

The Impact of Standard Arabic Verb Phrase Structure on Moroccan EFL Learners' Writing

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Abstract: The study investigated English verb phrases' (VPs) structural errors in the writings of Moroccan university students. It is believed that Arabic learners' syntactic problems in English VPs affect their writing proficiency. Most of the previously conducted research in this area ascribes learners' errors to the English and Arabic phrase structure variations. The participants were eighty semester two students of English at IbnTofail University. They are composed of males and females who have been exposed to Standard Arabcourses. On the basis of the elicited data, the study classified the participants' problems into three types of errors: omission errors, addition errors and mis-ordering errors. Secondly, the analysis of the data was limited to detecting participants' violations of the English VP structures in their written paragraphs. The analysis of the data showed that the participants made interlingual and intralingual errors. Besides, the qualitative and quantitative results demonstrated the effectiveness of the adopted treatment.

Key Words-English and Arabic VP structures, writing, inductive teaching

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of education, writing is seen as a learning and thinking activity. This activity promotes students' knowledge and reinforces previously taught materials. As Pobywajlo (2001) puts it, "what students are able to put into writing represents what they really know about the subject. The student is constructing an answer rather than memorizing one" (p.12) [1]. Likewise, teachers use writing as a tool to assess their students' progress in a language and hence prepare remedial works on the basis of the discovered problems; believing that learners will not reach full literacy in the language they learn until they have attained competence in writing. (Hughey, 1983, p.36) [2].

Of all skills, writing is not an easy activity for language learners, especially second or foreign language learners. As a matter of fact, writing requires more attention and good mastery of the language used. As Richards & Renandya (2002) claim, "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master" (p. 303) [3]. The challenge lies not only in finding ideas but also in how to put these ideas in a correct structure which is specific to the language used. In this context, Rivers (1968) argues that in order for a learner to write "he must learn to control the structure of the language so that what he writes is comprehensible to his reader" (p. 243) [4]. That is, the reader's understanding of a written text entails correct and accurate usage of the grammatical structures of a language on the part of the writer.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is apparent that all individuals are naturally equipped with an ability that helps them acquire languages. This ability is in the form of a set of "principles that are common to all human languages" (Haegeman, 1994, p.13) [5]. Languages of the world may look very different; however, they all involve a group of innate principles that are apparent in the process of language acquisition by children (Hawkins, 1994, p.1) [6]. Unlike language principles which are claimed to be universal and innate, language parameters are said to be acquired through exposure to a particular language. That is, when children are in contact with a particular language, they acquire its particular and specific set of parameters (Chomsky, 1981, p.7) [7]. Hence, the ability to speak a language requires knowledge of its specific parameters. In the same line of thought, Radford (2004) specifies that "although there are universal principles which determine the broad outlines of the grammar of natural languages, there also seem to be language-particular aspects of grammar which children have to learn as part of the task of acquiring their native language" (p. 8) [8].

Variations of parametric systems between languages may cause problems to L2 learners. For example, the formation of different structures within a sentence requires following the system of the language used. In this regard, Van Valin (2001) points out that "one of the most obvious yet important ways in which languages

differ is the order of the main elements in a sentence” (p.1). [9]. However, the sentence is not the only structure whose structure is dissimilar among languages. The structure of a phrase can vary from one language to another as well (Comrie, 1981) [10]. For example, in English heads normally precedes their complements, while in Japanese heads normally follow their complements” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 384) [11].

2.1. Phrase Structure

Phrases are normally formed with words that are closely related to each other. They make constituents that are built around one particular word (Carnie, 2002 p.30-33) [12]. and they “are usually classified according to their central word or head,” (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 75) [11]. That is, though phrases consist of one or more words, they are named on the basis of the main word they involve. For example, in a verb phrase, the main word is the verb which all the other words of the phrase center on (Richards et. al, 1985, p. 399) [13]. In a noun phrase the noun is the central element which may have pre-modifiers and post-modifiers (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 578). [11]. In an adjective phrase the adjective functions as the head of the whole phrase (Greenbaum and Nilson, 2002, p.67) [14].

Unlike sentences, phrases do not contain a subject and its verb. They both form two different phrases within a sentence (Richards and Schmidt, 2002, p. 75) [11]. Consider the following example: *the boy chased the cat*. The constituent *the boy* is a phrase which is named the noun phrase, but the last constituent *chased the cat* is another phrase which is known as the verb phrase. The central word in the first phrase is *boy*, but in the second phrase the central word is *chased*. This arrangement of words around a central word to form a phrase must follow a grammatical structure. That is, there are rules which decide on the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of the formed phrases (Carnie, 2002, p. 33) [12].

