference is not nearly so extreme; unstressed syllables can have full vowels and be pronounced fairly clearly. Sentence stress in Arabic is similar to that in English. Content words are usually stressed, and function words are usually unstressed. However, function words in Arabic do not have two forms. Vowels in words in an unstressed position keep their "full" value, unlike vowels in unstressed words in English, which are reduced to "schwa." (Wahba, 1998)

Factors Affecting Pronunciation:

Pronunciation of any non-native speaker of any language is promoted or impeded by a number of factors including, among others, (i) age, (ii) mother tongue influence and (iii) personality.

Age:

Age has been a hot issue in language acquisition and learning since it was introduced; it has received a fair amount of attention and research as a controversial factor. It may make adults find acquisition more difficult than children do and that they probably will not achieve native-like proficiency. The role of age is found to be more prominent in pronunciation than in other areas. It was Lenneberg (1967) who proposed the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), suggesting that there is a period of time when language learning is more successful than any other time in one's life. He links the close of the critical period to the completion of the cerebral lateralization of language function which takes place at puberty. The CPH is still disputed in many language acquisition studies; for instance, Chiswick and Miller (2007) define the CPH as a sharp decline in learning outcome with age. They add that to ensure a native-like proficiency, one has to acquire the language before the critical period ends. In response to Lenneberg point of view, Johnson & Newport (1989) conclude that they do not find a direct relationship between performance and age of learning

throughout childhood, with a rapid decline in performance marking the end of the critical period; instead, in their study performance increasingly declined from about age seven until adulthood. According to CPH, there is a biological or neurological period, which ends around the age of 12; after which, it becomes extremely difficult to attain the complete mastery of a second language, especially pronunciation. Conversely, Bongaerts, Planken and Schils (1997) have shown that it is not always the case; adult learners are capable of achieving native-like in an L2. However, the degree of pronunciation accuracy differs from one learner to another in spite of the age similarity, as we shall see in the following sections.

Mother Tongue Influence:

First language learning is complete as compared to second language learning in the sense that learners have no choice to leave certain aspects of L1 as they need it for their daily life communication. As far as the former is concerned, L1 learners have no difficulty in producing most words in their language after the age of puberty because it is only one linguistic system that the learner's mind tries to understand and he/she is exposed to the language all the time; whereas, in the learning of L2, L1 features play a kind of role which results in a clash between the system of L1 and that of L2. So it seems to be true that, as Odlin (1989: 112) puts it, there is no little doubt that native language phonetics and phonology are powerful influences on second language pronunciation. When discussing the influence of L1 on L2, it is necessary to refer to Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which states that those L2 elements that are similar to learners L1 will be simple for him/her and those different elements will be difficult. At this context, it is evident that the language teacher and language learners should know the structures of both L1 and L2. Because such knowledge can help the language teacher identify the areas of influence of L1 on L2 and to develop some methods to rectify the interferences. Cook (1992) states that L1 is present in L2 learners' minds, whether the teacher wants it to be there or not. The L2 knowledge that is being created in them is connected in all sorts of ways with their L1 knowledge. According to this, learners' interlanguage is open to L1 influence in a way that they transfer features from their L1 into L2. This type of transfer results in error if the transferred feature is not similar or not found in L2. Such transfers are called interference. Second language is the language acquired by a person after having acquired the basic system of L1. Researches focus on the errors learners make when learning an L2. In L2 learning, errors are indispensable. Researchers are interested in errors because errors are believed to contain valuable information about the language and the way it is learned. As we all know, we communicate orally and/or in writing where errors are found in both types of communication; our focus in this investigation is on the oral type. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) claim that learners transfer their L1 sound patterns into the second language and this transfer is likely to cause foreign accents. It is reflected by the mispronunciations of words by non-native speakers. In this respect, Avery and Ehrlich, point out that the sound system of the native language can influence the learners' pronunciation of a target language in at least three ways. First, when there is a sound in the target language, which is absent from the learners' native sound inventory, or vice versa, learners may not be able to produce or even perceive the sound(s). Second, when the rules of combining sounds into words (i.e., phonotactic constraints/rules) are different in the learners' mother tongue from those of the target language, they cause problems for learners because these rules are language specific as they vary from one language to another. Thirdly, since the rhythm and melody of a language determine its patterns of stress and intonation, learners may transfer these patterns into the target language. Eckman (1977) proposed the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) as an explanation for areas of difficulties in second language acquisition. The common sounds in many languages are considered unmarked, whereas the less common ones are considered marked. He predicted that for L2 learners, the acquisition of the former would be easier than the latter. This hypothesis has become somehow disputed since some scholars have agreed with it and think it is the cause of L2 errors, while others think it cannot be the sole answer to identify sources of errors. The current study identifies pronunciation errors which could lead to predicting sources of difficulty.

