



**Investigating Difficulties Facing Arab Adult Learners of
English in Learning Reported Questions at Benghazi
University Language Centre (BULC)**

By

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**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Master's Degree of Art in Applied
Linguistics**

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To My Parents

Nejia and Mohammed Ali

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ABSTRACT

Language learners often experience difficulties in their learning. This led to a large number of studies whose purpose is to reveal these difficulties and their causes. Reported questions in English grammar have been one of these difficulties the learners face. Reported questions are forms of reported speech where a question structure is changed into a statement structure in the process of reporting the question.

The aim of the present study is to investigate and describe the difficulties that Arab adult learners encountered at Benghazi University Language Centre in learning reported questions.

In order to investigate these difficulties, a test was administered to 45 pre-intermediate students who were divided into two groups, the experimental group and control group. The experimental group studied at the University of Benghazi, Department of English. They consisted of 20 students. The **control** group, 25 students studied at Benghazi University Language Centre.

The results of this study show a substantial support for the research's aim; that is, Arab adult learners of English as a foreign language have difficulties in learning reported questions. Most of the difficulties were in shifting tenses and structures of reported questions. However, learning reported *wh*-questions seemed more difficult than yes/no questions. Pronouns and possessive adjectives surprisingly caused no eminent challenge to both groups.

Moreover, the findings of the current study significantly agreed with the findings of the other studies. That is to say, most of language learners of English face difficulties in reported questions whatever their native language is. Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study will be a useful contribution to teachers, syllabus designers and course-book writers of English as a foreign language.

Chapter One

Introduction and Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

There are levels of difficulties in foreign language learning. These difficulties make learners commit errors which are possibly related to their strategies in learning languages. Then, these errors became a field of study. Language errors are naturally made through the process of learning language. Thornbury (1999) believes that language learners make mistakes; this seems to happen regardless of the teacher's skills or perseverance. Moreover, those errors may be related to interference from the mother tongue.

However errors are not desirable, some see them as positive signs of learning. For example, Littlewoods (1984) believes that a child's speech is no longer seen as only a wrong version of the adult's speech. It is recognized as having its own underlying system which can be described in its own terms. As the system develops towards that of the adult's language, the child contributes by actively forming rules. Sometimes they over-generalize them, and gradually they adapt them. Nevertheless, errors can offer us hints about the learning strategies and mechanisms which a child is employing. Therefore, they are considered as an important role of development, they are not inevitable, and they should not be ignored when they appear. Thornbury (1999) points out that most teachers believe that to ignore these mistakes might put the learner's linguistic development at risk. In addition, Doff (1988) sees them as a system of rules the learner has to acquire when they try out language and making errors are natural stages and unavoidable part of the learning process.

It is believed that a deviant form of language production has few shapes. Two of which are errors and mistakes. Islam (2007) stressed the importance of making distinction between mistakes and errors because these are crucial phenomena to analyse students' language

from an appropriate viewpoint. Ellis (2008) denoted that the description of errors might focus on the kind of errors learners make and how these errors change over time. She continued to say that errors may examine the variability found in learner language.

Ellis (2008) explained that errors reflect a gap in learner's knowledge because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes, on the other hand, reflect occasional lapses in performance and occur because the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. One area of difficulties in English language that causes problems to language learners and need to be investigated is reported questions.

With regard to Arab speaking learners of English language, there has been a quit number of studies investigating the difficulties and types of errors committed by those leaners the areas of English grammar. But, in fact, most of these studies have either concentrated on, for example, the phonology, structure or the semantics of reported speech in general and one may rarely find a study focuses on reported questions in particular. Mohammed, for example, dealt with phonology and the syntactic difficulties of reported questions. Her subjects were students at the Department of English at the University of Cairo. Qodariah studied the difficulties faced by Jakarta students of English reported speech in general and paid little attention to reported questions (e.g. Mohamed, (2010); Qodariah (2010)).

Moreover, English language courses and text books designed for teaching English as a second language pay little attention to this complex area of English grammar. I believe that the absence of empirical and error analysis studies of how Arab Adult learners of English learn English reported question systems must have contributed to this state of affairs.

In this study, I shall investigate the difficulties facing the intermediate learners at Benghazi University language Centre (BULC) in learning reported questions. This of course will

provide an essential basis for investigating these difficulties in learning this area of English grammar.

1.2. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to describe and investigate the difficulties encountered by Arab-speaking learners in the use of reported questions in order to arrive at ways of avoiding these difficulties through a satisfactory and more appropriate methods of teaching. This general aim can be broken down into a number of more specific aims as follows:

1. To review recent studies of reported questions in English.
2. To describe different types of reported question structures.
3. To analyse and examine data collected from the learners' actual performance in test items to cover some of the English reported questions learned by Arab learners.
4. Using the findings of this study to make recommendations for ways of improving the teaching techniques and the materials for teaching English to Arab-speaking learners in general, and for teaching the English reported questions in particular.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The process of learning a second language has been the subject of many language studies. One of the main objectives of these studies is to discover the possible difficulties that the learners face in learning a second language. One of these difficulties is reported questions. Therefore, this study will try to identify these difficulties to explain their causes and assess the content to which these difficulties can be accounted in terms of complexity in the target language itself.

Thus, this study is important since it may help teachers, researchers and book designers to consider the effective techniques for teaching reported questions of English grammar to Arab learners.

1.4. Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 represents an insight of the different structures of English reported speech in general and in much more details of the reported questions in particular. In addition, it refers to some of the different studies investigating learners' difficulties in learning reported questions.

Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter. It introduces information about the participants subjected to the test used to collect data. Then it explains how data will be analyzed and interpreted.

In chapter 4, the data will be presented by bar graphs that show the compared percentages of difficulties between the experimental and the control groups. The last chapter concerns with the conclusion reached in this study and what recommendations are suggested.

In the last chapter, 5, I will represent some detailed conclusions and suggest some recommendations about the finding of this study.

Chapter Two

Reported Questions in Reported Speech

2.1. Introduction

Reported questions in English are formed by changing a question structure into a statement structure preceded by a reporting verb such as *ask* and *wonder*. This syntactic process takes place when a speaker needs to retell someone's question. Therefore, they differ from normal question structures. Furthermore, for reporting both *wh* and *yes/no* questions, there is a grammatical need to apply subject–auxiliary inversion. Consequently, question marks, tenses, pronouns and structures are eventually adjusted.

Therefore, this chapter will represent in detail the structures of both reported *wh* and *yes/no* questions. In addition, it will give, in details, explanations on the differences between reported and direct speech in general, and reported questions in particular. Also, this chapter will represent enormous studies conducted on the use of reported questions by learners from different language backgrounds.

2.2. Structures of Direct Speech

One of the distinguishing features of direct speech is recognized with the use of quotation marks to tell the reader that these are the original words said by the speaker, and the reference is to the speaker who can be mentioned before or after the quote, with the commas placed accordingly. Peet (2000) stated that direct speech conveys exactly what someone has said, occasionally to “dramatize” and to create a sense of “immediacy”. It is usually found in newspaper reports, fiction, and oral narratives, as in:

1. He said, "I want to go home,"
2. Did she say, "What do you want?"

This structure requires quotation marks when it quotes direct speech. In direct speech, the quoted words are usually introduced by the verbs such as *say* or *think*, placed before the quotations. In writing, single quotation marks '...' or double quotation marks "..." are used interchangeably as in examples 1 and 2 above. Single quotations are common in American English.

