



A Syntactic-o-Semantic Study of English Resumptive Pronouns in University Students of English Written Performance

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Abstract

The present study aims at exploring some difficulties that university students of English face when using resumptive pronouns in their written performance. It is hypothesized that Students of English are not fully aware of this type of pronouns; therefore, they use them randomly. Consequently, students might be interrupted by interference of their native language (Arabic). To investigate the validity of the hypothesis, twenty samples of 4th year students of English written performance have been selected and analyzed to detect their ability to distinguish resumptive pronouns from other pronouns. The study concludes that students make grammatical errors



concerning resumptive pronouns due to two main reasons: interlingual and intralingual; both affect the way they compose their essays.

Keywords: Resumptive pronouns, Gaps, Traces

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1. Introduction

Resumptive pronouns (henceforth RPs) are used in English sentence to fill the position of gaps or traces. Syntactically RPs occur in subject or object positions of relative clauses which refer back to their antecedents. Semantically, RPs are used in English relative clauses to improve the acceptability of the sentence, otherwise an ambiguity appears.

An RP, according to Binkert (2004:105), is a pronoun that occupies the syntactic position of a phrase that has been dislocated for emphasis, such as '*him*' in:

- That boy over there, Mary likes *him* (left dislocation).
- Mary likes *him*, that boy over there (right dislocation).
- Mary likes *him*, that boy over there (right dislocation)



Binkert also gives an account of using an RP *he* as in:

- That boy over there, *he* likes Mary (left dislocation).
- He likes Mary, that boy over there (right dislocation).

(ibid:2004).

This work attempts to bring the phenomenon of RPs in accordance with analysis based on Keffala (2013). The semantic issues are presented within the framework of Quirk et al (1985).

Beltrama (2013:9) points out that English lacks RPs and has instead what are called *dubbed 'intrusive' pronouns*. Keffala (2013:151) states that RPs occur in contexts where movement is not possible and the RP is related to its antecedent anaphorically provided that gaps do not appear. According to Minimalism Theory, " RPs are spell-outs of traces. For reasons of economy, the RP surfaces only when the derivation with the trace is precluded by syntactic principles. This account predicts that RPs should only improve violations of constraints on representation, and not violations of constraints on movement." (Chomsky: 1995, cited in McDaniel and Wayne Cowart. 1999:16).

It is hypothesized that Students of English are not fully aware of this type of pronouns; therefore, they use them randomly. Consequently, students might be interrupted by



interference of their native language (Arabic). To investigate the grammatical rules always responsible for RP in English writing, the researcher conducts an analysis of the written English performance of twenty 4th year Iraqi university students at the Department of English, College of Education, Al Hamdaniya University. This study, will hopefully, present a good deal towards a better understanding and producing RPs by students of English, EFL students in particular.

2. What Resumptives Are?

Resumptive pronouns are pronouns that are used in place of subject or object gap to improve the acceptability of relative clause. McKee and McDaniel (2001:116) illustrate this statement through the following examples:

- (1a) This is the boy that whenever it rains cries.
- (1b) This is the boy that whenever it rains *he* cries.
- (1c) That is the girl that I like...
- (1d) That is the girl that I like *her*.

It has shown from above examples that the acceptability of (1b) is more than (1a), a trace appears in a position of a subject of Wh embedded clause in which one considers that can add a pronoun to refer to its antecedent anaphorically. Hence, *he* is used resumptively considering that it functions to avoid the ambiguity of the sentence structure. Furthermore, the sentence



in English does not prefer verb serialization without links as in the above '*rains cries*'. So, using RPs in these positions will get rid of such ambiguities. In (1c), there is trace in object position whereas in (1d) an RP is used to occupy the position of trace. Moreover, using an RP in English imposes a uniform penalty on acceptability, regardless of the position. This penalty appears to be less severe in speech than in writing. RPs can “rescue” illicit gaps in just those cases where the fixed RP penalty is less than that affecting the gap, Keffala (2011:140), as in the following example:

(2a) This is the chef that....Prepared the lunch. (Gap)

(2b) This is the chef that *she* prepared the lunch. (RP)

It is evident from (2b) that the RP '*she*' is used in subject position of that-clause in order to rescue an illicit gap in (2a).