2.1.1. Verb Phrase Structure in English and Arabic

The verb phrase (VP) refers to a group of words which is headed by the verb. The VP may involve one or more words, but the head of the phrase is its verb. In other words, the VP is that “part of a sentence which contains the main verb and also any object(s), complement(s) and adverbial(s)” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 578) [11]. That is, the elements that follow the verb as a head of its phrase are often adjectives, nouns, pronouns, adverbs or sentences. They are “elements which obligatory follow the verb in the VP” (Wekker & Haegeman, 1985, p.44) [15]. However, verbs may be also preceded by some other words that function as verb specifiers. For example, in English “the modal auxiliaries and the auxiliaries *have* and *be* function as specifiers of the VP” (Wekker & Haegeman, 1985, p.47) [15]. Therefore the general consideration of the English and Arabic VP structures can be as follows:

VP → V
VP → V (AP)
VP → (AP+) V (AP)
VP → (AP+) V (NP) (AP+)
VP → (AP+) V (NP) (AP+) (AP+)

General English verb phrase structure (Carnie, 2002) [12].

VP → V	qar'-a	قرأ	He read	
VP → V NP	akal-a	atufahat-a	التفاحة اكل He ate an apple	
VP → V PP	thahab-a	ilaal-madrasat-I	المدسة ذهب الى He went to school	
VP → VP PP	wajadt-u	alkitab-a	alaatawilat-I	الطاولة وجدت الكتاب على I found the book on the table

General Arabic verb phrase structure (Bassam Hammo, 2014, p.3) [16].

The comparison between the Arabic and English verb phrases, demonstrates a set of differences in their structures. Let's consider the following example:

(1) r-rajul-u muʕallim-un
the-man-NOM teacher-NOM
The man is a teacher.”

There is a difference between Arabic and English in this example. The difference is in the use of the verb *be*. It is observed that in the Arabic example *r-rajul-u muʕallim-un* the verb *be* does not appear and the sentence is given without a verb. Unlike Arabic, the English equivalent contains the verb *be* and it is the head of the VP *is a teacher*. The absence of the verb *be* in the Arabic structures and its presence in the English ones constitute one of the major variations between the VPs of the two languages (Scott & Tucker, 1974; Asfour, 1978; Mukattash, 1978, 1986; Assubaia, 1979; Beck, 1979; Al-Kasimi et al. 1979; Kambal, 1980; Sharma, 1981; Al-Muarik, 1982; El-Badarin, 1982; Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic, 1983; Abu Ghararah, 1989).

2.2. Inductive Teaching

The inductive approach is an indirect way of language teaching. The approach has recently gained ground within the realm of education as an attempt to turn the page of traditional way of teaching, deductive way. Teaching inductively starts with providing students with an enough amount of different examples about a language rule and then helping them generalize the rule (Goner, Phillips & Walters, 1995, p. 135) [17]. Intensive practice of a language rule through supplying students with meaningful examples, will enable them deduce the rule as well as develop an understanding of its usage (Rivers and Temperly, 1978, p. 110). [18]. Therefore, the inductive teaching approach is a bottom up process since the inference of a language rule results from students' excessive practice of specific related activities rather than being introduced to it beforehand (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p. 23) [19]. In this context, it is a learner centered approach which is based on trial and error experiments. The discovery of a language rule requires that students try different examples and deal with various situations where they may make errors until they understand and become able to use the rule (Chalipa, 2013, p. 5) [20].

2.3. Sources of Errors

Errors can be defined as those deviations which occur when learners use a second or foreign language. These errors may result from the phenomenon of negative transfer or interference (Sadiqi&Ennaji, 1994, p.142) [21]. That is, interference takes place when learners' L1 rules are applied in their use of a second or a foreign language. This problem is also referred to as 'interligual' (Richards, 1974, p. 36) [22]. However, learners' errors may be also due to the phenomenon of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) (as cited in Sadiqi&Ennaji, 1994, p.150) [21]. That is, when learners try their own ways and rules of learning the target language. For example, learners may overgeneralize one single rule on different situations. This language phenomenon is also referred to as 'intraigual' (Scovel, 2001, p. 51) [23]. Besides, learners' errors may occur owing to the learning context. That is, they "result more from the classroom situation than from either the students' incomplete competence in English grammar or first language interference" (Stenson, 1983, pp. 256-262) [24].