2.3. Structures of Reported Speech

Reported speech is generally known as the reproduction of an idea of another person's words, but not all of the exact words are used; verb forms and pronouns are changed depending on the tense, person, pronouns or possessive adjectives that were in the main statement. Swan (2010) stated that reported speech is used to quote somebody's words or thoughts without quoting the exact words that had been used and to connect it more closely to our own sentence. Azar (1999) pointed out that reported speech indicates the use of a noun clause to report what someone said; however, no quotation marks are used, as in:

3. a. She said, "I watch TV every day."
3. b. She said she watched TV every day.
4. a. She said, "Do you watch TV?"
4. b. She asked (you) if I watched TV. (ibid:245)
5. a. He replied "I cannot do it"
5. b. He replied he could not do it.
6. a. He said " I must study harder"
6. b. He said (that) he had to study harder

In each pair of the examples above, the indefinite "*a*" refers to the direct speech and *b* to the reported speech. We can notice different structures between each pairs, especially in the tenses and the pronouns.

Thompson and Martinet (1986) argued that in reported speech we give the exact meaning of a remark or a speech without necessarily using the speaker's words precisely. Thus, reported speech is used to communicate what someone else said, but without using the exact words. Peet (2000) stated that reported speech is a traditional name and it is also termed by linguists and grammarians as 'hypotactic locutions'. It refers to the use of a noun clause to report a person's words, thoughts, beliefs, etc.

Furthermore, reported speech is used mainly in conversations, and it is concerned more with conveying the exact meaning than the exact words. Peet (2000) added that the reported message may vary depending on the perspective point of speaker's view and the vocabulary selected. For example, the differences between the uses of *ask* and *order* make an important change in the meaning of the sentence, as in:

7. She asked you to come. (Invitation)
8. He ordered you to come. (Order)

2.4. Structures of Reported Questions

To form reported questions, Andrea (Cited in Swan and Smith 2001) listed four basic processes of transforming a direct question into a reported question:

- a. Edit the punctuation: question marks, quotation marks, and commas before the question. End the whole sentence with a period, as in:
 9. a. "Where is Peter?" (Direct)
 9. b. He asked where Peter was. (Reported)
- b. Insert the word *if* or *whether* before *yes/no* questions, or if the original question already contains a subordinator, as in:
 10. a. He asked, "Is Peter home?"
 10. b. He asked if/whether Peter was home.

- c. Adjust all necessary tenses and pronouns, as in:
 - 11. a. What do you do?
 - 11. b. He asked me what I did.
- d. Invert the subject and the verb in the question back to normal sentence order as in examples 10. b and 11. b, and the reported question's tense is changed into past.

Andrea (ibid) also added that it is unlike conventional question structures, in which the word order is kept, the subject usually comes before the verb in reported questions, as in:

- 12. a. Where does Peter go every night? (Direct)
- 12. b. I do not know where Peter goes every night? (Reported)

In general, questions are reported to restate what someone has said, either by the same speaker or by the bystander. Consequently, reported questions require a grammatical reformation in which structures, tenses, pronouns and punctuations are rephrased to report the exact meaning of the original speaker, but sometime in different time and place. This concludes an overview of the structure of reported speech in general and reported questions in particular.

Sinclair (2010) explained that questions in reported structures are sometimes called reported questions or indirect questions. In addition, there are two types of reported questions, one type is called *yes/no* question and the other is called *wh* question. The first question begins with auxiliary verbs such as *do* and *is* and can be answered simply with *yes* or *no*. The second question begins with *wh*-words and demands for more information about an event or situation.

Sinclair (ibid.23) added that the most common verbs used for reporting questions are *ask* and *want to know*, as in:

- a) *Wh* question

13. a. He said: "Where's my pen?" (Direct)

13. b. He asked where his pen was. (Reported)

b) *Yes/no* question

14. a. She said, "Do you like coffee?" (Direct)

14. b. She asked if I liked coffee. (ibid: 23) (Reported)

Moreover, we also need to change pronouns, tense and the word order. On other words, after question is reported a, it is no longer a question so question marks are not added. The word order becomes as a nominal statement (subject-verb-object). Peet (2000) mentioned that when someone reports questions, there are several areas we need to consider. Firstly, the word order have to be changed from a question to a statement, namely subject-verb, and accordingly reported questions are not usually punctuated with question marks. Secondly, the auxiliary verb *do* is dropped. Finally, when *yes/no* questions are reported, we start with *if* or *whether*, but when *wh* questions are reported, the case is different because we do not use *if* and *whether*, as in:

15. a. He asked, "Is Peter home?"

15. b. He asked if/whether Peter was home.

However, when a *wh* question is reported the case is not the same, as in:

16. a. He asked, "Where is Peter?"

16. b. He asked where Peter was.

Kane (2006:279) defined reported questions as questions that appear in a declarative statement where she stated that:

Reported questions do not close with a question mark but with a period. Like direct questions they demand a response, but they are expressed as declaration without formal characteristics of a question. That is, they have no inversion, no interrogative words, and no special intonation.

Reported questions are introduced in different ways. One is introduced after a reporting phrase (after shifting the structure from question to statements) and we call it reported question. The other is when a question is reported in a question, it is called an embedded question as shown in example 17 b. The reason for the second is making asking questions more polite. However, in this study I shall use the term reported questions for both types. Thus, Kane (1988) made a remarkable distinction between the use and the embedded questions and direct questions. He (ibid) explained that both questions (direct and embedded question) are sentences used to ask questions and end with question marks. He said that embedded question is when a question is asked indirectly by using one of the following question phrases.

- a. Can you tell me...?
- b. Do you know...?
- c. Who knows... (ibid:32)

By using one of the phrases above, they become embedded questions and are seen more polite than the normal direct questions, as in:

- 17. a Where is the bathroom? (Direct)
- 17. b Can you tell me where the bathroom is? (Embedded)
- 17. c He asked you where the bathroom was. (Reported)

As we have seen in the structure of embedded questions in examples 17 a and 17 b, the question *where is the bathroom*, was reported with one of the phrases listed by Kane whereas 17 c is a reported question.

For the use of reported questions, he (ibid) explained that we could think of a situation in which one person asks another *where is the bathroom?* (Direct). If the person addressed

does not hear, a bystander says, *He asked you where the bathroom was*. The question that is restated by the bystander is termed as “reported”. It requires an answer but it is expressed as a statement and it is closed by a full stop, not a question mark.

Jacobs (1995) commented on the differences in structures between direct and reported questions where he claimed that “Like other clauses, questions can be reported inside container clauses. When they are reported they are often called reported questions”. (ibid: 273), as in:

18. a. When could Dr. Amjad go to Green Park?

18. b. Haya asked when Dr. Amjad could go to Green Park.

19. a. When did they choose Rochester?

19. b. I was wondering when they chose Rochester.

Regarding tense shifting in reported speech, he pointed out that when speech or thought is reported rather than quoted, a different kind of time distancing is observed. In reported question, tenses are often shifted from the present to the past and the first person pronouns became the third person. Jacob explained that the reason of tense shifting is to make tense in a reported question “harmonized” with the tense of the container clause. For example, present simple is changed to past simple, past simple to past perfect, present continuous to past continuous.

He explained that it is obvious that the *wh* questions asked in the sentences 18.a and 19.a are not reported. They are still questions, but the questions in examples 18.b and 19.b are reported. Thus, in the first pair the auxiliary *could* in the reported question follows the subject, and in these two examples the reported questions need no operator, so *do* is not introduced into them. For example, he introduced more examples of reporting *yes/no* questions showing how grammatical changes take place.

