



Acquisition of prenominal adjective order by Jordanian EFL learners

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how Jordanian EFL learners manage to learn the order of English prenominal adjectives, shedding light on learners' cognitive processes and the possible impact of their first language. It focuses on two-, three- and four-adjective sequences to identify the areas of difficulty and their sources. The authors of the present study relied on their experience. They referred to some experts in Arabic grammar to compare the students' order of English prenominal adjectives with the order of Arabic adjectives to inform the degree of their mother tongue's influence. A test based on the order of prenominal adjectives suggested by Svatko (1979) was used for data collection to achieve the study objectives. The study participants were 42 Jordanian advanced EFL undergraduate students at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Jordan. The study results revealed that Jordanian EFL learners encounter great difficulties in using prenominal adjectives, especially as the complexity of sequences increases. The overall percentage of correct answers across all categories is 35%. The results also showed that intralingual errors outweighed interlingual errors, scoring 77%.

Keywords: L1 interference, word order, intralingual errors, Jordanian EFL learners

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, learning a second language is a significant cultural and cognitive achievement. The spread of English as an international language and an important career requirement has caused many non-native speakers to view it as a priority. Their ultimate goal is to achieve native-like fluency. They want to be as similar to native speakers as possible (Al-Saidat, 2010). Learning English as a foreign language has attracted the attention of researchers. They investigated the various aspects of learning English as a foreign language, including the learning and teaching strategies that may suit learners in different learning atmospheres (e.g., Aliakbari & Haghighi, 2014; Ahmadi, 2015) and the difficulties they encounter during their learning journey. They face diverse challenges in pronunciation and certain grammatical aspects, the order of adjectives being one of those difficulties. The study of the order of adjectives has attracted the attention of linguists (Ginting et al., 2020; Saputra et al., 2020; Halimah et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2022) as they believe that the order should not be taken for granted because the number of prenominal adjectives is infinite (Crystal, 1990). Despite this, one does not expect such long sequences of adjectives in their usage (Al-Ashoor, 2004). For Arab learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), acquiring prenominal adjectives is one of the more difficult areas (Al-Hassaani & Ja'ashan, 2017; Amir, 2014). This study explores how Jordanian EFL learners manage to learn the order of the prenominal adjectives while facing the influence of their first language.

Given that Arabic is the learners' first language, it plays a significant role in shaping their interlanguage (e.g., Al-Shalabi, 2021; Yahya, 2021; Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017; Elneel, 2018; Al-Harafsheh & Pandian, 2012; Al-Saidat & Warsi, 2011). As for the placement of adjectives, they are placed after the noun in an order that depends on the speaker's decision of what is more or less important. English and Arabic are different in this respect, as the Arabic order of adjectives depends not on specific order but on the importance criterion. In contrast, English relies on certain rules to be followed by the speaker or the writer. Therefore, challenges are expected for Arab learners of EFL in adjectival modification.

An adjective is a word used to modify a noun or a pronoun in that it adds clarity to the meaning of nouns to make it more obvious (Chalker, 1984). It is considered a significant unit of a language whose status as a part of speech is detected from its position in the sentence (Klochkova et al., 2019). According to Swan (2017), adjectives are usually classified into attributive, used before the noun (prenominal adjective) or predicative, occurring after verbs such as *be*, *seem*, *look*, *become*, and other linking verbs. The order of multiple adjectives within the adjective phrase may differ across languages.

