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Editorial Preface

This issue marks the second anniversary of the Journal of Research in Language and Translation (JRLT). Since its inception, *JRLT* has aimed to become an important forum for the publication of high quality papers in the areas of linguistics and translation. These two fields are increasingly becoming intertwined and interrelated and having a journal that serves to disseminate theoretical and practical knowledge is useful for both linguists and translators.

Several important topics are explored in this issue. The first paper discusses syntactic EFL errors and offers practical ways on how to remedy these errors. Contributing researchers are credited for addressing this topic which concerns both teachers and learners of English as a Foreign Language. The second paper, titled *The Applicability of Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies on Human and Machine Arabic Translations of an English Text*, is a great contribution that offers a key perspective on machine translation and the extent to which it can be used in translating texts from and into Arabic. The final paper in this issue is a cross-dialectal comparison of two Saudi Arabian dialects, namely Najdi and Hijazi, and the role of both dialects in the emergence of a Saudi Koine.

The editorial team is grateful for several scholars who have helped in reviewing the manuscripts and making valuable comments to improve the overall quality of each paper. We appreciate their work and we thank them dearly. *JRLT* family would also like to extend their appreciation to the dean of the college of languages and translation, Professor Sultan AlHarbi, for his outpouring support, unequivocal encouragement and continuous interest in the journal's mission.

On a personal level and as the chief editor, I would like to thank my fellow editors for their patience, enthusiasm and cooperation throughout the entire process of publishing this issue. Without their assistance, this work would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the editor's assistant, Dr. Dania Salamah, for her tireless commitment and dedicated service to the journal. A final word of appreciation goes to the contributing authors for choosing *JRLT* as a means for disseminating their research.

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March 1, 2022

Table of Contents

Syntactic Errors in Saudi EFL Learners' Writings: Types, Sources, and Remedial Strategies <i>Bakr Bagash Mansour Ahmed Al-Sofi</i>	1-24
The Applicability of Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies on Human and Machine Arabic Translations of an English Text <i>Hamad Abdullah H Aldawsari</i>	25-43
Najdi and Hijazi Dialects: The Formation in Progress of a Saudi Koine <i>Najla M. Alghamdi</i>	44-60

Syntactic Errors in Saudi EFL Learners' Writings: Types, Sources, and Remedial Strategies

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الملخص

تبحثُ هذه الدراسة النَّوعية الأخطاء النَّحوية الظَّاهرة المتداولة بين متعلِّمي اللُّغة الإنجليزية السَّعوديين في الامتحانات الورقية، وتكشف عن مصادر تلك الأخطاء، مُقترحةً استراتيجيات علاجية لها. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تمَّ اختيار نموذج تحليل الأخطاء لـ (Gass & Selinker, 2008) إطاراً لهذه الدراسة، حيث تمَّ جمع الأخطاء النَّحوية المتداولة من عينة مكوَّنة من سبعين ورقة اختبار نصفي ونهائي لخمسين طالباً من قسم اللُّغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بيشة بالمملكة العربية السعودية. كما تمَّ حصرُ الأخطاء الشائعة وتصنيفها وتحليلها تحليلًا نوعيًا بناءً على أنواعها ومصادرها، واقتراح استراتيجيات عملية لتقليل تلك الأخطاء. علاوةً على ذلك، أُجريت مقابلات مُنظَّمة مع عشرة أساتذة جامعيين ممَّن لديهم خبرة متراكمة لأكثر من ثماني سنوات في تدريس مقررات اللُّغة الإنجليزية في نفس الجامعة. أظهرت النتائج أنَّ من الأخطاء النَّحوية لدى الطلاب الاستخدام غير المناسب لصيغ الفعل، عدم توافق الفعل مع الفاعل، غياب الفاعل، واستبدال بعض أجزاء الكلام بأخرى. وترجع أسباب هذه الأخطاء بشكل أساسي إلى عوامل التداخل اللُّغوي مع اللُّغة الأم، وكذلك عوامل اللُّغة الثانية المتمثلة ب (التعميمات المُفرطة، المعرفة غير الكافية بقواعد اللُّغة الثانية، والاستخدام غير المناسب لتلك القواعد). إنَّ استكشاف هذه الأخطاء، وتحليلها يساعد الأساتذة الجامعيين وواضعي السياسات، وكذلك الطلاب على اتِّخاذ إجراءات فورية لمعالجتها.

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the overt syntactic errors made by Saudi EFL learners on paper-based exams. It also reveals the sources of these errors and suggests remedial strategies. To achieve these objectives, the error analysis model of Gass and Selinker (2008) was chosen as a framework for this study in which the data were collected from naturally occurring errors in a sample of 70 mid-term and final exam papers of 50 learners from the English Department at the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. Specifically, common errors were identified, classified, quantified, and qualitatively analyzed based on their types and sources. Remedies for minimizing these errors were also suggested. Furthermore, structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers who have accumulated experience of more than eight years in teaching English courses at the same university. The results showed that among the students' syntactic errors were the inappropriate application of verb forms, subject-verb agreement, the subject, parts of speech, and substitution of content words. The causes of these errors were rooted in the students' interlingual (first language interference) and intralingual (overgeneralization, inadequate knowledge of second language rules, and inappropriate application of such rules) factors. Detecting and analyzing these actual errors helps teachers, policymakers, and students take immediate actions to remedy them.

Keywords: interlingual; intralingual; remedial strategies; Saudi EFL learners; syntactic errors; writing skill

Introduction

Writing is an indispensable skill for expressing opinions and thoughts effectively. Batstone (1994) emphasized that language without grammar can be confusing and can lead to the same communication problems as grammatical errors in writing and speaking. Likewise, Aleraini (2020) argued that "successful second language acquisition and mastery comprise a recognition of different grammatical constructions in the target language" (p. 143). Learners are expected to make errors regardless of whether the language being learned is a Second Language (L2) or a Foreign Language (FL). Hence, making errors is considered normal in language learning.

Scholars made a distinction between errors and mistakes in language learning (Brown, 2014; Corder, 1973; James, 2013). Brown (2014) demonstrated that an error is a "noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker" and is not 'self-corrected', while a mistake can be "repaired if the deviation is pointed out to the speaker" and is correctable (pp. 249-250). Therefore, this study accounts for overt errors that learners make inadvertently and that are not self-corrected. To analyze errors in language learning, Corder (1967) coined the term Error Analysis (EA), a basic strategy that helps teachers and linguists identify students' shortcomings and work on them accordingly. EA is a branch of applied linguistics (Corder, 1981; Gass & Selinker, 2008; James, 2013) since it is concerned with students' language-related issues. It is an approach used systematically to identify and analyze the errors made by language learners. James (2013) defined EA as "the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language" (p. 1). James (2013) also stated that EA is of relevance "to a good many important and vexatious issues" among them the issues that face people who speak English as an L2 or FL" (p. 25).

The present study mainly consists of two important parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part highlights the research problem, objectives, significance, and research questions. Furthermore, the literature review outlines the importance of the EA, models of the EA, sources of the errors, and remedial strategies. Previous studies are also examined and related to the research topic. The practical part addresses the research design, respondents, research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, and results and discussion. The study ends up with a conclusion summarizing the most important findings and recommendations.

Research Problem

Public school students in Saudi Arabia take English as a compulsory subject from the fourth grade and, more recently, they study English from the first grade. However, it has been noticed that some university students do not understand the basics of English, which indicates that there is a gap in English teaching/learning between the school and higher education phases. In other words, English is not given the attention it deserves in school (Farooq & Wahid, 2019). English-major students at colleges usually study language skills and advanced courses in linguistics, applied linguistics, literature, and translation.

Compared to the simultaneous speaking skills, students in writing practices have more time to think about sentences before writing them on paper. In other words, advanced-level students' writings are expected to be error-free and well-formed; however, they apply the grammatical rules and sentence structures improperly. Specifically, they tend to produce unacceptable forms, i.e., syntactic errors, in the exam papers. In addition, students' writing performance is far from satisfying course instructors and achieving course objectives. Course instructors run into these vexing errors that should have been resolved in high school long before university admission. Moreover, course instructors, especially those teaching advanced

courses, are sometimes unable to teach or revise language basics. They are hampered by time constraints and instructed to give strict priority to implementing the items listed in the course descriptions. Therefore, the researcher believes that this alarming issue is worth addressing and has immediate importance for bridging the gap between expectations and reality.

Research Objectives

With this in mind, the present study aims to identify Saudi EFL learners' overt syntactic errors committed in exam papers. Moreover, it uncovers the sources of these errors and suggests remedial strategies for minimizing such errors. To achieve these objectives, Gass and Selinker's (2008) model of EA was applied in which the data were collected from a corpus of the students' exam-paper samples. The common errors identified were classified based on their types. Furthermore, the sources and reasons behind these errors were identified, and possible remedial strategies were proposed depending on the errors committed and the course instructors' recommendations.

Research Significance

This study is significant because writing skills are among the most important skills that should be mastered by language learners. They help learners communicate their ideas and thoughts effectively. The study deals with an alarming issue that should be addressed at the school level. Corder (1981) confirmed that "it is important that the teacher should be able not only to detect and describe errors linguistically but also understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence" (p. 35). Therefore, the systematic analysis of learning-related errors and the reasons behind their occurrence lead stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of students' learning process and work accordingly. Moreover, students need to be able to form grammatically correct sentences. This competency is demanded at any given point during their learning career and after entering the work environment. Hence, they need to be exposed to more writing tasks and activities to produce syntactically correct sentences. This study focuses on the applied error analysis of students' errors, the objective of which "is purely pragmatic and pedagogical such as organizing remedial courses and devising appropriate materials and strategies of teaching based on the findings of error analysis" (Keshavarz, 2012, p. 64).

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the common syntactic errors Saudi EFL learners commit in their exam papers?
2. What are the possible sources of these errors?
3. How can such errors be minimized?

Literature Review

Error Analysis: An Overview and Significance

Previously, errors were considered unwelcome and a hindrance to the language learning process. With the advent of the EA approach, as a reaction to contrastive analysis, making errors came to be seen as motivating and an integral part of the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process. The EA approach added intralingual factors that were neglected in contrastive analysis to L1 interference as the main source of errors. Scholars acknowledged that making errors is a strategy and an indicator of learners' progress in language learning, which in turn helps teachers identify the students' linguistic areas that need to be reinforced (Almahameed & Al-Shaikhli, 2017; Brown, 2014; Candling, 2001; Corder, 1967, 1974, 1981; Ellis, 1994; Gass & Selinker, 1983, 2008; Hendrickson, 1987; Sompong, 2014). Corder (1967) argued that

errors are valuable sources of information, not only for students, but for teachers and researchers too: they provide teachers with indications about the progress of the students; linguists can understand how learners acquire or learn the language; and learners can get resources to learn and develop their language learning. Supporting Corder's positive viewpoint of errors, Brown (2014) illustrated that the students' SLA process will be hindered if they neither make errors nor receive any feedback. Additionally, Hendrickson (1987) emphasized that errors are "signals that actual learning is taking place, they can indicate students' progress and success in language learning" (p. 357). Furthermore, Gass and Selinker (2008) described errors as "red flags" that warn and provide "evidence of the state of a learner's knowledge of the L2" (p. 102).

Making errors is an inevitable part of the learning process, especially when the linguistic systems of L1 and L2 are different. Students can learn from their errors with the help of their teachers' corrective feedback. Errors provide teachers with evidence of the learners' linguistic progress and the linguistic areas that should be reinforced. Al-husban (2018) highlighted the importance of EA in identifying "what students still need to learn; and how to improve their process of learning; the strategies and methods they should use when learning the language; why students add, omit, use wrong forms or words, or disorder structures and sentences; and how to eliminate the use of the mother language in learning a second language" (p. 29). Therefore, errors need to be analyzed to identify their types and sources, and to devise remedial strategies so that students can avoid those errors in advanced levels of language learning.

Models of Error Analysis

This section reviews three different models of EA: Corder's (1967) model, Ellis's (1994) model, and Gass and Selinker's model (2008). Corder's (1967) model went through the stages of collection of a sample learner language through determining the sample that will be utilized and collecting the data from that sample. The second step described the identified errors by classifying errors into different categories. The third step explained these errors by determining their sources.

Ellis (1994) created a four-step model in which a corpus of language is selected and errors are identified, classified, and explained based on their types. Gass and Selinker (2008) developed a six-stage model in which the data are collected and errors are identified, classified based on their types, and quantified based on their frequency. Moreover, the sources of these errors were analyzed and remedial strategies were proposed. These three models are similar in handling EA, but differ somewhat in the sequential steps of dealing with errors, causes of these errors, and the remedial strategies that could minimize such errors.

Sources of Errors

The EA approach added the intralingual factors that were ignored in contrastive analysis to the L1 interference as the main sources of errors. Sompong (2014) unveiled that error analysis "can reveal the sources of these errors and the causes of their frequent occurrence" (p. 110). Scholars classified the sources of errors into interlingual and intralingual factors (Brown, 2014; Corder, 1967; Farooq & Wahid, 2019; Noor, 1996; Richards, 1974; Selinker, 1974). Following Corder's (1967, 1971) taxonomy of the sources of errors, Richards (1974) stated that the learner language errors resulted from three sources: Interlingual, intralingual, and errors caused by faulty teaching techniques.

On the one hand, James (2013) confirmed that it is "impossible to deny totally the effects of MT on TL, since they are ubiquitously and patently obvious" (p. 5). Corder (1971)

pointed out that interlingual errors occur when the learner's native language patterns, structures, and rules are carried over to the TL. They stem from the L1 interference, in which language learners transfer L1 habits into L2, despite the linguistic differences. Moreover, word-for-word translation plays a negative role in error generation. On the other hand, intralingual errors arise from the target language (TL) use and the learning process itself. Overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and hypothesized false concepts were identified as causes of the intralingual errors (Collins, 2018; Corder, 1967; Richards, 1974). Farooq and Wahid (2019) revealed that syntactic errors can be attributed to many factors, such as L1 interference, insufficient knowledge of basic grammatical rules, little or no knowledge of parts of speech, inappropriate use of the dictionary, and overgeneralization. Moreover, students' carelessness and hastiness, especially during exams, can play a role in making errors. Mohammed (2012) conducted a study to identify the sources of errors in Yemeni EFL students' usage of relative clause. He found that most of these errors were interlingual with special reference to intralingual.

Previous Studies

Noor (1996) reviewed several studies to identify the common syntactic errors made by Arabic-speaking learners of English. He found that the most common syntactic errors were related to prepositions, verbs, articles, conjunctions, relative clauses, adverbial clauses, and sentence structure. L1 interference was the most common source of these errors.

Almahameed and Al-Shaikhli (2017) investigated the EFL Jordanians' salient syntactic and semantic errors in essay writing. The results showed that the respondents' syntactic errors were related to the verb-tense agreement, auxiliaries, conjunctions, word order, resumptive pronouns, null-subject, double-subject, as well as superlative, comparative, and possessive pronouns. Verb-tense errors were the most frequent ones.

Many related studies were conducted among EFL learners at Saudi universities (Ababneh, 2017; Alghammas & Alhuwaydi, 2020; Al-khatib, 2012; Al-Sindy, 1994; Farooq & Wahid, 2019; Hafiz et al., 2018; Khatteer, 2019; Othman, 2017; Sawalmeh, 2013; Younes & Albalaw 2015). They aimed to investigate the syntactic errors committed by Saudi EFL university students in written compositions from which the data were extracted. They also identified the sources of errors made, and the remedies for these errors. Most of the above-mentioned studies found that the common syntactic errors were mainly related to the incorrect use of the verb forms (verb tenses, subject-verb agreement), content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs), and functional words (articles, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns). Furthermore, these studies pointed out that the sources of these errors could be ascribed to the interlingual factors, namely L1 negative transfer, followed by the intralingual factors of overgeneralization, simplification, limited knowledge of L2, improper application of rules, and the learners' lack of seriousness and focus. Sompong (2014) stated that "once the sources and causes are revealed, it is possible to determine the remedy, as well as the emphasis and sequence of future instructions" (p. 110). Therefore, as part of the remedial strategies, it is proposed that the teachers' primary responsibility is to increase the students' syntactic awareness by filling the linguistic gaps that impacted negatively on students, providing feedback on the students' errors, showing the differences between the linguistic systems of L1 and L2, exposing students to a variety of writing activities and tasks, and employing effective teaching methods tailored to the students' learning needs. Additionally, students were urged to master the syntactic rules and practice writing skills regularly.