20. Paul: Hey, Carol, have you read that report?

21. Jean: What did Paul say, Carrel?

22. Carol: He asked me weather I had read that report yet. (ibid:273)

In distinguishing between reported and direct *yes/no* questions, Jacob (ibid:274) stated that “what distinguishes the reported and direct sentences apart from shifts in pronoun and tense is the appearance of *if* and *whether* in the reported question”. He also showed eminent differences between the uses of *if* and *whether*. He claimed that *if* can be replaced by *whether* although the result is less formal. That is, the use of *if* is more restricted than the use of *whether*. Clauses with *whether* can be the subjects of the container clauses, while for most native speakers, those with *if* cannot, as in:

23. a. Whether Iliescu resigns or not does not concern me.

23. b. *If Iliescu resigns or not does not concern me.

Moreover, Jacob (ibid) concluded that only *whether* could introduce non-finite clauses, as in:

24. a. *Helen asked the Markus if to go to the forum that day.

24. b. Helen asked the Markus whether to go to the forum that day.

He added that the reported alternative clauses with *whether* can have the negative alternative added as *or not*, as in:

25. a. He asked me whether I had read that report or not.

25. b. He asked me whether or not I had read that report.

If also allows *or not*, although less commonly than in a *whether* clause, and only at the end of the clause, as in:

26. *He asked if or not I read that report.

As we have seen, the grammar of reported question requires a complex process when we change a question from direct to reported question. This complex grammatical area causes difficulties to learners of English. In the coming section, I will provide a survey of different studies showing the difficulties learners from different backgrounds faced in learning reported questions in English.

2.5. Difficulties Facing Learners in Learning Reported Questions.

Reported questions have been studied from different prospective to show the difficulties encountered by learners from different language backgrounds and levels of proficiency. The coming sections review these difficulties that face learners from different nationalities in learning this aspect of English grammar.

Peet (2000) reported that L2 English learners have major troubles learning reported questions due to the number of grammatical elements that need to be learned. It is crucial, therefore, to present reported speech in a clear and effective context. This may not be easy in a classroom of adult students from a variety of different backgrounds, with different personal and professional interests, and different motivations for learning English. Furthermore, a reported question is something that is only used once or twice in any given situation and so finding a context to work on reported speech in depth is difficult and does not reflect the way language is used outside the classroom. Therefore, it may prove more effective to present reported questions in a variety of situations, rather than in a single context.

Qodariah (2010) seemed to observe Peet's claim in her multinational pre-intermediate students who found the structure reported speech challenging because of the variety of grammatical changes. However, according to her, the reason for this is that students at this level are usually not comfortable using all the tenses. For example, some students still have problems using the past form correctly, especially in the negative and in regard to auxiliary

verbs and often confuse the past simple and past perfect. Therefore, students who are attempting to use reported questions often have more difficulties; this is particularly true for learners whose L1 has no perfect tense, such as Turkish and Chinese learners.

She also commented that learners are usually not confident with using modals at this level so they often have problems reporting questions with modals, especially Turkish students who do not have comparable modals in their L1. Not only with modals but also with reporting verbs; learners who used both say and tell typically make mistakes with the forms, as in:

27. *He said him to sit down.

In addition, she claimed that some students have problems using the correct pronoun, particularly those who do not use pronouns in the same way in their L1, such as Turkish learners who mainly use suffixes as pronouns. It is the confusion that can arise from the fact that something can be reported in a variety of ways depending on the perspective and the vocabulary available to the person reporting, as in:

28. *He said he would meet you later.

29. *He asked me to tell you he would meet you later.

30. *He wanted me to let you know that he will meet you later.

Qodariah observed the students who studied reported questions at intermediate level would have the chance to enhance what they have learnt and to extend their understanding. She noticed that students learning reported questions for the first time at this level usually find it less difficult than students at pre-intermediate level.

Hence, it seems that the main problem at this level relates to the reporting of questions where adult learners often have difficulties with the inversion of word order and the use of *if* for *yes/no* questions, as in:

31. *He asked could he start work tomorrow.

They frequently make errors when they report questions with *do*, *did*, and *does*, as in:

32. a. Did you have a good day?

32. b. *She asked if he did have a good day.

32. c. *She asked to John if he did have a good day.

33. *She asked when did you arrive.

She concluded that some Jakarta students encountered some difficulties in learning reported questions especially when they changed a direct question into a reported question. She noticed that not only shifting tenses has the highest percentage of error, but it also seemed more difficult than in changing pronouns. That is, more than 50 per cent of the students made errors in tenses than they made in pronouns. She presumed that reported questions are still hard enough for students because their high percentage of errors especially in changing tense is probably caused by students' poor mastery of reported questions grammar.

Furthermore, she argued that they had "the worse mind set" (bad impression) that grammar is a difficult subject; of course it influences their motivation in learning. Students confuse the rules in the change of tense and pronoun in transforming direct questions and reported questions. Also they have less attention to teachers' explanation because some students make noise when they were learning.

Littlewood (1984) studied the development of negatives and questions in the learners' reported questions. They observed similar error sequence made by their various learners and noticed some variation of errors due to the mother tongue interference and to some individual factors. Their conclusion agrees with Qodariah's explanation (2010) when she made a relation between the source of difficulties of reported questions' tenses and the absence of perfect tenses in the students' L1.

Moreover, Littlewood (1984), in their case study on a Japanese female child after three months of learning, found that the child was able to use the pattern *I know how to.....* with various verbs in the final gap. The pattern underlying *I know how.....* itself was never used creatively. The child did not say, for example, *tell me how to do it* or *I know when to do it*. She rather made some errors. They observed that, at a later stage, the child produced a deviant structure such as *I know how do you write this*. Significantly, this seemed to cause misunderstanding. However, from the learners' viewpoints it probably indicates that the creative system underlying her speech had progressed almost to the point where *I know how to.....* could be produced by rules rather than as memorised at all.

Hakuta (1976) unexpectedly discovered, at a larger stage of language development, that there was a production of wrong forms of reported *wh* questions (e.g. test shifting, structures etc.). However, Rowland and Pine (2000) argued that this was a function of the frequency of *wh*-word auxiliary in the input. They discussed an analysis of the development of subject-auxiliary inversion in *wh* questions' structures where the results indicated that there was "an un-inversion period" in which the child fails to replace the subject with the auxiliary in *wh* questions, and they argued that this was a function of the frequency of *wh*-word auxiliary in the input, which may denote a problem in teaching techniques. That is, the more frequent a particular collocation was in the input, the more likely it was to be inverted in the child's speech. In this note, an alternative analysis was

proposed. This analysis did not only account for Rowland and Pine's data but also extended to inversion in *yes/no* questions.

Valian (1992) stated that English main questions require auxiliary inversion, while reported questions prohibit it. However, if the children's initial hypothesis was formulated, it in general would contain another three hypotheses:

- a. Always invert in *wh* questions.
- b. Never invert in *wh* questions.
- c. Optionally invert in *wh* questions.

The children appeared to learn the difference between the two types of structures; however, those who understood that inversion occurs sometimes but not always should go for option c. Moreover, He proposed that children's 'synchronous' production of inverted as well as non-inverted *wh* questions is a result of their application of an optional inversion's rule that applies to both questions. The options arise from two sources of misleading evidence; lack of inversion in reported *wh* questions and optional inversion in *yes/no* questions.