A foreign language learner's mother tongue influence seems inevitable, especially at the early stages of their acquisition journey. Beginner language learners do not only memorize vocabulary items and expressions while learning the target language but also form hypotheses about the structures of the target language. These hypotheses are not formed in a vacuum but drawn on their mother tongue and L1 transfer as one of the cognitive processes learners use to extract the target language's grammar (Selinker, 1972). In this regard, Cook (1992) states that "the L1 is present in the L2 learners' minds, whether the teacher wants it to be there or not. The L2 knowledge that is being created in them is connected in all sorts of ways with their L1 knowledge". Arab learners of English seem to provide some evidence for Cook's statement. Various studies have focused on Arab learners of EFL in attempts to explore language acquisition processes and to suggest solutions that may help learners avoid committing errors in different aspects of the target language. For example, in a study conducted by Yahya (2021), English and Arabic adjectives are compared to explore the similarities and differences between the two languages in the area of adjectives. The author used a diagnostic test to collect data from 30 English Multicultural Center for Training and Human Development students. The study results revealed that participants have low abilities in understanding the diversity and order of English adjectives. As for the similarities and differences between English and Arabic adjectives, the results showed that there are more differences than similarities, resulting in an L1 interference.

Furthermore, Alotaibi and Alotaibi (2017) investigated the acquisition of the prenominal adjectives order by 80 Kuwaiti EFL learners (40 advanced and 40 intermediate). The authors used a test to measure the ability of the participant to use English prenominal adjectives in the correct order. The study results revealed that less than half of the participants used the correct order of adjectives, and the advanced learners provided more correct answers than the intermediate ones. Moreover, the results showed that the most noticeable cause of such errors was the negative interference of participants' L1. Regarding the influence of Arabic on the acquisition of EFL, Amir (2014) investigated the position and order of English adjectives as perceived by 65 female EFL students at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG). The study also aimed to identify the student's areas of difficulty by identifying the errors that students commit in relation to the position and order of English adjectives. The study results revealed that the participants struggled to construct sentences involving several adjectives. He attributed these difficulties to the differences between English and Arabic in the position and order of adjectives. Such differences were the cause of the serious errors committed by the participants as a result of the negative interference from their mother tongue.

The relation between EFL learners and their mother tongue is also investigated by Elneel (2018), who used a questionnaire to collect data from Sudanese EFL learners to explore their mother tongue's impact on the placement of English adjectives. The study indicated that L1 interference seems to be an obstacle for the participants in their acquisition of English adjectives, especially in the area of adjective placement, as most of the students' errors were attributed to L1 interference.

Al-Hassaani and Ja'ashan (2017) examined the difficulties encountered by 120 Yamani EFL learners at Aden University in constructing English adjectives in attributive position at the sentence level. They collected data through a questionnaire, open-ended questions, and a test. The study results indicated that students struggle to construct English attributive adjectives. Such difficulty is mainly caused by their intense L1 interference and their unfamiliarity with the basic rules of English adjective construction. They concluded that students need extra practice using various English attributive adjectives. Similarly, in the Jordanian context, the findings of Al-Harafsheh and Pandian's (2012) study showed that the main factor of the Jordanian students' errors in the area of English adjectives is L1 interference. Similar results were reported in a study conducted by Al-Saidat and Warsi (2011), who examined Jordanian EFL learners' use of the English article system. They found a strong L1 influence on the participants' use of English articles, which causes errors, including addition and omission of the article.

Despite the strong influence of Arabic on EFL learners, which leads to errors in adjectives and other aspects of grammar, as observed in the above studies, intralingual errors are also reported in some other studies. For example, Dehham (2014) investigated the errors committed by 100 Iraqi EFL university learners in adjectives. The author used a diagnostic test to collect data. The study's findings conclude that the English adjectives area, especially the compound ones, is difficult for Iraqi EFL learners as the incorrect responses surpassed the correct responses, scoring 59%. According to the study, these errors are attributed to several factors, including intralingual transfer scoring 30%, communication strategy (29%) and interlingual transfer (14.44%). Moreover, Al-Saidat (2012) studied errors made by Jordanian EFL learners using inflectional morphemes. Among the different sources of errors identified by the study, intralingual errors greatly outweighed interlingual ones, as the latter scored less than 25% of the total number of students' errors.

