

**A STUDY OF THE USE OF *WH-QUESTIONS* IN ENGLISH AND  
ARABIC AMONGN.C.E. I STUDENTS OF AMINU KANO COLLEGE  
OF ISLAMIC AND LEGAL STUDIES (AKCILS) KANO**

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LANGUAGE.

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## DECLARATION

I, AminuAliyu Adam (SPS/12/MEN/00011) hereby declare that this research work titled, “A Study of the Use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic among N. C. E. I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS), Kano” is the product of my own research efforts and experiences under the supervision of: Prof. Muhammad Aliyu Kamal and my internal examiner: Dr. Amina Adamu of the Department of English and Literary Studies Bayero University, Kano. The research work has not been presented and will not be presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or a certificate. All the sources consulted have been duly acknowledged.

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this Dissertation and its subsequent preparations by AminuAliyu Adam (SPS/12/MEN/00011) were carried out under our supervision.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the performance of the N. C. E. I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS), Kano 2014/2015 Academic Session with course combination: English/Arabic/Education in their use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic. The researcher used a sentence completion test for students to fill in the blank spaces while a questionnaire was designed for teachers to answer as research instruments which were used in order to find out the area where *Wh-questions* give more problems to the students and suggest ways to improve their performances in accordance with the rules of English and Arabic grammars. Thus, the analysis of the research instruments revealed the students' abilities and mistakes in their efforts to achieve perfection. The researcher explores the theory of Language Transfer as the theoretical framework in investigating the students' performance and experiences in a second language. The findings reveal that, the students made mistakes in their use of *Wh-questions* in English but do so at a higher percentage in Arabic as a result of their positive transfer in English and negative transfer in Arabic due to the first language interference or influence.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the use of *Wh-questions* among the N.C.E. I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano. The study deals with the statement of the problem, background to the study, objective of the study, scope and limitation, significance of the study and research questions. It also used language transfer as the theoretical framework to study the use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic languages among N.C.E.I students from the Department of English and Arabic. Therefore, this paper, attempts to conduct a study on the students' performances in their use of *Wh-questions* strategy, in a comparative study of English and Arabic.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Chisholm et al (eds.) (1984:258), "there are six basic strategies in the languages of the world for creating questions or near questions. These are: (1) Intonation (2) Word order (3) *Wh-questions* (4) Tags or question tags (5) Embedding a question (6) A non-question. Bolinger (1975) asserts that question strategies include: conversational or real questions, grammatical questions, imperative questions, question tags, interrogative word questions and theoretical

questions but this research work is limited only to *Wh-questions* in English as compared to Arabic. The *Wh-questions* strategy is one of the six question strategies that is used to request for an information and the information requested should be provided in form of an answer which ends with a question mark (?). Many languages of the world use this strategy in questioning or raising questions though there are individual languages peculiar ways of structuring *Wh-questions* strategy. Comparatively, the transfer of language becomes negative in one hand and on the other hand becomes positive which is as a result of linguistic and cultural interference or influence in either of the two distinctive languages. The main aim of the researcher is to study the students' performances in their use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic.

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:196) assert that *Wh-questions* are formed with the aid of the following interrogative (words or *Wh-questions*): who/whom, whose, what, which, when, where and why. They further assert that: as a rule:

1. The Q-element (i.e. clause element containing the Q-words) generally comes first in the sentence.
2. The Q-words itself takes first position in the Q-element.

The only exception to the second principle is when the Q-word occurs in a preposition complement. Here, English provides a choice between two constructions: one formal and the other informal. In formal style, the preposition precedes the complement whereas in colloquial style, the complement comes first and the preposition retains the position it has in a declarative sentence.

*On what* did you base your prediction? (Formal)

*What* did you base your prediction *on*? (Informal)

We may perhaps express this difference more neatly by saying that informal English insists that the Q-word comes first, while formal English insists that the Q-element as a whole comes first (Quirk and Greenbaum 2000:196). So questions are formed by using the wh-question particles which are:

<b>English Versions</b>	<b>Transliterated Versions</b>	<b>Arabic Versions</b>
What?	Maaza?	مَاذَا؟
When?	Matta?	مَتَى؟
Who?	Maan?	مَنْ؟
Where?	‘ayna?	أَيْنَ؟
Why?	Limaatha?	لِمَاذَا/لِمَا؟
Whose?	Liman?	لِمَنْ؟
What?	Maa?	مَا...؟
Which?	Ayyu?	أَيُّ؟

Therefore, the investigation in this research work is limited to the study of *Wh-questions* strategy in English and Arabic by the N. C. E. I Where the students' performances in this area are tested in order to reveal the areas that give them more problems at the same time reveal the factors responsible for that as well as similarities and differences of *Wh-questions* in both languages.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

*Wh-questions* in English and Arabic pose difficulties to the N.C.E. I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano. The students often face the problem of using the wh-question words. For example, the Q-word "whose" as in 'Whose textbook is this?' should be لمن هذا الكتاب?/Limanhazalkitab? So the question word "whose" which is the equivalent of "لمن" is wrongly replaced by the students with "what" which is the equivalent of "من" which is the inappropriate question word to be used in this position. However, students' test in a pilot study revealed that they confuse the use of the question word "who" as in "Who is your best friend?" it should be من هو أفضل صديق لك? / or Man huwaafdalusadiqunlaka?" where the students use "what" which is the equivalent of "ما" for substitution which is the wrong collocation. They tend to substitute

masculine/feminine with neuter gender and they could not distinguish the proper use of question words like: Whose – for possession, who – for people, what/which – for things, When – for time, Where – for place and Why – for reason. It is, therefore, important to study these errors and suggest ways to minimise them, so as to achieve fluency and efficiency in using *Wh-questions* in both languages.

### **1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1 Aim**

The aim of this research work is to study how some NCE I students use the *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic languages.

#### **1.3.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this research work are listed below:

1. to find out the performances of N.C.E. I students of AKCILS on their use of *Wh-questions* of English and Arabic Languages.
2. to identify the areas where the *Wh-questions* give more problems to the students in Arabic as compared to that of English.
3. to find out the factors responsible for these problems taking into consideration the similarities and dissimilarities of the *Wh-questions* in both languages.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the performances of N.C.E.I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies on the use of *Wh-questions* of English and Arabic?
2. What are the areas of the *Wh-questions* that give more problems to the students in Arabic as compare to that of English?
3. What are the similarities and dissimilarities of the *Wh-questions* in both languages?

#### **1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION**

Despite the fact that there are about six (6) basic question strategies in the languages of the world which include: intonation, word order, *Wh-questions*, tags or question tags, embedding question and non-question. Chisholm et al.(1984:258), the scope of this research is limited to the study of *Wh-questions* strategy of English as compared to that of Arabic. The sample of the population is 138 N.C.E. 1 students of AKCILS studying Arabic/English/ Education as their course combination in the 2014/2015 Academic Session. The research instruments are limited to a test and a questionnaire. The theoretical framework is language transfer in the theory of the language learning, as supported by Odlin (2003).

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study reveals the performance of N.C.E. I students in their use of *Wh-questions* of English compared to that of Arabic. The study will also among other roles help to identify the areas where these *Wh-questions* are not used by the students in accordance with the rules of grammar and at the same time enables the researcher to find out the factors responsible for these obstacles and sort out the similarities and dissimilarities of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic Languages for the achievement of an appropriate use of grammar.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This literature review explains at length the use of the *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic languages and discusses its various grammatical theories sourced by different linguists according to their perspectives. According to Chisholm et al (1984:258) “there are some basic strategies in the languages of the world for creating questions or near questions which include: Intonation, Interrogative words or *Wh-questions* among others.

***Intonation:*** This expresses the mood of the speaker and attracts the use of *Wh-questions* to make an interrogation. Example:

Why did you break the door?

Who directed you to the store?

