



INNOVATIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR THE ERRORS OF THE ARABIC LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Teachers come across errors of the learners of the foreign language. There are many common errors by the Arabic students who learn English. Students make these errors mainly because there is a lot of linguistic difference between English language and Arabic language. In this paper, the researcher attempts to highlight the errors of the Arabic students learning English. He also discusses the simple teaching techniques and procedures followed in his classes to reduce the errors of the students.

Introduction

Learners make errors while learning the second language or foreign language. Learning English is difficult for the Arabic learners because of the existence of linguistic difference between these two languages. Learners make different sort of errors like: spelling, reading, writing, grammatical and pronunciation errors. This paper is not going to concentrate mainly on how these errors take place; rather it focuses on how to reduce the errors of the students with simple teaching strategies and procedures.

Literature Review

One of the linguistic distinctions exists between English and Arab, Kharma and Hajjaj (1997), is the differences in the orthographic systems. According to them “the greatest difficulty for Arab learners’ of English arises from the difference between the seemingly irregular spelling system of English compared with the greater regularity of the predominantly phonetic script of Arabic” (p.56).

Santa’s (1976-1977) study shows that spelling units are important for reading speed, which in turn assists comprehension. Although it is true that native speakers might not need special

instruction to help them recognize these spelling patterns to read in their mother tongue, non-native speakers may need help in developing their low-level skills because, as Koda (2005) points out, the nature of reading in L2 is different.

Ediger (2001) points out, reading is “a valuable source of language input, particularly for students in learning environments, in which fluent speakers of English are generally not available to provide other types of language input” (p.153).

Similarly, Brown (2000) indicates that analyzing students’ errors provides teachers with tools to predict and address student’s problems. “Familiarity with the types of errors students actually make is (also),” as Burt (1975) indicates, “a valuable guide for determining the sequence and emphasis of instruction in the EFL classroom” (p. 54).

Swan and Smith (2001) believe that the native language can influence the acquisition of L2 in two ways. On the one hand, learners are likely to have problems acquiring L2 in particular areas where the mother tongue has no equivalents for some of the linguistic features found in the target language. On the other hand, where equivalents are found, learning is likely to be facilitated.

Discussion

Final ‘e’ or silent ‘e’ is a big problem for Arabic learners of English. These students often miss the final ‘e’ or silent ‘e’ in their spellings. There is a lot of difference between the Arabic and English spelling system. English has irregular spelling system when compared with the Arabic spelling system.

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Axe | ax |
| Blue | blu |
| Cute | cut |
| Race | rac |
| Fine | fin |
| Gate | gat |
| Cage | cag |
| Give | giv |
| candle | candl |

Researcher used simple techniques in explaining the importance of final 'e' or silent 'e' to reduce such errors by the Arabic learners' of English. 1. Every syllable must have a vowel *people, name, came, pickle* and *bible*. 2. Silent 'e' changes the sound and meaning of the word in other words it softens the sounds of 'c' and 'g'. Such as, *hug* becomes *huge*, and *rag* becomes *rage*, and *cag* becomes *cage*, and *rac* becomes *rage*. 3. Usually, English words don't end with 'i', 'u', and 'v' *tie, give, and true*. It worked out well and there is a significant progress in learners' spelling related to silent 'e' or final 'e'.

Phonological system is also different between Arabic and English. In English there is a distinction between /p/ and /b/, whereas Arabic does not. So, Arabic learners of English often confuse with words that have letter **p** and **b**, and **v** and **f**, and **b** and **d**.

For example:

| | |
|----------|----------|
| panda | banda |
| pack | back |
| pad | bad |
| power | bower |
| van | fan |
| view | fiew |
| cover | cofer |
| changed | shanged |
| cheese | sheese |
| children | shildren |

To reduce these errors first of all the researcher made the students aware of the distinction between **p** and **b**, and **ch** and **sh**, and **b** and **d**, and **v** and **f**. Secondly, the researcher taught mouth formation for each sound and the vibration in the vocal chords. Thirdly, flash cards were used to improve visual recognition in the classroom. Finally, a list of often misspelt words was given and made them drill for five minutes every day in the class. It worked out well and there is a significant progress in above mentioned areas of spelling.

Researchers argue that reading and spelling is correlated. Reading without errors has an impact on acquiring the foreign language. With the help of the above strategies and techniques of spelling errors, reading errors were reduced to some extent.

Another major reading error of the Arabic learners of English is missing the plural. They read plural as singular like *sentences* as *sentence* or present simple verb '*sleeps* as *sleep*', which also leads to grammatical error. Integration of all the skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing, and grammar, and pronunciation leads to acquisition of any language.

For example:

They read plural as singular like, *check (√) the skills you learned* as *check (√) the skill you learned*, which changes the meaning of the sentence. The researcher used the following strategy to help the students understand plural. First the researcher explained the difference between singular and plural. Next he explained the importance of plural noun which is used to refer more than one person, place, thing or idea.

Subject-verb agreement is another grammatical area where students often make errors. Especially, this sort of error one can find in the usage of simple present verb. In the study it is found that students think that verbs like 'sleeps, eats, drinks, wants and starts' are plural because they end in 's' which cannot agree with singular subject. This is because the linguistic difference that exists between Arabic and English.

For example:

Ali *want(s)* to change his career. Learners think that '*wants*' is plural, so they use *want*. Another example, Kathy *start(s)* her new job after a month.

The researcher made it clear to the students that verbs end with 's' are not plural, in fact they are singular verbs which are supposed to be used with third person singular subjects in the simple present. A list of such verbs with singular subjects was given to the students for drilling. It worked out well and there is a significant progress in subject-verb agreement.

Conclusion

Acquisition of foreign language is quite challenging for Arabic learners. Teaching English to Arabic learners is also challenging because of the linguistic differences in Arabic and English. With the help of the above mentioned innovative techniques, learners should be given superfluous practice and encourage them to submit the written assignments. Then teachers can see significant difference in their students' learning ability and usage of the language with few errors.



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