Haegeman (1994:409) points out that an RP is a pronoun that refers back to a previously realized item within the same syntactic structure. RPs are often found in [relative clauses](#), where they are realized twice; once as relative pronoun and once as RP (ibid:409). In [generative syntax](#), RPs are seen as an alternative strategy to movement (ibid:409), they are spell-out forms, where otherwise (i.e. if movement would have applied properly) only invisible [traces](#) would be left. An RP is a



pronoun which appears in the position of the variable bound by a WH-phrase. Consider the following examples:

(3a) The man who the police arrested ... has talked. (Gap)

(3b) The man who the police arrested *him* has talked. (RP)

In (3b) "him" is a RP bound by "who" and interpreted as bound variable.

2.1. Resumptives and Traces:

McKee and McDaniel (2001:136) assume that resumptives appear in positions where traces would be ruled out because of constraints of movement. Though, RPs appear in surface structure bound by its antecedent. Thus, no movement is involved. When movement occurs such as in question phrases, an invisible place-marker is left, called a trace as in:

(5) Which boy Mary like.....? (Trace)

In (5) the RP is not coexisting with wh-movement, otherwise ungrammaticality will occur.

A trace is an empty category that maintains a position in a sentence. It represents the pronoun that would have been present in the embedded clause, or before the WH-movement, i.e. removed from the surface representation of the sentence. As a result, in accordance with Binding Theory, the empty



position of a trace must still be co-indexed with the preceding noun that it refers to in D-structure (McKee and McDaniel 2001:117).

(6a) Mary likes every boy.

(6b) Every boy Mary likes

McKee and McDaniel (2001:113) point out that RPs are pronouns in a relative clause which refer to the antecedent of the main clause (sometimes referred to as the matrix clause). These pronouns occur after a pause or interruption (such as an embedded clause, series of adjectives, or a wh-island), and they restate the antecedent such as:

(6) This is the girl that whenever it rains *she* cries.

McCloskey: (2006: 26) points out that resumptives are “pronouns which appear in a position in which, under other circumstances, a gap would appear”.

(7a) This is the girl that John likes..... (Gap)

(7b) This is the girl that John likes **her**. (RP)

It is obvious from the examples above that in case of omitting the RP *her* in (7a) a gap will appear in its position as it is illustrated in (7b).



McKee and McDaniel (2001:113) state that in many contexts RPs are judged to be ungrammatical by native speakers and they cannot be in the same binding domain or clause as the pronoun to which they refer. They do not usually occur in main clauses, but generally in relative clauses in some languages. (ibid: 2001).

There are two views regarding the existence of RPs. Some Linguists (McCloskey 2006:26, Prince 1990:2 among many others) believe that resumptive pronouns occur as a result of syntactic processing, while others (Postal 1971:7, Wasow 1974: 7, among many others) believe they are the result of grammatical structure and are actually the pronunciation of a trace. In terms of grammatical processing, speakers use RPs to clarify syntactically complicated sentences by using an RP as a hook back to the antecedent. From the structural perspective, RPs have been called a “cross between a trace morpheme and a regular pronoun” (Yael, 1990:3). Consider the following example:

(8a) That is the boy that cries loudly.

(8 b) *That is the boy that **he** cries loudly.

To approach RPs, McKee and McDaniel (2001:115) state that "A conceivable way of approaching RPs is to say that they



are syntactically of the same category as gaps or traces, and that they get the same semantic translation". Chomsky, 1995, cited in McKee and McDaniel, 2001:115) mentions that the difference would be that certain gaps get 'spelled out' as pronouns for clarity. In this sense, RPs are syntactically and semantically pronouns and they differ in both these respects from gaps. Consider the following examples from Chomsky (1981:56):

(9a). The man [who(i) John saw t(i).]

(9b). *The man [who(i) John saw him(i).]

(9c). That is [the boy(i) that t(i) cries loudly.]

(9d). *That is [the boy(i) that he(i) cries loudly.]

t = trace i = co-indexed

Sentence (9a) shows a trace, where the pronoun has been removed from the embedded clause. In (9b), the word "him" represents the pronoun that would be referred to as a RP if it remains in the sentence. However, traces and RPs appear in complementary distribution, so for the sentence to be grammatical with a trace in (9a), it must be ungrammatical when the RP fills that same position in (9b). Sentences (9c) and (9d) operate similarly.



RPs are generally disallowed in English relative clauses. Thus, (10b) seems preferable to (10a). Some improvement in whether a native speaker judges RPs as grammatical may also result when the RP is embedded as in (10c) below:

(10a): *This is the camel that **he** likes Oscar.

(10b): This is the camel that maybe, **he** likes Oscar.