Personality:

Certain non-linguistic factors related to an individual personality and learning goals, attitude towards the target language, native speakers and their culture, and type of motivation, which are beyond the teachers control, all have their role in the development of pronunciation skills. In addition, the degree of exposure to and use of the target language can support or impede pronunciation skills development. For example, learners who are outgoing and confident and get

involved in interactions with native speakers are liable to practice their foreign language pronunciation (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992). Conversely, some learners feel uncomfortable trying out new speech rhythm and melody patterns, while others feel stupid pronouncing weird sounds, and with time, they decide that it is fruitless and impossible to learn English pronunciation. In this respect, Miller (2000) believes that changing and not changing speech patterns is affected by how much responsibility the learner takes, how much the learner practices outside of class, and how ready the learner is. Different Arab countries with different colloquial Arabic backgrounds, all participants were in contact with the target language group and culture after the age of puberty for at least four years. The results show that eight English consonants, namely, /ŋ/, /p/, /v/, /d/, /l/, /dʒ/, and /r/ are identified as problematic ones for Arabic speakers. The author also finds that interference of L1 seems to be the major factor contributing to pronunciation problems that might differ from one Arabic speaker to another, depending on the colloquial variety of Arabic they use.

Methodology:

The qualitative quantitive approach was applied. The populations of the study were 50 students enrolled in Neelain University, first year in the year 2013- 2014. The subjects were divided into two groups, one is called "focus group" and the other is called "controlled group" where the experimental procedures are performed. The researcher divided the students into two groups with (25) students each, then they were given oral communication classes for one month.

The first group were taught equivalences of Arabic grammatical patterns; they were following the grammar translation patterns, with focus on the enhancement and consodolation to the structural patterns, the students produce. While with the second group, the researcher used English as a medium of instruction. No Arabic word or instructions to direct the students.

The findings:

As it is seen on the findings, the performance of the students in terms of some   linguistics aspects in the speaking test they go through.

In terms of pronunciation, the students of both groups have difficulty in pronouncing consonants included, the inability to produce / θ/ sound in words such as this and thin, the swapping of /b/ and /p/ at the beginning of words, and the substitution of /f/ for /v/. Consonant clusters, such as in the words *split*, *threw* or *lengths*, also cause problems and often result in the speaker adding an extra vowel: *spilit*, threw or lengthes.

They have difficulties with the seemingly random nature of English stress patterns. For example, the word **yes***terday* is stressed on the first syllable and *tomorrow* on the second

The elision (or swallowing) of sounds that is so common in spoken English. This can cause problems for them. Consider the example in questions like *what did you do?* Or *do you know her?* In conversational English it would be phrased and pronounced as: *Whatcha do? / Jew knows her?* This aversion to elision and the use of glottal stop before initial vowels are the primary reasons for the typical *staccato* quality of the spoken English of the students.

The biggest challenge that has been observed is the cultural adaptation. The students are being exposed to Arabic culture so when it comes to the English context they just transfer it structurally rather than supersentaially. In other words they do not take much care to the cultural context of the language.   However, it is a typical dilemma for most of Sudanese students.

When it comes to phonetic issue, English is a foreign language for Sudanese students whereas in many other countries it taught as a second language. Difficulties with pronunciation mainly crop up because of the sounds which do not exist in Arabic alphabets.

The students have problems with 'b' or'd' in a word when writing it. It is confusing to them because they are mirror image of each other. They would write something like 'sudway' instead of 'subway', they may have problems with words like "bomb, tomb, comb all end in 'omb' even when they don't rhyme. These examples show how convoluted English can be for the students since Arabic is their mother tongue and it interferes a lot due to the lack of the short time language exposure.

They also have difficulty differentiating between 'p' and 'b'. Since Arabic has no 'p' sound Arab speakers will often say 'p' as 'b' like bark for park or bolice. They have difficulty in knowing the difference between 'f' and 'v' because

there is no 'v' in Arabic. So you will hear many Arabs say 'fery 'instead of 'very'. This isn't as widespread at the 'p' vs. 'b' sound.