To summarize this section, one can state that making errors is inevitable and healthy for language learners, teachers, and linguists. The most common syntactic errors were generally

related to verb forms, subject-verb agreement, and content and functional word classes. Othman (2017) attributed the sources of errors to the intralingual factors. Except for Othman's study, the reviewed studies traced the errors back to the interlingual errors, i.e., students' L1 negative interference, followed by the intralingual errors of overgeneralization, inadequate knowledge, and improper application of rules. Furthermore, errors could be overcome with the help of teachers, who can raise students' syntactic awareness of the considerable parallels and disparities between the linguistic systems. Learners also have a role in minimizing intralingual errors by avoiding overgeneralization and simplification, and applying the correct and complete rules in frequent writing activities.

Methodology

Research Design

This descriptive qualitative case study employed a content analysis technique derived from Gass and Selinker's (2008) matrix of EA as a framework for the study, in which the data were collected from a sample of 70 mid-term and final paper-based exams of 50 students. Students' erroneous responses to open-ended and multiple-choice questions and syntactic analysis of sentences using tree diagrams were detected based on the deviation from the syntactic rules. The errors identified were classified based on their types, qualitatively analyzed, and supported with a comprehensive list of examples for each category. The frequency of common errors was also counted and represented in tables. The errors were traced back to their expected sources depending on intralingual and interlingual factors and in the light of the errors detected and the teachers' perspectives. Finally, applicable remedial strategies were devised based on the results elicited from the students' erroneous responses and teachers' perspectives to help students avoid these errors in future writings

Compared to Corder's (1967) model and Ellis' (1995) model of EA, it is noticed that Gass and Selinker's (2008) model is an extension of these models. What is also distinctive with Gass and Selinker's (2008) model is considering the frequency of errors and proposing remedial strategies for such errors. Therefore, it is assumed that this model is suitable to achieve the research objectives.

Participants

The participants, who were purposely chosen, were Saudi English-major students in their second and fourth academic years at the University of Bisha. Their native language is Arabic and their second language is English. They studied English in school for eight years. Among other English courses, they took six compulsory writing courses, namely Writing-1, Writing-2, Writing-3, Writing-4, Writing for Specific Purposes, and Research Methods. These courses focused on improving their writing skills, starting with sentences, paragraphs, short and long essays, and ending with hands-on skills such as personal and business letters, emails, application forms, reports, curriculum vitae, and research proposals and papers, with a view to the work environment. Moreover, ten teachers, who have had cumulative experience of more than eight years in teaching several courses at the University of Bisha, participated in structured interviews.

Research Instruments

Making errors is "habitual and can be found in any text written by a learner of a foreign language" (Al-Sindy, 1994, p. 42), regardless of time restrictions. Therefore, the data were collected from a corpus of 70 samples of midterm and final exam papers of the Syntax, Applied Linguistics-2, and Introduction to Linguistics courses taken during the first semester of the

academic year 2021-2022. In addition, structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers of English to form a more comprehensive picture of the syntactic errors that students commonly made in writings. The teachers were asked about the possible sources of these errors and the expected remedies that could help students avoid them.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Ellis (1994) considered “free compositions and examination papers” as a type of the “spontaneous or unplanned data” collection procedures that is more common in the EA than the intentional one and that conveys the actual level of the students’ writings (pp. 49-50). James (2013) called eliciting errors from the students’ exams a ‘controlled elicitation’ of the experimental techniques of EA data collection that involves “the use of **cloze tests**, **dictations**, and even **multiple choice** items” (p. 21, boldface in original). Therefore, as the researcher taught Syntax, Applied Linguistics, Introduction to Linguistics, and Translation courses, students’ midterm and final exam papers were selected as the cross-sectional data source for the study at hand. These papers were chosen as the data sources because the learner’s focus during exams is “on the content rather than the form of what he wants to say or write” (Keshavarz, 2012, p. 80).

James (2013) revealed that in the EA “we assemble a line-up of utterances produced or processed by a learner and ask the ‘witness’ or knower to pick out the one or ones that look suspicious, that is, those which are potentially erroneous” (p. 91). Therefore, the researcher carefully studied the exam papers to detect the students’ overt syntactic errors. Any deviation from the norms and L2 grammatical rules was considered an error that should be analyzed. Specifically, the unit of analysis in this study is students’ error-containing responses to open-ended and multiple-choice questions and their syntactic analysis of sentences using tree diagrams. The identified syntactic errors were described and classified based on the types of errors: tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word choice, run-on sentences, articles, prepositions, word order, and conjunctions. Then, the syntactic errors were explained and discussed thoroughly, and supported with illustrative examples of each type. The common errors were also quantified and represented in tables to identify the most frequent ones that students and teachers need to reconsider.

To triangulate the elicited data from the students’ exam papers, ten teachers were also interviewed using an Imo application, a free application used for audio/video calling and instant messaging, to obtain more information about their students’ writing errors, the possible sources behind these errors, and the proposed remedies that can help students avoid such errors. The interview results were transcribed, grouped into similar themes, and analyzed qualitatively.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: What are the common syntactic errors Saudi EFL learners commit in their exam papers?

To answer the first research question, the students’ syntactic errors were classified into the following categories. Some sentences contained more than one error, so they were analyzed in their respective categories. The errors are shown in italics and boldface in each example. The following examples are just samples; there are many more not mentioned here due to space limitations. The frequency of students’ errors is shown in Table 8.

Types of Syntactic Errors

The Use of Verb Tense

Based on the examples 1-13, students' syntactic errors in the use of the verb forms can be classified into verb omission, improper use of verb forms, addition of unnecessary verbs, incorrect use of infinitive form, improper use of modal verb forms, and run-on sentences juxtaposing verbs and ignoring conjunctions and punctuation.

The predicate is one of the main constituents of a sentence that is always identified by a verb phrase (VP). Nevertheless, the omission of verbs is common in the students' writings, as noticed in example 1. Such errors could be attributed to the intralingual factors of the students' inadequate understanding and incomplete application of grammatical rules. They might get confused because of the various uses of the verb 'to be' as a lexical or auxiliary verb in its simple and progressive aspects.

1.*Syntax \emptyset the internal structure of phrases and sentences.

In the final exams, students were asked about what they have learned from the courses they have taken. Examples 2 and 3 show that they incorrectly used the verb forms. Their use of the '-ing' form and the omission of the auxiliary verb 'to be' occurred neither in the progressive nor in the simple aspects. They did not differentiate between the aspects of the present tense, namely simple, progressive, and perfect. The verb 'to be' in its progressive and perfect aspects is not used in the students' L1. The causes of these errors could also be ascribed to the intralingual factors of the students' incomplete knowledge and inappropriate application of the rules.

2.*We **learning** about the language . . .

3.*I **learning** from this course . . .

Examples 4-6 illustrate the students' incorrect use of the infinitive form. Their syntactic errors were represented by either the omission of 'to' or the use of the wrong forms. Arabic does not have a "to (infinitive)" form, so the source of the incorrect use of the infinitive form is intralingual due to the students' incomplete knowledge of the rule.

4.*. . . how **correct** my mistakes.

5.*Smartphone apps help us to **learning** vocabulary.

6.*I learned how to **understood** the structure of sentence.

Examples 7 and 8 reveal that the students committed syntactic errors represented by the improper use of the verbs that follow the modal auxiliary verbs. They either used the wrong form after the modal verbs, which should be followed by the infinitive form, or dropped the modal verb altogether. Such incorrect use is traceable to the intralingual factors of incomplete knowledge and inappropriate application of rules. Students' L1 does not affect their responses as it does not have modal verbs.

7.*how I can **analyzed** the sentence.

8.*VP-adverbial can **comes** like PP or NP. *In the future the learning \emptyset **become** by smartphone.

As is observed in examples 9-12, students sometimes simplified certain verb forms and resorted to the use of the basic form irrespective of the tense of the action. They added unneeded linking or auxiliary verbs in unnecessary positions, used inappropriate forms, or blended two base forms in the same position. Specifically, they complicated the structure of the sentences as they repeatedly used the unnecessary copula verb with the lexical verb to talk about actions that happened in the simple present or past, where they were supposed to use one or the other

form. Students' failure to apply the correct rules is ascribed to the intralingual factors of overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and false concept of hypothesis.

9. *VP-adverbial *is come* clause, PP, adv, NP.
10. *I *have learn* how to do a good sentence.
11. *Second, I *am understand* the syntax.
12. *It *is includes* two or more bound morphemes.

The use of run-on sentences was also obvious in the students' writings. They made various errors switching between different verb forms and the inappropriate use of conjunctions and punctuations to connect clauses or separate distinct thoughts, as shown in example 13. These errors are traced back to the interlingual factors as long sentences can be applied in Arabic using different punctuation marks in one sentence.

13. *We *learning* about ambiguity and learning about category..... *And learning* about the lexical and finchical *and* what is the different between both of them.

Subject-verb Agreement

Students also faced difficulty in the appropriate application of subject-verb agreement to generate grammatically correct sentences. Specifically, they overgeneralized the omission of 's' for the third person singular in the simple present tense, as shown in examples 14-17, or addition of 's' for the third person plural, as in example 18, where the student was supposed to omit 's' attached to the verb 'make' or use the verb 'increase'. Students also substituted the verb 'to be' for the verb 'to have', as shown in example 22. The source of these errors is the intralingual influence, as the agreement system in English differs from that in Arabic. Specifically, the conjugation in Arabic sentences should be by number and gender, while in English it is only by number. Students' incomplete application of rules and insufficient knowledge are also apparent in these examples.

- 14.*Morphology *study* . . .
- 15.*Applied linguistics *talk* about . . .
- 16.*Desuggestopedia is a teaching method that *help* students
- 17.*Ali *go* to Abha.
- 18.*I think smartphone apps *makes* my vocabulary increased.
- 19.*There *is* two type of ambiguity.
- 20.*The methods *has* . . .
- 21.*The dog *have* one eye.
- 22.*My house *is* four rooms and two bathroom.

The Use of the Subject

Subject and predicate are the main constituents of every complete sentence. However, the inappropriate use of the subject was common in the students' writings, in which they either omitted the subject, as in example 23, or used double subjects (the subject with the pronoun) concurrently, as in examples 24-26. The omission of the subject is ascribed to the students' L1 as it allows the use of the tacit subject pronoun or the attachment of the subject to the verb of the sentence. On the other hand, the subject can either be a noun or a pronoun, but not concurrently in the same position. The source of the application of dual subjects is also intralingual due to the students' incomplete knowledge of L2 rules, as the double subjects (noun and its pronoun) are allowed neither in Arabic, as the students' L1, nor in English.

- 23.*In this course \emptyset learned many things about syntax.

- 24.*Desuggestopedia **it** is a teaching method . . .
- 25.*Morphology **it's** study the function of the word in the sentence.
- 26.*It **is they** can learn so many things from it in every fields.

The Use of the Adjective

The following examples show the students' syntactic errors in the placement of adjectives. Students' disorder and permutation of the adjective after the noun it describes was clear in examples 27-29. They also incorrectly used the comparative and superlative adjectives, as in examples 30-31. In example 30, the student omitted the definite article that should be used before the superlative adjective 'best'. In example 31, the adjective 'cheap' is monosyllabic, but the student used both 'more' before it and added the suffix '-er' to the adjective. The sources that led to the adjectives' incorrect placement were the students' L1 interference represented by the use of the adjective after the noun it describes. Word-for-word translation was also present in this regard. The students' inadequate knowledge of the correct use of the comparative and superlative adjectives was another source of these errors.

- 27.*Phonology is the study of systems **sounds**.
- 28.*Ambiguity **lexical** . . .
- 29.* . . . to get **new** a word
- 30.* . . . and know which of this methods is **best**.
- 31.*Smartphone apps are **more** cheaper than books.

The Use of Pronouns

Subject and object pronouns substitute the nouns they refer to. In the following examples, it is noticed that the students generally got confused in the use of subject, object, and reflexive pronouns. In example 32, the student erroneously replaced the subject pronoun 'I' with the object pronoun 'me'. In example 33, the student substituted the male third-person singular pronoun 'He' for the neutral subject pronoun 'it'. In example 34, the student substituted the reflexive pronoun 'yourself' for 'themselves'. It is thought that L1 interference does not play a role in this regard. Instead, the sources of these errors are attributable to the students' insufficient knowledge of the use of L2 pronouns.

- 32.*How can **me** learn from these apps
- 33.*Complementizer: **He** gives . . .
- 34.*The students can find the information by **yourself**.

The Use of Definite and Indefinite Articles

Learners' errors in examples 35-37 were in the form of omission, addition, or the improper use of articles. In examples 35-36, the necessary articles were not used before the countable nouns. In example 37, the definite article 'the' was unnecessary. Such errors could be ascribed to L1 interference because the non-existence of indefinite articles in Arabic led the learners to omit them in English.

- 35.*Desuggestopedia is \emptyset teaching method.
- 36.*Translation is about transferring \emptyset meaning from \emptyset source language to \emptyset target language.
- 37.*Seeking **the** knowledge . . .

The Use of Prepositions

As in the case of articles, students added, omitted, or used prepositions inappropriately. Such errors distort the intended meaning of sentences as the meaning of some expressions

changes depending on the prepositions they use. In examples 38-40, the students removed the necessary prepositions, whereas in examples 41-43, they added unnecessary prepositions. Specifically, there was also redundancy in using the preposition 'of'. The students erroneously substituted some prepositions for others, as in examples 44-46. L1 negative transfer and L2 inadequate knowledge of the proper use of prepositions played an important role in the students' errors. Students' literal translation also played a role in the inappropriate use of prepositions.

- 38.*Phonetics is a branch \emptyset linguistics.
- 39.*Morphology is the study \emptyset forms.
- 40.*I learned \emptyset this course . . .
- 41.*Syntax: the structure and ordering of components within *of* sentences.
- 42.*Seeking *in* knowledge \emptyset obligation on every Muslim.
- 43.*Syntax is a branch of study *of* structure *of* sentence.
- 44.*The messenger *to* Allah.
- 45.*Audiolingual method is teaching method that focus *in* . . .
- 46.**On* my opinion....

The Use of Conjunctions

Conjunctions are used to connect words, phrases, and sentences. In examples 47-49, it is obvious that the students committed syntactic errors in the omission, addition, or improper use of conjunctions. In example 47, the student omitted the conjunction 'and' that should be used to connect phrases. In examples 48-49, it is clear that there are redundant conjunctions. Students were supposed to use one conjunction before the last entity at the end of the sentence, but they were influenced by Arabic, which uses multiple conjunctions in one sentence. Inadequate knowledge of the proper use of conjunctions in L2 could also be another source of errors.

- 47.*Semantics study structure of phrases \emptyset the sentence.
- 48.*The grammar translation method *and* direct method and audio lingual method...
- 49.*VP-adverbial can come in adverb *or* clause *or* PP or NP.

Substitution of Word Classes

The proper use of the word classes plays a crucial role in sentence structure. However, students' word choice was inappropriate and did not match the word functions in examples 50-54. Students erroneously substituted some content words for others. In example 50, the student substituted the verb 'advise' for the noun 'advice'. The noun 'life' was replaced with the verb 'live' as in example 51. The noun 'difference' was replaced with the adjective 'different' as in example 52. In example 53, the student substituted the adjective 'English' for the noun 'England'. In example 54, the noun 'analysis' was replaced with the verb 'analyze' despite using the definite article that precedes the noun. This indicates that the students did not differentiate between the content words and their functions in sentences. Such errors can be attributed to the students' inadequate knowledge of L2 and inappropriate application of the rules.