II- Methodology

2.1. Research questions

1. What are the common types of errors do the students make in the structure of their written phrases?
2. What are the sources of structure errors in students' written verb phrases?
3. Is negative transfer from Arabic the major cause of errors?
4. Is there any significant statistical difference between the experimental and control groups' scores of spoken errors? If so, does the inductive teaching method, as an adopted treatment, effectively reduce the experimental group's errors in forming English VPs?

2.2. Purpose of the study

1. To uncover the types and sources of structure errors in students' written phrases.
2. To help teachers gain insights into the difficulties that Moroccan university students have in writing English verb phrases.
3. To show the effectiveness of the inductive method in teaching English VP structures.
4. By showing qualitative as well as quantitative results, the study will provide a basic framework for further research.

2.3. Participants of the study

The subjects for the study were selected randomly. They were semester two students at IbnTofail University, Morocco. At this level the students should be able to produce correct structures of the English VP. The sample included (80) students who are both males and females. They were all native speakers of Arabic and shared the same educational background.

2.4. : Data collection

Data for the research is elicited through writing a paragraph. To do so, two tests were administered: A pre-test and a post-test. That is, the experimental and control groups were tested before and after the experimental group has received a treatment, the inductive approach as an alternative method of teaching.

2.5. Limitations of the study

This study investigates students' structural errors in writing English verb phrases. So, other students' written phrases will not be accounted for in this study. Besides, this study investigates only students' structural errors in forming English verb phrases.

III. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

3.1. Qualitative Analysis of the Data

The post-test findings indicate that the experimental and control groups made omission, addition and mis-ordering errors in their written verb phrases. Yet, the results display an important difference between the two groups regarding the number of errors made in each type. The difference is clearly apparent in table 3 below:

Table 1: The experimental and control groups' frequencies of the types of VP errors.

Types of errors	Examples of errors	Control group		Experimental group		Total
		Frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage	
Omission	I not <i>spoken</i> since last year.	35	87.5%	16	40 %	51
Addition	I <i>am like</i> this language.	37	92.5%	18	45%	55
Misorder- ing	We <i>sometimes are</i> absent from class.	33	82.5%	12	30%	45

On the basis of the qualitative results in the table (1) above, it is apparent that the number of VP errors made by the control group in different types exceeds that of the experimental group. To begin with, the frequency of omission errors which were made by the control group is 35 whereas the frequency of the same type of errors made by the experimental group is only 16. This difference shows the subjects of the control group have more difficulty in writing English verb phrases. The table 3 above provides an example of the subjects' VP omission errors: I *spoken* since my college. In this example, the VP is not complete as the main verb *spoken* misses an auxiliary *have* which should precede it.

Another striking difference between the two groups is in the frequency of their made errors of addition. According to table (1) above, the experimental group's number of addition errors (18) is very less in comparison to the frequency of addition errors made by the control group (37). This result shows that the subjects of the experimental group are more successful in avoiding addition errors while writing English verb phrases. The table (1) above provides an example of the subjects' errors: I *am love* this language. In this example the verb *like* is preceded by the verb be form *am* which is not a necessary element for this phrase.

Furthermore, the mis-ordering errors made by the control group as well as the experimental group are dissimilar. The qualitative findings, as the table (1) shows above, demonstrate that the experimental group's number of mis-ordering errors is not as big as the one made by the subjects of the control group. On the basis of this outcome, the control group is less successful in writing verb phrases free of mis-ordering errors. The group's frequency of errors is 33 while the frequency of errors made by the experimental group is 12.

The qualitative findings in the table above show that the subjects made errors of omission, addition and misordering in their writing of English verb phrases. The total number of the made errors is 151. Of this number addition errors constitute the higher frequency (55) followed by omission errors which make out (51) errors and then misordering errors which have the smallest frequency (45). Besides, the findings showed in the table demonstrate that the control group made more frequency of errors in comparison to the experimental group. That is, the total number of errors made by the experimental group is 46 while the total frequency of errors made by the control group is 105.