The main objective of this study is to find the difficulties that Jordanian EFL students face when using English pronominal adjectives. In addition, this study aims to reveal possible sources of error in this area. In this study, errors will be divided into two main categories: interlingual, referring to errors caused by participants' L1 interference and intralingual, referring to errors not caused by L1 interference. Once the difficulties and causes are explored, solutions can be easily suggested to address and avoid mistakes. This study is expected to be of great value in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, especially for Arabic learners. More precisely, it will benefit teachers, translators, students, and researchers who focus on modification systems in English and Arabic in contrast analysis and applied linguistics.

To achieve the above objectives, the study tries to answer three research questions: 1) To what extent are the Jordanian learners of EFL aware of the order of English pronominal adjectives? 2) What difficulties are Jordanian EFL learners encountering while using English pronominal adjectives? 3) What are the sources of these difficulties, and how can they be avoided?

METHOD

The participants of this study were 42 (20 males and 22 females) advanced EFL undergraduate students of English enrolled in the Department of English Language and Literature at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (AHU) in Jordan. Before joining AHU, all participants studied English at schools in Jordan for 12 years. At AHU, they have completed at least two courses in English grammar, viz., English Grammar (1) and English Grammar (2). For ethical considerations, they were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could quit anytime if they felt uncomfortable.

To explore the Jordanian EFL learners' use of pronominal adjectives, the authors designed a test to extract the required data. The test was based on the order of pronominal adjectives suggested by Svatko (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), as it appears common for native English speakers. It consists of 10 items: three items to test the order of two pronominal adjectives, four for three-adjective order, and three for four-adjective order, as in Table 1. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) analysis was used to determine whether participants could

place the prenominal adjectives correctly. In addition, it was used to calculate the percentages of the correct answers and to identify the most problematic sequences of adjectives.

Table 1. Types and order of adjectives used in the test

Adjective sequence	Type and order of adjectives			
Two adjectives	Opinion	Origin		
	Age	Origin		
	Condition	Colour		
Three adjectives	Opinion	Size	Colour	
	Opinion	Shape	Colour	
	Size	Age	Origin	
	Opinion	Age	Origin	
Four adjectives	Condition	Age	Colour	Origin
	Size	Age	Colour	Origin
	Opinion	Size	Age	Colour

The justification for using such divisions, as in Table 1, lies in the complex nature of adjectival sequences. The participants’ preferences are examined across different degrees of complexity in adjective sequences. By dividing the data into these subsections (Table 1), the analysis aims to explore the complexities involved in the participants’ decision-making processes when encountered with sequences of differing adjective quantities. This thorough procedure aims to provide a valuable deep understanding of the cognitive processes and linguistic preferences that underpin the multifaceted task of adjective sequencing in the participants’ L2 comprehension and production.

The following section represents the findings of the study. It includes examples of learners’ errors; under each example, the Arabic norm of the sequence of adjectives is given. This is meant to compare both the learner’s choice and Arabic sentence to decide about the influence of L1. Two experts in Arabic grammar from the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University represent these norms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the study test devised to determine the participants’ knowledge of the order of prenominal adjectives, the subsequent analysis is divided into three main subsections, delineating the differences between two-adjective sequences, three-adjective sequences, and four-adjective sequences.

Two-adjective sequences

This subsection focuses on two-adjective sequences exploring the participants’ degree of accuracy, choice strategies and cognitive processes when dealing with the order of two prenominal adjectives. It comprises three different sequences of adjectives they include adjectives: Opinion – Origin (PO), Condition – Colour (CL), and Age - Origin (AO). Referring to the data presented in Figure 1, it becomes apparent that the degree of accuracy of these sequences varies from one to another. The participants’ highest percentage of correct answers is found with the PO sequence scoring 83.33, suggesting notable proficiency in correctly ordering adjectives of PO. Contrariwise, the AO sequence displays the lowest accuracy rate in this category, scoring 57.14%, implying a comparatively higher level of ambiguity in correctly using adjectives of age and origin. The accuracy rate of correct answers in this category is 73%.