Escutia (2002) believed that teachers of English as L1 (EFL) in Spain have a primitive experience with their Spanish students who tend to produce reported questions that are ungrammatical due to the subject-auxiliary inversion, as in:

34. *She wanted to know where did Helen live (ibid:6)

In addition, she explained that it seemed as if those students deal with reported questions as direct, or they were overgeneralizing the English interrogative direct structure to reported

Moreover, Peet (2000) believed that the most popularly used reporting verbs are *say*, *tell*, and *ask*, and most class texts introduce these verbs first. Few texts introduce reported speech at pre-intermediate levels. Consequently, the late introductions in course books of reported question is one of the reasons of reported questions difficulties. As Peet (ibid)

explained, this causes the interrogative structure fossilized, as a result, this leads to the fact that learners make errors in reported questions. He added that the reason for the late introduction of reported questions to the English curriculum is due to the complexity of the grammar items outlined in earlier units. The complexity of the grammar explains why a wider variety of reported questions are not introduced until upper-intermediate level.

Swan and Smith (2014) concluded that there are problems of reported questions encountered by many learners of English from different backgrounds. Those learners have committed errors in their attempt to produce reported questions. It seemed that most of their reported questions are seen influenced by their native language and some of the errors could be made due to the insufficient instructions received.

Harder and Davidsen (1987) investigated the misuses of verb *to be* in reported speech produced by Scandinavian speakers. They stated that there is not inflection for person and number in Scandinavian Languages. Consequently, those learners tend to drop the third person singular. Even a very advanced speaker occasionally make errors in his speech in this respect. They explained that the verb *are* is similar to the only Scandinavian present tense verb form and it tends to be used for every person, and this leads learners to make mistakes, as in:

35. * I do not know if she are ready. (ibid: 21)

Scandinavians also have the same problems with the *do* construction and they need to practice to get used to the formation of questions and negatives of English. Negatives are particularly difficult in subordinate clauses, where it leads to ignore it, as in:

36. * They asked why they not came. (ibid: 21)

Lee (Cited in Swan and Smith 2001) stated that there are seven question words in Korean that correspond to English and they are *where, what, why, how, when, who* and *whose*, and there is an interrogative verb suffix, but there are not any auxiliary verbs. He explained that once the basic question forms in English are mastered, such reported question forms as *I wonder where John is going* and *I asked him what he was doing* remain difficult to understand because Korean learners of English may overgeneralize the ordinary question word order with reported question. Therefore, this may lead to fossilization, as in:

37. *Utawa asked me where was Toyota last night.

Swan (2010) argued that despite the fact that German learners of English do not seem to face difficulties producing reported questions, they definitely have problems on punctuations. However, punctuation's conventions are relatively the same in German and English. The main difference is that commas are used before all subordinate clauses, as well as infinitive complements of verbs, nouns and adjectives. As a problem of mother tongue interference, this leads them to use commas after the reporting verb and before reported *wh* questions, as in:

38. *She knew exactly, what he meant.

Quotation marks in Germany are different to English. They open with single and close with double quotation marks. Therefore, in direct questions, the use of quotation marks can be transferred to the target language, as in:

39. *,How can I help?’’ she asked.(ibid:40)

Moreover, because of the similarity in some verb forms, English *had* is often misused as an equivalent of German *hat* which is similar to *has*. This can lead to make forms, as in:

40. *Do you know if he had telephoned yet. (ibid:40)

Moreover, German tends to use a present simple in reported questions where English uses the past tense after past reporting verbs, as in:

41. * I did not know if she is at home.(ibid:41)

The English modals such as *must*, *may* and *will* have rough German equivalents. In other words, there are differences in the use of models which lead them to make mistakes. For example, German *will* means *want* or *wants*, but not *will*. This leads to misunderstanding, as in:

42. * She does not know what she would.

This could possibly lead to a confusion between *would*, *wanted* and *wants*. This confusion appears in reported questions, as in:

43. *I told her I would a coffee. (ibid:41)

Most West African speakers of English have tense shifting difficulties of reported questions. Tregidgo (1996) argued that the majority of learners have difficulties in good understanding of tense sequence in reported questions, as in:

44. *Jesus told them he will die.

45. * I did not know you are here. (ibid: 65)

In example 44, the speaker used the reporting verb *told* in past but he used *will* in the reported question. In example 45, he used the auxiliary verb *did* in the past while the reported question tense is past. In addition, reported questions are not distinguished from direct questions to African speakers. This may lead to interference, as in:

46. *I want to know how do you do.

47. *He asked her that, will you marry me.

Shepherd (cited in Swan and Smith, 2001:122) stated that Portuguese word order is generally freer than English, and it is common to move a non-subject object element to the

front of the sentence and the verb follows the question word in reported question, and it leads to a structure, as in:

48. * I wonder where is your coffee.

49. * I asked who was her friend. (ibid:122)

Personal pronouns are placed before, after or between elements of the verb, depending on the variety of Portuguese. This may interfere to cause a structural difficulty, as in:

50. *I asked what to do to him. (ibid:122)

In example 50, the pronoun was used in the wrong position showing the effect of mother tongue interference, where it should have been placed after the *wh*-word in the reported question.

Duguid (Cited in Swan and Smith 2001) concurred that Italian speakers have a common problem in learning reported questions in English. They not only keep the question word order after reporting but also there is a punctuation error, as in:

51. *Do you know where is my village? (ibid:83)

Word order has been one of the most common difficulties of reported questions faced by Polish. Spiewak and Golebiowska (cited in Swan and Smith, 2001) commented that mother tongue interference can affect the target language of Polish speaker, mainly the structure. The difference is that the word order is relatively free in Polish, similar to Italian and Portuguese, though this does not cause as many problems as one might expect. Thus, word order in Polish reported questions is the same as in direct questions (there is no inversion). *Yes/no* questions, on the other hand, require a question word whether or not they are direct. Learners who have mastered English direct questions may therefore produce sentences, as in:

52. * Tell me where are they.

53. * Tell me are they at home.

54. * She wants to know what you want. (ibid: 173)

They (ibid) pointed out there is a problem of tense sequence in reported questions in Polish where students make forms, as in:

55. * He asked how will you do it.

56. * I don't know if to do it. (ibid:173)

As one of the most causes of errors, interference of L1 is still the main factor that causes structure and tense difficulty for Farsi speakers. Lili and Wilson (Cited in Swan and Smith, 2001) admitted that questions are reported directly in the form in which it was spoken by Farsi speakers. The complex rule of reported speech governing tenses in English can therefore cause confusion, as in:

57. * He asked are you going home. (ibid:186)

As quotation marks are barely used in Farsi, so when they report speech in English, the Farsi learner might produce a forms, as in:

58. *He said I am ill. (ibid:186)

However South Asian Languages are very different, Shackle (cited in Swan and Smith, 2001) did not provide any examples that most of them differ from English in having postpositions rather than prepositions, and they place the verb at the end of the sentences. He (ibid) believes that it is not an area of serious confusions except in direct and reported questions. He adds that there is no true reported speech in Hindi, which usually preserves the original tense after reporting verbs, as in:

59. *He asked that if we are doing this (ibid: 239)

Chinese word order of questions is quite different to English. That was noticed by Swan and Smith (2014) who said that this is the reason why Chinese uses direct questions in reported questions. Also, Chinese subject verb agreement is different to English as appeared in example 60, where the third person singular takes *have* instead of *has*. This sometimes leads to errors such, as in:

60. *You and your family last summer visited here?

61. *When she will be back?

62. *What was called the film?