This is because   English has many vowel sounds while Arabic only has a few vowel sounds. It is clear when the student's pronouns words like people are or words that are only differentiated by their vowel sound are tough. Some students do not know the difference in sound between 'bomb', 'pump', and 'bump'. The 'o' and 'u' sound are hard for them as well as the 'p' and 'b'. Another example is the difference between 'six' (6) and 'sex' which causes problems to Arabic students. The 'e' sound in 'sex' just isn't found in Arabic. Many Arabs will say 'sixy' instead of 'sexy'. Therefore, grammar is the challenge to the students because of different reasons. For example, there is a big difference between Arabic grammar and English grammar in terms of styles, organizations, and structures. Another reason is that the students usually do not like to sit and study for hours in the library. They are social and oral communicative. Hence its grammar is very different from English. There is a large potential for errors of interference when Arab learners produce written or spoken English. The students seem to pay less attention to accuracy than fluency. Because they are being exposed to grammar "banging" and the Sudanese education system is not based on communicative approach.

However, some progress is noticed among the students of group one as the contrastive analysis techniques helped them to understand the grammatical rules and therefore use them. While in group two it is proved that they need much time to expose the langue with a native speakers' breath. Moreover there is the problem of comprehension. Most students learn English in Sudan in a very traditional way because the texts and curriculum are locally geared and the students are not familiar with the English/ American culture ; therefore they lack the most important factor which is comprehension ,, so the students do not allocate enough hours for learners of English during their primary and secondary schools , some teachers put more emphasis on one skill on the expense of the others - whereas all four skills-understanding , speaking , reading and writing - are important and necessary for learning the language .Furthermore, exposing the learners to native speakers is very important in order to get the right pronunciation , intonation , stress and speed of the English native speakers ..That is why Sudanese students find great difficulty following the lecturers - some even have to join language schools till they get used to the hearing and pronunciation. Another problem is that the students think in Arabic and forget English so they should do the opposite ,but this should be done from early stages ,,, because if you think in one language and write in another ,,you end up writing wrong stuff incomprehensible material ,, another important factor is the speed which most Arab cannot manage so they have to train their ears from early stage of learning to English native speakers ,,as for speaking skill , students should be taught to speak English as if they have a chain ,,.i. e not in isolation but in group of words ,,, these and others are important factors to help Arab students facilitate their understanding and comprehension in an English speaking country ... In Grammar of the verb and tense Arabic has no verb *to be* in the present tense, and no auxiliary *do*. There is a single present tense in Arabic, as compared to English, which has the simple and continuous forms. These differences result in errors such as *She good teacher*, *when you come to school? I going to school tomorrow/* or *Where he going?*

Conclusion:

In conclusion the students of Neelain university are more often "oral communicative because In fact, Arabic retains much more of the oral culture in its written expression than English does. The written language is more dependent upon pragmatics than upon strict English-style syntactic structures. These points make writing in English terribly difficult, especially in terms of the English sentence that constitutes a "complete thought" according to most definitions of the independent clause. But Arabic's 'complete thought' may include many clauses and full sentences linked by commas, double dots, etc until the writer has reached the end of his or her complete thought. Teaching higher-level academic writing is extremely difficult because it must take into account major cultural and linguistic differences that go far beyond knowing how to punctuate a sentence or put the articles in the right place. For my students, spelling, phonetics, and basic grammar take a back seat to the serious problems of cultural differences in the way thought is expressed in writing, particularly argumentative academic writing. For instance, Arabic rhetoric favors coordinate structures while English favors subordination, especially in argument. When these rhetorical elements are added to Arabic's lack of cognate vocabulary, structures common to most Indo-European languages, the entire task of teaching English even to capable ESL Arabic-speaking students becomes a difficult task demanding the utmost creativity on the part of the instructor.

Recommendation:

The study comes out with the following recommendations:

Students should:

1. Communicate using digital media and environments to support personal and group learning.

2. Share information efficiently and effectively using appropriate digital media and environments.

3. Communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively to different audiences using various media and formats.

Basic communication skills are at the core of every organization. It is crucial that we as teachers help students build this vital set of 21st century skills. Everything depends on our ability to be creative and to use modern teaching methods. The following is a suggested list of such activities:

- Reading aloud

- Students give their thoughts on topic assigned by teacher

- Students listen to classmates' thoughts and respond

- Oral diary; oral weekly report

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