Participants committed various misordering errors in all the sequences presented in Table 2. For example, the sequence PO was erroneously produced as OP seven times (16.6%), as in example (1) (in each example, the learner’s response is represented under which the norm in Arabic is given). Similarly, the sequence CL was mistakenly produced as LC nine times (21.4%), as exemplified in (2). The sequence AO was also produced as OA 18 times (42.8%) as in example (3). The examples can be seen in A.

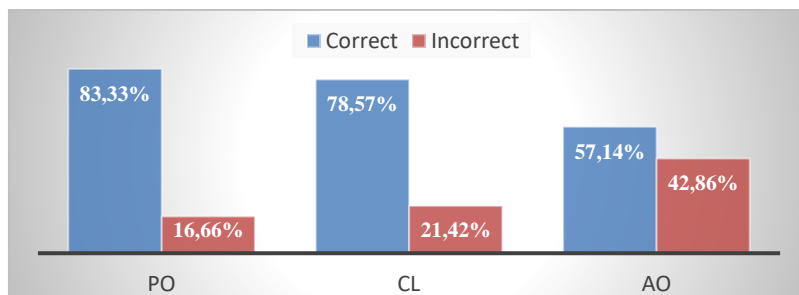


Figure 1. Two-adjective Sequences

- *I have a Japanese, nice voice recorder.
I have recorder voice Japanese nice
- *My younger brother has a pair of blue, spoiled toys.
My younger brother has a pair of toys blue spoiled
- *My uncle presented me a(n) Swiss, old watch.
Presented me my uncle watch Swiss old (A)

The above misordering errors do not seem to be related to the norms of the target language, as the criteria for adjective ordering are generally well-established. Instead, these errors can be attributed to participants’ L1, where the choice of adjective order depends on the speaker’s decision on the degree of importance within a particular situation and context, shown under each sentence. Therefore, these can be categorized as interlingual errors, reflecting the influence of participants’ L1 on their L2.

Three-adjective sequences

This subsection is devoted to three adjective sequences, exploring the participants’ discernment when they encountered the challenge of using three adjectives before a head noun. It aims to explain the cognitive dynamics and decision-making mechanisms employed as the complexity of adjectival arrangement increases.

The focus of this category extends to four intricate sequences of adjectives, each comprising three prenominal adjectives. These sequences include adjectives of Opinion – Age – Origin (PAO), Opinion – Shape – Colour (PSL), Opinion – Size – Colour (PZL), and Size – Age – Origin (ZAO). As shown in Table 2, PAO is the most accurately processed sequence, scoring 40.47%. On the other hand, ZAO displays the lowest accuracy, scoring 19.04%, which may indicate a cognitive challenge in construing sequences involving adjectives of size, age, and origin.

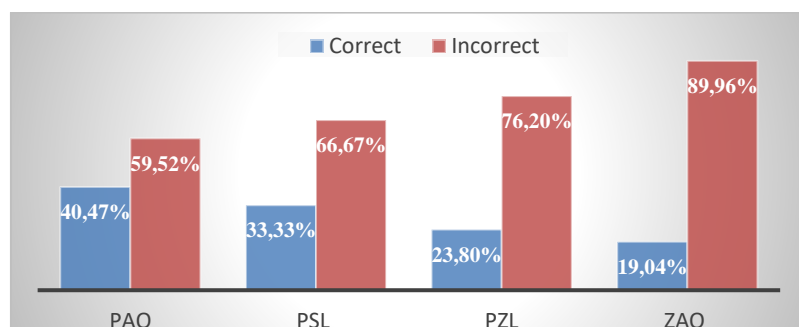


Figure 2. Three-adjective Sequences

The participants committed various misordering errors in this category due to the presence of three adjectives in one sequence. For example, for the Opinion – Age – Origin sequence (PAO), they produced four erroneous sequences; for instance, the sequence APO, as in example (4), occurred 10 times, whereas L1 order OAP was produced only 6 times. The sequence Opinion – Shape – Colour (PSL) is erroneously produced as SPL 8 times as in example (5), whereas L1