3.2. Quantitative Analysis of the Data

According to table (2) below, the T-test's findings confirm the results of the frequency data obtained in table (1) above. That is, the difference between the experimental group and the control group is confirmed quantitatively as well. To explain, since the sig. value (.046) is less than the alpha level (.05), we can say that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups. The difference displays that the subjects of experimental group were more successful in their written VPs. Accordingly; the development of the experimental group is certainly attributed to effectiveness of the adopted treatment.

Table 2: T-tests' results of the two groups' VP errors.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MeanDifference	Std. ErrorDifference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Verb phrase	4,104	,046	14,477	78	,000	-2,90000	,20032	-3,29881	-2,50119
Equal variances assumed									
Equal variances not assumed			14,477	70,512	,000	-2,90000	,20032	-3,29948	-2,50052

IV. QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The VP structure errors were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the analysis showed that the participants did not respect the English VP system in their writings. They made omission errors, addition errors and mis-ordering errors. On the basis of this classification, the participants' errors of Addition constituted the highest frequency number. The dominant error of addition in participants' written VPs is the addition of the verb *be*. The following examples are taken from participants' erroneous VPs:

1. *English is help me in communicate
2. *My friends are speak with me English
3. *Techers are explic good the lissons
4. *I am like language English

Participants' addition of the verb *be* in their VPs, cannot be ascribed to the Arabic transfer. According to previously conducted studies by Kasem (1997), Zahrani (1993) and Abu-Jarad (2008), EFL Arab learners of English tend to omit the verb *be* in present tense due to the negative transfer. However, in this study, the findings are different. The participants added the verb *be* in the present tense. The arrangement of words in their written VPs, follow neither the English VP word order system nor the Arabic VP word order system. Therefore, *their* errors cannot be referred to as the native language interference, but as errors due to overgeneralization and also to ignorance of rule restrictions. That is, participants' practice of the verb *be* in the present tense was heavier than their practice of the other verbs in the same tense. As a result, the participants used the verb *be* together with other verbs ignoring that the present simple in English is not used with more than one verb.

The second type of errors that has continuously appeared in participants' written VPs is omission errors. The frequency number of these errors is 35 almost the same as the frequency number of errors of addition (see table (1) above). Of all omission errors, the absence of the auxiliary *be* and the auxiliary *have* constituted the main problems in participants' written VPs. The following examples are taken from participants' erroneous VPs:

5. *I already studied English in at centre.
6. * I not spoken English since the year last.
7. *lessons explicated good by my teachers.
8. *Teachers very gentile with me

Among the challenges that EFL learners encounter in their writing is the formation of VP structures which involve the present perfect form (Catford et al, 1974, p.98). The fact that the present perfect form links between the past and the present, and "serves to locate an event within a period of time that began in the past and extends up to the present moment" (Dowty, 1979, p. 341), it is confusing for EFL learners to understand the situations where they can use this form. They often replace the present perfect with the present tense or the past tense (Palmer, 1987, p.174-177; Comrie, 1976, p.66-71). The same problem is discovered when Arab learners construct English VP structures. They often use the past tense instead of the present perfect form (Matter's, 2001, p. 104). They simply perceive the situations where in English the present perfect is normally used as situations that belong to the past. However, Arabic learners' may also replace the present perfect with the present tense. As Ryding (2005) puts it, "An action started in the past and continuing into the present is usually

rendered by the present tense in Arabic, whereas in English, the present perfect is used" (p.345). Therefore, Arabic EFL learners' replacement of the present perfect form with the present tense or the past tense in their written VPs can be ascribed to the negative transfer from their L1.

Conversely, in this study the participants' problem with the use of the present perfect is very different. Most of the participants tend to omit the auxiliaries *have* or *has* which normally precede past participles in present perfect forms. The most striking point is that the participants did not put the main verbs in the present or the past tense. Their written verbs were given in past participle form, but without being preceded by the auxiliary *have* or *has*. Hence, the absence of these auxiliaries (*have and has*) in participants' written VPs cannot be attributed to the Arabic transfer (Matter's, 2001, P.104). This omission error demonstrated that the participants may have thought that the past participle is the only part of the verb and so they failed to complete applying the rule of forming the present perfect. Failure in applying the required rules to give acceptable structures is part of intralingual errors (Richards, 1971, p. 209).