63. * have she gone home? (ibid: 319)

Hung (Cited in Swan and Smith 2001) supported Swan and Smith's claim that Chinese word order is identical in both statements and questions. She stated that inversion in English interrogative sentences may be ignored or may be applied wrongly. This interference of Chinese mother tongue could noticeably produce such errors, as in:

64. *she asked me what does she like.

65. *she wondered where is her father.(ibid: 319)

Swan and Smith (2014) reported that in Hindi there is no true reported speech. They usually preserve the original tense after reporting verbs, as in:

66. *He asked that if we are doing this (ibid: 319)

In summary, we have seen from the discussion above that the structure of reported questions are different from ordinary questions. The variety of this structure seems to cause difficulties to most of English language learners. This, in fact, is evident from the findings of the studies above.

It seems that errors of reported questions are caused by many factors such as interference from learners' language and or they occur as developmental stages within the target

language. Thus, mother tongue interference, strategies, and stages of learning such as fossilization also play an important role in influencing the process of learning reported questions. Moreover, more investigation are still needed on this particular area of English grammar, especially for Arabic speaking learners. This what we shall see in the coming chapter.

Chapter Three

Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.1. Introduction

We have seen in chapter two, in details, the formation and the description of English reported questions. In addition, we noticed that this grammatical process is needed when a speaker wants to report someone's questions. This grammatical process requires tense shifting, structures, punctuation and pronouns. Therefore, learners of English as L1, in general, face different difficulties in reporting questions (see section 2.5). However, there are not enough studies that investigate the difficulties faced by Arab learners in learning reported questions.

On this basis, data on learners' performance of reported questions is needed to study the possible areas of difficulties Arab learners encounter. Hence, Abunwara (1996) stated that the value of such a study could make teachers realise how errors are made, so that a special care shall be devoted in their teaching to overcome these difficulties. He also mentioned that to identify these areas of difficulties, researchers need data to base their investigation on. Such data should be either written or spoken in order to cover all the questions under investigation. This can be achieved by applying different techniques to collect the data, such as observations, interviews and tests. Thus, to investigate the difficulties encountered by the learners BULC, I designed my own technique to collect data. The technique I used was a test.

3.2. The Test

The test is mainly intended to measure the difficulties learners at Benghazi University Language Centre (BULC) may face in learning reported questions in English. The test

was designed to collect data about the difficulties students may encounter in their attempt to learn reported questions. The questions are sentence completions (from direct to reported questions). See the appendix.

The test was divided into three sections (A.B.C). Each section focuses on one of the essential grammatical areas of reported questions. In total, the test consists of 38 items to test the following:

- Section A tests structure
- Section B tests tense shifting.
- Section C tests pronouns and possessive adjective

Section A consists of 10 items that are meant to examine the word order of reported questions. Each item introduced as a quoted question proceeded by a reporting verb. The participants are asked fill in the gap by reporting the questions after the reporting verbs. The students are required to report the questions between quotation marks in the space proceeded by the reporting verbs such as *ask*, *tell* and *wonder*.

Section B has 14 items, from 11 to 24. It tests the participants' ability to shift tenses, which also includes questions that contain modals. The task here is to report the questions between the brackets in the space after the reporting verbs using the appropriate tense for each question.

Section C consists of 14 items. From 25 to 38, and is divided into two parts. Part one tests the use of pronouns and part two tests the use of possessive adjectives. The items are introduced as reported questions but the pronouns and possessive adjectives of the quoted questions are missing in the reported questions. So, in the incomplete reported questions, the participants are required to fill in the gaps with the right pronouns or possessive adjective.

In relation to test administration, the students were allowed 60 minutes to answer all questions. In addition the instructions were given orally to the students and they were informed that their names would remain anonymous and their results would not be part of their course.

1.3. The Subjects

The subjects used in this study were 45 students. They were divided into two groups: the control and the experimental. Both groups were at the same level of English language proficiency (pre-intermediate). The reason of taking the control group is to compare the performance of both groups in the test items and how effective the different teaching techniques used with the experimental group are. However, the control group consisted of 25 third-year students studied in the Department of English at Benghazi University. They had already completed studying reported speech and reported questions in their third year.

The experimental group consisted of 20 students. They were at pre-intermediate level in Benghazi University Language Centre. Even though, reported speech, in general, was introduced in the unit 12 in their text book, they were introduced to reported questions from unite 11 for an hour at the end of each teaching session. The course lasted for 8 weeks and the total time of the teaching session devoted to reported questions was 24 hours.

We have noticed from the previous studies that there are many factors effecting learning reported questions such as teaching techniques, mother tongue interference overgeneralization etc. (See section 2.5). One of the most important factors is using special teaching techniques in presenting reported questions. To investigate the effectiveness of these techniques and activities on the experimental group in learning reported questions, they participated at the end of each class session for an hour in the following teaching techniques and activities.

A short video, where three people used reported questions in a real context, was displayed to show the students how questions are reported. Meanwhile, there was an explanation of how questions are reported. In addition, I prepared a PowerPoint presentation to introduce examples of *yes/no* questions and *wh* questions. Then, these examples were explained to show how reported questions are formed.

Card games, as interactive activities, were also used in real situations where the students needed to report questions in writing and speaking. These card games were represented as extracts on which different questions were written. Instructions were given to the students orally for both activities, and one example of both *yes/no* and *wh* questions was demonstrated as a model to make sure the students understood the game.

First, the writing activity. A work sheet was designed for a writing activity. It consisted of a variety of questions. The students were divided into groups of three and were titled as A, B and C. Each student worked independently to report questions in a written form while the teacher was observing. After all students finished all the questions, answer keys were shown on the board. Later on, each student passed the reported question sheet to their friends who in turn changed the reporting questions back into normal questions. At the end of the class, the model answers of direct questions were then displayed on the board for the students to check their answers.

Second, the oral activity. A number of questions similar to those in the writing activity were introduced on extracts. The students were also divided into groups of three and the cards were placed upside down on a table. One of the three students drew a card and passed it to the second student who in turn reported the question orally to the third. Each student did the same while the teacher monitored them to manage complexities, and ensure they used the correct reported question form.

Error correction played an important role in the teaching. Thus, the techniques used here is to collect the most common errors from the students' response. Then, these errors were put on the board for further discussion and self-correction. This, in fact, would help the students gain language awareness and to avoid repeating them in the future.

At the end of the 8 weeks of teaching, a test was designed to collect that data from the experimental group. The control group, on the other hand, took the same test at the University of Benghazi.

1.4. Data Analysis

There is a variety of techniques available to analyse data. Abunwara (1996) explained that the selection of a specific data analysis technique depends on the nature of research question. He also stated that the particular types of data lead to a particular analysis techniques.

Punch (2009) stated that the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) is the most widely used in education and social sciences. SPSS can read data in almost any format such as excel. SPSS generates results that show significance through *t*-test.

Furthermore, Bryman (2016) stated that the *t*-test assesses whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate whenever a researcher wants to compare the means of two groups. This technique is used for this study to determine the significant difference between the two groups. Then, a descriptive data technique (percentages) was applied to gain the different percentages of the learners' scores.

After applying this formula, a number of bar graphs will be used to show bars that display the percentages of errors in each section. Then, these percentages will compare the differences of difficulties of each area tested between the two groups. Therefore, the

statistical results of the test will be discussed in the following chapter to see if there is a significant difference in the difficulties between the groups.

Chapter four

The Analysis and the Interpretation of the Data

4.1. Introduction

This chapter concerns itself with the findings of the test described in Chapter 3 and with the interpretation of these findings. The analysis of the data below reveals the most common errors committed by the intermediate learners of English at Benghazi University Language Centre (BULC) in learning reported questions in English.