interference (LSP) appears only 4 times. This suggests that errors in examples 4 and 5 are attributed to the learners’ developmental stage rather than their L1. However, in example (6), the sequence Opinion – Size – Colour (PZL) is produced as ZLP 13 times, which matches the participants’ L1 order and thus indicates interlingual errors. Among the four sequences examined in this category, the sequence Size – Age – Origin (ZAO) was erroneously produced as AZO 24 times (see example 7), scoring the lowest accuracy rate in this category. In contrast, the L1 order match (OAZ) appears only 4 times. The examples can be seen in B.

4. *My grandfather has a(n) old, wonderful, German radio.
My grandfather has radio German old wonderful
5. *When I was a child, I used to keep my toys in a round, beautiful, pink box.
When I was a child, I used to keep my toys in a box pink round beautiful
6. *I hate the big, black, violent dog that passes in front of my house every morning.
I hate the dog big black violent that passes in front of my house every morning
7. *My father bought me some new, big, Turkish trousers.
Bought to me my father some trousers Turkish new big (B)

The percentage of the total correct answers in this category is 29.16. Compared with the previous category, the accuracy rate of this category is lower, indicating that the number of adjectives in the sequence plays a significant role in attaining the correct order of adjectives.

Four-adjective Sequences

The final category in this analysis focuses on three different sequences of adjectives; each sequence consists of four prenominal adjectives. It explores the participants’ cognitive adaptability and linguistic judgement when encountering highly complex adjectival constructions. The sequences include adjectives of Opinion – Size – Age - Colour (PZAL), Condition – Age – Colour - Origin (CALO), and Size – Age – Colour - Origin (ZALO). A meticulous analysis of the data presented in Table 3 shows a ubiquitous low level of accuracy across all the sequences in this category. Despite this, the highest accuracy is manifested by the PZAL sequence, albeit with a modest score of 7.14%. On the other hand, the ZALO sequence shows the least accuracy, scoring only 2.38%.

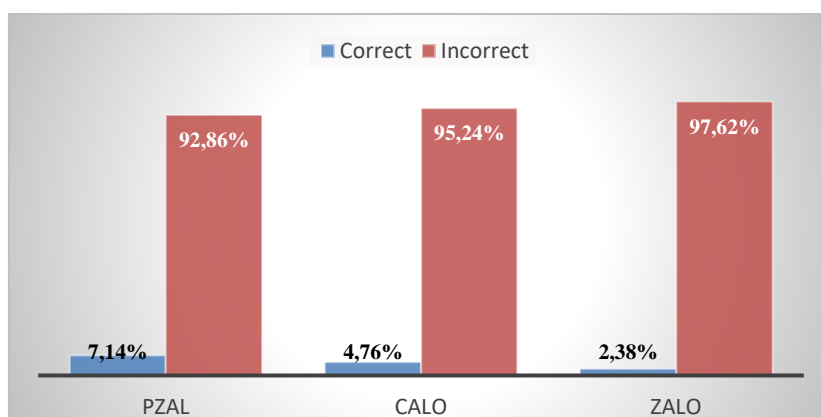


Figure 3. Four-adjective Sequences

The participants made various errors in this category due to the presence of four adjectives in each sequence. This created many erroneous sequences, producing a low accuracy rate (4.76%). The sequence Opinion – Size – Age - Colour (PZAL) was replaced by 16 erroneous sequences, among which the highest is PALZ produced 24 times (see 8), whereas the L1 order (ALPZ) was not found a single time. Moreover, the sequence Condition – Age – Colour – Origin (CALO) is produced erroneously as CLAO four times as in (9) and as OALC (L1 order) three times. Finally, the sequence Size – Age – Colour – Origin (ZALO) was replaced by 13 erroneous sequences; for instance, the sequence ALZO was produced eleven times as in (10), whereas the L1 order OALZ was not found in the data. The examples can be seen in C.