- 50.*I *advise* them to use and download the following apps.
- 51.*Culture is a complete way of *live*.

52.*The *different* between lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity ...

53*Syntax is a branch of linguistics that studies the formation of structure of *England* sentences.

54*We learned the *analyze* \emptyset the sentences.

The Use of Nouns

Substituting singular with plural and vice versa was also one of the most common syntactic errors committed in the students' writings. Examples 55-58 reveal that an 's' for the plural was left out or added to the singular. On the one hand, examples 55-57 represent the omission of the necessary 's' that should be added to the countable nouns. On the other hand, example 58 shows that the student added an unneeded 's' despite the use of the indefinite article 'an' before the noun. The intralingual influence was apparent in these examples as students did not apply the rules correctly. They didn't take these errors into account because they may have concentrated on the content and forgotten the form, thinking that such errors were of no consequence.

55.*There can be many auxiliary *verb* and one lexical *verbs*.

56.*In this course I learned many important *point*.

57.*Blending is to put two or more *word* together.

58*Seeking knowledge is an *obligations* on every Muslim.

In one of the syntax midterm exams, students were asked to classify the elements of the term 'determiners', as modifiers of nouns. Two students classified the article 'the' as a demonstrative. Another student identified the adverb 'there' as a demonstrative. Moreover, some students classified 'here', 'me', 'have', and 'mine' as possessive pronouns. Another student classified 'were' and 'was' as examples of quantifiers. These errors resulted from the students' insufficient knowledge of the word classes, specifically the determiner elements.

In Syntax final exam papers, students were asked to choose the best answer for the underlined words in the following sentences. Their errors are shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Students' Erroneous Answers to Some of the Multiple-choice Questions*

The sentences	Erroneous answers	Correction
I know <u>that</u> you work hard.	determiner, coordinator, auxiliary verb	complementizer
He gets <u>in</u> .	preposition, complementizer, pronoun	adverb
He lives <u>in</u> Abha.	pronoun, determiner, article	preposition
He manages his company <u>honestly</u> .	verb, noun, adjective	adverb
He <u>has</u> a comfortable car.	auxiliary verb, preposition	main verb
<u>Can</u> can can the can easily.	main auxiliary verb, modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb	proper noun
Total of errors	17	

The students' responses, shown in Table 1, indicate that they did not distinguish between demonstratives and complementizers, adverbs and prepositions, adjective and adverbs, and main and auxiliary verbs. In the last sentence, the teacher's goal was to confirm the idea that an English word can have multiple functions in a sentence, such as 'can', which can be analyzed differently as a proper noun, modal auxiliary verb, lexical verb, and noun, depending on its position in the sentence. Students have limited knowledge of the elements of the word classes, which constitute the basis for mastering syntax.

In the final exams of the syntax course, students were also asked to analyze the following sentences syntactically using top-down tree diagrams. Their analysis is reported in the tables below.

Table 2*Polite students opened the door quietly.*

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
Polite students	noun, adjective phrase (AdjP), subject, pronoun	5	noun phrase (NP)
students	subject, adverb	4	noun
door	pronoun	1	noun
quietly	adjective, noun	4	adverb
Total of errors		14	

Table 3*The weather in Al-Namas is very interesting.*

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
weather	adjective, verb	3	noun
in	pronoun	1	preposition
very interesting	noun phrase (NP)	1	adjective phrase (AdjP)
very	adjective, main verb	4	degree adverb
interesting	verb, noun	4	adjective
Total of errors		13	

Table 4*The white cat slept deeply under the red mat.*

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
white	noun, preposition	2	adjective
cat	verb	2	noun
slept	adjective, noun	5	verb
deeply	adjective, noun phrase (NP)	6	adverb
under	adverb, determiner, verb	3	preposition
red	noun	5	adjective
mat	adjective, object, adverb, auxiliary verb	5	noun
Total of errors		28	

Table 5*Gently, he repaired the mobile for his son.*

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
Gently	adjective	1	adverb phrase (AdvP)
he	determiner, preposition, noun	6	pronoun
the	preposition	1	determiner
mobile	adverb	1	noun
for	determiner	1	preposition
his son	prepositional phrase (PP), preposition, pronoun, auxiliary verb	6	noun phrase (NP)
Total of errors		16	

Table 6

Unfortunately, his car stopped in the main street.

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
his	pronoun (<i>without specifying whether it is a possessive pronoun or a subject pronoun</i>)	3	determiner
the main street	adjective phrase (AdjP)	2	noun phrase (NP)
the	adjective	1	determiner
main	noun	3	adjective
street	adjective, adverb	3	noun
Total of errors		12	

Table 7

My friend sends his passport very quickly.

Constituents	Students' errors	Frequency	Correction
sends	adjective, noun	2	verb
his passport	complementizer phrase (CP), prepositional phrase (PP)	2	noun phrase (NP)
his	pronoun, verb, preposition	4	determiner
passport	adjective, verb	4	noun
very	adjective	5	degree adverb
quickly	adjective, noun phrase (NP)	6	adverb
Total of errors		23	

The students' responses, shown in tables 2-7, reveal that they did not differentiate between the adjectives and adverbs, the main and auxiliary verbs, the prepositions and pronouns, and the adjectives ending in '-ing' and the progressive verb forms. They overgeneralized that any word ending in '-ly' is an adverb, neglecting that many words ending in '-ly' are analyzed as adjectives. They also overgeneralized that any word ending in '-ing' is a verb regardless of the adjectives ending in '-ing' used to describe things and situations. They also did not consider the differences between the constituents and their functions in the sentence.

Table 8 shows the frequency of syntactic errors extracted from a corpus of 70 exam-paper models. Some of these examples were mentioned above and others are summarized in this table due to space limitations.

Table 8*Frequency of Syntactic Errors in the Students' Writings*

	Classification of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Errors committed in students' responses to open questions	The use of verb-tense and aspect	34	13.66 %
	Subject-verb agreement	23	9.24 %
	The use of the subject	7	2.81 %
	The use of the adjective	9	3.61 %
	The use of pronouns	4	1.61 %
	Definite and indefinite articles	6	2.41 %
	The use of prepositions	12	4.81 %
	The use of conjunctions	7	2.81 %
	Substitution of word classes	14	5.62 %
	The use of nouns	10	4 %
Errors committed in students' answers to multiple-choice questions	Determiners in multiple-choice questions	17	6.82
Errors committed in students' syntactic analysis of sentences using tree diagrams	Syntactic analysis using tree diagrams	106	42.6 %
Total		249	100 %

Supporting the results obtained from the students' exam papers, teachers agreed that the students' incorrect use of verb forms predominated in their writings. For example, one teacher reported that the common syntactic errors were "*incomplete sentence structure, subject-verb agreement error, improper use of conjunctions, prepositions, and articles.*" Teachers also pointed out that students made errors related to the improper use of conjunctions, prepositions, articles, punctuation, adverbs, and relative clauses.

The results of this study were in line with those of the previous studies (Ababneh, 2017; Al-khatib, 2012; Al-Sindy, 1994; Farooq & Wahid, 2019; Hafiz et al., 2018; Khatter, 2019; Sawalmeh, 2013; Younes & Albalaw, 2015). Most of the students' errors in sentence structure

were related to the use of verb forms and subject-verb agreement. Moreover, the teachers referred to the students' errors in using articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and words permutation. These errors were common among the Arabic-speaking learners of English.

Sources of the Errors

RQ2: What are the possible sources of these errors?

Since Arabic and English descend from different language families, they have widely differing linguistic systems. Therefore, the sources of the erroneous examples were mainly interlingual, i.e., L1 negative interference and habits transfer. The sources overlapped and their influence on students' writings was obvious. Students tried to match and transfer the habits they have acquired from L1 to the TL they are learning. Similarly, the influence of the intralingual factors on the students' writings was apparent in their inappropriate application of grammatical rules and their insufficient knowledge of the TL rules. These results were also compatible with those of the previous studies conducted in the Saudi context (Ababneh, 2017; Alghammas & Alhuwaydi, 2020; Al-khatib, 2012; Al-Sindy, 1994; Farooq & Wahid, 2019; Hafiz et al., 2018; Khatter, 2019; Sawalmeh, 2013; Younes & Albalaw, 2015) as the interlingual factors were more frequent and dominant than the intralingual ones. The results of this study were inconsistent with the results of Othman's (2017) study, which found that the intralingual factors predominated over the interlingual ones in influencing the students' errors.

Most of the teachers interviewed agreed that the sources of the syntactic errors were insufficient writing activities and practices in and outside the classrooms. One teacher said that "*the insufficient exercises in the classroom*" can cause such errors. Another teacher noted that:

Learners always want high grades without learning properly and without practicing more. Learners are also not interested in learning grammatical rules and lack self-instinctive motivation. They are greatly fossilized to memorize without understanding. Moreover, they are habituated to study in a limited syllabus.

This conclusion confirmed that of the previous studies of Hafiz et al. (2018) and Alghammas and Alhuwaydi (2020). Three teachers attributed the sources of errors to the teachers' use of the students' mother tongue in the classroom. For example, a teacher revealed that the sources of the students' errors were "*the use of mother tongue in the classroom by some teachers. Students try translating everything before writing, and because Arabic and English are structurally different, they commit mistakes.*" Likewise, some teachers referred to the teachers' use of inappropriate teaching methods in the classroom. This finding was in accord with Corder's (1967, 1971) and Richards' (1974) taxonomy of the sources of errors, and with the previous studies of Alghammas and Alhuwaydi (2020) and Younes and Albalaw (2015), which concluded that inadequate teaching methods played a role in the students' production of errors.

The teachers also clarified that the students' 'carelessness' played a role in their syntactic errors. Moreover, the bad habit of memorizing some texts and rewriting them during activities or exams can affect students' performance level in the writing process. Furthermore, teachers referred to the students' attitudes towards learning English, which could demotivate them and affect not only their ability to write well but also their inability to master other language skills. To summarize, a lack of the following: practice, in-class exercises, adequate knowledge, familiarity with grammar, inadequate teaching methods, as well as self-confidence, were strongly present in the teachers' minds as sources of the students' errors in writing.

Remedial Strategies for the Errors

RQ3: How can such errors be minimized?

As teachers have accumulated teaching experience, they proposed plausible remedial strategies to minimize the students' syntactic errors. They generally referred to the teacher's effective role in emphasizing grammatical rules, identifying problematic areas at the syntactic level, and teaching accordingly. They also focused on more writing practice, exercises, and effective assessment. One teacher suggested that *"teachers can use online and face to face as well as controlled/free writing activities to practice English grammar and writing knowledge."* *"Students should be enabled to self-assess, self-edit, and self-correct."*

The responsibility is not that of teachers only. Rather, students also have a great responsibility to avoid such errors, as they should be independent and responsible for their own learning. The teachers affirmed that students should practice writing, acquire sufficient knowledge, employ self-practice and self-editing, and collaborate with their peers. Interestingly, one teacher stated that students *"need to change their perspective and focus on obtaining knowledge, emphasize on perseverance, and avoid such errors as there is no any second word without practice as it makes a man perfect."* Technology employment was also present among the teachers' plausible remedies. One teacher urged students to use applications such as Google Docs and Grammarly for writing practice and editing.

Based on the discussion of the findings and the erroneous examples given, the conclusion can be drawn that students tried to do their best in writing grammatically correct sentences, but they failed to apply the above-mentioned rules appropriately. They faced writing difficulties and, as a result, they deviated from the correct grammatical rules. Their syntactic errors were mainly manifested in the addition, omission, improper use, and permutation of verb forms, subject-verb agreement, content and functional word classes, and determiners. Specifically, their substitution of adjectives with adverbs, nouns with verbs, and vice versa, revealed that they did not distinguish between the functions and positions of words. Moreover, students mostly used the verb 'to be' along with infinitives in the writing tasks, thinking that the verb 'to be' should be used with every lexical verb.

It can also be deduced that such erroneous examples are attributable to the negative transfer of L1. Students also tended to think in, and transfer the habits of, their mother tongue and translated their thoughts into English. The examples mentioned above are evidence for the students' inadequate knowledge of L2 as they applied the L2 rules inappropriately. Therefore, teachers could play an effective role in helping students perform error-free writing tasks and activities by making them conscious of the word classes, and that some English words can perform different functions depending on their positions in sentences. Teachers should clarify more the differences between adjectives and adverbs, prepositions and pronouns, the subject pronouns and other pronouns, the adjectives ending in -ing and the progressive verb forms, and the degree adverbs. The influence of the interlingual and intralingual factors should also be generally highlighted so as to maximize correctly-structured sentences in students' writings. Effective teaching methods, corrective feedback, and guided teacher-supported writing practices in the classroom are recommended for the students to avoid these syntactic errors. Students also are responsible for their own learning, and should practice writing outside the classroom in their spare time with the help of the open educational resources on the Internet.

In addition to what has been reviewed in the previous studies, many important points are raised in this study. First, students usually used the progressive verb form without an auxiliary verb (examples 2-3). Second, some students blended two lexical verbs concurrently in the same position, especially the use of the verb 'to be' with other lexical verbs (examples 9-

12). They assumed that the verb 'to be' should be used with every verb in the sentence. Third, students inappropriately used the verb form following the modal auxiliary verb, forgetting that it should be in the infinitive (examples 7-8). Finally, the incorrect placement of adjectives after the nouns they describe is unique in the context of this study (examples 27-31).

This original study contributes to the existing body of knowledge since it is the first study contextualized among students enrolled at the University of Bisha. Following Keshavarz's (2012) linguistic-based classification of errors, this study casts light on one linguistic domain, namely, the authentic syntactic errors produced by EFL students in specific writing activities (exam papers) and a specific context (the Saudi context), drawing on Gass and Selinker's (2008) model of EA. Phonological, orthographic, morphological, and lexico-semantic errors were disregarded as they were beyond the scope of the present study. The current study identified the syntactic errors and the potential sources of these errors, along with suggesting some remedial strategies deduced from the results and the teachers' comments. Compared to the previous studies mentioned above, the data source of this study was the students' actual and spontaneous writings in exam papers, focusing on the analysis of open-ended and multiple-choice responses and the students' syntactic analysis of some sentences using tree diagrams. Furthermore, what is unique about this study is the triangulation of the students' data with their experienced teachers' opinions regarding students' errors, the causes of these errors, and the teachers' proposed suggestions for minimizing such errors. It is believed that the results of this study will be helpful to teachers, course designers, policymakers, and students, because being aware of such errors provides stakeholders with deeper insight and a better understanding of students' learning level.

Conclusion

Errors are a natural outcome of language use and an important source of knowledge for stakeholders. Error analysis, in turn, increases the teachers' and students' awareness of the syntactic errors to be avoided in the future. The present study examined the common syntactic errors produced by Saudi EFL learners in their exam papers. It also identified the sources of these errors and suggested remedial strategies that could maximize students' proficiency in English writings. The results of this study are summarized in the following points:

1. Saudi EFL learners' syntactic errors were categorized into the inappropriate use of verb forms, subject-verb agreement, content and functional words, and determiners. Most of the students' frequent errors were related to the inappropriate use of the verb forms and subject-verb agreement.
2. The interlingual influence of L1 negative interference and the intralingual influence represented by overgeneralization, inadequate knowledge of L2 rules, and inappropriate application of such rules, were the main contributing factors to the students' errors. Furthermore, the teachers traced these errors back to the lack of practice, inappropriate teaching methods, lack of confidence, and students' focus on good grades.
3. Teachers could engage students actively in writing activities and self-correction in the classroom. They could also expose students to the disparities between the Arabic and English linguistic systems for minimizing the negative transfer of L1 habits and for errors not to become fossilized. Teachers' selective strategy to deal with errors is also helpful for students to feel confident in using the language without fear of making errors. Being conscious of students' errors leads teachers to a better understanding of their students' needs and enables them to devise effective teaching techniques accordingly. Moreover, course designers could defer the complicated linguistic areas encountered by students to

the advanced levels or make them easier to understand. These considerations could lead students to create flawless writings in the future.