In quantitative research, the data is in numerical form which can be converted into numbers. Analyzing data with the aid of statistics usually makes the research more manageable and more efficient, as there are acceptable procedures for doing it (Abunawara, 1996:359). Therefore, there will be percentages to compare the performance of both groups in the three different sections of the test, and a t-test will be used to see if the difference between the two groups is significant in learning reported questions and how the techniques used with the experimental group was effective.

4.2. Results and Discussions

4.2.1. Reported *Wh*-Questions

Figure 1 shows that 76% of the control group learners faced difficulties with the reported *wh*-question structures. Most of them used the same question structure in examples 67 and 68 of the test instead of changing structures to a statement, as in:

67. *He asked where is Peter

68. *Can you tell me what does Ana like?

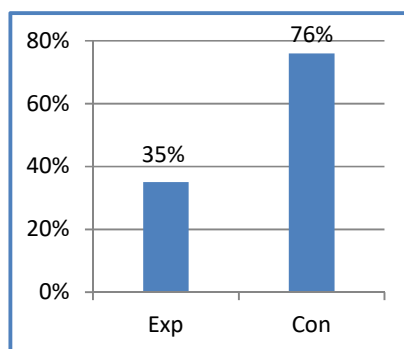


Figure: 1: Comparison of Reported *Wh*-Questions' Structures

Unlike the control group, only 35% of the learners of the experimental group encountered difficulties in this area. However, the experimental group had fewer difficulties than the control group. Consequently, the differences between the two groups' performance could be related to the special teaching techniques the researcher used in class with the experiment group during a two-month session.

Such a problem in the structures of reported *wh*-questions was not only made by Arab learners but also by Asian learners at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. This was observed by Hakuta (1976) in her pre-intermediate Japanese students learning reported *wh*-questions where she noticed that most learners encountered difficulties in understanding the structure of reporting *wh*-questions. (See section 2.5)

In addition, Qodariah (2010) noticed similar findings to the results of this study. However, the intermediate group she tested had fewer difficulties than the pre-intermediate and she explained that this is due to the fact that the intermediate students could have understood grammar more than lower levels. (See section 2.5)

These studies revealed that the difficulties encountered by English learners, whatever their native languages, were similar. That is, most learners maintained the question word order after reporting verbs. Moreover, these studies may also lead to the fact that the differences

of learners' native languages does not necessarily affect the learning of reported *wh*-questions. Thus, the most possible reasons for these difficulties can be the poor teaching techniques and the insufficient exposure to the target language.

4.2.2. Reported *Yes/No* Questions

By reference to Figure 2, 59% of the control group still had difficulties in *yes/no* questions as they did with *wh*-questions (see fig. 1). Most of them did not change the question order to a statement and did not use *if* or *whether* in reported *yes/no* questions, as in:

69. *I wanted to know she did study English.

70. *She asked me did I see him?

Compared with the control group, the learners of the experimental group had fewer difficulties with the structure of reported *yes/no* than the control group. Only 6% of the learners had problems with using *if* and *whether*.

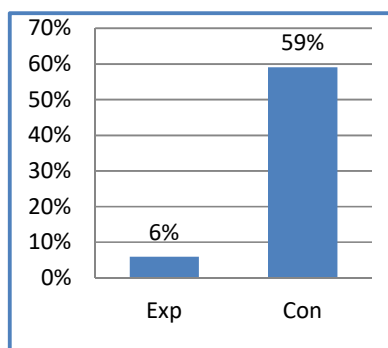


Figure 2: Comparison of Reported Yes/No Questions' Structures

We can see from the examples 69 and 70 that the learners used an auxiliary verb in the *if*-clause. They have problems in tense shifting as they did in section 4.2.3. Another interesting finding shows that almost all learners used *if* more than *whether*. This may be due to the fact that *if* is introduced more frequently than *whether* in teaching *yes/no* questions.

The difficulty of the control group in *yes/no* reported questions is supported by the finding of Harder and Davidson (1987). They found investigated the misuses of auxiliary verbs in reported questions of Scandinavian learners and they found that these learners had difficulties in reporting *yes/no* questions. This, as they claimed, could be transferred from the learners' native language. (See section 2.4)

The case is different in Arabic where the structure of reported *yes/no* question is quite similar to English. *Yes/no* questions in Arabic and English are reported similarly in term of adding *if* and *whether*. In Arabic, *yes/no* questions are reported after adding *itha* or *ma'itha* that are similar *if* and *whether*. Accordingly, it does not seem that the errors committed by the control and the experimental group learners have to do with the mother tongue interference, but probably to the teaching techniques.

4.2.3. Tense Shifting in Reported Questions.

Figure 3 shows that tense shifting in reported questions is another difficulty facing both groups. 65% of learners in the control group have problems in tense shifting in reported questions. On the contrary, only 28% of the experimental group learners have less difficulties, as in:

71. *He asked if we are doing this.

72. *He wodered what did he?

Moreover, they still have problem with the questions structure as it has been noticed in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

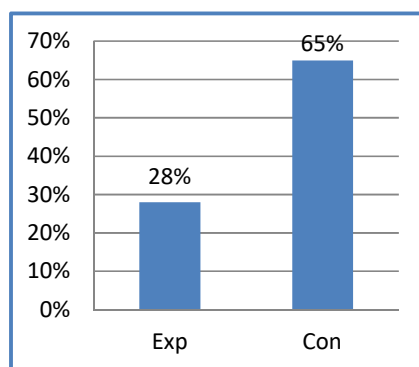


Figure: 3: Comparison of Tense Shifting In Reported Questions

As we can see from the examples 72 and 73 above, most of the learners of both groups had difficulties in reported questions. Such errors are probably caused by either ignorance or mother tongue interference. (See section 2.5)

The same problem has been noticed by Qodariah (2010). She found out that about 50% of Jakarta students encountered difficulties in tense shifting caused by the students' poor mastery of English grammar of reported questions. In addition, Swan and Smith (2010) stated that students usually kept the original tense after reporting verbs. However, they (ibid) concluded that tense shifting seemed more difficult than changing pronouns.

What is more interesting is that most of the learners used more if-clause more frequently than whether. This is possibly due to the learning practice in the classroom. Another interesting finding is that many learners of both groups had difficulties with changing some modal verbs in reported questions. They used the wrong modal in the incorrect response of some reported question, as in:

73. *She asked me if I could come to the party.

74. *He asked if I do it.

In example 74, the direct question was introduced with the modal verb *will*. However, many learners used *could* in this example where they should have used *would* in the reported

question. In example 75, some learners ignored using the past form of *must*. In other words, instead of using *had to*, they did not use any modals.

Cook (1978) suggested that such a problem of modal caused by the confusion of the meaning not the structures. He reported that many learners had similar problem with the past form and meaning of the modal verb *must*. (See section 2.4)

In general, the problem of tense shifting can be universal among most learners of English of different language backgrounds. Thus, it is clear that the sources of tense shifting errors in reported questions are properly due to insufficient understanding of the target language grammar.

4.2.4. Pronouns and Possessive Adjectives.

Figure 4 below shows that 32% of the learners in the experimental group had more difficulties with changing pronouns and possessive adjective than the control group at 12%. Most of them had problems with the possessive adjective *your*. In the test, the direct questions was introduced with *your*, but few learners reported them as:

75. *Peter wanted to know where is *his* house.

76. *The teacher wanted to know what happened to his bus.