What is your name?

Whose shop is it?

Where did you sold the car?

Why did you open the room?

Interrogative words or *Wh-questions*: These are the types of question that carry *wh* in asking questions. Example:

When did the Imam preach?

Whose novel is this?

Who delivered the speech?

What is the central idea of the sermon?

However, according to Quirk et al (1985:806) question can be divided into three major classes according to the type of reply they expect: (1) Those that expect affirmation or negation as in have you finished the book? Yes – No. (2) Those that expect a reply from an open range of replies as in what is your name? These are called *Wh-questions*. (3) Those that expect as the reply of one of the two options presented in the questions as in would you like to go for a walk or stay at home? These are called alternative questions.

Other linguists such as Bolinga (1975) classifies questions in similar ways like: Conversational Question or real questions, Grammatical Questions, Alternative Questions, Interrogative Word Questions and rhetorical questions as explained below.

Conversational Questions: These are *Wh-questions* asked in a conversation. Example:

What is your name?

Where do you live?

Who is your local government chairman?

Grammatical Questions: These include the following *wh*types of questions:

What is semantics?

When did the slave trade exist?

What time did the Christian missionaries activities come to Nigeria?

Alternative Questions: Examples of this type of *Wh-questions* include:

Which of the two books do you need?

What type of meal did you want?

Interrogative Word Questions: It can be exemplified in the following sentences.

Who are you?

Why did you come late?

Whose car is this?

Rhetorical Question: Examples of this type of wh questions are:

Why are you (sun) beaming on my head?

What a beautiful young girl?ji

What a marvellous performance?

Dubois et al (1999) and Maingueneau (1999) identify two major classes of *Wh-questions*: Total and partial interrogation. Total interrogation affects a whole sentence while partial interrogation focuses only on one constituent of a sentence. In summary the three devices that make questions are word order, morphology and intonation (cf. Chisholm et al (eds), 1984). The research review therefore, discusses in detail the literature on *Wh-questions* and most importantly how it is used in English as compared to Arabic.

## **2.1 WH-QUESTIONS STRATEGY IN ENGLISH**

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2000: 196-198) *Wh-questions* are formed with the aid of one of the following *Wh-question* words; who/whom, whose, what, which, when, where and why. As a rule, the Q-element (i.e. clause element containing the Q-words) generally comes first in the sentence. However, the Q-word itself takes first position in the

Q-element. The only exception to the second principle is when the Q-word occurs in a preposition complement. Here, English provides a choice between two constructions, one formal and the other informal. In formal style, the preposition precedes the complement whereas in informal style, the complement comes first and the preposition retains the position it has in a declarative sentence. For example:

(1) *On what* did you base your prediction? (Formal)

(2) *What* did you base your prediction *on*? (Informal)

We may perhaps express this difference more neatly by saying that informal English insists that the Q-word comes first, while formal English insists that the Q-element as a whole comes first. However, the following are sentences in which the Q-element operates in various clause functions:

Who opened my LETter? (Q-element: S)

Which books have you LENTt him? (Q-element: O<sub>a</sub>)

Whose beautiful anTIQUES are these? (Q-element: C<sub>s</sub>)

When will you come BACK? (Q-element: A<sub>time</sub>)

Where shall I put the GLASSes? (Q-element: A<sub>place</sub>)

Why are they always comPLAINing? (Q-element: A<sub>reason</sub>). (Quirk and Greenbaum, 2000:196-198).

As the examples show, the Q-elements (i.e. clauses that contain Q-words) the rule maintain that the Q-words always take first position in a sentence. The only exception is when the Q-word occurs in a preposition complement, then it is optional to either introduce the proposition in the first position or Q-words. Both are acceptable in English language as the examples indicated earlier on.

However, the examples indicate, falling intonation, not rising intonation, is usual for *Wh-questions* which is similar to that of Arabic. Subject-operator inversion is the same in its application to *Wh-questions* as in its application to yes-no questions if there is no auxiliary in the equivalent statement “do” is introduced as operator in the question. Lexical *be* (and sometimes in BrE, *have*) acts as an operator: *Who have we here?*

Note

1. Adjuncts of Instrument, reason and purpose are normally questioned by the prepositional construction:

*What shall I mend it with?*

*What did you do that for?*

Although the latter could be replaced by *Why did you do that?*, it has no alternative with a proposed prepositions: *\*For what did you do that?*

Abbreviated questions consisting of Q-word and final preposition (which in this construction bears nuclear stress), *Where to? What for/with? Who with/by?* are as popular in colloquial speech as questions consisting of the Q-word only: *Where? Who? Why?* There is a common abbreviated negative question *Why not?*

2. Although there is no Q-word for the verb, the content of the predication can be questioned by *what* as the object of the generalised agentive verb *do*:

A: What are you doing?                      B: I'm reading.

A: What have you done with my book?      B: I've hidden it.

3. An indirect object cannot act as Q-element: instead of *\*Who(m) did you give the present?*, the equivalent prepositional complement construction is used: *Who(m) did you give the present to?* Or *To who did you give the present?* *Wh-questions* can be seen as a sentence which asks questions. Examples: (1) Where is your wife? (2) Who is the richest person in Nigeria? Otor (2006:62) is in the view that

*Wh-questions* are interrogative pronouns which are used in asking questions. They include:

Who, which, whose, where, what and when.

Examples of the *Wh-questions* are:

Who is the captain of the team?

Whose biro is this?

What is your name?

Which of the two biros is yours?

When did you come?

For whom did you buy the gift?

Who are they?

Dakshina (2006:34) has the same opinion with Otor (2006:62) as discusses on the *Wh-questions* as interrogative adjective i.e. an adjective used to question. Examples; what, which, whose as in the following sentences;

- What advice shall I give you?
- What language do you teach at the college?
- Which places do you wish to visit?

- Which poet do you like most?
- Whose photograph is this?
- Whose handwriting is this?
- On whose recommendation did you apply for this poet?

Dakshina (2006:66-67) further discusses on the *Wh-question* as an interrogative pronoun which is used to make question. Example: who, whose, which, whom, what. Dakshina (2006) opines that:

1. Who: It is used only for persons in subjective case.

Example: Who was the first Prime Minister of India?

Who is known as the father of the Nation?

2. Whom: It is used for person in the objective case.

Example: Whom do you want to see?

Whom do you wish to marry?

3. Whose: It is used in the possessive case?

Example: Whose are these books?

Whose hand-writing is this?

4. Which: It is used both for persons and things.

Example: Which is the longest river in India?

Which is the tallest building in America?

5. What: It is used for things.

Example: What do you expect me to do?

What can I give you?

6. What are you and who are you!

‘What are you’ refers to your profession and ‘who are you’ refers to your name and other particulars.

Example: What is she? She is a teacher.

Who is she? She is Miss Vijaya.

7. What + be + like: It is used to make a request for a description.

Example: What is the day like? The day is very hot.

What is she like? She is clever and beautiful with pleasant manner.

8. What does he/she/it look like? It is used to talk about physical appearance.

Example: What does your father look like? He looks like a doctor.

What does the sky look like? It looks like dark and cloudy.

9. What + for: It is used in the sense of why.

Example: What are you doing it for?

[It means; why are you doing it?]

Dakshnina (2006:236-237) also sees *Wh-questions* as exclamatory sentences which expresses some strong or sudden feeling. Example:

What a shame!

What a beauty!

What a great success!

What a pity you have failed once again!

What a tragedy it is!

What a great thing you have done!

What a good memory he has!

What a fine evening!

What a beautiful building!

What a strange person you are!

It is obvious as opined by Dakshina (2006) that the *Wh-questions* are used in asking questions which include:

- What do you want to do this evening?
- What shall we do this afternoon?
- When I'm tired in the evening, I like to watch television?
- What have you decided to do?
- Where is Ann?
- Why did she go to the party? etc.