4. Writing is a complex skill that requires continuous practical effort on the part of the learners themselves. They should benefit from their errors, feel confident, practice writing extensively, and be mindful when applying the grammatical rules. They should step away from memorizing grammatical rules to practicing them. Additionally, since technology has made it possible for students to practice language independently and freely, employing learning applications, social networks, online tests and short quizzes, and self-study courses, could help students practice writing, be self-assessed, get corrective feedback, and become effective writers.

This study provides a solid basis for future research. Since English programs contain study plans with many writing courses, future researchers could examine the students' use of writing strategies in writing genres and their adherence to the writing norms. To meet the requirements of the job market, researchers could also investigate the syntactic errors made in students' research proposals, business letters, emails, job applications, cover letters, and curriculum vitae. Since speaking and writing are productive language skills, errors in students' speech could also be explored in future research.

Bio

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The Applicability of Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies on Human and Machine Arabic Translations of an English Text

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الملخص

تناولت الدراسة تحليلاً وظيفياً منهجياً لنص ترجم من الإنجليزية إلى العربية ترجمة بشرية وأخرى آلية، وقد انتهج في ذلك نموذج جيرمي مندي المنهجي في الدراسات الوصفية الترجمية وباستناد على أسلوب هالدي لتحويل اللغة على الصعيد الفكري والتبادلي والنصي. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل مدى فاعلية تطبيق هذا النموذج على التراجم البشرية والآلية العربية. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى وجود تناوب على الأصعدة الثلاثة بوتيرة بارزة في النص البشري مقارنة بالنص الآلي والذي رُأي أنه قد يكون ذا ارتباط بمفهوم عموميات الترجمة بالإضافة إلى الفارق الزمني بين نشر النص والترجمة بالإضافة إلى الاختلاف الثقافي للمتلقي وكون الترجمة جزء من برنامج تدريبي.



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Abstract

This paper intends to analyze translation shifts between an English source text (ST) and two Arabic (human and machine) translations (HT and MT) by applying Jeremy Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies, adapting a systemic functional approach using Halliday's ideational, interpersonal, and textual levels of language analysis. The overall aim of the study is to test the practicality of the model on Arabic human and machine translations of the same English source text. Results suggest substantial shifts at the three metafunctional levels of language in the human translation compared to the machine translation. It is suggested that these shifts could be linked to the concept of translation universals in addition to being possibly motivated by the somewhat big publishing time gap, the different cultures of the source text and human target text audiences and the fact that the latter was written as part of a translator training program.

Keywords: computational linguistics; descriptive translation studies; machine translation; systemic functional linguistics

Introduction

In parts of the Arab world, translations are still being juxtaposed with alternative translations followed by dictated amendments. This study attempted to apply a more ‘neutral’ approach adapted from Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on the ideational, interpersonal, and textual language levels. In this approach, an English source text (ST) and two Arabic human and machine translations of the text (HT and MT), were analyzed in order to attempt to locate shifts in meaning. Jeremy Munday’s Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies published in Theo Hermans’ book *Crosscultural Transgression* (2014) was adapted. Several books were consulted to accurately carry out the systemic functional analysis of the two texts. These include Halliday’s *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2014), Thompson’s *Introducing Functional Grammar* (2013), *Using Functional Grammar* (Butt et al., 2000) and *A Workbook for Getting Started with Functional Grammar* (Droga & Humphrey, 2002). The overall aim of this paper was to test the practicality of the model presented by Munday, especially when applied to human and machine Arabic translations of the same English ST.

Literature Review

Only a few studies have attempted a systemic functional analysis of Arabic translations (e.g., Althumali, 2021; Al Herz, 2021). Althumali (2021) proposed the use of SFL as a tool for translator training and assessment. He demonstrated its effectiveness by conducting an experiment on two groups, one trained to translate using an SFL approach and the other without. His results indicated the usefulness of SFL-based training in aiding translators to interpret more accurately. Al Herz (2021) carried out an SFL analysis of two translations of the same source text. He focused on modality and found “discrepancies” between the two target texts which he attributes to stylistic preferences of the two translators (p. 151). This study intends to gather further evidence on the practicality of SFL analysis of Arabic translations by examining human and machine translations of the same source text, adapting Munday’s Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies. Because Halliday’s systemic functional grammar forms an important part of Munday’s analysis, a clarification of it is provided next.

Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar

According to Halliday and Hasan (1985, p.10), a text is “language that is functional.” This means that the function of a text should be considered when attempting to analyze it. This includes examining it in both its context of culture and context of situation. Context of culture can be defined here as “the sum of all meanings it is possible to mean in that particular culture” (Butt et al., 2001, p. 3), while context of situation can be described as the more specific contexts inside that context of culture. What follows is a description of the three levels of meaning reflected by the context of situation.

Ideational Metafunction

In his highly influential book *Introducing Functional Grammar*, Halliday describes the ideational function of language as the “human experience” (Halliday, 2014, p. 29). This agrees with Thompson’s definition of the term as “our experience of the world, including the worlds in our own minds” (Thompson, 2013, p. 30). What both these descriptions imply is that the ideational level of language highlights the choices of grammar and vocabulary that reveal the writer or

speaker's ideology and the way he or she views the world. However, Halliday further distinguishes between two components of the ideational level, which are "the experiential and the logical" (Halliday, 2014, p. 29). This paper focused only on the experiential component when addressing the ideational function of the text. A good way of explaining the experiential function of language is by asking the question "Who does what to whom under what circumstances?" (Butt et al., 2000, p. 46). This means that in the experiential function of language, we examine three smaller parts of the text which are termed participant, process, and circumstance. A participant can be a nominal group or a prepositional phrase, a process is always a verbal group, and a circumstance might be an adverbial group, prepositional phrase, or sometimes a nominal group (Butt et al., 2000). By analyzing the participants, processes, and circumstances in terms of transitivity, the experiential metafunction can be examined (Droga & Humphrey, 2002).

Interpersonal Metafunction

According to Halliday, language is "enacting our personal and social relationships with the other people around us" (Halliday, 2014, p. 29). Thompson adds that we use language to interact with other people to "influence their behavior, to express our own viewpoint on things in the world, and to elicit or change theirs" (Thompson, 2013, p. 30). Linguists have distinguished two kinds of interactions for which we use language. The first is to exchange information, and the second is to exchange goods and services (Butt et al., 2000). A further distinction can be made regarding the type of exchange happening. It can either be giving or demanding, which means that language can be used to give information or goods and services, and it can also be used to demand information or goods and services. For example, the clause "[h]ow many miles to Babylon?" is considered demanding information, while the clause "[t]hree score miles and ten" is considered giving information (Butt et al., 2000, p. 87). Similarly, the clause "cross Macquarie Street" is demanding a service and the clause "I'll make the tea" is giving a service. An analysis of the interpersonal metafunction also consists of investigating the *mood* and *residue* of the text in question (Droga & Humphrey, 2002).

Textual Metafunction

The third function of language identified by Halliday is the textual metafunction (Halliday, 2014). It is "related to the construction of the text" and is "regarded as an enabling or facilitating function" (Halliday, 2014, p. 30). Thompson gives a much clearer description of the textual metafunction by asserting that when we use language, "we organize our messages in ways that indicate how they fit in with the other messages around them and with the wider context in which we are talking or writing" (Thompson, 2013, p. 30). It is used for connecting the experiential and interpersonal meanings and making them a comprehensible whole (Butt et al., 2000). Examining the textual metafunction of a text involves analyzing the beginning of a clause, or the *theme* as it is known by systemic functional linguists. This analysis determines the way the speaker or writer intended the message to be conveyed. For example, the two clauses "[t]he lion beat the unicorn all round town" and "[t]he unicorn was beaten all round town by the lion" are said to be different in their textual metafunction because in the first clause, "[t]he lion" is in the theme position (meaning at the beginning of the clause), while in the second clause, "[t]he unicorn" occupies the theme position (Butt et al., 2000, p. 134). What this means is that the first clause is delivering a message about the lion, whereas the second clause is delivering a message about the unicorn. The rest of the clause other than the theme is identified by linguists as the *rheme* and is defined by Baker as "what the speaker says about the theme" (2011, p. 133).

Methodology

Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies

The study followed a qualitative approach with quantifying measures utilizing Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies. The model is an adaptation of Toury's descriptive system explained in his book *Descriptive Translation Studies—and Beyond* (1995). It combines three tools for its analysis (Hermans, 2014). The first is the aforementioned Halliday's systemic functional grammar, which examines language through three levels of meaning. The second is corpus linguistics, which uses electronic tools, such as *Wordsmith* and *AntConc*, to generate lists of word concordances and word frequencies in addition to other advantages that aid the researcher in the analysis of texts. The third is an analysis of the cultural context of the two compared texts by “locating the results within the wider publishing, political and sociocultural contexts” (Hermans, 2014, p. 80). All three analytical tools were applied to the texts. Some difficulty was faced during the corpus stage as not all tools recognize Arabic characters accurately, particularly during wordlist extractions. Fortunately, a suitable tool, Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014), was located and used to carry out the wordlist analysis as well as total word count (tokens), unique word count (types), and type/token ratio.

The Texts

The Source Text

The ST is an English extract that consists of 584 words divided into seven paragraphs (Appendix A). It is taken from the book *The Mass Media and Modern Society* written by Theodore Peterson, et al. and published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1965. Not much information is available online regarding the text or even the book in general with the exception of a somewhat miniature review about the text mentioned in the book *Makers of the Media Mind: Journalism Educators and Their Ideas* (Sloan, 1990). The extract is titled *Man as Symbol Maker* and discusses the unique ability of humans to attach a symbolic meaning to everything around them. It appears, at first, as if the text is purely philosophical, but after careful reading, it seems that it combines notions taken from several fields of study, including sociology, theology, and even economics. This combination of several fields into one text was one of the main factors the text was chosen for analysis as it might be interesting to discover how much of the Western ideas and thought expressed in the text would be retained when translated for a target audience that might possibly disagree with some of these ideas.

The Target Texts

The HT is an Arabic translation of *Man as Symbol Maker* (Peterson, et al., 1965), translated by Ghada Al-Amoudi (Appendix B). Both the source and the human target text were initially located on the website *Translators Avenue* (Translatorsavenue.com, 2014), which is a website that aims at “giving professional models of translation in different fields in order to help potential translators gain more experience through studying such models” (ProZ.com, 2014). However, upon further research, it was determined that the text was originally published in a newsletter promoting a translator training program supervised by a company called Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Translation, Distribution & Publishing, or TAG for short (Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Translation, Distribution & Publishing, 2010). The text was published to showcase the quality of the translator training program that this company provided. Moreover, communication with the translator revealed that the purpose of the translation was for translator training (G. Al-Amoudi, personal communication, December 26, 2018).

The same source text was translated using Google Translate (Appendix C). Google currently uses a neural machine translation system for several languages, including Arabic (Alkhawaja et al., 2020). Google translate was used due to its popularity.

Results

Computer-Generated Statistics of the Texts

Table 1 presents some word statistics for the three texts: ST, HT, and MT. The analysis was carried out using Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014), the corpus tool used to analyze the texts. The table shows some clear differences between the texts. First, the HT is 193 words longer than the MT. The HT is 813 words (tokens) long, while the MT is 620 tokens long. Second, the HT uses slightly more variant vocabulary than the MT. The corpus analysis shows that 391 different words (types) were used in the HT, while only 276 types were used in the MT. The overall type-token ratio clearly reveals the variance between the two texts as well as the high percentage of repetitiveness. It also reveals a closer similarity between the ST and MT compared to the HT.

Table 1

Word Statistics Adapted from Munday's Model (Hermans, 2014)

	ST	HT	MT
Word count (tokens)	649	813	620
Different words (types)	288	391	276
Type-token ratio	44.38	48.09	44.52

Another advantage of corpus tools is the generation of word frequency statistics, as shown in Table 2. The table shows the 10 most frequent words in the three texts, and the words are ranked by frequency. The ST's most frequent words appear on the left side of the ST column with the number of times they were repeated next to it. Similarly, the HT and MT's most frequent words appear on the left side of their respective columns with the number of times they were repeated next to them. The table again reveals that the MT appears to resemble the ST more than the HT. The use of the word *man* and its translation الإنسان (*lit. the human being*) are almost equally frequent in both the ST and MT. On the other hand, the HT uses the same word 21 times which is higher than its frequency in both ST and MT.

Table 2*Wordlist for the ST, HT, and MT Adapted from Munday's Model (Hermans, 2014)*

ST		HT		MT	
Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
,	39	و	40	هـ	34
.	30	هـ	37	.	30
of	23	ب	26	,	28
a	20	ان	23	و	25
the	18	الانسان	21	ل	17
and	14	من	20	ب	15
to	14	,	20	ان	14
his	13	.	20	الانسان	14
man	13	ل	18	من	14
he	12	ف	18	ها	9

The Metafunctional Analysis of the Texts

Appendix D highlights shifts at the three metafunctional levels of language. The majority of shifts appear in the HT, while the MT was found to more closely resemble the ST. It was noted from the analysis that the three metafunctions of language sometimes overlapped, with the Arabic text proving more difficult to apply systemic functional grammar to. What follows is a discussion of each level.

Ideational Metafunction

Most shifts at the ideational level relate to religion. The ST claims on several occasions that God is a symbol made by man. The HT either alters the language used for this claim or omits it completely. In the following example, the HT alters the language used in the ST when it attempts to assert that humans are different than animals when reacting to the consumption of food and that animals react to food by simply eating it, while humans will avoid some foods for different reasons.

ST. "He may avoid some foods for fear of offending the deity."

HT. "فقد يحرم على نفسه ألوانا من الطعام المحرم في الدين والعقيدة"

(Lit. "He may forbid on himself, colors of forbidden food in religion and faith.")

MT. "وقد يتجنب بعض الأطعمة خوفا من الإساءة إلى الإله."

(Lit. "He may avoid some foods for fear of offending the god/deity.")

The ST uses the words *avoid*, *fear*, *offending*, and *deity*, while the HT uses *يحرم*, *محرم*, *الدين*, *العقيدة* (*lit. forbids, forbidden, religion, and faith*), suggesting an intentional alteration of meaning. The ST appears to distance itself from the human who avoids some foods for religious purposes in contrast to the HT, which uses terminology utilized by many religious people when referring to religious matters, especially in the Arab world. On the other hand, the MT much closely follows the ST, rendering word-for-word many of the aforementioned terms. It is also worth mentioning that throughout the ST, *man* and *men*, are translated in both the HT and MT as *الإنسان* (*lit. the human*

being). The ST appears to be sexist with the continuous use of *man, men, he, and his*, which was clear from examining the word frequency statistics in Table 2 above.

The following is another example from the two texts where a different strategy was undertaken:

ST. "He envelopes himself ... in religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except through his symbolic system."

HT. "و غلف حياته بـ ... الطقوس اللاهوتية"

(Lit. "He wrapped his life in ... religious rituals.")

MT. "إنه يغلف نفسه بـ ... طقوس دينية لا يستطيع أن يرى أو يعرف أي شيء إلا من خلال نظامه الرمزي"

(Lit. "He envelops himself in ... religious rituals that he cannot see or know anything except through his symbolic system.")

The ST phrase *that he cannot see or know anything except through his symbolic system* was completely omitted from the HT. The phrase appears to accuse human beings of examining reality only through their faith, which they wrap themselves in, meaning that the ST chose to somewhat negatively comment on this attribute that some human beings might have, while the translator of the HT decided that refraining from commenting on that aspect is the better choice. On the other hand, the MT did not omit any phrase in the ST indicating that omission is a translation strategy used by human translators.