(10c): This is the camel that I think **he** likes Oscar.

2.2. Acceptability of Resumptive Pronouns

Since distance is generally irrelevant to syntactic principles, it is difficult to build a grammatical account of English RPs in such terms. The factor that seems to affect the distribution of resumptives in English most is extractability (i.e., whether a trace is acceptable). RPs are therefore generally in complementary distribution with traces. (McKee and McDaniel, 2001:115).

In (11) below where the trace is possible, the resumptive pronoun is not:

(11a). That's the girl that I like ... (Trace)

(11b). *That's the girl that I like **her** .

McKee and McDaniel (2001:115) state that RPs' distribution is very limited and appears to be influenced by linear distance,



depth, and especially extractability, i.e. whether a trace is acceptable.

To sum, RP in English is generally in complementary distribution with traces. In (12a), where the trace is possible, the RP is not; in (12b), where the trace is not possible, the RP is. (ibid)

(12a). *That's the girl that I don't know what did.

(12b). That's the girl that I don't know what she did.

(13a). This is the man that *he* is swimming.

(13b). This is the man who is swimming.

In (12a) the trace appears, on the other hand an RP *she* appears to fill this position.

In (13a) the resumptive pronoun '*he*' refers to the subject whereas in (13b) the trace appears.

2.3 Semantic functions of Resumptives

The meaning of the sentence with a relative clause is shaped respectively by two factors; the choice of the relative pronoun, and the relation between the dependent and the independent clauses of the sentence. Dik et al (1997:25) identify the semantic function of relative clause stating that "a relative clause is a proposition embedded within a construction with a nominal head, which restricts the set of potential referents of



that nominal head to a subset of which the proposition is also true ".

Most linguists (McDaniel & Cowart 1999, Alexopoulou & Keller 2007, Heestand et al. 2011, Keffala & Goodall 2011, Ross, 1967 among many others) believe that the most important function of RPs is to improve the acceptability of relative clause otherwise sentences with relative clause without RPs, gaps will appear . Hence an ambiguity appears and the sentence will be weak in form. Consider the following examples:

(14a) The teacher that... saw him.

(14b) The teacher that *I* saw ...

(14c) The teacher that *I* saw *him*

From examples above, I agree with linguists regarding the ambiguity of sentences if there is no overt pronouns in the structures as in (14a) and (14b) whereas (14c) the structure with RPs is more acceptable than empty category. Moreover, in some languages like Arabic the structure of (14b) is acceptable provided that there is no confusion of meaning (Amer 2010:13), as in :

(15) Hadara allathi kafa?t .
attended who rewarded-I
"The one whom I rewarded attended"



Guy and Bayley (1995 cited in Amer, 2010:7) correlate between relative pronoun choice and the adjacency of the antecedent, the syntactic position of the relativised element in the embedded clause, and the adjacency of the antecedent and the relativized element. This means that all these variants have significant effects on the choice of the relative pronoun, which in turn impose constraints on the semantic framework of the sentence (Amer, 2010:8). Some typical semantic variables such as "agent" and "patient" have also their impact on the semantic features of the relativized sentence. To consider the semantic functions of the relative clause with RPs in English, the following examples may shed light on five different variables (Amer, 2010:8):

- Mary talked to the man who (*agent*) bought the house down the street .
- She saw the boy whom (*patient*) the dog bit.
- They called the man to whom (*recipient*) Bill sold the house.
- Mary looked at the box in which (*location*) the jewelry was kept .
- Mary looked at the box out of which (*source*) the jewelry had been taken .



Clearly, the above instances show that the different semantic roles are controlled by the head of the relative clause; that is, the relative pronoun can have any semantic role; it can function as agent , patient, recipient, location or source (ibid.2010:8).

2.4 Major Studies on Resumptives

McDaniel & Cowart(1999) found that structures with RPs were rated higher than those with empty gaps in subject gap relative clauses formed from weak islands.

(16a). That is the girl that I met last year.

(16b) * That is the girl that I met her last year.

(17a) That is the girl that I wonder when met you.

(17b) That is the girl that I wonder when she met you.

In (16) and (17) where the status of RP sentence (the (b) examples) depends on the status of the counterparts with traces (the (a) examples).

Alexopoulou & Keller (2007:23) and Heestand et al. (2011:14) show that when RPs occur in object position whether in WH or 'that' island clause These RPs will not improve acceptability of island violations. According to them RPs in subject position is more acceptability and more accurately than object position. They prefer object gaps than resumptives one.