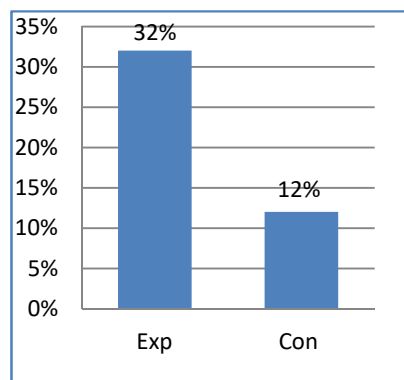


Figure: 4: Comparison of Pronouns And Possessive Adjectives In Reported Questions

We have noticed from the response of the learners of both groups that they had problems only with the possessive pronouns *his* and *your* more than the other pronouns. In example 76 and 77, the question were introduced using *your* however many learners replaced *your* with *his*. In addition, the problem of tense and structure shifting occurs again in the same example.

It seems true that the reason of wrong adjustment of possessive adjectives and pronouns in the reported questions is the confusion of the subject's reference mentioned in reported questions. In other words, it seems that when learners want to change the pronoun in direct question to reported question, they take the subject pronoun as their reference. They look to Peter as the one who asked about his house, where Peter is the one asked about someone's house.

Qodariah (2010) claimed that many students had problems using the correct pronoun; particularly those who do not use pronouns in the same way in their first language. She explained that confusion could arise from the fact that a pronoun can be reported in a variety of ways depending on the perspective and the vocabulary available to the person reporting.

4.3. T-Test Results

To see the effectiveness in using techniques a t-test was applied to see if there is a significant difference between the two groups. The *t*-value shows that the learners of the control group had less difficulties in most of the test areas.

The major result of the test equality of means and the *t*-value shows a significant difference between the two groups represented by the figure 000 sig. (2-tailed).

Group	Number of Pairs	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-Value	df
Experimental	40	28.68	6.47	12.08	5.561	39
Controlled		16.60	6.95			

Table 1. Comparison of Reported Questions’ Errors Between the Experimental and the Control group.

It can be seen by the reference to the *t*-test that in general terms the experimental group performed substantially better than the control group in the most of the areas tested. Thus, the experimental group achieved a mean of 28.68 with a standard deviation of 6.47 compared to the control group’s mean of 16.60 with a standard deviation of 6.95. The difference in mean scores is thus 12.08. It should also be noticed that in the *t*-test the obtained value is 5.561, which is considered significant beyond 001 level.

It is reasonable to conclude that the data collected and analysed for this research reached its aim in discovering most of the difficulties the learners of English as a second language encounter in learning reported questions.

4.4. Summary

This concludes our discussion of the analysis and the interpretation of the data we obtained from the test. The analysis shows that the learners in both groups face different difficulties in leaning reported questions. However, one may notice from the analysis of the data that learners in the experimental group performed better than control group. The difference between the two groups is significant (see table 5.1. page 43). This difference is due to the effect of using different teaching techniques used with the experimental group. For example. The researcher used role plays, card games, stories and realia; namely, the communicative approach was applied. This may be one factor for better performance. Another factor is

possibly the insufficient presentation of this important area of English grammar in students course books.

Finally, the findings of this study are strikingly similar to those from different studies referred to in section 2.4. and 2.5. It seemed that the difficulties of reported questions is universal among learners from different language background. Now, we turn to chapter 5 to draw some conclusions and suggest some recommendations about the findings of this study.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

When the test was applied to compare the results obtained by both groups, the difference between the groups was seen significant (See section 4.2.5). However, this study revealed that, in general, the experimental group performed much better than control except in pronouns and possessive adjectives.

Therefore, the findings of this study led to the following conclusions.

1. In learning reported *wh*-questions' structures, subject-verb inversion was the most difficult area of the reported question where many students kept the auxiliary verb before the subject and after *wh* words instead of deleting the auxiliary and making a statement structure instead of question structure. (See figure 1)

These findings agreed with Qodariah's results (2010) where she observed her multinational pre-intermediate learners of English who found the structure reported speech challenging because of the variety of grammatical changes. In additions, Hakuta (1976) had results similar to the result of the current study that there was a production of *wh* questions' wrong structure.

2. With regard to the structures of reported *yes/no* question, most of the learners of both groups had less difficulties in this area than they had in *wh*-questions. However, some of them still have difficulties in changing question word order to statement word order, but they did not face many problems in using *if* and *whether*. In addition, it was noticed that *if* was used more frequently than *whether*. (See figure 2).

The problem of *yes/no* questions was very similar to South Asian learners who were observed by Shackle (2001) whose conclusion showed that there was an area of confusions in reported *yes/no* question structures. (See section 2.5)

3. Tense shifting of reported questions was also one of the most difficult areas. The learners used the wrong tense in both *yes/no* and *wh*-questions. Instead, they used the original tense of questions after the reporting verbs, where they should have considered tense sequence. (See in figure 3). The case was different in modal verbs where the learners used the wrong past forms of some models such as *must* and *have to*. (See figure 5)
4. Tenses of reported questions seemed to be quite universal since most studies revealed significantly similar difficulties among learners from different nationalities. For instance, Shackle (2001) noticed that Indian and Chinese students had tense shifting difficulties when they report questions. (See figure 4)
5. Pronouns and possessive adjectives' results did not show much difficulty. However, the most common errors made by the learners were the reference confusion of pronouns with their subjects and possessive adjective. (See figure 4).

These findings harmonize with Qodariah's findings (2010) where she discovered that many students have problems using the correct pronoun such as Turkish students of English. The main reason of this confusion rises from the fact that sentences can be reported in a variety of ways depending on the perspective and the vocabulary available to the person who is reporting.

Moving to modal verbs in reported questions, the learners used the wrong past forms of some models such as *must* and *have to*.

These results were identical to the findings observed in Turkish students' performance. They had problems not only with the modals but also with reporting

verbs. These results were very identical to the findings observed in Turkish students who had problems with the modals. (See section 2.5)

Finally, the findings of the present study are strikingly similar to those in the different studies referred to in section 2.4 and 2.5. However, the experimental group performed better than control group in most of the items of the test. In addition, most the results were significantly similar to the other studies mentioned in chapter two. The difference between both groups can be related to the teaching techniques the teachers used in the class with the experimental group. In relation to the *t*-test, table 5.1 shows that the difference between the two groups is significant ($t = 5.561$ at $P=05$ level).

5.2. Recommendations

All numbers of recommendations that are derived from this study will be made here. It is hoped these findings would be of great help to those concerned with teaching and learning of English, such English departments, centres, teachers and syllabus designers.

Grammar of reported speech is rich because it consists of many grammatical points such as tenses, possessive adjectives, pronouns, structures and punctuations. Therefore, teachers of English as a foreign language should analyze the students' language need before teaching reported questions. In other words, we need to think of the students' good mastery of grammar and vocabulary before introducing reported questions. It is strongly suggested that English reported questions should be taught in an authentic context, so students may understand better. For this, it is better to base on real situations used as lessons designed by the teacher.

On the other hand, books or syllabus designers may better resort modern teaching techniques such as technology and games. For examples, using videos, songs and photos

can help students be involved in the lessons which may lead to better understanding. In addition, the late introductions of reported questions at pre-intermediate and intermediate levels, can lead learners encounter the problem of fossilizations. On other words, learners usually practice questions and answers at lower levels (from beginner to intermediate levels) and this may cause questions forms fossilized.

Teachers should also vary the teaching techniques and use a communicative approach where learners of English as foreign language learn using card games, realia and photos. In addition, grading the task to meet the students' levels of proficiency is also important. That means most English course books used to teach English are not latterly designed to suit all types of learners. Consequently, the teachers should check out the new grammar point for each lesson in the book and anticipate what might make students learn wrong and plan for these difficulties in advanced.