The omission of the copula is another important discovered error. The absence of the linking verbs: *is*, *are* and *am* is a noticeable problem in participants' written VPs. In this sentence *Teachers very gentile with me*, an example taken from participants' errors, the place of the copula is left empty. That is, according to the English VP structure rules, the adjective phrase *very gentile* in this example should be preceded by the helping verb *are*. This finding is in line with Abu-Jarad's research (1983) on omission errors in the writings of Palestinian students. He concluded that the omission of the copula in students' written VPs is more apparent in the present tense. In the same line of thought, Al-Zahrani (1993) conducted a study to measure the use of the copula by Arabic learners of English. In his study, he discovered that students' omission of the copula constituted the highest frequency. The qualitative results of his study showed that the percentage of copula omission was 69.4%. Our findings are also in harmony with Kasem's (1997) study on the use of the English copula by Arabic EFL learners. He underlined that the majority of the participants failed to avoid omitting the English copula in their written VPs.

The Arabic Equivalents of participants' erroneous VPs show that the copula is not used in Arabic VP structures. Consider these examples from participants' errors.

9. *Grammar difficult subject. النحو مادة صعبة / *anahuwmadasa'aba* /

10. *because beautiful language جميلة لانها لغة / *hiyaluvajamila*/

The Arabic examples above do not involve a verb that could be equivalent to the copula as is the case in English. The omission of the verb *is* in both of these examples above results from the absence of an equivalent form of this verb in Arabic examples. It can be understood that Arabic and English VPs are dissimilar in these syntactic structures. According to the English VP structure rules, examples like these above are ungrammatical because of the absence of the copula, whereas in Arabic these structures are grammatically accepted. In the context, Alshayban (2012) confirms that "the omission of the copula is an instance of negative transfer, because Arabic does not have a copula in the present tense form" (p.34).

Omission of the verb *be* is also discovered in passive voice forms. The participants' constructed VPs include forms of passive voice where the verb *be* was absent. In English, past participles must be preceded by the auxiliary *be*. However, this rule was violated by the participants of the study. This finding is also discovered by Bryan (1980) when he investigated the use the copula by EFL learners. He concluded that "Omission takes place both when the copula is an auxiliary part of the present progressive aspect or of the passive voice" (p. 46). Let's consider these examples from participants' errors.

11. *we helped by my teachers نساعد من طرف اساتذتي

/ *nusa'd min tarafasatidati*/

12. *english loved by friends من طرف الاصدقاء /الانجليزية محبوبة

/ *l'anjaliziyamahboba min taraf l'asdiqa2*/

The Arabic equivalents lack auxiliaries in these examples of passive voice. It is observed that Arabic does not use auxiliaries which could be equivalent to the auxiliary *be* is in English passive voice forms. In English, passive voice is formed with both the past participle of the main verbs and the auxiliary *be*. That is, in the examples above the verb *helped* should be preceded by the auxiliary *are* and the verb *loved* should be preceded by the auxiliary *is*. It seems that the omission of these auxiliaries is due to their absence in the Arabic equivalents. In the Arabic equivalents, the verb *نساعد*(helped) and the verb *محبوبة*(loved) are not preceded or followed by any auxiliaries. Therefore, it could be understood that "Arab learners of English are likely to omit the auxiliary verb *be* in their English passive constructions because of negative transfer from their Arabic as the auxiliary is not present in the Arabic passive form (Alshayban ,2012, p.42).

In addition to the omission of the copula and the auxiliary *be*, there is omission of the auxiliaries *do* and *does* in the negative forms of the present tense. It is discovered that the participants of the study form negative VPs by putting the word *not* before verbs without adding the auxiliary *do* or *does*. In English, these auxiliaries should always precede the word *not* to form negative VPs of the present tense (Finch, 1987, p.121). Yet, this rule was violated by the participants of the study. Let's consider the following examples from participants' errors:

- 13.*I not find good book for read
- 14.*I not do exercises my self
- 15.*My parents not live with I
- 16.*reading not give me words easy
- 17.*My teacher not comelate.

The auxiliaries *do* and *does* are absent in the examples above. The heads of the VPs above are all preceded by the word *not* (*not find, not do, not live, not give, not come*). According to the English VP structure rules, these forms are not correct because they lack the auxiliaries *do* and *does* which should precede the word *not*. Unlike English, Arabic negative forms of the present tense are not constructed with auxiliaries that could be equivalent to those in English. That is, *do* and *does* as auxiliary verbs do not exist in Arabic, but there are some particles that function as the English auxiliaries (Farhan, 2015, p. 10). (لا) and (لم) are common particles whereby negative forms are made in Arabic (Al- Yasui ,1976, p.75). To understand whether Arabic structures were adopted by the participants of the study in their written VPs, it is necessary to provide an Arabic equivalent of the erroneous VPs.