Keffala (2013:146) tests this on relative clauses formed from non-islands (simple clauses, one-level embedded clauses), weak islands (WH-complement clauses) and strong islands (relative clauses). The test sentences contained a subject gap relative clause as in (18), or an object gap relative clause as in (19):

- (18a). This is the chef that ... the potatoes.
- (18b). This is the chef that *she* prepared the potatoes.
- (18c). This is the chef that Tom inquired how ...
prepared the potatoes.
- (18d). This is the chef that Tom inquired how *she*
prepared the potatoes.
- (19a). These are the potatoes that Tom prepared
- (19b). These are the potatoes that Tom prepared *them*.
- (19c). These are the potatoes that Tom inquired how the
chef prepared
- (19d). These are the potatoes that Tom inquired how the
chef prepared them.

Keffala (2011:147) found that in island conditions, while object resumptive relatives are rated as low as object empty gap relatives, subject resumptive relatives are rated higher than subject empty gap relatives. But they found no difference in



acceptability between subject resumptive relatives and object resumptive relatives.

Prince (1990:483) and Cann et al. (2004:1554) have found that native speakers of English use RPs in incautious speech. According to them, RPs are inserted to the corresponding structures instead of gaps for saving island violations. Keffala. (2013) characterized an RP as "last resort strategy. It is used when movement violates grammatical constraints. Moreover, RPs are preferred instead of traces when movement occurs in which a gap would be ungrammatical (ibid: 2013). For instance:

(20a) Sally said that will leave.

(20b) Sally said that *she* will leave.

The pronoun in (20b) appears in positions where one would find a gap in RP's position in relative clause.

The sentence (20a) containing a gap is grammatical and it is expected that speakers of English should find it to be acceptable.

Sells (1984:6) states that RPs and gaps are assumed to be equally acceptable, the idea that resumption can save an ungrammatical sentence by replacing an illicit gap. Ross(1986:260) has focused on these apparent differences in



acceptability between English sentences that may contain RPs and their illicit, gap-containing analogs, as in (21a-d) below:

(21a) That's the girl that I wonder when ...met you.

(21b) That's the girl that I wonder when she met you.

(21c) That's the girl that I wonder when you met

(21d) That's the girl that I wonder when you met her.

The sentences with RPs (21a-b) are claimed to be more acceptable than corresponding structures (21c-d). This phenomenon can be explained by attributing RPs with a saving function for islands or a last resort function for movement that violates a constraint on grammaticality (ibid:2013).

It is clear from the previous studies that RPs are found much more frequently in indefinite relative clauses than definite relative clauses (Prince, 1990) and they are definite in the studies of Heestand et al. (2011) and Keffala& Goodall (2011). It is also found that resumption is known to be a speech phenomenon in that structures with resumption are commonly found in speech rather than in text. Subject RPs is more acceptable than object RPs in relative clauses.

In the current study, RPs are important to be given to learners of English. However, RPs in English relative clauses in general are more acceptable than gaps. In previous studies the analysis based on experimental findings from McDaniel

and Cowart (1999) or Alexopoulou and Keller (2007) do not account for these facts, an alternative solution must be sought. Past literature on resumptive pronouns has long assumed that resumption is capable of 'saving.' island violations as it was stated by many researchers, while the present study adds to the body of information accumulating from experimental investigation of the acceptability of resumptive pronouns through the university students' data and analyze them according to Keffala's Model 2013.

4. Results and Data Analysis

The results of sorting out the resumptives in the written performance of the samples of the study (twenty 4th year students) and their percentages can be represented in the following table (1) and Figure (1) below, respectively:

Use of Resumptives in Students' Written Performance

جامعة تكريت

Test Subject	trace	gap	Embedded that-clause	Wh-island Clause	Adequate use of RPs	Misuse of RPs
1	2	1	1		2	2
2	2	1	1	2	2	2
3	1		2	2	7	3
4		1	1		3	2
5	1		2	2	7	1
6	3		1	1	2	
7	1	3	4		2	4
8	1	1		2	3	2
9	2		1	1	3	2
10	1	2		2	5	
11	1		1	3	3	2
12	1	3	2	2		1
13	1	1		2	5	
14	1			3	5	1
15	2			2	7	1
16	2		2		7	
17	3	1	2	1	3	2
18	1	3	2			
19	1	1	3	1	2	1
20	1	1		1	6	
Total	28	19	25	27	74	26