He further explains the use of the *Wh-questions* as in:

Who saw you?

Whose is this?

Which of these is your own?

Adedokun (2002:97) sees *Wh-questions* as the kind of sentences which are identified in their exclamatory forms.

They convey an expression of surprise, shock or excitement.

Example:

What a kind fellow are you!

Why are you there!

He further sees *Wh-questions* as an interrogative sentence which asks questions. Example: Where do you live? What is it? When do you arrive?

Adelakun (2011:77-78) is of the view that *Wh-questions* means questioning so also an interrogative pronoun, which is also used to ask question. According to this linguist, wh-type question makers must be able to yield nouns as answers. For example:

- i. Whom do you wish to work with? Mr. Zulu.

- ii. What is your name? Ade.
- iii. Who took my purse? Sidi.

Other examples include:

What have I done?

Which do you prefer?

Who is mewling like a cat?

Whose books are those?

Which people do you wish to associate with?

What statement is that?

Ahmad (2011:46) explains the *Wh-questions* as the interrogative pronouns which include:

Who, whom, whose, what, which. Examples:

Who is the captain of the team?

For whom did you buy the gift?

Which is the longest river in Africa?

Whose car are you driving?

What game do you like best?

Which game do you like best?

Which of the five houses do you prefer?

Ahmad (2011) is in the same view with the linguist above as he opines that *Wh-questions* are used to ask question like: (1) What is wrong with you? (2) Which of these pencils is yours?

The researcher views some *Wh-questions* to be interrogative because speakers use *Wh-question* to interrogate facts of a real life situation. Such question using the *Wh-questions* include:

What is your name?

Which course do you prefer to study?

Whom do you prefer as your supervisor?

Whose book is this?

Why did you open the gate?

What are you? (referring to profession)

Eteh(2000: 89) identifies *Wh-questions* as a questions strategy and that it is asked with the intent of getting precise information from a listener. This type of questions strategy is usually introduced by interrogative pronouns such as what, who, when, whom, which etc.

## 2.2 WH-QUESTIONS STRATEGY IN ARABIC

As we have discussed on the *Wh-questions* strategy in English, the following is the *Wh-questions* strategy in Arabic which is signalled by the interrogative particles (question words).

**2.2.1 Statement of Words Order:** According to Kaabi et al (2000) this type of questions strategy is also called *Wh-questions* particles. Examples include:

English Versions	Transliterated Versions	Arabic Versions
What?	Maaza?	مَاذَا؟
When?	Matta?	مَتَى؟
Who?	Maan?	مَنْ؟
Where?	'ayna?	أَيْنَ؟
Why?	Limaatha?	لِمَاذَا/لِمَا؟
Whose?	Liman?	لِمَنْ؟
What?	Maa?	مَا...؟
Which?	Ayyu?	أَيُّ؟

Kaabi et al. (2001) asserts that:

مِنْ = Who?: is used to ask about persons whether they are subject or object.

Ex. – مَنْ كان أول رئيس لمصر؟ = Who was the first president of Egypt?

? مَنْ هو أفضل صديق لك؟ = Who is your best friend?

? مَنْ الذي بني الهرم الأكبر؟ = Who built the Great Pyramid?

? مَنْ زاركم بالأمس؟ = Who visited you yesterday?

? مَعَ مَنْ تناولت العشاء بالأمس؟ = With whom did you have dinner yesterday?

? عَنْ مَنْ تتحدث؟ = Who are you speaking about?

\* مَاذَا/مَا = What?: is used to ask about things only.

Ex. – مَا رياضتك المفضلة؟ = What is your favourite sport?

? مَا الذي أعجبك في هذا الكتاب؟ = What did you like about this book?

? مَاذَا تحب أن تأكل؟ = What would you like to eat?

? عَنْ مَاذَا تتحدثون؟ = What are you talking about?

\* مَتَى = When?: this particle asks about time.

Ex. – مَتَى تذهب إلى العمل؟ = When do you go to work?

? مُنْذُ مَتَى تنتظر؟ = Since when are you waiting?

\* أَيْنَ = Where?: is used to ask about a place.

Ex. – أَيْنَ تعيش؟ = Where do you live?

من أين يُمكن □ نبدأ؟ = From where can we start?

\* أي = Which?:is used to ask about all of the above; (persons, things, time, place, number, .. etc.) depending on what comes after it.

Ex. – أي طالبٍ فاز بالسباق؟ = Which student won the race?

أي كتابٍ تفضّل؟ = Which book do you prefer?

أي وقتٍ تريدُ □ نتقابل؟ = Which time do you want us to meet?

في أي مدينةٍ ولدت؟ = In which city were you born?

### 2.3 STRUCTURE OF WH-QUESTIONS IN ARABIC

According to Kaabi et al. (2001) *Wh-questions* in Arabic are formed with the aid of one of the following:

The word: "من": is a question word that means 'who'. It is used in asking of someone's identity. It is also used in asking about a subject of an action.

It can be formed in this pattern:

Question word + verb + object or;

Question word + subject + the part of sentence we wish to enquire about.

e.g.:

Who helped you?

من ساعدك؟

Who won the match?

من فاز بالمباراة؟

من قابلت بالأمس؟ Whom did you meet yesterday?

In Standard Arabic “what” comes at the beginning of a question.

We translate it, (ما، ماذا) "ما" is used in questions that do not have verbs while (ماذا) is used in questions that do have verbs.

Example:

ما اسمك؟

ماذا قرأت اليوم؟

The word: "متى" means ‘when’. It comes first in interrogative sentence and in response it is erased always. It is a question word which at a particular time referred to generality as in the following examples:

When + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb?

متى تغادر الحافلة؟ When does the bus leave?

The response will be:

في الساعة الثانية عشر. At twelve o'clock.

To understand the answers to the question above, you need to understand how to tell the time in Arabic.

In Standard Arabic "أي" is used when there is a restricted range of answers, it is also used to ask about choice between two or more things.

We translate it “which”.

Example:

Which of the colours do you prefer, Red or Green? أي من الألوان تفضل الأحمر أم الأخضر؟

The word "لماذا": is a question word meaning 'why'. It is used in asking of the reason of the occurrence of something. For example:

Why did he leave early? لماذا غادر مبكراً؟

It renders meaning sometime without subject, a main verb also suffices if occurrence of what is being asking about is conditional.

The usage of the word "لماذا" is also correct by way of reference to intend suggestion or in questioning an action that does not require completion. For example:

Why not end it now? لماذا لا تنهيه الآن؟

The question word "أين" – (where) is used in enquiring about place, location or direction. It is formed in this pattern:

Question word + verb + object.

e.g.:

Where does she live? أين تسكن هي؟

Where are you going? أين ستذهب؟

Where do you go to complain? أين ستذهب للشكوى؟

## **2.4 THEORY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Theory of language learning refers to the models of an explanatory framework for some observations and from the assumptions of the explanation follows a number of possible hypotheses that can be tested in order to provide support for or challenge the theory in the language learning process.

### **2.4.1 Language Transfer**

Transfer means “the carry-over or generalization of learned responses from one type of situation to another”, especially “the application in one field of study or effort of knowledge, skill, power, or ability acquired in another” (*Webster’s Third New World International Dictionary* 1986). Thus, language transfer is used when the learned skill, power or knowledge is applicable as a result of the idea acquired in another language.

The use of Transfer in Linguistics is what the learners carry over or generalize in their knowledge about their native language (NL) to help them learn to use a target language (TL). Here, transfer does not indicate whether what is carried over is bad or good. This meaning from the dictionary shows that transfer is a neutral word in origin and nature.

Linguistics concerns in overall with the static structures within a language system. Viewed from the TL grammatical rules, certain NL-based linguistic transfers are found to coincide with linguistic errors. In this way, NL-based linguistic transfers are divided into two broad types, positive and negative. Those NL-based uses that do not lead to linguistic errors are labelled as positive transfer whereas those that leads to errors, negative transfer. In second language classroom teaching, a positive linguistic transfer is generally not attacked but a negative linguistic transfer almost to all instructors, is definitely not recommended for the learners, since it is erroneous.