Interpersonal Metafunction

At the interpersonal level, there appears to be a number of shifts related to the relationship between the ST writers and their potential audience and the HT writer and her potential audience. One aspect is the sexist language used in the ST with the continuous use of *man, men, he, and his* to refer to human beings. Both HT and MT avoid this by rendering man and men to الإنسان (*lit. the human being*) and then referring to that neutral word rather than using the words *he* or *his*. It must be noted, however, that the ST was published in 1965, whereas the HT was published in 2009, which might justify the reason behind these shifts with sexism becoming a more prominent issue in writing and life in general in the Western world (Mills, 2008). It is interesting to note that all the machine translation systems tested did not render *man* to its literal meaning. This reflects, perhaps, the constant recurrence of such a rendition in many comparable translated texts used by many of these systems for translation reference (Alkhawaja et al., 2020).

Another aspect related to the relationships between the writers and the audiences in both the ST and HT is the difference in the way the two scholars quoted are presented in both texts. In the ST, the first scholar quoted is Kenneth Boulding, who "reminds us, a dog has no idea that there were dogs on earth before he arrived and will be here after he has gone." Here are the excerpts from the ST, HT, and MT:

ST. "They have no sense of past, no sense of future; as Kenneth Boulding reminds us, a dog has no idea that there were dogs on earth before he arrived and will be here after he has gone."

HT. "فهي كما يقرر كينيث بولدينج (1910-1993) لا تمتلك إدراكاً أعلى للشعور بالزمن" إذ لا تلقي بالاً
للماضي الفائت ولا تنتظر المستقبل القادم!" فحيوان مثل الكلب لا يمتلك خبرة عن أنواع الكلاب التي سكنت الأرض قبله، ولا يشغله تلك التي ستأتي بعده"

(Lit. "It, as asserted by Kenneth Boulding (1910-1993), does not have a higher realization to feel time 'as it does not pay attention to the finished past and does not await the coming future!' for an animal like a dog does not have experience about the types of dogs who lived in the earth before him, and no concern to him those who will come after him.")

MT. "ليس لديهم إحساس بالماضي ولا إحساس بالمستقبل؛ كما يذكرنا كينيث بولدينج، ليس لدى الكلب أي فكرة عن وجود كلاب على الأرض قبل وصوله وسيكون هنا بعد رحيله."

(Lit. "They have neither a sense of the past nor a sense of the future; As Kenneth Bolding reminds us, the dog has no idea there were dogs on Earth before he arrived and will be here after he's gone.")

It is clear that a number of shifts occurred between the ST and the HT in this example. The most visible shift is the addition of the years in which Boulding lived. Boulding is probably known to the audience of the ST but not to the audience reading the translation. An additional shift that appeared in the HT is the referral to the example of the dog quoted by Boulding as "فحيوان مثل الكلب" (lit. an animal like a dog) and not as the ST quoted it as "a dog". Dogs do not hold the same social status in the Arabic culture as in the Western world. On the contrary, they are mostly regarded as unclean animals which are to be mostly avoided (Abou El Fadl, 2001). In both examples, the MT did not alter the ST wording but kept it the same.

It is also noted that the ST depicts human beings as types of animals but with some unique abilities, which is slightly altered in the HT. For example, the ST writes about the human communication faculty that "distinguishes him from other animals," which is translated in the HT as "يغايير بها التصنيف العام للحيوانات" (lit. contrasting to the general classification of animals). The HT attempts to distance the human being from animals by referring to the general classification of animals, whereas the ST portrays humans as a part of the animal classification. This alteration of meaning is closely related to Darwin's theory of evolution, which is perhaps generally accepted in the Western World but mostly rejected in the Muslim Arab world (Aslan, 2005).

Textual Metafunction

The HT appears to feature increased cohesion. This is evident in the increased frequency of the word الإنسان (lit. the human being) in the HT, which suggests a coherent text. Table 2 highlighted the computer-generated word frequency statistics, which showed that the term is used far more frequently than in both the ST and MT. Moreover, some shifting of theme positions suggests an effort to increase cohesion and readability. The following example illustrates this:

ST. "Traditionally, philosophers have set man apart from other animals."

HT. "مما تواطأ عليه الفلاسفة جيلاً بعد جيل أن يصنفوا "الإنسان" في رتبة مستقلة"

(Lit. "That which had a concession among philosophers generation after generation is to put 'the human being' in a unique position.")

MT. "تقليدياً، ميز الفلاسفة الإنسان عن الحيوانات الأخرى"

(Lit. “Traditionally, philosophers have distinguished man from other animals”)

The ST places the words *traditionally* and *philosophers* in the theme position. However, the HT puts the words *مما تواطأ عليه* (lit. *that which had a concession*) in the theme position, keeping *philosophers* as it is and rendering *traditionally* as *جيلاً بعد جيل* (lit. *generation after generation*). In this example, not only is there a shift at the textual level but at the ideational level as well. The addition of the words *مما تواطأ عليه* (lit. *that which had a concession*) adds emphasis to the notion of the phrase *الإنسان* (lit. “*The human being*” in a unique position). On the other hand, the MT keeps the theme position the same as in the ST and does not add any additional notions.

Another example illustrating the shifting of the theme position in the HT is the following:

ST. “Even the mythologies of man, like mathematics, language, and the formula $E = me^2$, are his rational and practical efforts to deal with experience.”

HT. "حتى الأساطير الإنسانية يتم التعامل معها على أنها تمثل نضج الإنسان وما بذله من جهد عملي. لاكتساب الخبرة شأنها في ذلك شأن الرياضيات و علم اللغة والصيغ الرياضية والمعادلات الحسابية."

(Lit. “Even the human mythologies are treated as if it reflects the growth of the human being and what he did of practical effort to acquire experience as it is, as the example of Mathematics, Linguistics, mathematical formulas and mathematical equations.”)

MT.

"حتى أساطير الإنسان، مثل الرياضيات واللغة والصيغة $E = me^2$ ، هي جهوده العقلانية والعملية للتعامل مع التجربة"

(Lit. “Even the myths of man, such as mathematics, language, and the formula $E = me^2$, are his rational and practical efforts to deal with experience”)

The examples of *mathematics*, *language*, and *the formula $E = me^2$* , which are positioned in the theme position in the ST, are transferred to the end of the sentence in the HT. Moreover, the mathematical formula, which is mistakenly written as $E = me^2$ when it is probably referring to Einstein’s $E = mc^2$, is substituted in the HT with *الصيغ الرياضية والمعادلات الحسابية* (lit. *mathematical formulas and mathematical equations*). Due to these changes, the HT does seem somewhat more coherent.

As with the previous example, the MT did not change the theme structure of the sentence. Moreover, the incorrect mathematical equation is unchanged and remains in English, demonstrating that Google Translate recognizes the mathematical equation.

Discussion

Concurring with previous studies (Althumali, 2021; Al Herz, 2021), the use of SFL in the analysis of Arabic translations has been found to be practical. Munday’s Model provides an ample qualitative approach to translation analysis. Frequency results indicate the human translator’s tendency to make translated texts a detailed explanation of the original text (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1977/1995). This could also be linked to Mona Baker’s widely debated *translation universals* (1993; see also Olohan, 2004). More specifically, it could be linked to the tendency of explicitation, described as the inclination to spell things out by some translators. In other words, it

could be assumed that there was an attempt of clarification by the human translator compared to the machine. Moreover, the metafunctional analysis of the texts could suggest two other translation universals, namely normalization (described as conservatism by Baker, 1993) and simplification. Shifts at the ideational level, such as the translation of the word *deity* to العقيدة والدين (*lit. religion and faith*) could be understood as an attempt to normalize the text for the target audience by the human translator. On the other hand, shifts at the textual level, such as the translation of *the formula* $E = me^2$ to الصيغ الرياضية والمعادلات الحسابية (*lit. mathematical formulas and mathematical equations*) could be regarded as an attempt to simplify language by the human translator compared to both the ST and MT. Overall, there can be no doubt that some clear shifts have been found between the ST and the HT while, on the other hand, the MT followed the source text meticulously. Considering Munday's model, most of the shifts found in the HT are closely related to the intended audience of the ST and the HT. The ST was most likely written with a Western audience in mind who would be familiar with and also accept ideas such as Darwin's theory of evolution and the overall perception of religion. The HT, on the other hand, was written as a part of a training program for Arabic translators who most probably understood the target audience and their culture. This explains the shifts that appear on both the levels of culture and style. Moreover, the HT was published in a newsletter belonging to the translator training institute TAG (Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Translation, Distribution & Publishing, 2010). It was possibly published as a showcase of talent. Examining the newsletter suggests that the aim of publishing the translation might be to advertise their organization and encourage people to enroll in their translator training program. The translation was presented as a model of how their course can improve your performance (G. Al-Amoudi, personal communication, December 26, 2018).

Conclusion

This paper set out to apply a qualitative analysis of an English text and its Arabic human and machine translations to identify shifts at the ideational, interpersonal, and textual levels of language. Jeremy Munday's Systemic Model for Descriptive Translation Studies was adapted to achieve this goal. The model did prove practical to a certain extent. The analysis of the texts revealed substantial shifts in the HT at the three metafunctional levels of language. These shifts could be explained with reference to Baker's (1993) translation universals and were possibly motivated by the somewhat big publishing time gap, the very different cultures of the ST and HT audiences, and the fact that the HT was translated as part of a translator training program. Conversely, with the exception of the translation of *man* and *men* as الإنسان (*lit. the human being*), no major shifts were found in the MT, suggesting that machine translations still follow source texts in their interpretations. It was noted from the analysis that the three metafunctions of language sometimes overlapped, with the Arabic text proving more difficult to apply systemic functional grammar to. Munday mentions this in the conclusion of his model by asserting that it "may not work so well with non-European languages." (Hermans, 2014, p. 91). It is hoped that despite these limitations, this study provided further insight into systemic functional translation analysis. It should be noted that a more detailed application of Halliday's metafunctional analysis on larger texts will most likely expose more reoccurring shifts.

Bio

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Appendix A: Source Text (ST)

Man as Symbol Maker

Theodore Peterson, et al.

Traditionally, philosophers have set man apart from other animals because of his powers of reason. But man has another faculty which also distinguishes him from other animals - his ability to communicate by symbols. He is the one creature that reacts not only to his real physical environment but also to a symbolic environment of his own making. A hungry dog reacts to food by eating it. A man might, too, but just what he eats often depends on symbolic considerations. He may avoid some foods for fear of offending the deity; he may eat others for their reputed curative powers; he may even eat some, such as caviar, for status.

What all of this means is that man has an environment far different from that of other creatures. Most creatures live in just their physical environments. They receive stimuli, and they respond to them. They have no sense of past, no sense of future; as Kenneth Boulding reminds us, a dog has no idea that there were dogs on earth before he arrived and will be here after he has gone. But man, by creating a symbolic world, has given reality a dimension known only to the human species.

Between the mere stimulus and response of other creatures, he has erected a symbolic system that transforms the whole of human life and sets it apart from the life of all other animals. This distinctive mark of human life is not necessarily related to man's rationality (or to his irrationality, for that matter). It is a remarkable achievement that has taken man out of a merely physical universe and put him into a symbolic universe of language, art, and myth.

Man does not confront reality first-hand. Instead of always dealing with things themselves, as other animals do, he develops ideas about things. He so envelopes himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols, or in religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except through his symbolic system. As Epictetus said, "What disturbs and alarms man are not the things, but his opinions and fancies about the things."

Reality of course contains all the things which are given to man by his senses; but the framework and structure of reality are not something which man can touch or directly see. They are something intellectual, something he can perceive only indirectly through symbols. Animals react to outside stimuli either directly or not at all. Men, on the other hand, respond largely in a cerebral, invisible way. They produce images, notions, figments of all sorts, as symbols for ideas about things. A cat may cower under a porch during a thunderstorm; only a man would interpret the storm as a sign of a god's wrath. For man the symbol-maker, then, the world is mainly a pseudo-world, a web of symbols, of his own making.

Yet his pseudo-world is not sheer fantasy. Even the mythologies of man, like mathematics, language, and the formula $E = mc^2$, are his rational and practical efforts to deal with experience. They are attempts to organize his sensations and to build up around them symbolic systems that give meaning to his existence.

As a result, man's world is different from that of other animals, for it is both more and other than the physical stimuli which surround him. More important, it is precisely this symbol-making function that makes human communication and the social process possible.

Appendix B: Human Target Text (HT)

الإنسان صانع للرموز

ترجمة: غادة عبد الله

مما تواطأ عليه الفلاسفة جيلاً بعد جيل أن يصنفوا "الإنسان" في رتبة مستقلة يغيّر بها التصنيف العام للحيوانات لما جبل عليه الإنسان من قدرة على التواصل باستخدام "الرموز". فهو الكائن الوحيد الذي لا تتقيد أشكال استجابته بمحيطه المادي القريب فحسب، بل يتجاوزه إلى عالم رمزي من صنعه كذلك. إن الكلب الجائع يتفاعل مع الطعام بالأكل فقط، وهكذا قد يصنع الإنسان! إلا أنّ ما يأكله الإنسان يتوقف إلى حد كبير على اعتبارات رمزية. فقد يحرم على نفسه ألواناً من الطعام المحرم في الدين والعقيدة، بينما يتناول أنواعاً أخرى أماً في الشفاء، وقد لا يتناول الطعام جوعاً بل زينة وتفاخراً ورغبةً بالتباهي أمام الناس بانتمائته لطبقة اجتماعية مترفة .

كل هذا يوحى إلينا أن ثمة بونٌ شاسع يفرق بيئة الإنسان عن بيئات الأحياء الأخرى. فغالبية الكائنات الحية تستقبل المؤثرات من محيطها ثم تتفاعل معها في حدود البيئة المادية المحسوسة ولا أكثر، فهي كما يقرر كينيث بولدينج (1910 – 1993) لا تمتلك إدراكاً أعلى للشعور بالزمن "إذ لا تُلقَى بالألماً للماضي الفائت ولا تنتظر المستقبل القادم!" فحيوانٌ مثل الكلب لا يمتلك خبرة عن أنواع الكلاب التي سكنت الأرض قبله، ولا يشغله تلك التي ستأتي بعده. أما الإنسان، فإنه استطاع بإنشائه عالم الرمز لديه أن يلقي على هذا المحيط المادي أبعاداً أكثر عمقا جعلت من الواقع القريب شكلاً فريداً يُعرف بانتسابه إلى الجنس البشري .

وبين حدّي المؤثر والأثر القائمين عند المخلوقات الأخرى؛ تمكّن الإنسان من أن يبني نظاماً رمزياً ينقل كل أنشطة الحياة الإنسانية ويسجلها بصرف النظر عن حياة الحيوانات الأخرى. وهذه العلامة الفارقة للحياة الإنسانية ليس بالضرورة أن تكون ذات صلة بالصبغة العقلانية عند الإنسان (أو بحدسه الغريزي، في هذا الصدد)، فاختراع (النظام الرمزي) يعد إنجازاً استثنائياً نقل الإنسان من ضيق الكون المادي إلى رحابة الرمزية التي تمثلت في اللغة والأدب والفنون والأساطير .

إنّ الإنسان لا يقوى على مجابهة الحقيقة الماثلة أمامه مباشرةً. وبدلاً من الاكتفاء بالتعامل دوماً مع ظاهر الشيء كما هو سلوك عموم الحيوانات؛ فإنّ الإنسان طوّر أفكاراً حول الأشياء، وغلّف حياته بالكثير من الأشكال اللغوية، في الصور الفنية والرموز الأسطورية والطقوس اللاهوتية، حتى أصبح الرمز هو مفتاح مشاهدته ومعرفته الأول. وكما قال إبيكتيتيوس (55 ق.م - 135 ق.م): "ليست الأشياء في ذاتها ما تثير قلق الإنسان وذعره، وإنما هي رؤاه وخيالاته عن هذه الأشياء". وبالطبع فإنّ الواقع يحوي الكثير من المعطيات التي توهب للإنسان عن طريق حواسه، ولكن كيفية نشوء الواقع أو هيكله جوهره فهو أمر لا يمكن للإنسان أن يسمّه أو يشاهده مباشرة، فهي أشياء تخضع لإعمال العقل، أشياء ما كان بالإمكان فهمها إلا بصورة غير مباشرة ومن خلال الرموز فقط .