Figure (1) Percentages of Students' Written Performance

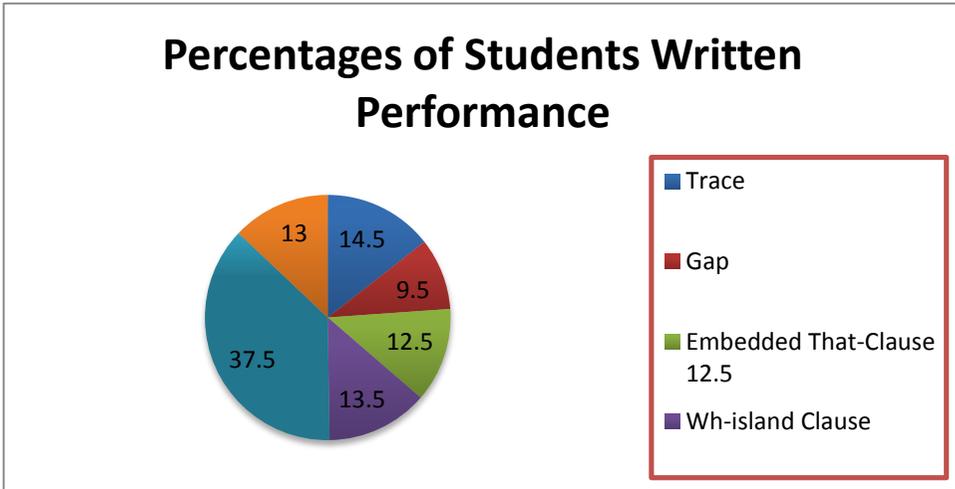
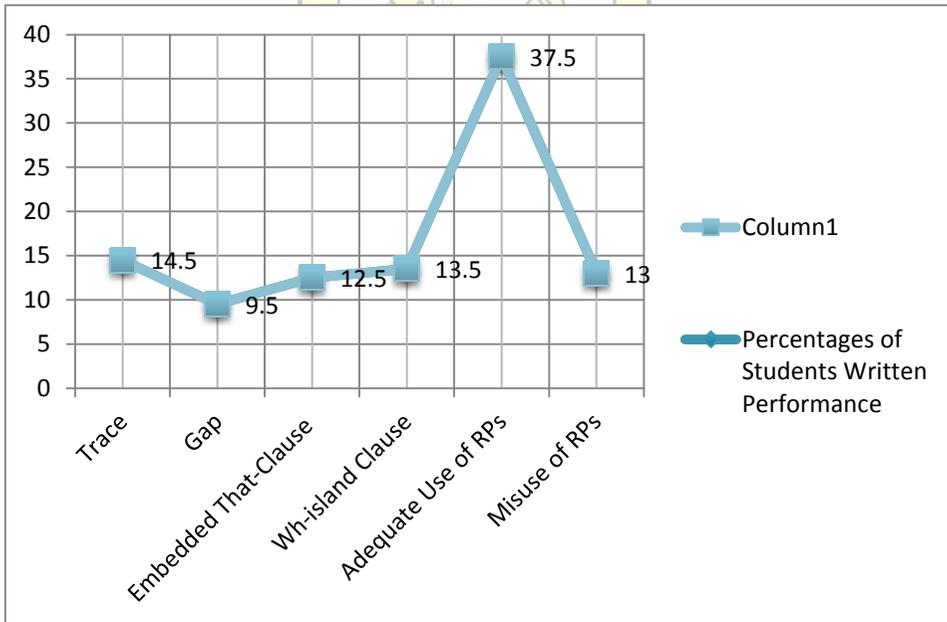


Figure (2) Percentages of Students Written Performance



The percentages of data from the above table summarize all the data that have been taken from students' samples. They show that there are in general, differences between students'



responses regarding RPs. Adequate use of RPs was 37.5 %, whereas 13% of these pronouns was used inadequately.

Through the above figures there are about 50% of students performance characterized by the use of trace, gap, that clause and Wh-island. However, empty gap island relative clauses have a very low acceptability rating in comparison to trace relative clauses in other cases.

A set of six criteria, suggested by Keffala(2013), is adopted in analyzing the students' written performance.

- Criterion(1)

Resumptive pronouns in English relative clauses seem to have relatively stable level of acceptability.