- 18.* I not find good book for read اجيدلم اجد كتابا
- 19.*reading not give me words easyسهلةكلماتتتعطينيلعة لاالمط

On the basis of the Arabic equivalents above, it seems that Arabic does not have the auxiliaries *do* and *does*. The verbs *اجد* (find) and *تعطيني* (give) are preceded by the particles *لم* and *لا* which could be equivalents of the English word *not*, but these particles are not combined with an auxiliary verb as is the case in English. The difference between English and Arabic in constructing negative forms of the present tense could be the reason why participants made errors in their VPs. That is, the omission of *do* and *does* in participants' written VPs can be attributed to the Arabic interference.

The third type of errors in students' written verb phrases are the mis-ordering errors. It is discovered that most of misordering errors made by the participants of the study are in their use of the phrasal verbs. That is, they do not respect the ordering rules of using a verb and its particle in their written verb phrases. The examples below are taken from the participants' errors:

- 20.* I write down them. كتبتهم
- 21.*I don't pick up it before لم اتعلمها من قبل

In English, it is optional to write the noun between the verb and its particle, and it is also possible for the noun to follow the particle. However, pronouns must be written between the verb and the particle (Hart, 1999, p. 37). For example with nouns, it is possible to write *I take off the Jacket* or *I take the Jacket off*. In the case of pronouns, it is correct to write *I take it off*, but it is not correct to write *I take off it*. Unlike English, Arabic lacks these constructions. In example (20) above, the Arabic equivalent: كتبتهم (write I them) shows that Arabic verbs do not consist of particles as is the case in English. This finding is in line with Ayadi's (2010) study. His investigation of the Algerian students' use of the phrasal verbs led him to discover that most of his students avoid using phrasal verbs due to the absence of such constructions in Arabic. In the same line of thought, (Al-dahesh, 2008, p.70) argues that Arabic does not involve phrasal verbs, but it uses a structure which is like phrasal verbs in English. The structure consists of a verb and a preposition. This can be illustrated as follows: *he came with a thing* لبثت عندهم (Haywood and Nahmad, 1993, p. 413) / *I stayed with them a whole year* لبثت عندهم (ibid, p. 393). However, the absence of phrasal verbs in Arabic does not lead the participants of the study to avoid them in their writing. Their written VPs involved phrasal verbs, but they were mis-used. That is, the ordering system of English phrasal verbs is violated by the students. In examples (20) above the pronouns *them* should be put between the verb *write* and the particle *down*. Likewise, in example (21) the pronoun *it* should be written between the verb *pick* and its particle *up*. Therefore, participants' mis-ordering errors regarding the use of phrasal verbs cannot be ascribed to the Arabic interference but to interlanguage causes.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has given an account of the main errors made by Moroccan EFL university students in their written work. Based on the discussion of the findings and the examples given, it could be concluded that the students in this study committed three types of common errors in the structure of their written verb phrases.

They made addition errors, omission errors and mis-ordering errors. These errors indicate the main areas of difficulty for the students when they are writing English VPs. Students' elicited errors indicate that they involve interlingual errors, intralingual errors and induced errors. However, it has been deduced from the number of the collected errors that most of the errors are intralingual and induced errors. That is, learners' errors in forming English VPs come mainly from learners' incompetence or ignorance of the English phrase structure rules or from their learning situations in the classroom. Additionally, it has been demonstrated in the data analysis that the two groups are qualitatively and quantitatively different. Hence, the inductive teaching method that has been adopted as an alternative model to teaching the English VP structure to the experimental group has proven effective. For example, in quantitative results, the sig. value (.046) is greater than the alpha level (.05). Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant statistical difference between the two groups. The difference displays that the participants of the experimental group were more successful in their written VPs.

Given the results of this study, a number of recommendations are suggested. First, the students should develop an understanding of the differences between Arabic and English VP structures. Likewise, teachers are invited to make use of the study's findings and their discussion in order to know what they should focus on while teaching writing. Besides, the use of the inductive approach in teaching syntactic structures like phrases is highly recommended. More importantly, based on this study's framework, further research is required so as to investigate Moroccan EFL students' written structural errors of other phrases.

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