8. *Salma has a(n) amazing, old, white, small ornament.
Salma has ornament old white amazing small
9. *My brother sold his spoiled, red, old, German car.
Sold my brother his car German old red spoiled
10. *I would like to buy a new, red, big, Japanese car.
I would like to buy a car Japanese new red big (C)

L1 influence is evident in this category, as indicated by the high percentage of misordering errors. The participants relied on their L1 system, where the order of adjectives was chosen according to importance rather than any fixed order.

As for the overall accuracy, as seen in Figures 4 and 5, the accuracy rate is quite low (35%), indicating that the participants' performance across all categories is relatively poor. This suggests that there is a possibility for improvement in their overall performance. As clearly seen from Figure 4, there is a noticeable discrepancy in accuracy between the different categories. The two-adjective category is the highest, scoring 73.01%, followed by the three-adjective category at 29.16%, and the four-adjective category scoring only 4.76%. This shows a decline in accuracy as the number of adjectives increases, indicating that the participants may struggle with longer sequences and their increased complexity.

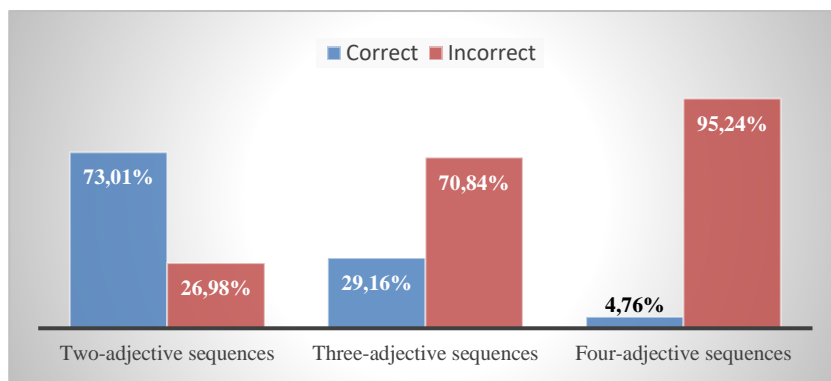


Figure 4. Accuracy in Each Category

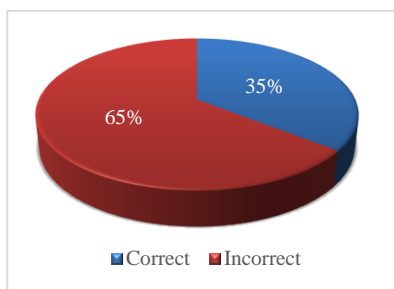


Figure 5. Accuracy Across each Category

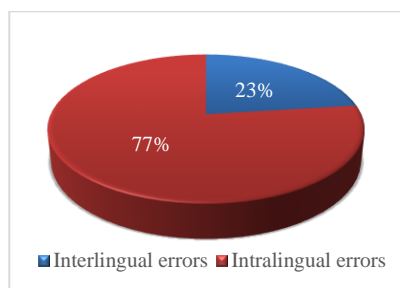


Figure 6. Sources of Errors

As for sources of errors, Figure 6 indicates that errors not attributed to L1 interference (intralingual errors) outweigh those caused by learners' L1. This downplays the role of L1 interference in prenominal adjectives as produced by Jordanian learners of EFL.

Discussion

This study addressed three main research questions to explore Jordanian EFL learners' knowledge of English prenominal adjectives and their difficulties when using them. These questions are revisited in this section, and their answers are based on the analysis in the previous section.

RQ1. To what extent are the Jordanian learners of EFL aware of the order of English prenominal adjectives?

By answering this question, the analysis in the previous section showed that students are, to a great extent, not aware of the order of the English prenominal adjectives, as the total number of errors committed in this area is 273 out of 420, scoring 65% as it can be seen in Figure 5 above. This finding aligns with previous studies' findings (e.g., Ginting et al., 2020; Al-Hassaani & Ja'ashan, 2017; Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017; Amir, 2014).