Pragmatics: a branch of Linguistics which studies how people interpret and produce meaning in a specific context Leech (1983), also claims an interest in transfer. For pragmaticians, they are interested in finding out in what way NL-based transfers influence the learners in comprehending and performing a speech act in a TL and whether such transfers are appropriate in the context.

Apparently, Pragmatics diverges from Linguistics in interpreting transfer in that it has maintained the neutral sense or natural attribute of transfer. Since Pragmatics aims at exploring the appropriateness of speech that is free from right-wrong linguistic grammar, everything under pragmatic investigation is correct, grammatically speaking. In literature to

date, in pragmatics-oriented studies of transfers, interests and endeavours have been attached to the finding out of the differences or deviations between these divergent forms from the TL and whether these deviant forms are appropriate from the angle of TL speakers. An example to illustrate this point is the Japanese learners' overuse of the expression "I am sorry" in conversations. It was reported that there are many cases in which Japanese students used this expression which is actually not needed in English since to English speakers, the expression is used only for an apology. This indicates the learners fall back on the Japanese routine expression "suminmasen" which means literally: "I'm sorry." Hence, this is not an example of error, but of appropriateness (Takahashi 1992).

The researcher therefore sees the views of some linguists related to some extent, for instance, in linguistics. The use of transfer is what the learners generalise in their knowledge about their native language (NL) so as to enable them use the target language (TL). Leech (1983) is of the same views about the use of transfer, according to him, the pragmatics are interested in finding out the way in which NL based transfers influence the learners in understanding and delivering a speech act in a target language (TL).

On the other hand, the linguists diverge from pragmatics in the sense that pragmatics aims at revealing transfer as the appropriateness of speech which is free from right – wrong use of grammar while Sharwood-Smith (1994) sees a clear distinction between transfer and influence in which transfer refers to the linguistic behaviour incorporated from L1 (first language) without capturing other linguistic influence.

In practice, transfer has attracted people of different academic backgrounds and led researchers to different interpretations and definitions of the term. Kellerman and Sharwood-Smith (1986) studied the exactitude of the term and tried to draw a distinction between transfer and influence. To them, transfer is not the same thing as cross-linguistic influence. Whereas transfer refers to those linguistic behaviours incorporated from L1 into IL without capturing other inter-lingual effects, cross-linguistic influence on the other hand refers to those L1 effects such as avoidance, L1 constraints on L2 learning and performance, and different directionality of inter-lingual effects. This view is further elaborated in Sharwood-Smith (1994). To Odlin (1989), transfer just means the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been obviously, and perhaps imperfectly, acquired. This definition thus suggests that transfer can occur at any levels, strategic, linguistic, discoursal, and pragmatic.

Wolfson (1981) analysed how the transfer of speaking rules from one's own native speech community influences interacting with members of the host community. She insisted that transfer mainly stands for the use of rules of speaking from one's own native speech community when interacting with members of the host community or simply when speaking or writing in a second language. For Wolfson, the two terms, sociolinguistic and pragmatic, are interchangeable, and so are her sociolinguistic rules and rules of speaking. Then to Beebe and Takahashi (1990), transfer specifically refers to the learners' L1 socio-cultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation. Hence for Clyne et al (1991), "apologies" and "complaints" are pragmatic, while turn-taking discoursal. In terms of the scope of transfer, Takahashi (1992) held that transfer consists of both cross-linguistic influence and cross-cultural transfer elements. Kasper (1992) focused on pragmatic transfer and defined it as "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and acquisition of L2 pragmatic information" (Kasper 1992 and 1995).

The identification of transfer was first discussed by Corder (1981) who remarks that it is the duty of both teachers of languages and native speakers of the language to point out the transfer according to the rules of

language. At the same time Corder (1981) implies the source of data for transfer research lie in the learners' production or utterances that is the observed output which results from the second language learners' attempted production of a TL norm (1981). Kasper (1992) also reiterates that it is imperative to find certain constraints on a pragmatic transfer so that our work will be operationable.

The usual way to identify a transfer in SLA research is something like an informal estimation method (Kasper 1992). In informal estimations, we decide whether a transfer can be established by looking at the similarities and differences of the percentage by which a particular category of inter-language features (such as a semantic formulae, strategy, or linguistic form) occurs in the NL, TL and IL data. Similar response frequencies in all the three data sets are classify as positive transfer (Blum-Kulka 1982; House & Kasper, 1987), while different response frequencies between IL-TL and NL-TL combined with similar frequencies between IL-NL register as negative transfer (Beebe et al. 1990; Takahashi 1992; Olshtain, 1983).

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THE USE OF *WH-QUESTIONS* OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC**

In the test administered to the students, the researcher learned that the students displayed good performance in their use of *Wh-questions* in

English and a little failure in Arabic because they wrongly selected inappropriate response to *Wh-questions* in the test administered, and they also substitute one *Wh-question* with another which completely change the meaning or make it erroneous expressions. This conformed to the theory of language transfer by Odlin (2003), who asserts that ‘transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language’. Pedagogical practice reflects the fact that, the more similar the writing systems of two languages are, the less time learners need to develop basic encoding and decoding skills. In the case of Arabic with a writing system far more intricate than English, the consequences for acquisition take more effort to achieve. This means more similarities between two languages writing systems produce more positive transfer whereas more language distance may lead more negative transfer. The result of this analysis is therefore built into test and research in the study of *Wh-questions* strategy of English and Arabic.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The researcher displays a comprehensive description on the methodology to be used in collecting the relevant data to achieve the objectives of this study. Therefore, the chapter entails the population of the study, the sample and sampling techniques, the research instruments, the method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

#### **3.1 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

For the purpose of this study, the population of the research entails NCE I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano 2013/2014 academic session with the total number of 210 students, studying English/Arabic/Education as their course combination, ninety-five 95% of the students are: Hausa while 5% of the students are mixture of Yoruba, Igala and Ibirra. Sixty 60% of the students are female while 40% are males. Most of them live in the different areas of Kano metropolis.

#### **3.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The sample of this population is stratified sampling, the research work is interested in this sampling techniques because of the different gender characteristics for being male and female. It is also interested to

measure both male and female students' performance. According to Kreycie and Morgan (1971) stratify sampling is used for dividing the population into groups based on their characteristics, and then, the researcher randomly selects from each group based on its size. Therefore, 136 participants were selected, 82 of them were females while 54 participants were male. The sample of the table for determining population sampling size sourced by Morgan and Kreycie (1971) is in appendix IV.

### **3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of this research, the instrument used for data collection are; sentence completion test and questionnaire. The test was administered in order to test and assess the respondents' ability and performance in the use of *Wh-questions* while the questionnaire was given to the English teachers to answer, it comprises two parts: A & B.

### **3.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

In this research work, having the result of the pilot study conducted, the researcher explained the reason of the investigation to the students and allowed them to ask questions before conducting the objective test with the assistance of the English teachers of the College. The test was administered to the students using the English/Arabic period

with effective control of the invigilators. Thus, at the end, the scripts were assessed with the use of marking scheme prepared by the researcher. On the other hand, the questionnaire was distributed to the English teachers via their head of department and they were given enough time to fill before collection.

### **3.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher administered 20 questions on sentence completion test which was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire was also analysed through frequency counts. The study adopts the formula below as adopted by Suleiman andDandago (2014)in calculating the percentages of frequencies of the respondents' opinions to each question type in order to ensure informed judgment:

$\frac{n}{N} \times \frac{100}{1}$  . Where n represent the number of individual response (frequency), and N stands for total number of responses (frequency)Suleiman andDandago (2014).