5.3.Recommendations for Further Research

1. Reported speech has more than what this research has conducted. For example, there can be a relation between the easier application of "*if* and *whether*" in reporting *yes/no* questions and the mother tongue. Moreover, there can be a relation between difficulties of reporting *wh*-questions and the mother tongue interference. A research may be done to investigate how much the mother tongue can affect the learning quality of reported questions.
2. Most students were observed to use rising intonations when they report questions but this research did not cover this point, which is recommended to conduct a research on.

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Appendix

- THE TEST

WRITE YOUR NAME IN ARABIC HERE PLEASE _____ : DATE _____

- (Section A) structure in reported questions
- Complete the sentences by changing the direct questions to reported questions. Use the normal sequence of word order.

1. My mum always asks “What is this?”

- My mum always asks what _____.

2. “Where does John live?” Maria wants to know

- Maria wants to know where _____.

3. “What does Ana like?” She asks.

- Can you tell me what
_____.

4. “Which book do they like best?” The librarian was wondering.

- The librarian is wondering which
_____.

5. “What can you do for him?” The nurse asks the doctor.

- She needs to know what
_____.

6. My friend wants to know “Is she your sister?”

- My friend wants to
know _____.

7. The teacher always asks “Do they understand the lesson?”

- The teacher always asks
_____.

8. "Do you live in a house or flat?"

- Mr Mick asked
- I wanted to know _____.

9. "Can you speak now?" The dentist asked.

- She wants to know _____.

10. I need to know "Will you come to the party?"

- I need to know _____.

- (Section B) Tense sequence in reported questions
- Complete the sentences by changing the direct questions to reported questions. Use the normal sequence of tenses.

11. “What do you do in the evening?” My boss asked.

- He asked me what _____.

12. The woman speaks to the boy “What does she know about me?”

- The woman wonders _____.

13. He asked “what did he do then?”

- He wondered what _____.

14. The man wonders “Do you remember me?”

- The man wonders _____.

15. Her mother wonders “Does she drive well?”

- She wants to know _____.

16. The coach asked “Did you see John?”

- He asked me _____.

17. The man asked “What are you talking about?”

- He asked what _____.

18. The man asked the women” Were you watching TV?”

- The man asked the women _____.

19. Jenny wondered, “Was she watching TV?”

- He wondered _____.

20. My classmate asked me “Have you ever been to London?”

- He asked me _____.

21. My girlfriend asked, “Will you come to the party?”

- She asked me _____.

22. She wondered, “Can you come please?”

- She asked me _____.

23. "Do I have to do my homework before I play?" the boy asked his mum

- The boy asked his mum _____

24. He asked a again "Must I do it now?"

- He asked _____

- (Section C). Subject Pronoun and possessive adjectives shifting.
- C1. Fill in the gap, and report the following questions using the right pronoun or the possessive adjectives.

- Subject pronouns (you – he – she – it – they – we)
- Object pronouns (you – him – her – it - them – us)

1. The man asks” What can I do?”

- The man is wondering what _____.

2. “Where can I find the receptionist?” The woman asked.

- The women asked where _____ could find the receptionist

3. “Where do *we* have to take the test?” “ The students asked their teacher

- The students asked their teacher where _____ had to take the test.

4. “Are you sick” Ali asked me.

- He wondered _____ was sick.

5. The teacher always asks the students “ do you understand me”

- The teacher always asks the students _____.

6. Anne asked “Must I do the shopping?”

- Anne asked _____ do the shopping.

- (Section C2). Fill the gaps with the correct possessive adjectives.

- Possessive adjectives (your – his – her – its – their – our)

7. Peter asked ‘where is your house?’

- Peter wanted to know where _____ house was.

8. He asked ‘where is Anna’s house?’

- He asked Ann where _____ house was

9. ‘Where is Mike’s house?’ He asked Mike.

- He asked Mike where _____ house was.

10. The students wondered ‘what happened to our bus?’

- The students asked what happened to _____ bus

11. The teacher also asked ‘what happened to your bus?’

- The teacher wanted to know what happened to _____ bus.

12. Did you find your cat? My friend asked me.

- He asked me if I found _____ cat.

13. ‘Did you clean the cat’s house?’ She wondered

- She wondered if I cleaned _____ house.

14. Where is your house? She asked

- He asked where _____ house was.

ملخص الدراسة

غالباً ما تواجه متعلمين اللغة، وبالأخص اللغة الإنجليزية، صعوبات في تعلم لغة ثانية مما أدى إلى القيام بدراسات من هدفها كشف تلك الصعوبات وتحديد أسبابها للتغلب عليها.

التعامل مع الأسئلة في الكلام المنقول (Questions in Reported Speech) وقواعدها اللغوية في اللغة الإنجليزية كانت ولا زالت إحدى تلك الصعوبات التي تواجه المتعلمين.

تُعرف الأسئلة المنقولة في اللغة الإنجليزية على أنها شكل من أشكال الكلام المنقول، إلا أن التركيب اللغوية للأسئلة المنقولة (Reported Questions) تختلف عن تركيبية نقل الجملة المفيدة من حيث متطلبات التصريف اللغوي وتعديل بعض المفردات كالضمير والزمن للفعل وغيره.

عليه، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى كشف مستوى ومدى الصعوبات التي قد تواجه متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بمركز اللغات جامعة بنغازي في تعلم الأسئلة المنقولة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

ولدراسة الصعوبات، جُهِز اختبار ورقي للطلاب الدارسين وكان مجمل عددهم 45 طالب في المستوى ما قبل المتوسط، وقسم الطلاب علي مجموعتان، 25 طالب من مركز اللغات جامعة بنغازي وهي التي درسها الباحث والمجموعة الثانية تكونت من 20 طالب من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بنغازي بمستهل السنة الرابعة.

عند نهاية الدورة التدريسية أمُتحت كلتا المجموعتين وبينت النتائج دعماً واضحاً لأهداف الدراسة، هو أن معظم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية العرب يواجهون مشاكل في تعلم الأسئلة المنقولة، وأوضحت الدراسة أيضاً أن هناك فرق في مستوى الصعوبات بين المجموعتين.

وبالرغم من ذلك، لُوَظ أن هناك ترتيب ملحوظ في الصعوبات، فمثلاً، التعامل مع أسئلة التأكيد (نعم أو بلا) وتغيير الضمائر تأتي الأخيرة في مستوى الصعوبات ويأتي التعامل مع الأزمنة والتركيبية النحوية في المرتبة الأولى من حيث الصعوبة، أما الضمائر فلم تمثل صعوبات جديرة بالذكر.

اتفقت النتائج التي أظهرتها هذه الدراسة مع نتائج الدراسات الأخرى والتي أكدت أن معظم متعلمين اللغة الإنجليزية يواجهون صعوبات في تعلم نقل الأسئلة في اللغة الإنجليزية، وقد بدا جليا أن هذه الصعوبات عامة بغض النظر عن اختلاف اللغة الام.

وفي النهاية، نأمل ان تكون النتائج مفيدة لكل من الباحث، المعلمين ومصممين مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية.



تحري الصعوبات التي تواجه متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية في تعلم استخدام الأسئلة
المنقولة بمركز اللغات بجامعة بنغازي

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قدمت هذه الرسالة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في اللغة
الانجليزية.

جامعة بنغازي

قسم اللغة الانجليزية

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