In English, generally, a specific order for prenominal adjectives is used. However, Bailey (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999) classifies the constituents of noun phrases into six parts in the following order: "determinants, subjective or evaluative adjectives, measurement adjectives, coloring adjectives, material adjectives and head nouns", see Table 1. Svatko (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999) expands the classification made by Bailey (1975) and narrow the category within Bailey's section, see Table 2.

Table 1. Constituent Order of Bailey's English Noun Phrases (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999)

1	2	3	4	5	6
The	poor	little	pink	plastic	doll
a	ugly	old	gray	Wood	statue

Table 2. Constituent Order of English Noun Phrases Svatko (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999)

Det.	opinion	size	shape	condition	age	color	as long as	noun
A	ugly	big	round	Flaky	old	blue	French	vase

Furthermore, Scott (2002) expands on the order of adjectives proposing the following fine-grained hierarchy: "ordinal numbers > cardinal numbers > subjective comments >>> size length > height > speed > depth > width > weight > temperature > wet > age > shape > color > nationality/origin > material". As can be observed from the order of English adjectives above, learners of English as a foreign language may find this area problematic, especially if the order in their L1 is different.

Whereas adjectives in Arabic are placed after the nouns they modify, Arabic adjectives agree with nouns in certainty, number, gender and case (Fehri, 1999; Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017). Since Arabic is characterized by the flexibility of word order (Al-Ashoor, 2004), there is no specific order for adjectives in Arabic; they are semantically ordered according to their importance in the sentence (Elneel, 2018). Adjectives can be in the form of one word, half-sentence or sentence (Yahya, 2021). Compared to English adjectives, Arabic adjectives use different processes in their rules and construction. With significant differences and minimal similarities in their construction, Arabic EFL learners are expected to make mistakes in the placement of English adjectives where L1 perturbations would be predicted (Al-Hassaani & Ja'ashan, 2017).

RQ2. What are the difficulties encountered by Jordanian learners of EFL while using English pronominal adjectives?

The analysis in the above section indicated that the number of constituents in each category plays a significant role in the degree of difficulty for Arab EFL learners in general and Jordanian learners in particular. Figure 4 shows sequences with two easiest adjectives, scoring 73% of correct use. Whereas sequences with the maximum number of adjectives are the least correctly used, scoring only 4.76%.

The main cause of language learner errors is the influence of the language already learned, including L1 or their target language system. In this case, Richards (1971) classifies learner errors into 'interlingual errors' and 'intralingual errors'. Furthermore, Gass and Selinker (2020) argue that, in terms of the language learning process, there are similarities between L1 and L2 learning because it is difficult for students to avoid making mistakes when learning one of them.

This error is usually caused by the influence of the student's mother tongue on the target language. They are predicted to occur when the L1 pattern is different from L2. When learners have difficulty generating certain grammatical features in L2, they try to apply their L1 rules in the context of L2 (Hermawar et al., 2021; Ramli et al., 2020; Wati, 2022; Dehham, 2014). They are called interference errors (Dulay & Burt, 1974). Richards (1971) uses the term 'interlingual error' to describe this error. However, throughout this study, we will refer to it as an 'interlingual error' as used by Selinker (1972). On the other hand, when learners' errors are not caused by their L1, they are referred to as intralingual or developmental errors (Villarroel & Estrada, 2019). Richards (1971) states that these errors indicate some common aspects of language acquisition and reveal a particular level of language competence. Touchie (1986) considers them more serious than interlingual errors because they suggest inadequate learning methods. They are caused by various factors, including "simplification, overgeneralization, hypercorrection, incorrect teaching, fossilization, avoidance, inadequate learning, and hypothetical false concepts" (Touchie, 1986). Errors are also classified into two broad categories according to the degree of disruption they cause in communication. Burt and Kiparsky (Touchie, 1986) refer to mistakes that do not cause communication difficulties or challenges in understanding the meaning of speech as local errors. This includes errors in inflectional suffixes, articles, prepositions and helpers. Global errors are mistakes that hinder communication because they interfere with the meaning of speech, such as the wrong order of words.