A well prepared marking scheme was provided by the researcher so as to achieve proper analysis of data. The purpose of the research therefore is to identify the students' performance in their use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic

### **3.6 PILOT STUDY**

The researcher conducted a test in a pilot study so as to test the reliability of the test items (sentence completion and content validity). The pilot subjects for the study were the students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies. Thirty six (36) respondents were selected studying English/Arabic as their combination. The test was administered and the result was collected accordingly. However, sample of the test conducted in the pilot study is in appendix.

### **3.7 RESULT OF THE PILOT STUDY**

The test in the pilot study administered to the students by the researcher was to measure the students' performance in the use of the *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic. In the investigation, therefore, the researcher discovered that, the students use the *Wh-questions* correctly in English and have little problem in Arabic. The sentence completion test administered to the students consists of twenty questions divided into two sections: A and B.

Section A: Deals with ten (10) questions in *Wh-questions* in English Language.

Section B: Deals with ten (10) questions in *Wh-questions* in Arabic Language.

In the result of the test, most of the students clearly identify the answer in their use of *Wh-questions*, which revealed their understanding of *Wh-questions*. For example, question nine (9) of section 'A' in the pilot study says; "..... did you come late?" In this question, many of the students answered it correctly. In this section therefore 75% of the respondents have appropriately made right selection while only 25% of them could not answer the question correctly. In section B where Arabic *Wh-questions* were tested, it was revealed that seventy (70%) of the respondents could not answer the questions correctly as a result of the Arabic. Therefore, this indicates that only 30% of the respondents have appropriately made right selection whereas only 70% of the respondents failed to answer correctly.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents analysis, discussions and reveals the performance of the N. C. E. I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies in their use of *Wh-questions* in English as compared to that of Arabic. The chapter also discusses the performance and difficulties faced by the students in their use of the *Wh-questions* in both English and Arabic.

#### **4.1 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS ON THE WH-QUESTIONS**

The results analysed below is on the performance of the students' use of *Wh-questions*. It displays 1 – 20 questions and its responses from the students (respondents).

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS ON THE WH-QUESTIONS**

The researcher portrays the analysis of the results found in the sentence compilation test administered to the students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies.

The result gives the “correct”, “incorrect” and “no” responses in percentages (%). The students answered the questions accordingly and returned the question papers to the invigilator for marking. The sample of

the *Wh-questions* administered to the students is in appendix II, while the marking scheme for the test conducted was in appendix III.

#### 4.2.1 Section A:

English Language questions and responses in percentage for the use of *Wh-questions* are displayed in the table 4.2.1 below.

**Table 1**

Q/No	Question types	No of Respondents	Correct Response	Incorrect Response	None	Total Percentages
1	... do you live? (What, <u>where</u> )	136	90 (66.2%)	46 (33.8%)	0 (0)	100%
2	... treated the patient today? ( <u>Who</u> , which)	136	70 (51.5%)	64 (47.0%)	02 (1.5%)	100%
3	... student won the race? (Who, <u>which</u> )	136	63 (46.3%)	73 (53.7%)	0 (0)	100%
4	... visited you yesterday? ( <u>Who</u> , how)	136	80 (58.8%)	56 (41.2%)	0 (0)	100%
5	... is your favourite sport? (When, <u>what</u> )	136	100 (73.6%)	36 (26.4%)	0 (0)	100%
6	... do you go to work? (Whose, <u>when</u> )	136	90 (66.2%)	45 (33.1%)	01 (0.7%)	100%
7	... phone is this? (how, <u>whose</u> )	136	75 (55.1%)	61 (44.9%)	0 (0)	100%
8	... did you finish your work? ( <u>how</u> , what)	136	60 (44.1%)	76 (55.9%)	0 (0)	100%
9	... did you come late? (what, <u>why</u> )	136	102 (75.0%)	34 (25.0%)	0 (0)	100%
10	... is the time now? ( <u>what</u> , why)	136	77 (56.6%)	59 (43.4%)	0 (0)	100%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100</b>

**Question 1:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask “*where someone lives*” (The correct option is underlined in the table 1).

The question 1 of the table 1 above reveals that the N. C. E. I Students level of comprehension in their use of *Wh-questions*. The analysis therefore indicates that 66.2% of the respondents correctly answered the question in their use of *Wh-question* while 33.8% of them did not answer the question correctly. This means that they did not understand the use of *Wh-question* accordingly.

**Question 2:** The use of *Wh-question* in asking the person who treated the patient today.

Question 2 of the table 1 above measures the students’ performance in the use of *Wh-question* in asking the person *who treated the patient today?* Therefore, 51.5% of the respondents answered the question correctly, while 47.0% of them responded wrongly. This shows that majority of the N. C. E. I Students do not have problem in using *Wh-question* to ask the person who treated the patient today. Moreover, despite the higher percentage of the students who answer the question correctly, the result also reveals that 1.5% of the respondents did not give any response at all as a result of their poor knowledge of the *Wh-question*.

**Question 3:** The use of *Wh-question* in asking the students “*who won the race?*”

Question 3 of the table 1above measures the respondents’ performance on the use of *Wh-question* to ask the students on *who won the race?* In the analysis therefore, 53.7% of the respondents answered the question wrongly while on the other hand 46.3% of the respondents answered the question correctly and this indicates their poor performance in the use of this type of *Wh-question*.

**Question 4:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask the person “*who visited you yesterday?*”.

Question 4 of the table 1above tests the N. C. E. I students’ performance in the use of *Wh-questions* to ask the person *who visited you yesterday?* As clearly seen in the table 1 above, majority of the respondents performed very well in this *Wh-question* because 58.8% of them answered the question correctly but 41.2% of the respondents have not answered it correctly since they gave wrong answers.

**Question 5:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask “*your favourite sport?*”.

Question 5 in the table.1above tests the N. C. E. I student’s realisation in their use of *Wh-question* to ask what is your favourite sport? As clearly revealed in the above analysis 73.6% of the respondents

answered the question correctly which is major percentage, while 26.4% of the respondents have not answered the question correctly.

**Question 6:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask *the time you go to work*.

Question 6 in the table above tests the respondents choice of diction in the use of *Wh-question* to ask the time you go to work, where the test justifies the 66.2% of the respondents have clearly shows the higher level of mastery and realisation while 33.1% of the respondents failed to make a right choice of this *Wh-question* word, where the 0.7% of the respondents have not filled the gap in the sentence completion test correctly.

**Question 7:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask *the owner of the phone*.

Question 7 in the table 1 above however, examines the respondents' ability to make appropriate selection in their use of "whose" as a question word to ask the owner of the phone 55.1% the respondents have clearly answered the question correctly while 44.9% of the respondents failed as a result of inappropriate choice of the question word.

**Question 8:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask of *the way and manner you finish your work*.

Nonetheless, the question 8 on the table 1 examines the respondents' performance in their use of the *Wh-question* to ask the manner at which the work is finished. The test shows that majority of the

respondents did not answer the question correctly because 55.9% failed while some percentage of the respondents represented by 44.1% answered the question correctly.

**Question 9:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask of *the reason why you come late*.

Moreover, question 9 of table 1 above evaluates the respondents' knowledge in their use of *Wh-question* on *why did you come late*. The evaluation justified that 75.0% of the respondents have answered the question correctly while only the 25.0% of the respondents answered the question wrongly.

**Question 10:** The use of *Wh-question* to ask *the time now*.

Finally, the question 10 on the table 1 assesses the respondents' ability in their use of question word "what" to ask *what is the time now?* 56.6% of the respondents responded correctly while 43.4% answered it wrongly.

#### **4.2.2 Section B**

This section presents the respondents' response on Arabic Language question numerically as well as in percentage (%). The students answered the questions as instructed and returned the questionnaire to the investigator for assessment and marking. The sample

of the *Wh-questions* administered to the students is in Appendix II while the marking scheme for the test conducted is in Appendix III.