وبما أنّ الحيوانات قد تستجيب للحوافز الخارجية أو لا تستجيب على الإطلاق، فإنّ البشر على خلاف هذا يتفاعلون بشكل أكبر من خلال مخاطبة العقل وعبر إشارات ذهنيّة خفية. فهم يُخرجون صوراً ونظريات ونسجاً من الأدوات في كل الحقول؛ لتكون بمثابة رموز لأفكارهم حول الأشياء. فإذا كانت القطة تجثم مرتعدّة تحت الشرفة أثناء عاصفة رعدية؛ فإنّ الإنسان وحده من يفسر هبوب العاصفة على أنه آية على غضب الرب!! ومن ثمّ فإنّه بالنسبة للإنسان -صانع الرمز- يغدو العالم الأساس لديه هو العالم المصطنع من رموز صنعها الإنسان .

وبعد، فإنّ هذا العالم المصطنع ليس محض خيال! فحتى الأساطير الإنسانية يتم التعامل معها على أنها تمثل نضج الإنسان وما بذله من جهد عملي لاكتساب الخبرة شأنها في ذلك شأن الرياضيات وعلم اللغة والصيغ الرياضية والمعادلات الحسابية. كما إنّها تعطي صورة عن محاولات الإنسان لتنظيم أحاسيسه وتشبيد نظام رمزي يحيط بها مما يعطي معنى لوجوده.

نتيجة لذلك، فإنّ عالم الإنسان مختلف في هذا عن غيره من الحيوانات الأخرى، فهما يتعرضان للحوافز الخارجية على حد سواء، بل يزيد عالم الإنسان بما يدور حوله من المؤثرات المادية. والأهم من هذا كله أن ندرِك بأنّ دقة هذا الرمز المصنوع هي ما جعلت التواصل الإنساني والتعاملات الاجتماعية أمراً ممكناً.

Appendix C: Machine Target Text (MT)

الرجل كصانع رمز

المترجم الآلي

تقليديًا، ميز الفلاسفة الإنسان عن الحيوانات الأخرى بسبب قواه العقلية. لكن للإنسان ملكة أخرى تميزه أيضًا عن الحيوانات الأخرى - قدرته على التواصل عن طريق الرموز. إنه المخلوق الوحيد الذي يتفاعل ليس فقط مع بيئته المادية الحقيقية ولكن أيضًا مع بيئة رمزية من صنعه. الكلب الجائع يتفاعل مع الطعام بأكله. يمكن للرجل أيضًا، ولكن ما يأكله غالبًا ما يعتمد على اعتبارات رمزية. وقد يتجنب بعض الأطعمة خوفًا من الإساءة إلى الإله. قد يأكل الآخريين لقواهم العلاجية المشهورة؛ حتى أنه قد يأكل بعضًا، مثل الكافيار، للحصول على مكانة.

ما يعنيه كل هذا هو أن الإنسان لديه بيئة مختلفة تمامًا عن بيئة المخلوقات الأخرى. تعيش معظم المخلوقات في بيئاتها المادية فقط. يتلقون المنبهات ويستجيبون لها. ليس لديهم إحساس بالماضي ولا إحساس بالمستقبل؛ كما يذكرنا كينيث بولدينج، ليس لدى الكلب أي فكرة عن وجود كلاب على الأرض قبل وصوله وسيكون هنا بعد رحيله. لكن الإنسان، من خلال خلق عالم رمزي، أعطى للواقع بُعدًا لا يعرفه إلا الجنس البشري.

يبين مجرد تحفيز واستجابة مخلوقات أخرى، أقام نظامًا رمزيًا يحول الحياة البشرية بأكملها ويميزها عن حياة جميع الحيوانات الأخرى. هذه العلامة المميزة للحياة البشرية لا تتعلق بالضرورة بعقلانية الإنسان (أو بغير عقلانيته في هذا الصدد). إنه إنجاز رائع أخرج الإنسان من مجرد كون مادي ووضعه في عالم رمزي من اللغة والفن والأسطورة.

لا يواجه الإنسان الواقع مباشرة. بدلاً من التعامل دائمًا مع الأشياء بنفسها، كما تفعل الحيوانات الأخرى، يطور أفكارًا حول الأشياء. إنه يغلف نفسه بأشكال لغوية، في صور فنية، في رموز أسطورية، أو في طقوس دينية لا يستطيع أن يرى أو يعرف أي شيء إلا من خلال نظامه الرمزي. كما قال إبيكتيتوس، "ما يزجج الإنسان ويخيفه ليس الأشياء، بل آراءه وهواياته حول الأشياء".

يحتوي الواقع بالطبع على كل الأشياء التي وهبتها حواس الإنسان للإنسان. لكن إطار وهيكلي الواقع ليسا شيئًا يمكن للإنسان أن يلمسه أو يراه مباشرة. إنها شيء فكري، ولا يمكنه إدراكه إلا بشكل غير مباشر من خلال الرموز. تتفاعل الحيوانات مع المحفزات الخارجية إما بشكل مباشر أو لا تتفاعل على الإطلاق. من ناحية أخرى، يستجيب الرجال إلى حد كبير بطريقة دماغية غير مرئية. إنهم ينتجون الصور والمفاهيم والأشكال من جميع الأنواع، كرموز للأفكار حول الأشياء. قد تنكمش قطة تحت الشرفة أثناء عاصفة رعدية؛ فقط الرجل يفسر العاصفة كعلامة على غضب الله. إذن، بالنسبة للإنسان صانع الرموز، فإن العالم هو عالم زائف بشكل أساسي، وشبكة من الرموز، من صنعه.

ومع ذلك، فإن عالمه الزائف ليس مجرد خيال. حتى أساطير الإنسان، مثل الرياضيات واللغة والصيغة $E = mc^2$ ، هي جهوده العقلانية والعملية للتعامل مع التجربة. إنها محاولات لتنظيم أحاسيسه وبناء حولها أنظمة رمزية تعطي معنى لوجوده.

نتيجة لذلك، يختلف عالم الإنسان عن عالم الحيوانات الأخرى، لأنه أكثر من المحفزات الجسدية التي تحيط به. والأهم من ذلك، أن وظيفة صنع الرموز هذه هي التي تجعل التواصل البشري والعملية الاجتماعية ممكنًا.

Appendix D: Shifts

	ST Clause	HT Clause	Back-Translation	Shift
1	Man as Symbol Maker	الإنسان صانع للرموز	The human being a maker of Symbols	Ideational
2	Traditionally, philosophers have set man apart from other animals	مما تواطأ عليه الفلاسفة جيلاً بعد جيل أن يصنفوا "الإنسان" في رتبة مستقلة يغير بها التصنيف العام للحيوانات	That which had a concession among philosophers generation after generation is to put 'the human being' in a unique position	Textual
3	Which also distinguishes him from other animals	يغير بها التصنيف العام للحيوانات	Contrasting to the general classification of animals	Interpersonal
4	He may avoid some foods for fear of offending the deity	فقد يحرم على نفسه ألوانا من الطعام المحرم في الدين والعقيدة	He may forbid on himself, colors of forbidden food in religion and faith	Ideational
5	Man has an environment far different from that of other creatures	بأن شاسع يفرق بيئة الإنسان عن بيئات الأحياء الأخرى	Large distance that distinguishes the human environment from other living creatures	Ideational
6	As Kenneth Boulding reminds us, a dog has no idea that there were dogs on earth before he arrived and will be here after he has gone	فهي كما يقرر كينيث بولدينج (1910-1993) لا تمتلك إدراكاً أعلى للشعور بالزمن " إذ لا تلقي بالاً للماضي الفائت ولا تنتظر المستقبل القادم!" فحيوان مثل الكلب لا يمتلك خبرة عن أنواع الكلاب التي سكنت الأرض قبله، ولا يشغله تلك التي ستأتي بعده"	It, as asserted by Kenneth Boulding (1910-1993), does not have a higher realization to feel time 'as it does not pay attention to the finished past and does not await the coming future!' for an animal like a dog does not have experience about the types of dogs who lived in the earth before him, and no concern to him those who will come after him	Interpersonal
7	But man	أما الإنسان	As for the human being	Ideational
8	He has erected a symbolic system	تمكّن الإنسان من أن يبني نظاماً رمزياً	The human being was able to build a symbolic system	Ideational
9	This distinctive mark of human life is not necessarily related to man's rationality (or to his irrationality, for that matter)	وهذه العلامة الفارقة للحياة الإنسانية ليس بالضرورة أن تكون ذات صلة بالصبغة العقلانية عند الإنسان (أو بحدسه الغريزي، في هذا الصدد)	And this distinctive mark for human life is necessarily to be of relation to the rationality coating in the human (or in his instinctive intuition in this regard)	Interpersonal

10	As other animals do	كما هو سلوك عموم الحيوانات	As is the behavior of generality of animals	Interpersonal
11	As Epictetus said	وكما قال إبيكتيتوس (55 ق.م - 135 ق.م)	And As Epictetus said (55 B.C. – 135 B.C.)	Interpersonal
12	Has taken man	نقل الإنسان	Had transferred the human	Ideational
13	He envelopes himself ... in religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except through his symbolic system	وغلف حياته بـ ... الطقوس اللاهوتية	He wrapped his life in ... religious rituals	Ideational
14	And the formula $E = mc^2$	والصيغ الرياضية والمعادلات الحسابية	Mathematical formulas and mathematical equations	Interpersonal

Najdi and Hijazi Dialects: The Formation in Progress of a Saudi Koine

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الملخص

تقدم هذه الورقة دراسة استكشافية في محاولة لفهم الوضع اللغوي في المملكة العربية السعودية وأيضا لاختبار فرضية ظهور لهجة سعودية معيارية (عامة). بداية، من المهم جدا الإشارة الى أن الأدبيات اظهرت أن اللهجات السعودية تقع حاليا تحت وطأة التغير كنتيجة للتغير لاجتماعي والاقتصادي الكبير الذي يحدث في المملكة العربية السعودية منذ عام ١٩٧٠، وقد وُصفت هذه التغيرات بالتفصيل في مقال الهدلول وايدادان (١٩٩٣). وحول طريقة الدراسة فقد جُمعت بيانات هذا البحث من الإعلام وبالتحديد من ستة وعشرين إعلاناً تلفزيونياً وتم التحقق من عدد من المتغيرات اللغوية وهي كالتالي: الصوتان الصائتان المتصلان [او] و [اي]، الأصوات اللثوية [ث] و [ذ] و [ظ] وما يقابلها من أصوات انفجارية [ت] و [د] و [ض]، أيضاً صوت الجيم المعطشة [دج] وغير المعطشة [ج]، بالإضافة الى متباينات صوت (ك) وهي [تس] و [س] و [تش] و [ش]، وأخيرا الصوت النادر للمتغير (ك) وهو [ك]. وبناء على ما تقدم تفترض هذه الدراسة نشوء لهجة سعودية معيارية ذات قطبين حيث يظهر عليها تأثير اللهجتين النجدية والحجازية وهو مشابه لما وُجد في دراسة الرجيعي (٢٠٢٠). الجدير بالذكر هنا أن نتائج هذا البحث الاستكشافي تُظهر أمراً ملفتاً وهو ظهور أثر اللهجة النجدية على اللهجة المحكية في الإعلانات أكثر من الأثر الحجازي إلا أنه، وفي ظل التغيرات الاجتماعية المستمرة والكبيرة، لا يمكن الى حينه التنبؤ بصفات اللهجة السعودية، بمعنى هل سيتفوق أثر الصفات اللغوية النجدية ويلغي الحجازية؟ ام أننا سنكون أمام لهجتين سعوديتين: نجدية وحجازية؟ ام أن لهجة سعودية مختلطة ستنشأ من اللهجتين؟

Abstract

This paper is an exploratory work which attempts to understand the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia and to test the hypothesis of the emergence of a Saudi koine. To begin with, it is vital to mention that the literature shows that many Saudi dialects are presently in a state of change. This is due to tremendous social and financial changes taking place in the country starting from 1970. A detailed description of these changes is presented in Al-Hathloul and Edadan (1993). The data of the current study was collected from media, in particular, from 26 television advertisements. Several variants were investigated: diphthongs [aw] and [aj], interdental [θ], [ð], [ðʕ] and their stop counterparts [t], [d] and [d̪], the affricate [dʒ] and the fricative [ʒ], the affricated and fricative variants of (k) [tʃ] and [ts] and [s] and [ʃ] respectively, and finally the palatalized variant of (k) [kʲ]. The results suggest that there is indeed an emergence of a Saudi koine, however, it is a double-sided koine, with influences from both Najdi and Hijazi dialects. These results go hand in hand with those presented by Al-Rojaie (2020). Another important result that this exploratory work demonstrates is that the use of the Najdi -influenced koine is clearly more prominent than the Hijazi one in the language of advertisements. Nevertheless, in light of the dramatic social change in the country, it is not possible to predict whether the Najdi koine will oust the Hijazi one or if both will continue as two pan-Saudi dialects or whether a mixed dialect will be formed.

Keywords: dialect change; Hijazi; koine; media; Najdi; social change

The characteristic of variation is something ingrained in all spoken languages around the world and is stimulated by internal factors, such as position of feature in the word and the adjacent sounds, etc., and external factors, such as age, gender, and race, etc. The main theory about variation in the sociolinguistic field is that it is not random but rather it is structured as Labov (1963) found in his Martha's Vineyard study. However, this does not mean that the patterns of variation in all communities are similar. On the contrary, each community has its own characteristics and circumstances that shape the pattern of variation (Al-Wer et al., 2022), and the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia is no exception. In fact, the situation in Saudi is slightly blurred; many Saudi dialects are not investigated, and the idea of having a Standard Saudi dialect or supra-local dialect has not yet been examined. In fact, the excessive and continuous internal immigration in the country could encourage the occurrence of koineization which often happens when mutual intelligible dialects come into contact. The present paper is intended to discern whether a koine has emerged in Saudi Arabia or not.

Recently, there have been a number of sociolinguistic studies conducted in different Saudi cities by some sociolinguists such as Al-Essa (2008) in Jeddah, Alghamdi (2014) in Mecca, Alqhtani (2015) in Abha, Al-Ammar (2017) in Ha'il, Hussain (2017) in Medina and Alaodini (2019) in Dammam. The results of these studies have shown that a change is in progress in the spoken dialects of these cities. They also reveal that there is an emergence of new koineized dialects in those cities where marked features are abandoned, and more neutral elements are being used. For instance, the affricated variant of (k) [ts] in feminine suffix *kita:bits* 'your book' (feminine singular) is replaced by the neutral velar stop [k] *kita:bik* 'your book'.

It is important to mention here that when it comes to laypersons, there is a general perception of the emergence of a common dialect termed with a non-scientific expression *al-lahjah al-beḏ'ā* (lit.) 'the white dialect', a dialect that has no regional linguistic markers which can be linguistically called a Saudi dialect or supra-local dialect. Al-Rojaie (2020) also confirms the prevalence of this expression among Saudi people. However, linguistically, this perception has not yet been tested. In order to scrutinize this public perception, the current study collected data from 26 television advertisements, and analyzed them based on a number of regional linguistic features namely, diphthongs [aw] and [ai], interdental [θ], [ð], [ḏʕ] and their stop counterparts [t], [d] and [ḏ], the affricate [dʒ] and fricative [ʒ], the affricated and fricative variants of (k) [tʃ] and [ts] and [s] and [ʃ], respectively, and the palatalized variant of (k) as [kʲ]. This study is just a point of departure to conceptualize the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia.