As far as the first criterion is concerned, the data reveals that there is no significant difference between resumptives and gaps in the 'that'-clause. Consider the following examples:

- "To indicate that *they* are not the same" (Test Subject 7)
- " and his perceive that *he* wants to shift it." (Test Subject 12)

In (7) and (12), the Subject RPs *they* and *he* are preferred over subject gaps in the relative clause island because of the effect and interference of their native language (Arabic) to their



foreign language(English). The following Example from Arabic makes this clear:

Jaa' a al- lathi *huwa* 'awnun lakum
(Came.pt who ref.pron. M he helper N. to-you pp 2nd pl.)

"The one who is a helper to you came".

Though, the subject overt pronoun (*huwa*, 'he')is covertly mentioned in the sentence and if it is deleted and left as a gap, there will be an ambiguity.

At the same time, it must be recognized that the RPs in Arabic can be omitted when there is no confusion of meaning, as in:

'arrajulul-lathi: 'ishtara assajaarata ghanijun

(The man.N.S who buy. pt the car. ACC rich.

NOM)

"The man who bought the car is rich".

Moreover, the RPs '*they*' and '*he*' in (7) and (20) could have been written to improve acceptability of '*that-clause*'. They occur in subject position, rated higher than subject empty gap relatives; this is again to avoid ambiguity and realize concord with the function of '*that-clause*' (cf. Quirk et al 1985).

- Criterion(2)



Subject and object gaps in plain relative clauses are much more acceptable than subject and object resumptives in plain relative clauses.

As regards the students' performance at the level of using gaps instead of resumptive, the following examples are illustrative:

- " When someone tries to reduce the social distance with whom *he* is speaking to by using similar forms of other person." (Test Subject 2)
- " When someone modifies *his* speech style towards the style being talked, *he* reduces the social distance between *them*" (5)

In (2) performance there is a 'gap'; the student did not use RP either because lack of linguistic competence (lack of adequate use of pronouns and their structures in clauses) or unawareness of what goes with what in complex sentence. In this performance, there is no sense at all in which the possibility of a pronoun alternates with the possibility of a gap. On the other hand, the pronouns in (5) are free to find their antecedents in the context.

Putting these observations together, then, we can say that a resumptive pronoun is a pronominal element which is obligatorily bound and which appears in a position in which, under other circumstances, a gap would appear. The binder of



the pronoun is the same, apparently, as the element which binds the gap in the corresponding filler-gap construction. This model contrasts with Arabic. At the same time, it must be recognized that the resumptive pronoun can be omitted when there is no confusion of meaning. Yet, there are some other cases where the resumptive pronoun cannot be deleted, such as:

- Jaa 'al -lathi *huwa* 'axuuhu mutafawwequn

(Came who he brother-his successful)

"The one whose brother was highly successful".

- Jaa'at allati 'uxtuha muttawfiqatun

(Came who-she sister-her successful)

"The one whose sister was highly successful came".

In these sentences, it is not acceptable to delete the RP because, if omitted, what is left need to be connected.

- Criterion(3)

Object gaps in 'that' clauses embedded in relative clauses

are more acceptable than object resumptives in 'that' clauses embedded in relative clauses.

Indicative Examples that stand for Criterion (3) could be the following:

- "We mean by speech accommodation as modifying our speech into the forms similar to *that* used with the



- person whom we are talking to...." (Test Subject 6)
- "Speech accommodation is the speech style *that* used by people and the social distance mean *that* each social has it own dialect and each person speak with own style *that* is completely different from other social areas." (Test Subject 18)

In (18) the appearance of gaps tends to be more than from others in students' written performance. This might be attributed to the students' unawareness of English usage of relative clauses with complex structures. A similar example is also detected in Test Subject (17) written performance:

- " the person that *he* speak to". (Test Subject 17)

To be noted, Arabic RPs' are obligatory in the indirect object, oblique object, genitive and object of comparison positions, as in:

- 'alwaladul-lathi a<tajtuhu l-kitaba saafar
" The boy to whom I gave the book travelled."

- Criterion(4)

Object gaps and resumptives in both wh- and relative clause islands are equally acceptable.



As regards, the application of the third criterion, the data shows instances that verify it. Consider the following examples:

- " the context, depending on who are you talking to..."
- " the social distance as in this example, when a boy is talking to *his* teacher. (Test Subject 3)
- " he should be aware when *he* speaks with an educated person and put in *his* mind the social distance between *them*". (Test Subject 10)

We can notice that there are equally used by students; this is because of interlingual interface. The first language of some students allow to use objects with Wh. Island structures, whereas some of the samples could have been written differently instead of gaps to avoid ambiguity. The following examples show some differences between English and Arabic in this regard:

- Hadharal- llathi kaafa'tu-*hu*
(Attended who rewarded-I-him)
"The one whom I rewarded attended".