RQ3. What are the sources of these difficulties, and how can they be avoided?

The sources of the participants' difficulties, as revealed in the analysis section, are both interlingual and intralingual. As for the influence of learners' L1, the analysis showed that in the two-adjective sequences, the participants' errors can be attributed to their L1 interference as all errors committed match the order of their L1, and thus they can be classified as interlingual errors, in line with the findings of the previous research (e.g., Yahya, 2021; Alotaibi & Alotaibi, 2017; Elneel, 2018; Al-Hassaani & Ja'ashan, 2017; Amir, 2014; Al-Harafsheh & Pandian, 2012). Conversely, all errors are attributed to the learners' developmental stage in the three-adjective sequences, reflecting their incomplete acquisition of English pronominal adjective order rules. Therefore, they can be categorised as intralingual errors. However, in one sequence, Opinion – Size - Colour (PZL), the most frequent error is the sequence ZLP, which perfectly matches the order of their L1 and thus suggests an interlingual error. Finally, all the errors of the four-adjective sequences are attributed to the participants' developmental stage since L1 interference is mostly unseen in their errors. Thus, they can be regarded as intralingual errors. As indicated in Figure 5, less than one-fourth of the total errors committed (23%) are interlingual ones. This finding agrees with Al-Saidat's (2012) findings and Richards's (1971) findings, which state that the influence of the mother tongue on L2 produces 3-25 percent of all errors. Teachers should emphasise English pronominal adjectives using more practice and quizzes to overcome these potential challenges. Teachers are also required to use different teaching styles (Aliakbari & Haghighi, 2014; Ahmadi, 2015) and employ diverse activities to promote students' proficiency in this problematic area, highlighting the difference in adjective order in both English and Arabic, such as asking their students to translate sentences containing several pronominal adjectives from English to Arabic

and vice versa. They may analyse the areas of weakness to provide remedial solutions to students who are not progressing adequately. Along with these, other solutions may be possible and need to be further investigated.

Furthermore, according to Burt and Kiparsky, misalignment is considered a global error because it usually causes communication difficulties (Touchie, 1986). For example, an object is placed in the subject's position. However, in the order of prenominal adjectives, the rate of miscommunication is lower because one can understand the meaning intended by the speaker or writer. Therefore, this study proposes to classify error errors in prenominal adjectives as local errors based on the degree of communication disorders.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the participants' knowledge of using prenominal adjectives in the correct order, focusing on two-, three-, and four-adjective sequences. The analysis showed that the accuracy rate varies across these sequences, shedding light on participants' cognitive processes and the possible impact of L1. The overall percentage of correct answers across all categories is 35. This overall accuracy provides an insightful perspective into the general proficiency revealed by Jordanian EFL learners in grasping and correctly ordering prenominal adjectives. Therefore, it can be concluded that Jordanian learners of EFL encounter great difficulties in using prenominal adjectives, especially as the complexity of sequences increases. Analyzing the participants' performance across various sequences of prenominal adjectives provides an understanding of the cognitive processes they involve in linguistic categorization and comprehension, which, in turn, sheds light on the areas of possible difficulty or ease within this particular area of grammar.

Hopefully, this study will be valuable in providing pedagogical insights to various parties involved in foreign language teaching and learning, including syllabus designers, teachers, and material designers. As for Arab learners of EFL, the study could be of great benefit as the results revealed the problematic areas they might encounter in ordering prenominal adjectives and the causes of these difficulties.

Further exploration of this area is required with similar participants at different institutions in different Arab countries to give a panoramic view of the various causes of errors in this area, which may help Arab learners of English improve their fluency and academic achievements in English.

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