Literature Review

Koineization

Sociolinguists have come up with the common concept of koineization which is a linguistic phenomenon related not to a specific place but a universal linguistic situation that occurs when prolonged contact happens between mutually intelligible dialects (Siegel, 1985 and Trudgill 2004). People who speak these dialects work together and are aware from the start that they are using shared linguistic features and eliminating the different ones. Eventually, this turns into a habit that they are unaware of, resulting in the emergence of a new dialect or a

koine. Kerswill and Williams (2005) defined koineization as “... the type of language change that takes place when speakers of different, but mutually intelligible language varieties come together, and which may lead to a new dialect or koine formation.” (Kerswill and Williams, p. 1023)

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that there are several linguistic phases that lead to the occurrence of a koine (Siegle, 1985; Trudgill, 2004). Firstly, mixing is one of the prominent phases where the existing linguistic features originate from different dialects. Another phase is called simplification which denotes the reduction of structural complexity. Reallocation is the phase where surviving features of mixed dialects are re-functionalized to have new social, stylistic, or linguistic functions in the emerging dialect. In the levelling phase, the marked features are reduced or eliminated by the speakers. The last phase is called focusing which is an advanced stage that is needed to move from a koineized dialect to a new-dialect formation. Some examples of research on koineization are presented below where some of these phases are illustrated.

Koineization in New Zealand. The emergence of New Zealand Modern English is a well-known example of koineization which overtime became a new-dialect formation. Trudgill (2004) investigated the formation of the new English dialect in New Zealand. He worked with colleagues on a large-scale project in which they detected the so-called Origins of New Zealand English (ONZE). They were fortunate to find old records of spoken English from thirty-four different locations in New Zealand. The recordings were of the first generation of children born to European settlers there.

Trudgill divided the process of new-dialect formation in New Zealand into three stages. The first stage encompassed initial contact that started between adult speakers who migrated from different regions of the British Isles (Ireland and Britain) carrying with them social and linguistic varieties. In this stage, accommodation was the main mechanism which resulted in rudimentary levelling and interdialectal development. In the second stage, the variability was extreme, and the levelling was obvious. Children were the main actors in this stage, so they were the reason behind the occurrence of this extreme variability. Children at this stage were exposed to different adult models and they had the freedom to select variants from different dialects. This means that the key mechanism in stage II was a “form of variable acquisition” (Trudgill, 2004: 103). In the third and final stage, the social situation was more stable, and the variants lessened since the forms of the minorities were lost. Children were still the crucial actors in this stage, but this time they dealt with fewer variants, and they simply selected the most common ones. Hence, the key attribute of the third stage was determinism.

Koineization in Amman, Jordan. Al-Wer (1991- present) started a large comprehensive project in 1991 in the capital city Amman, Jordan that is still continuing today. Amman is a relatively recent capital city that historically did not have either a native population or a traditional dialect. Therefore, Amman became an attractive city for immigrants. It has become a city of people from Palestine, Syria, and other parts of Jordan. This made Amman the perfect place for social and dialect contact, and hence, for new dialect formation. The cumulative research for Al-Wer was conducted to trace the koineization process in Amman and eventually the new dialect formation. She investigated the continuous change across three generations. The results obtained by Al-Wer (2013) demonstrated the following facts:

- The local features in Jordanian and Palestinian dialects were levelled out by the adults in the first generation. From the Jordanian side, the affrication of /k/ in front vowel

environment, and from the Palestinian dialect the raised realization of /a/, both were levelled out.

- The variability was extreme in the speech of the second generation. Linguistically, women behaved differently from men on both sides, Jordanian and Palestinian. The Jordanian men and the Palestinian women were the most conservative, and the opposite happened with the Jordanian women and Palestinian men; they were the innovators.
- The social meaning and the linguistic features started to gain stability. Al-Wer also found simplification and markedness occurring as the two phases of koineization in this stage.

Some Saudi sociolinguistic studies are presented below for a more extensive understanding of the topic of the present research. Researchers used dialect contact as a framework to investigate linguistic changes in several Saudi cities. These studies revealed almost the same findings which would help the author understand the general linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia and test the hypothesis of a Saudi koine emergence.

Sociolinguistic Studies in Saudi Arabia: Evidence of Levelling

Al-Essa (2008) conducted her research in Jeddah to examine sociolinguistic variation in the speech of Najdi immigrants. Najdi people had moved from the middle region of Saudi Arabia to dwell in Jeddah, the urban city in the west, where the Hijazi dialect is spoken. She investigated the use of some Najdi phonological and morphophonemic variants. The results of her research revealed that Najdi speakers preferred adopting more Hijazi variants by levelling out Najdi markers such as the affricated variants of (k) and (g) and the 2nd person feminine suffix [-ik]. One of the Hijazi dialect traits is a type of morphological simplification that occurs when using neutral variant to show gender distinction. Al-Essa found that Najdi immigrants adopted this neutral form and abandoned the complexity of the Najdi morphological system. The example below demonstrates the complexity in the Najdi morphological system

3rd masculine plural ja:kl-**u:n** ‘they eat’

3rd feminine plural ja:kl-**in** ‘they eat’

The analysis revealed that Najdi immigrants used the masculine suffix [-u:n] to refer to females and males.

On the other hand, Najdi speakers showed the opposite manner with the interdental variants [ð], [θ] and [ð^s]; the rate of their usage of the Hijazi variants [d], [t] and [d^s] was low and constrained by social factors such as age and social contact.

These results exhibit that levelling out local Najdi variants is the outcome of prolonged contact between Najdi and Jeddawi speakers.

The same findings occurred in a contact situation in Mecca. Alghamdi (2014) examined the change in the speech of Ghamdi immigrants who moved from Al-Baha, located in the southwest of Saudi Arabia, to settle in Mecca. Diphthongs (aw) and (aj) and interdentals (ð), (θ) and (ð^s) were the examined variables; their Ghamdi variants are [aʊ] and [ai] and [ð], [θ] and [ð^s] respectively. Their Meccan counterpart variants are [ɔ:] and [ɛ:] and [d], [t] and [d^s] respectively.

As a result of dialect contact and long-term accommodation, Alghamdi found that Ghamdi speakers eliminated the diphthongs and replaced them with the Meccan monophthongs [ɔ:] and [ɛ:].

bait > baɛ: ‘house’

laon > lɔ:n ‘colour’

Alghamdi ascribed this pattern of change to the salience that diphthongs carried in Mecca especially in view of the fact that Ghamdi immigrants were a minority there. In fact, diphthongs are not prevalent variants among Saudi dialects as Prochazka (1988) has pointed out in his dialectology work in Saudi Arabia.

However, the case of the interdentals [ð], [θ] and [ð^s] was opposite to those of the diphthongs. In general, the Ghamdi speakers maintained their interdentals, and their avoidance of the Meccan stops [d], [t] and [d^s] was obvious. This result goes in parallel with Al-Essa (2008) as mentioned above. Al-Essa and Alghamdi findings present an evidence of language change in two urban cities, Jeddah and Mecca, that leads to a levelling out of local features and maintaining of neutral ones.

Alqhatani (2015) presented her sociolinguistic research from a different region of Saudi Arabia. She investigated the change in the Tihāmi Qaḥṭāni dialect (TQ). TQ is one of the spoken dialects in the province of ‘Asīr located in the southwest of Saudi Arabia.

Alqhatani investigated two linguistic variables. The first linguistic variable is phonological, the Arabic sound *d^sād*, which has two realizations, the emphatic voiced fricative-lateral sound [ɬ^s] – the local variant – and the emphatic interdental [ð^s] – the variant of most Saudi dialects. The second variable is morpho-phonological, the definite article *m-*, which has two variants *m-* (the local variant) and *l-* (as in the standard Arabic and other Saudi varieties).

The results of Alqhatani’s study revealed that the pattern of change was similar to other Saudi sociolinguistic studies. The young women speakers led the linguistic change, as they tended to abandon their local variants [ɬ^s] and the definite article *m-* in favor of the koineized or supra-local variants [ð^s] and *l-* respectively in the spoken dialect in Abha. This is not surprising since the sociolinguistic literature shows many cases where women in various societies lead the change towards koineized features.

In the same vein, Hussain’s sociolinguistic work in 2017 in Medina (one of the Hijazi cities in the western region of Saudi) examined the variation and change in two mutually intelligible spoken dialects which were in constant contact, namely, the urban Medini and the Bedouin Medini. She worked on two phonological variables: the variable (dʒ) which has two realizations, the affricate [dʒ] or the fricative [ʒ] and resyllabification as a result of syncope and epenthesis. For the purpose of this study, the author will only present the results of the first variable.

Hussain collected the data from two groups: the urban and the Bedouin descendants of Banū Masrūḥ (one of the Ḥarbi clans). Both groups have the variable (dʒ) with a voiced alveolar affricate [dʒ] realization in their linguistic dictionary. The results revealed that there was a change toward the deaffricated variant [ʒ] which is the innovative one. Hussain ascribed this change to two reasons: firstly, the [ʒ] was the most used feature in the spoken dialect of Jeddah and she assumed that urban Medinis who worked in Jeddah had brought this innovative variant back home with them. Secondly, the variant [ʒ] was the traditional sound in other Ḥarbi clans that were in regular contact with the target clan of her study, the Banū Masrūḥ. The emergence of the [ʒ] in both communities, urban and Bedouin, was obvious in the results.

It should be noted that both variants [dʒ] and [ʒ] are realized in different Saudi dialects, however, sometimes they exist in one dialect but with certain linguistic conditions.

Nevertheless, the results in Hussain's research showed that a koineized dialect in Medina had emerged.

In 2017, Al-Ammar conducted a sociolinguistic study for Ha'ili Arabic, which is a dialect spoken by sedentary Ha'ili people. Ha'il is the capital city of the northern region in Saudi Arabia. The city residents are from different tribes, while the villages and remote areas around the city were inhabited by nomads and rural people. However, the demographic population changed after oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia, and nomads and rural people immigrated to the city for better job opportunities and an easier lifestyle.

The Ha'ili Arabic dialect is one of the Najdi Arabic varieties as Ingham (1994) pointed out. Hence, it shares some of the Najdi dialect features, yet it retains some distinguishable ones. Al-Ammar examined the change and variation in two of those distinguishable features, namely, the raising of the feminine ending *-ah* and the lenition of the plural feminine ending *-a:t*. In the Ha'ili dialect the raising of the feminine ending *-ah* is unconditional in pausal position, and it becomes either [ɛ] or [e] (the lowered variant [a] is the supra-local one). The second variable, the plural feminine ending *-a:t*, is realized with the [t] sound (the innovative feature) while it is lenited in the Ha'ili dialect as [j] or [h].

Raising fem. ending *θalaθah* > *θalaθeh* 'three'

Lenition fem. pl. *wa:gfat* > *wa:gfa:j* 'they are standing'

The results of Al-Ammar's study illustrated that these two Ha'ili features, the raising of the feminine ending *-ah* and the lenition of the plural feminine ending *-a:t*, were undergoing change towards the innovative/ koineized variants. It is worth mentioning here that the innovative variants in Al-Ammar's work are the features of the spoken dialects in the urban cities in Saudi Arabia.

Alaodini conducted her sociolinguistic research in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the capital city, Dammam. She provided the final version of this work in 2019. Alaodini investigated the changes and variation in the speech of *Dawāsir* immigrants in Dammam. She talked about their journey through Yemen, Najd, and Bahrain before finally settling in Dammam. She created a link between their long journey to different areas and the change it had on the *Dōsarī* dialect.

Alaodini examined the variation and change in two salient linguistic features (dʒ) which is realized as the alveo-palatal affricate [dʒ] (the supra-local feature) or the glide [j] (traditional *Dōssari* variant), and the realization of (ɑ:) in word-medial position as either the rounded [ɔ:] (the traditional *Dōssari* variant) or the unrounded [ɑ:].

The results of Alaodini's work revealed that traditional *Dōssari* features [j] and [ɔ:], the minority variants, were abandoned by *Dōssari* speakers; they preferred to use the supra-local/ koineized features [dʒ] and [ɑ:]. These results are in line with all the above-mentioned sociolinguistic studies in Saudi Arabia. The marked/ regional variants are levelled out to be replaced by the koineized variants.

To sum up, the studies above show that dialect contact has been taking place in various Saudi cities due to increasing mobility, growth of urban cities and economic changes. Researchers also provide us with crucial findings that there is a dialect change in progress and this change leads to one of the koineization phases known as levelling. Speakers are levelling out regional linguistic features from their speech to replace them with neutral variants. To

determine some of the neutral variants, the author started with presenting the social and linguistic development in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia: Social and Linguistic Development

The discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia occurred during the thirties of the last century. Yet, the Saudi population did not enjoy the fruits of this industry until the late sixties when ARAMCO, the largest oil company increased its production. “By 1962, we reached another milestone, with cumulative crude oil production reaching 5 billion barrels” (ARAMCO, 2022). The details of this journey are presented on the website of ARAMCO. As a result of that, the prosperity in the country influenced many aspects of life. For instance, job opportunities grew sharply in the main cities, individual income increased dramatically, and subsequently mobility expanded. People immigrated from small cities and villages to the main cities beginning with Mecca and Jeddah, and then later to Dammam and Riyadh to take advantage of the new lifestyle. These changes led to huge social and linguistic interaction between people who came from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

From the thirties until the fifties of the last century, Mecca and Jeddah had been the most attractive destinations for all Saudi immigrants for many reasons. ‘Al-Rahma:neyyah school’, the first school in the kingdom was established in Mecca in 1912 (Seba:ʿi, 1984); and the first official radio broadcast named ‘Etha:ʿat Makkah Al-Mokarramah’ was launched in 1949 in Jeddah (Krayyim, 1982). Also, much of the population in these cities was educated. Mecca and Jeddah enjoy a comfortable social and economic situation since they are cosmopolitan cities. Mecca is the sacred city that receives millions of pilgrims every year and Jeddah is the Islamic port. These characteristics elevated the social power in these cities. People, culture and spoken dialects there became a symbol of civilization and modernization. Hence, people who immigrated to these cities were psychologically ready to immerse themselves in this new life and become members of society by various means, including adopting the hosts’ linguistic behavior. The results of the previous studies (Al-Essa, 2008; Alghamdi, 2014) revealed that old participants (the first and second generation of immigrants) were the most influenced by the Hijazi culture, and they were more advanced in their use of Hijazi variants compared to other participants from the third generation. From old oral data of Alghamdi (2014), one of the older participants from the second generation, gave a thought-provoking comment about his life in Mecca after immigration, saying:

Life in Hijaz is much better than in my homeland, it is easier, and everything is clean and tidy here not like my village. I really do not want to go back.... I just go for visiting in the holidays but not to live there anymore. Frankly saying, no I can’t live there forever. (My translation, from one of the sociolinguistic interviews of Alghamdi, 2014)

الحياة في الحجاز أحسن بكثير من العيشة في القرية، أسهل وكل شيء نظيف ومرتب هنا مو زي القرية.
حقيقي ما عاد أبغى أرجع..... أروح زيارة في الاجازات بس لا يمكن أرجع أعيش هناك. للأمانة ما أقدر
أعيش هناك للأبد

However, in the early seventies and with the spread of education and the improvement of different aspects of life in other main cities, specifically Riyadh and Dammam, attention turned naturally to them, and the power of Mecca and Jeddah started to diminish. The immigration to Dammam and Riyadh gradually increased (Kim, 2021); whole families moved to dwell there. Furthermore, many young men enrolled at the main universities in Dammam and Riyadh, and

they eventually settled, worked, and raised families there. In addition, Riyadh as a capital city brought together all governmental sectors and ministry headquarters (Alahmadi & Atkinson, 2019) which, indeed, provided great job opportunities. Many well-known Najdi merchants (coming from different parts of Najd) settled in Riyadh and practiced their businesses there. And to complete the picture, it is important to mention that Riyadh is the homeland of the royal family which in turn makes it a prestigious place to live in. Further comprehensive details about these changes and the expansion of these urban cities are demonstrated in Alahmadi and Atkinson (2019) research. These social and financial changes undoubtedly reallocate the meaning of social power, modernization, and civilization. Now they are not only associated with Mecca and Jeddah, as in the thirties to fifties of the last century, but Riyadh and Dammam (especially Riyadh) are having the biggest share of these meanings. Consequently, the Najdi culture and dialect competed with the Hijazi ones which affected the immigrants' social and linguistic attitudes.