Unlike English, retention of the resumptive pronoun in the direct object position is optional in Arabic.

In this sentence, the object dependent pronoun can be deleted.

Thus, we can say:

- Hadharal- llathi kafa'tu



(Attended who rewarded-I)

"The one whom I rewarded attended".

Whereas in English, the resumptive pronoun of the object is left out:

- Have you found the keys that you lost....?

Instead of :

- *Have you found the keys that you lost *them*?

Moreover, unlike English, an Arabic RP can correspond to a larger relative expression or external textual coherence which imposes ambiguity at the semantic level. Admittedly, this ambiguity is not available in English as it is in Arabic (Amer 2010). The following example clarify this claim:

- uhibbu l-kitaab-a 'althi 'shtaraytu-*hu*

"I like the book that you bought."

In these sentence, the clitic subject and object pronouns with the verb ' *'ish-tara*' (bought) cause an ambiguous reference of the subject pronoun respectively . This means that a relative pronoun corresponds to an underlying personal pronoun which is difficult to retain, especially when it introduces a new personal pronoun other than the one underlying the relative noun.

Criterion (5)



Subject gaps in 'that' clauses are as acceptable (if not slightly more acceptable) than subject resumptives in 'that' clauses.

In the examples above, it can be noticed that there are adequate use of RPs in Students' performance. This is an indication that this group of students has either good knowledge of using RPs in their adequate place or they have RPs that can be used in a place where gaps are not allowed in their first language. Consider an example from test subject (5), (15) and (17)

- " and his teacher to indicate *that he* can't do it." (Test Subject5)
- " here the person is talking with *his* friend telling *him*
- *that he* want to watch the pictures." (Test Subject15)
- " the person *that he* speak to". (Test Subject17)

Example (5) is a clear evidence for the interference element of the test subject's adequate written performance. He was keen to keep the meaning intact. Therefore, he resorted to the use of an RP. Consider another example of RPs in Arabic:

- at-tuffaḥatul- lati akala-*ha* ar-rajulu
(the-apple which ate-it the-man)
"The apple which the man ate".



If the pronoun 'ha' 'it' is omitted from the sentence above, the meaning will change and the doer of action will inverse the 'man' to 'apple'.

On the other hand, in the test subject (12) performance, two gaps appeared (i.e. no resumptives are used):

- " forms that are really" " terms that are distinct" (Test Subject12)

An RP, however, should have been used after 'that' to make it more acceptable in accordance with the model of Keffala (2013). The lack of this may be attributed to student's way in expressing a topic which contains ' that' clause. So, he/she used to use and express an idea without a subject in "that clauses structure."

The performance of students to structures like this criterion is very well; this is because the students are full aware of using subject pronouns after that clause in accordance with the functions of that clause by Quirk et al (1985).

Criterion (6)

Subject resumptives in wh- and relative clause islands are more acceptable than subject gaps in wh- and relative clause islands.



RPs seemed to prefer gaps to resumptives in subject position of a 'that'-clause embedded in a relative clause. Consider the following examples:

- " The same teenager boy *when he* is speaking to his friend's mother". (Test Subject 9)
- "We should know to *whom we* are saying it and to be more polite." (Test Subject 13)
- " So, he asks his mother to give *him* the picture". (Test Subject 6)
- " Here the person is talking with his friend telling him *that he* want to watch the pictures." (Test Subject 15)

RPs in these instances seem to function different things. Some of them serve as normal discourse pronouns rather than as a type of bound pronoun or a gap. In (6) the RP is used anaphorically in non-finite.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Building on the results, the study concludes that the students make grammatical errors due to two main reasons: Interlingual and intralingual reasons. The former is related to the different language systems of English and Arabic. These interlingual errors may be attributed to developmental reasons, faulty



teaching, and probably many other reasons. The latter is attributed to interference; the students' native language seems an influential factor behind some instances of their writing failure. This is why the performance of students shows that sentences with RPs are more acceptable than sentences with a gap, i.e. RPs received higher comprehensibility scores than gaps. It can thus be concluded that students still have a long way to go in writing satisfactory essays in English. The way they composed their essays clearly shows their weak grasp of the basic tenets of English grammar. Moreover, grammatical proficiency is the foundation of better writing ability. Efficient grammar instructions, especially for university students, help EFL students learn English more effectively. Therefore, the connection between the use of RPs in production, writing and their acceptability in comprehension are highly recommended.