**Table 2:** Respondents' responses in numeric and percentage

Q/No	Question types	No of Respondents	Correct Responses	Incorrect Responses	None	Total Percentages
1	... تعيش؟ (كيف، هل، أين)	136	58 (42.7%)	77 (56.6%)	1 (0.7%)	100%
2	... حال الجو اليوم؟ (لمن، كم، كيف)	136	75 (55.2%)	58 (42.6%)	3 (2.2%)	100%
3	... طالب فاز بالسباق؟ (من، أي، ما)	136	45 (33.1%)	91 (66.9%)	0 (0)	100%
4	... زاركم بالأمس؟ (كيف، أي، من)	136	50 (36.8%)	85 (62.5%)	1 (0.7)	100%
5	... ربيضتك المفضلة؟ (ما، متى، من)	136	39 (28.7%)	93 (68.4%)	4 (2.9%)	100%
6	... تذهب إلى العمل؟ (لمن، أي، متى)	136	75 (55.1%)	61 (44.9%)	0 (0)	100%
7	... هذه الجواله؟ (لمن، كيف، لماذا)	136	60 (44.1%)	75 55.2%	1 (0.7%)	100%
8	... كملت عملك؟ (كيف، كم، أين)	136	68 (50%)	68 (50%)	0 (0)	100%
9	... جئت متأخرا؟ (كم، لماذا، من)	136	35 (25.7%)	100 (73.6%)	1 (0.7%)	100%
10	... الساعة الآن؟ (كم، أين، هل)	136	60 (44.1%)	70 (51.5%)	6 (4.4%)	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>136</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Question 1:** The use of *Wh-question* "أين" to ask *where this listener lives*.

The question 1 of the table 2 above assesses the respondents' inability in their use of *Wh-question* word "أين" which is used to ask the place where the listener lives. 42.7% answered the question correctly responses while 56.6% did not answered it correctly. There is also unattempted questionnaire which is 0.7% of the sampling. Therefore, there is poor mastery of this question word.

**Question 2:** The use of *Wh-question* "كيف" to ask *the situation of the weather today*.

Question 2 on the table 2 above evaluates the respondents' level of mastery in their use of *Wh-question* word "كيف" to ask the situation of the weather today. The analysis therefore indicates that 55.2% of the respondents answered correctly while 42.6% of the respondent failed to answer it correctly, while 2.2% of the respondents did not attempt the question at all.

**Question 3:** The use of *Wh-question* "من" to ask *in asking the students who won the race*.

The question item 3 of the table2 above measures the respondents' level of mastery in the use of *Wh-question* word "من" to ask the student who won the race. The test reveals that only 33.1% of the respondents were able to answer the question correctly. While 66.9% of the

respondents failed to answer the question. Therefore this shows that there is lack of knowledge of this *Wh-question* to the majority of the respondents.

**Question 4:** The use of *Wh-question*"من" to ask *the person who visited you yesterday*.

Furthermore, question 4 on the table 2 above assesses the respondents' mastery and performance in the use of *Wh-question* word "من" to ask the person who visited you yesterday. Majority of the respondents have not responded correctly simply because 62.5% of the respondents have answered wrongly while only 36.8% of the respondents have answered correctly. The table also reveals that there are 0.7% of the respondents that have not made any attempt to answer the question.

**Question 5:** The use of *Wh-question*"ما" in asking *your favourite game*.

Nonetheless, the question 5 of the table 2 examines the respondents' performance in the use of *Wh-question* word "ما" to ask interlocutor his favourite game. The result shows that 68.4% of the respondents have not mastered the *Wh-question*, because they have answered incorrectly. On the other hand 28.7% of the respondents made a wrong attempt which reveals that, only the minority of the respondents have answered correctly. There is about 2.9% of respondents who have not filled the questionnaire.

**Question 6:** The use of *Wh-question*"متى" to ask *the time by which you go to the work.*

The question 6 on the table 2 above measures the respondents' performance in the use of *Wh-question* word "متى" to ask the time by which you go to the work. The test reveals that 55.14% of the respondents have answered the *Wh-question* correctly while 44.9% of the respondents have wrongly answered the question. This justifies the majority of the respondents make a wonderful attempt in using the *Wh-question*.

**Question 7:** The use of *Wh-question*"لمن" in asking *the rightful owner of a phone.*

Question 7 on the table 2 above measures the respondents' level of performance in the use of *Wh-question* word "لمن" to ask the rightful owner of a phone. The assessment shows that 55.2% of the respondents failed to answer correctly while 44.1% of the respondents have correctly answered the question. On the other hand, 0.7% of the respondents have not made any attempt to fill the questionnaire. Therefore, the percentage of the failure reveals lack of mastery in using the *Wh-question*.

**Question 8:** The use of *Wh-question*"كيف" in asking *the manner within which you finish your work.*

The respondents level of mastery as suggested based on the above question 8 in the table 2 show that, there is equilibrium in percentage

between the correct and incorrect answers each represented by 50% of the respondents, this means that the respondents need to master the *Wh-question* for good communication and efficiency.

**Question 9:** The use of *Wh-question*"لماذا" in asking *the reason why you come late*.

However, the question on the table 2 above evaluates the respondents' level of comprehension in the use of *Wh-question* word "لماذا" to ask the reason why you come late, which reveals that, 73.6% of the respondents have not answer the question correctly. On the other hand, 25.7% of the respondents answered the question correctly while 0.7% of the respondents have not made any attempt.

**Question 10:** The use of *Wh-question*"كم" in asking *the exact time in the meantime*.

Finally, the question on the table 2 above measures the respondents' comprehension in the use of question word "كم" in asking the exact time in the meantime. 51.5% of the respondents have failed to answer the question appropriately because of the level of mastery in using the *Wh-question*. 44.1% of the respondents on the other hand answered the question while 4.4% have not filled in the questionnaire.

### 4.3 A SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES ON THE USE OF THE WH-QUESTION IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

**Table 3: Summary of the responses on the use of *Wh-questions* in  
English**

Responses	No. of Respondents	Workings	Percentages
Correct	807	$\frac{TCR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{807}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 59.3\%$	59.4%
Incorrect	550	$\frac{TIR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{550}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 40.4\%$	40.4%
None	3	$\frac{TNR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{3}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 0.22\%$	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1360</b>		<b>100%</b>

Where:

TCR = Total Number of Correct Responses

TIR = Total Number of Incorrect Responses

TNR = Total Number of None Responses

TR = Total Number of Responses

The respondents in the table3 above displayed different level of competence in the use of the *Wh-questions* as clearly analysed in section A; the mastery level of the respondents is rated in average as displayed in the analysis above. The percentage of all the incorrect responses in the sentence completion test given is 40.4%, while 59.4% of them displayed their level of competence in the use of the *Wh-questions* in English and

some respondents did not responded at all constitute 0.2% because they did not attempt to answer any question.

**Table 4: Summary of the responses on the use of the *Wh-questions* in Arabic**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Workings</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Correct	565	$\frac{TCR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{565}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 41.5\%$	42%
Incorrect	778	$\frac{TIR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{778}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 57.2\%$	57%
None	17	$\frac{TNR}{TR} \times \frac{100}{1} = \frac{17}{1360} \times \frac{100}{1} = 1.25\%$	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1360</b>		<b>100%</b>

Where:

TCR = Total Number of Correct Responses

TIR = Total Number of Incorrect Responses

TNR = Total Number of None Responses

TR = Total Number of Responses

In the above summary table4 were shown different level of competence in the use of the *Wh-questions* of Arabic as clearly analysed in the section B; the mastery level of the respondents is rated in average as displayed in the analysis above. The respondents' percentage that shows failed attempt is higher in percentage which is 57%, whereas the correct attempt is 42%, while those that did not make any attempt to answer *Wh-questions* in Arabic were 1% among all the respondents.