The field of sociolinguistics is served well by a rich literature that presents language change as an obvious truism, specifically, in many dialect contact situations. Trudgill (1986) assumed that individual accommodation during dialect contact is a long process that leads to the emergence of a mixed dialect. Britain (1997) pointed out in his study of East Anglia that individual accommodation to the target dialect is an accumulative process. Therefore, people start to use the dialect variably, and when this contact lasts for a long time, a clear change will happen, and in most cases, a koine or a new dialect will be formed. Previous studies of Saudi dialects have revealed that variability is obvious in the speech of Saudis in different cities. In fact, based on the social changes and the two periods of internal immigrations, the author would suggest that this variability has two successive linguistic phases. In the beginning, the immigrants, who mainly immigrated to Mecca and Jeddah, tend to (sometimes conditionally) adopt Hijazi features such as stops [t], [d] and [dʰ]; and, on the other hand, they avoid their heritage features such as diphthongs [aw] and [aj] and the affricated variants of (k) and (g). The concept of simplification also occurs in immigrants' dialects, and it is obvious in eliminating gender distinction in the plural suffix variants in the present tense verb. Immigrants tended to use the Hijazi neutral suffix which is the masculine form (Al-Essa, 2008).

With all these changes in the country including the rapid mobility to Riyadh as elaborated above, immigrants became aware of the power that Riyadh and its people have. The immigrants immersed themselves in Najdi culture and interacted, on a daily basis, with Najdi people. This certainly affected and reshaped the immigrants' social and linguistic attitudes and behaviors. At this juncture, the author assumes that the second phase of variability has occurred. Many Saudi people continue to avoid regional markers, but in this phase, they tend to adopt more Najdi variants such as the affricate [dʒ] and some other phonological and syntactical features. This is a change from above (Labov, 1966), as the immigrants are aware of the cultural and linguistic dominance of Najd, therefore, they integrate some Najdi variants into their linguistic system. By adopting the dialect which has more status, immigrants use it as a tool to help them feel part of the new surroundings. Chambers (1995: 274) confirms this "We must also mark ourselves as belonging to the territory, and one of the most convincing markers is by speaking like the people who live there". In fact, the immigrants go beyond adopting the status dialect and adopt cultural and social behaviors such as, the way of receiving

guests and presenting food, and celebrating Najdi events such as (Gargeṣaan¹). However, it is worth mentioning here that the second phase of variability did not eliminate the first one. This goes along with the basic concept in sociolinguistics that change does not happen all of a sudden. It is a gradual process that starts with a variation over time in some linguistic features. In the beginning, specific old features gradually start to give way to innovative features until the change is complete through the disappearance of the old ones. The existence of both Najdi and Hijazi koinés is evidence of change in progress, but there is no indication that the Hijazi one will yet be terminated.

The influence of these two phases is also noticeable on the language of Saudi media: local broadcasts, drama, YouTube content, advertisements, and street billboards. Media is one of the channels that mirror societies' mores, cultures, thoughts, and language. Although it has been thought that mass media is capable of shaping societies, new research suggests that what is recently happening in new media is the opposite; people are controlling the content of the media (Bowman, 2014). Clay Shirkey (2008) has argued that the content in social media is shaped by the people themselves; social media has become the platform that presents a society's culture (cited in Bowman, 2014). Hence, what we hear or read in the media reflects what we use and do as a society. Al-Rojaie (2020) commented on the speakers' linguistic choice in different social platforms. He said, "On these sites, users attempt to use a shared variety that can be understood by nationwide viewers from Saudi Arabia" (ibid: 46). He also pointed out that using a common dialect is integrated with a national identity that young speakers in social media want to show.

Data and Methodology

The data for this study was collected from 26 television advertisements using simple random sampling. The author chose the advertisements, for Saudi companies and products, from YouTube. The length of the advertisements ranged from 30 seconds to one minute and 27 seconds. This kind of data is easily accessible, and it is a good reflection of what the public believe in and use, bearing in mind that people who work in this industry are eager to approach the widest Saudi audience. Hence, the linguistic choice of the workers in and behind the advertisements is an indication of the linguistic situation in the society. I used this material as a point of departure to try to conceptualize the linguistic trajectory in Saudi Arabia.

Based on the salience and examined features in previous sociolinguistic and dialectal studies (some examples mentioned above), the author selected the target variants. The author was keen to select variants that represent various Saudi dialects. These variants are listed below:

¹ It is a celebration that takes place in the middle of Ramadan where children wear traditional clothes and sing traditional songs. This type of celebration began in the gulf cities and spread to Najd areas.

Table 1*The selected variants*

The variants	Characteristics
Diphthongs [aw] and [aj]	Diphthongs in non-final position are mainly found in some spoken dialects of southwestern regions and the spoken dialect of the Rwaiili tribe (Prochazka, 1988).
Interdentals [θ], [ð], [ð̣ ^ʕ] and their stop counterparts [t], [d] and [ḍ].	These variants are the classical ones that distinguish between all Saudi dialects and Hijazi varieties.
The affricate [dʒ] and the fricative [ʒ]	Both variants are used variably in Saudi dialects.
The affricated and fricative variants of (k) [tʃ] and [ts] and [s] and [ʃ] respectively	These are marked variants which can be found in some spoken dialects of three main regions: the eastern, northern, and southern regions. They also occur in Najd (including Al-Qassim province)
The palatalized variant of (k) [kʲ]	According to a previous sociolinguistic study, this rare feature occurs in the Ḥarbi dialect in Medina. For further details check Al-Rohili (2019)

All advertisements were transcribed, then the needed variants were extracted by the author. The number of extracted tokens was 155. Then, they were entered into Excel Microsoft to extract percentage using the percent style button.

Results and Discussion

In this section the author illustrated the results which have been preceded by some examples of the extracted tokens. This has been followed by tables that show percentages of the variant's usage. A discussion is provided after each table.

Advertisement #1

Advertisement #1 is from one of the telecom companies in Saudi which was aired during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. In this advertisement only interdentals [ð], [θ] and [ð̣^ʕ] are used, [t], [d] and [ḍ] did not occur at all.

hāða 'this'

yenað̣^ʕð̣^ʕef 'cleans'

meθel 'such as'

ʔakθar 'more'

Advertisement #2

Advertisement #2 is from one of the famous restaurant chains. The interdentals did not occur at all, two of the stops are used [d] and [ḍ].

xud 'take'

ðaro:ri 'necessary'

Advertisement #3

Advertisement #3 is from the Saudi electricity company. In this advertisement, both interdental [ð] and [θ] and stops [d] and [t] are used.

Ha:ða ‘this’

hada ‘this’

tala:tah ‘three’

θa:bbet ‘set up’

Advertisement #4

Advertisement #4 is for a detergent product. It manifests the existence of both variants [ð̣] and [ð̣̄], in addition to the variant [θ].

aθθeya:b ‘men’s traditional clothes’

almobayyed ‘the bleach’

ʔalbε:ð̣a ‘the white’

la: lɛlmobayyed ‘not to use bleach’

ʔabbyad ‘whiter’

beθala:θ ‘with three’

baya:ð̣ ‘whiteness’

Table 2

The interdental variants

Features	No.	%
[ð], [θ] and [ð̣]	62	77%
[t], [d] and [ḍ]	18	23%

The data in Table 2 clearly illustrates that both plain interdentals [θ], [ð], [ð̣] and stops [t], [d] and [ḍ] occurred in the language of advertisements. However, comparing the usage of plain interdentals and stops stood at a drastic 54% difference in favor of plain variants.

Advertisement # 5

Advertisement #5 is for Nutella. Both variants [dʒ] and [ʒ] are used.

zede:d ‘new’

yedʒmaʔna: ‘gather us’

Advertisement #6

Advertisement #6 is for Goody mayonnaise. Only the fricative [ʒ] occurs.

ya: ʒama:ʔah ‘guys’

ʒa:yyen ‘are coming’

Advertisement # 7

Advertisement #7 is for a pastry company. Both variants [dʒ] and [ʒ] are used.

alfadʒer ‘sunrise’

mawʒu:dah ‘available’

yeʒeblik ‘brings you’

Advertisement # 8

Advertisement #8 is for a tea brand. Both variants [dʒ] and [ʒ] occur.

ʒeʒtema:ʔna ‘our meeting’

ma:ʒehzat ‘not ready’

ardʒu:k ‘please’

ʒadʒeblik ‘brings you’

Table 3

The (dʒ) variants

Features	No.	%
[dʒ]	50	67%
[ʒ]	25	33%

Regarding the variable (dʒ), 75 tokens were extracted from the advertisements. Table 3 shows that both variants, the affricate [dʒ] and the fricative [ʒ], occurred. Nevertheless, the affricated variant has been used more than the fricative variant with a 34% difference.

The occurrence of the variables (θ), (ð), (ð^s) and (dʒ) with the range of their variants is not surprising. However, what is surprising is the occurrence of the interdental and stops in one context which is clear in advertisement #3 and # 4. The variants [ð], [θ] and their stop equivalents [d] and [t] occur in # 3 and the variants [ð^s] and [d̪] in # 4. The data shows that the same speakers are pronouncing the same word variably. For instance, they use both [ð] and [d] in pronouncing the demonstrative pronoun *haða/hada* ‘this’. The same thing is happening with the variants [ð^s] and [d̪], a speaker in advertisement #4 uses them variably in the etymology of the word ‘white’ such as: *ʔalbɛ:ð^sa* ‘the white (fm.)’, *almobayyed* ‘the bleach’. Regarding [dʒ] and [ʒ] the manner of their occurrence is no different from the interdental and stops. This is obvious in advertisements # 5, # 6 and # 8. What really deserves consideration here is the use of [ʒ], advertisement # 5, in the word *ʒede:d* ‘new’; it is a Hijazi variant that is used in Najdi syllabification (the mid front vowel [e] in the first syllable). It is common for Hijazi variants to appear in words with Hijazi syllabification, and therefore the word *ʒede:d* is supposed to be *ʒade:d* with a low back vowel [ɑ] in the first syllable. What we have here is a novel linguistic form which combines two variants from the Najdi and Hijazi mixture. In fact, on a daily basis, I have noticed some examples of phonological and morphological intermediate forms which, indeed, need a thorough examination. Having intermediate variants is not something peculiar, as Trudgill (1986, 2004) provided some examples of the occurrence of intermediate forms as a result of contact in different languages such as Spanish and colonial English.

The results also show that the plain interdental and stops such as [ð], [θ] and [ð^s] and the affricate [dʒ] predominate, which can be due to the prevalence of these variants among Saudi dialects,

including Najdi. On the other hand, the stops [t], [d] and [dʕ] appear only in the Hijazi dialects (spoken in Mecca, Jeddah, Medina, and some areas in Taif); and the variant [ʒ] is used in the spoken dialects in the south-western region and in some Hijazi dialects. This provides an explanation for the prominence of Saudi-Najdi features.

In line with the results of the previous studies, none of the regional markers occurred in the language of advertisements as Table 3 demonstrates.

Table 4

Other variants

Features	%
[aw] and [aj]	0%
[s] and [ts]	0%
[ʃ] and [tʃ]	0%
[k]	0%

The [aw] and [aj] are both marked variants; they occur in only a few dialects in Saudi. They are used by speakers in some spoken dialects in the south-western region and the dialects of some Bedouin tribes in scattered areas (Prochazka, 1988). People in these areas practice agriculture and cattle grazing. This lifestyle imbued their dialects with negative connotations such as being “rural,” “backward” and “old fashioned”. Speakers of these dialects eliminate [aw] and [aj] from their speech to align themselves with modernization in the big cities (Al-Shehri, 1993; Alghamdi, 2014).

With the high level of mobility in the country, people who immigrated to big cities work hard to avoid standing out, rather, they aspire to be associated with those cities and the variants [s], [ts] and [ʃ], [tʃ] are marked and localized. It is easy to identify where people originally come from by using any of these variants, therefore, people endeavor to avoid using them in order to minimize social differences.

The abandonment of the last examined variant [k] can be ascribed to three major reasons: 1- it is a rare feature, 2- it is extremely localized and, 3- it is hard to be pronounced by non-native speakers. Therefore, this feature does not match with the modern social qualities in the urban societies. Further illustration for this rare feature is provided in Al-Rohili (2019).

In general, the results show the measure in which the advertisements reflect the linguistic behavior in society. The performers (most of them are famous Saudi influencers) tried to sound Saudi more than regional. This goes along with what Al-Rojaie (2020) mentioned about using a common dialect to represent a national identity. It also conforms with the findings of the previous Saudi sociolinguistic studies which revealed that people in urban cities level out linguistic markers that might represent negative connotations or that might reveal where they come from. Instead, they tend to use more neutral, common, modern, and unmarked features. This would explain why lay persons insist on using the term Saudi dialect/ supra-local dialect when they are asked: what type of dialect do you use in your workplace, school and with people who do not come from the same place as you?

The author believes that this current study is a useful starting point for further research with bigger samples from a range of different linguistic sources such as sociolinguistic interviews, social media, and television drama in order to have a better and more accurate description of the putative Saudi koine.

Conclusion and Future Directions

To conclude, this research suggests that we are witnessing an emergence of a dialect that can be called a Saudi koine. One of the characteristics of this supposed koine is that it features a double-sided pole, a Najdi pole and a Hijazi pole. In this koine, people abandon their marked features to choose neutral ones from a linguistic repertoire, Najdi and Hijazi Arabic. The findings show that all local and marked variants were eliminated: diphthongs [aw] and [aj], the affricated and fricative variants of (k) [tʃ] and [ts] and [s] and [ʃ] respectively, and the palatalized variant of (k) [kʲ]. On the other hand, other variants were variably used: Interdentals [θ], [ð], [ð̣] and their stop counterparts [t], [d] and [ḍ], the affricate [dʒ] and the fricative [ʒ]. Although the results show that the Najdi pole is more prominent than the Hijazi one, it is impossible to predict either the demise or the continuation of the Hijazi pole at this stage. This is because language change is still in progress which coincides with the continuous and huge social change as the government announces a range of new projects planned for Jeddah. In fact, this might create a balance between the two poles, Najdi and Hijazi. This current study is an attempt to understand the linguistic situation in Saudi and to test the hypothesis of the emergence of a Saudi koine. Further studies are certainly needed to scrutinize and identify this linguistic trajectory.

Bio

Najla M. Alghamdi is an assistant professor in linguistics, sociolinguistics. She is teaching linguistic courses at Taif University, Department of Foreign Languages. Her bachelor's degree was in English language from Umm Al-Qura University, 2001. The master's degree was obtained in applied linguistics from Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, 2004. She got her PhD degree in linguistics, sociolinguistics in 2014 from Essex University, UK. The thesis title is '*A sociolinguistic study of dialect contact in Arabia: Ghamdi immigrants in Mecca*'. In 2018, she obtained the fellowship of British higher education academy (recently called Advance HE). Among her interests are dialect variation and change and teaching English language in higher education. She is ready to supervise master students who are interested in dialect variation and change. Najla dedicates her sociolinguistic research to understand and conceptualize the linguistic situation in Saudi Arabia. She has a vision to launch a big national project with other Saudi sociolinguists to study and document Saudi dialects.

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