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Appendix

The following samples represent 4th year students answers to one of the questions in General Linguistics, a course given by prof. Anis Behnam Naoum, at the English Department, College of Education, University of Al Hamdaniya, 2014. The question reads: "speech accommodation is strongly related to social distance". Comment.



- Samples of Students Performance

Sample (1)

Speech accommodation is strongly related to social distance. It can be defined as the speaker's ability to modify his speech towards or forward the person who is speaking to. It means to accommodate (change) your speech style according to social distance. We have two kinds of speech accommodation:-

Convergence:- when the speaker change his speech style to reduce the Social distance between him and the speaker talking to. He tend to use forms and term which are understood by the other person. For example when a person from a low ~~ata~~ or middle class talk with person from higher class. In examples below , a person may use two different speech style indicating the same meaning.

- Hey john, gizzalook, gizzalook.

Here the person is talking with his friend telling him ~~that~~ that he want to watch the pictures.

- Can I look at the pictures, Mrs. Susan?

The same person asking to look at the pictures of his mother's friend.

Divergence:- this accommodation is opposite to the previous one in which the person accomodate his ~~style shik~~ speech style to emphasis social distance. In this way a person tend to use forms occur in his only speech style without changing them for the sake of the other speaker.

For example: student:- teacher I can't do it.

Teacher :- john, if I can do it, so you can do it.

Student: Look, I canae do it.

Here the student in the last sentence shifted his speech style to emphasis ~~his~~ the social ~~status~~ distance as a reflection to what the teacher have said of being similar.

Sample (2)

Speech accommodation can be defined as you can keep your speech style in order to improve yourself to the ~~precieve you~~ an yourself and ~~inter-ae~~ interact with p the precieve you talk two.

Speech accommodation is of two kinds:-

Convergence ~~speed~~ speech accommodation is used to reduce the Social distance between the speaker and the perceive speech at act. You need ~~to~~

to shift your style in order to appropriate the person ~~for example, one person wants from his friend to look at the picture, you~~-you talk to. For example, one person wants from his friend to look at the pictures that he ~~has~~ has about the journey, but he doesn't give him those pictures. So, ~~H~~ he asks his mother to give him the picture. ~~In the two function of the~~ C'omon Tomy, gazzelook, gazzelook.

Pleas, could I look at your photos, Mrs. Hall?

The function of the two sentences is similar which is request but they differ in style.

Divergence speech accommodation is used to emphasize the social distance between the ~~p~~ speaker and ~~the~~ and ~~p~~-the person you talk to.

For example:-

Teenager:- I can't do it, sir.

Teacher :- yes, if I can do it, so you can do so.

Teenager: I dennae it....

Teenager in his first response that teacher can ~~understo~~ understand him. But, in the second response he used his own style in order to emphasize the social distance between him and the teacher

* NOTE: The grammatical mistakes are as in the original answer sheets of theses sample

المخلص

دراسة نحوية دلالية للضمائر الانكليزية العائدة في الاداء الكتابي لطلاب اللغة
الانكليزية الجامعيين

علي حسين حازم

جامعة الحمدانية

كلية التربية/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة بعض الصعوبات التي تواجه طلاب اللغة الانكليزية الجامعيين عند استخدام الضمائر العائدة في الأداء الكتابي. وتفترض الدراسة بأن الطلاب لا يدركون تماما هذا النوع من الضمائر. وبالتالي، فإنها تستخدم بشكل

عشوائي بسبب تداخل لغتهم الأم (العربية). وللتحقق من صحة هذه الفرضية، فقد تمت دراسة وتحليل عشرين عينة من طلاب السنة الرابعة في تخصص اللغة الانكليزية في المرحلة الجامعية بهدف وصف وتصنيف هذه الاخطاء من اجل الوصول الى معرفة كيفية صياغتها وبالتالي التمكن من ايجاد طريقة لتحسين الاداء الكتابي لهذه الضمائر عن الضمائر الاخرى وخلصت الدراسة على ان الطلاب يواجهون هذه الاخطاء النحوية نتيجة لسبب تأثير لغة الام على اللغة المكتسبة في

كتاباتهم.

جامعة تكريت