The performance of the students in the use of the *Wh-questions* in the sentence completion test testifies their different levels of competence in both languages. This indicates and confirms the assumption that the *Wh-questions* strategy is an aspect of English Grammar which the respondents understand much better if its compared with Arabic, because the researcher justified that 67.69% of the total correct responses was from section (A) which is English *Wh-questions* while only 41.2% of the total correct responses was from section (B) which is Arabic *Wh-questions* comparatively. In a nutshell, the percentage of the correct respondents in the 20 items administered to the students clearly justified the researcher's assumption that, there exists a success in the use of *Wh-questions* in English with higher percentage than in the Arabic comparatively.

#### **4.4 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The evaluation of the research questions is very important for the effectiveness and relevance of this research work.

##### **4.4.1 What are the Performances of the N. C. E.I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies in Their Use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic?**

It is discovered from the research of this study that, the students have good performance in using the *Wh-questions* in English. The

students' poor performances in the *Wh-question* of Arabic include inability to distinguish and appropriately identify *Wh-questions* and their use in sentences. Some of the students substitute one question word with another as the test in the pilot study revealed. Therefore, the performance of the N. C. E.I students of AKCILS in their use of *Wh-questions* in Arabic is poor in comparison with English.

#### **4.4.2 What are the Areas which Give More Problems to the Students in Their Use of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic?**

The area that gives more problems to the students in using the *Wh-questions* is mostly in Arabic and it attracts many factors. These include; poor Arabic educational background right from the primary to the secondary. In addition to this, what hinders their ability to perform well in using the *Wh-questions* in Arabic in particular is that most of them did not perform well in their Arabic subject taught in their secondary school. This gives more problems to the students in using *Wh-questions* in Arabic.

#### **4.4.3 What are the Similarities and Differences of *Wh-questions* in English and Arabic?**

It has been revealed that, English and Arabic are similar in some dimensions and structures while differ in some. Based on the test in the pilot study administered, the researcher revealed that both languages use

the *Wh-questions* in sentence in subjunctive and objective positions. As subject and object the clause functions in a similar manner in both languages. For instance, appendix I Item (1) revealed that, the responses that respondents were expected to make are:

Whose textbook is this?

لمن هذا الكتاب؟

The researcher revealed that all the questions words appeared in subjective position which justified the similarities. However, there was lexical semantic similarities which the test revealed for instance:

Whose = لمن

Who = من

When = متى

What = ماذا

Why = لماذا

How = كيف

Where = أين

Which = أي

The test in the pilot study administered revealed the differences of *Wh-questions* in both languages.

#### **4.5 THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

The researcher, in this section distributed the questionnaire to the teachers. It also includes the teachers' responses. It comprises two sections: I and II. Section I of the questionnaire investigates the N. C. E. I students' performances in their use of *Wh-questions* while Section II displayed the solution to the N. C. E. I students' poor performances (mistake) in their use of *Wh-questions* in Arabic and English. Teachers of English/Arabic in the school of languages in their respective departments cooperated and responded to the questionnaire given to them. Considering the rejection or acceptability of the item was used to assess the investigation. The teachers decided and ticked the appropriate column in the table 5 below, to indicate acceptability or rejection.

**TABLE 5: Teachers' Questionnaire**

S/N	Items	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Undecided	Decisions
1	Inconsistencies of the rules of grammar			✓			Accepted
2	L1 transfer to L2 (mother tongue interference)	✓					Accepted
3	Students poor background of English language	✓					Accepted
4	Carelessness of the students	✓					Accepted
5	Inadequate learning materials			✓			Accepted
6	Language change				✓		rejected
7	Mistakes/errors in inter language stage	✓					Accepted
8	Variations of English language			✓			Rejected
9	Unqualified English language teachers					✓	Accepted
10	Poor teaching method	✓					Accepted

The teachers' responses of the questionnaire in the table 5 above stated that in item: 2,3,4,7 and 10, majority of the respondents accepted and agreed as one of the cause of poor performances in the students' use

of *Wh-questions*. The respondents' responses disagreed in items: 1, 5 and 8. In item 9 of the teacher's questionnaire the respondents remained undecided. In item 6, the respondents strongly disagreed to be the cause of the students less performance in Arabic.

#### **4.6 DISCUSSION**

When we take into cognisance, the research questions in relation to the experts opinions, we discover some similarities and dissimilarities of English and Arabic. In the view of the test in the pilot study administered to the students, some of the respondents answered the questions wrongly while others answered the questions correctly. The total number of the students in the test administered is one hundred and thirty six (136).

The students displayed good performance in their use of *Wh-questions* in English and a little failure in Arabic because they wrongly selected inappropriate response to *Wh-questions* in the test administered and they also substitute one *Wh-question* with another which completely change the meaning or make it erroneous expressions. This performance conformed to the theory of language transfer by Odlin (2003), who asserts that 'transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language'. Pedagogical practice reflects the fact that, the more similar the writing systems of two languages are, the less time learners need to develop basic

encoding and decoding skills, but in the case of Arabic with a writing system far more intricate than English. The consequences for acquisition take more effort to achieve. This means more similarities between two languages writing systems produce more positive transfer whereas more language distance may lead more negative transfer. The result of this analysis is therefore built into test and research in the study of *Wh-questions* strategy of English and Arabic.

Therefore, learning is accompanied with making mistakes. In view of this, Corder (1973) explains that the students make mistakes in their attempt to learn the second language. Moreover, the students do not follow the rules of the *Wh-questions*. For this reason, they make mistakes and could not differentiate the proper use of *Wh-questions* of Arabic. Richard and Renadiya (2005) state that to be a competent user of grammar, one need to know not only the rules of grammar, but also how the rules of grammar are used in real communication.

Moreover, the poor background of Arabic and the students' poor attitude to learning discourage their performance in learning the language. Based on the students' poor performances and deficiency in communication.

In view of the investigation on the causes of the poor performances of the students, the teachers' questionnaire was also used. It is understood that learning is accompanied with making mistakes, learners commit mistakes in their effort to learn English and Arabic languages. Corder (1973) perceives that students make mistakes in their effort to learn the second language as a result of analogies and overgeneralization in which Hadley (1993) referred to as intra-lingual errors. The causes of errors/mistakes in learning foreign language is the poor linguistic background and lack of teaching methodology. Students are bound to make mistakes/errors in an attempt to learn the target language and thus what comes about the concept of inter language as an intermediary language between the first language (L1) and the target language (L2).

The information below is the responses of teachers' questionnaire section B on the solutions on how to minimize the students' errors in the use of the *Wh-questions*. The researcher harmonized and presented the teachers' views as follows:

1. Students should be enlightened towards listening to modal English and Arabic languages speakers for fluency such as the news of Voice of America (VOA), Al-Huda, Al-Jazeera, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Nigeria Television Authority news and other important networks of English and Arabic.

2. A keen interest towards learning should be instilled in to the mind of students so as to learn the *Wh-questions* accordingly.
3. Students should also be encouraged to develop their oracy skills through their instructors (teachers).
4. Students should be discouraged to speak vernacular as it is a threat to the use of the both languages.
5. Enough facilities, like computers, textbooks, laboratories and so on must be provided to the students, this will encourage them to learn the rules governing the *Wh-questions* of English and Arabic.
6. Teachers should use different methods of teaching in their day to day lessons to instil the knowledge of *Wh-question* of English and Arabic.
7. Teachers should effect corrections in the students' written and spoken English and Arabic.
8. Qualified teachers should be provided by the stakeholders to overcome the challenges in learning the two languages.

