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## **Structural properties of relative clauses in Russian interlanguage of Syrian students**

### **Abstract**

In the process of L2 acquisition, learners develop a transitional linguistic system called interlanguage. Both native language and previously learned languages influence the development of such interlanguage. Thus, the interlanguage demonstrates deviations from the target language standards caused by the native language interference. This article considers structural properties of relative clauses (RCs) used by Syrian students when writing in Russian. Undergraduate and graduate students from Syria with Russian language proficiency at B1/B1+ level participated in an experiment performing a writing task. The obtained stories comprised the material for the study. The paper aimed at, first, identifying the patterns of using or not using appropriate conjunctions in Russian RCs, and secondly, testing the hypothesis of language transfer from Arabic as a possible source of errors. Russian and Arabic RCs' comparative analysis was performed focusing on the contexts where the conjunction was omitted. The results show a correlation between the omission of the conjunction *kotoryy* 'that/which/who(m)' and the "indefiniteness" of RC's head in Russian-as-L2 interlanguage of Arabic native speakers from Syria. This proves the hypothesis of the language transfer from Arabic to Russian.

**Keywords:** foreign language acquisition, language transfer, interlanguage, Russian as a foreign language, Arabic, relative clause, contrastive analysis

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