#### 4.7 FINDINGS

Based on this investigation on the use of *Wh-questions* of English and Arabic by the N. C. E. I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano the researcher discovered the followings:

- ✓ The findings from this study revealed that Arabic is far more intricate in writing system than English which was really demonstrated by the students' performance from the test administered.
- ✓ Being the main theme of this study, the performance and understanding of the NCE I Students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano is apparently revealed by their stand in the administered test.
- ✓ It is also found that the consequences for acquisition of Arabic take more effort to achieve than the English because of the intricate writing system.
- ✓ The result of the sentence completion test conducted to the students revealed their poor performance in Arabic.
- ✓ Most of the students answered the questions correctly in English *Wh-questions* which clearly indicated their good performance.

- ✓ Majority of the respondents are often faced with problem of poor background in terms of learning the *Wh-questions* of Arabic.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

The research work investigated the use of *Wh-questions* by the N.C.E. Istudents of English and Arabic at Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano. The students' performances in the use of the *Wh-questions* is discovered in the written sentence completion test.

#### 5.1 SUMMARY

The study investigates the use of the N. C. E. I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano in their use of *Wh-questions*. The use of these *Wh-questions* is an aspect of grammar which is examined in order to identify the students' performances in the use of *Wh-question* of English and Arabic. Some identified mistakes,especially in Arabic wereas a result of so many reasons which led to the students' incapability to use the *Wh-questions* in accordance with the rules of Arabic grammars.The performances of the respondents were portrayed in various ways according to their proficiency. Some of the students did not answer the question correctly, this is because the rules of how to use *Wh-questions* not thoroughly been comprehended by them. Therefore, the students should be encouraged through different

methodologies on how to use these *Wh-questions* in accordance with the rules of English and Arabic grammars. The data as collected through the sentence completion test for students and an interview for teachers as the research instruments and the theoretical framework used in this investigation was the theory of language transfer in the theory of language learning.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

Based on what has been discussed in this investigation, there were some factors which affect the use of the *Wh-questions* by the N. C. E. I students of Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies (AKCILS) Kano. The mistakes in the use of *Wh-questions* of Arabic are caused mostly by poor educational background, students' carelessness and lack of exposure to the target language. Rivers (1968: 40) is of the view that the major difficulties for the language learners are to be found at these points where the foreign languages differ radically from the native language. We can therefore deduce that the *Wh-questions* are not properly understood by various native learners of both languages. This research work therefore revealed the causes of these mistakes in the students' performances in the use of *Wh-questions*. Despite the difficulty of attaining proficiency in learning the second language, teachers of English

and Arabic should therefore work hard to teach judiciously in order to solve or minimise these mistakes.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the investigation on the use of the *Wh-questions*, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

1. Students should be encouraged to use the *Wh-questions* of both English and Arabic in order to attain efficiency and fluency in the two languages.
2. The students should pay attention and develop a keen interest in learning both English and Arabic.
3. The teachers of English and Arabic should endeavour to identify the factors that hinder the proper use of *Wh-questions* of both English and Arabic to find ways to either eradicate or minimise them.
4. Teachers should introduce practical drill in the class among the students on how to use the *Wh-questions* of both English and Arabic.
5. Students should be encouraged to use the *Wh-questions* of English and Arabic to ask questions in and outside the class. This will enable them to comprehend and retain the proper use of it.

6. The school authority should make efforts to discourage speaking Nigerian languages, often called ‘vernacular’. This can be achieved if the school authority imposes sanctions on students who tend to speak vernacular.
7. Teachers of English and Arabic should be encouraged to attend in-service training, seminar and workshop in order to update their knowledge of *Wh-questions* in both English and Arabic. This would enable them to apply the best method to inculcate the knowledge of *Wh-questions* in both English and Arabic to the students.
8. I anticipate that the subsequent researcher would take up from where I stopped to make an investigation on what hinders the proper use of the *Wh-questions* in both English and Arabic.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### THE STUDENTS' TEST ADMINISTERED IN THE PILOT STUDY

##### *Students' Information*

Age \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

##### **Section A** (English on *Wh-questions*)

1. Whose text book is this?
2. Who is your best friend?
3. When did you go to work?
4. What would you like to eat?
5. Who are you talking about?
6. Who visited you yesterday?

##### **Section B** (Arabic on *Wh-questions*)

1. لمن هذا الكتاب؟
2. من هو افضل صديق لك؟
3. متى تذهب إلى العمل؟
4. ماذا تحب أن تأكل؟
5. عن ماذا تتحدث؟
6. من زاركم بالأمس؟

**APPENDIX II**  
**STUDENTS' TEST**

**General Information**

School \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Course \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction:** Answer all questions and fill in the blank spaces with the correct options in the following sentences.

**Section A: English**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ do you live? a. What ( ) b. where ( ) c. ( )
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the weather like today? a. How ( ) b. who ( ) c. ( )
3. \_\_\_\_\_ students won the race? a. Who ( ) b. which ( ) c. ( )
4. \_\_\_\_\_ visited you yesterday? a. Who ( ) b. how ( ) c. ( )
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is your favourite sport? a. When ( ) b. What ( ) c. ( )
6. \_\_\_\_\_ do you go work? a. When ( ) b. What ( ) c. ( )
7. \_\_\_\_\_ phone is this? a. How ( ) b. Whose ( ) c. ( )
8. \_\_\_\_\_ did you finish your work? a. How ( ) b. What ( ) c. ( )
9. \_\_\_\_\_ did you come late? a. What ( ) b. Why ( ) c. ( )
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is the time now? a. What ( ) b. Why ( ) c. ( )

## Section B:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ تعيش؟ أ. كيف ( ) ب. أين ( ) ج. هل ( )
2. \_\_\_\_\_ حال الجو اليوم؟ أ. لمن ( ) ب. كم ( ) ج. كيف ( )
3. \_\_\_\_\_ طالب فاز بالسباق؟ أ. من ( ) ب. أى ( ) ج. ما ( )
4. \_\_\_\_\_ زاركم بالأمس؟ أ. كيف ( ) ب. أى ( ) ج. من ( )
5. \_\_\_\_\_ رياضتك المفضلة؟ أ. ما ( ) ب. متى ( ) ج. من ( )
6. \_\_\_\_\_ تذهب إلى العمل؟ أ. لمن ( ) ب. أى ( ) ج. متى ( )
7. \_\_\_\_\_ هذه الجوالة؟ أ. لمن ( ) ب. كيف ( ) ج. لماذا ( )
8. \_\_\_\_\_ كملت عملك؟ أ. كيف ( ) ب. كم ( ) ج. أين ( )
9. \_\_\_\_\_ جئت متأخرا؟ أ. كم ( ) ب. لماذا ( ) ج. من ( )
10. \_\_\_\_\_ الساعة الآن؟ أ. كم ( ) ب. أين ( ) ج. هل ( )

**Appendix III**  
**MARKING SCHEME FOR SENTENCE COMPLETION TEST**

The respondents are expected to write the following answers from options in the given test.

**Section A: (English)**

1. Where
2. How
3. Which
4. Who
5. What
6. When
7. Whose
8. How
9. Why
10. What

**Section B: (Arabic)**

1. أين
2. كيف
3. أي
4. من
5. ما
6. متى
7. لمن
8. كيف
9. لماذا
10. كم

## APPENDIX IV

**TABLE FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE, FROM A GIVEN**

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	346
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	130	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	376
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Source: Morgan & Kreycie (1971)

Note: "N" is population size

"S" is sample size

## APPENDIX V

### TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

S/N	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Decision
1	Inconsistencies of the rules of grammar			✓			Accepted
2	L1 transfer to L2 (mother tongue interference)	✓					Accepted
3	Students poor background of English language	✓					Accepted
4	Carelessness of the students	✓					Accepted
5	Inadequate learning materials			✓			Accepted
6	Language change				✓		Rejected
7	Mistakes/errors in inter language stage	✓					Accepted
8	Variations of English language			✓			Rejected
9	Unqualified English language teachers					✓	Accepted
10	Poor teaching method	✓					Accepted