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Number and agreement errors made by the native Arabic learners of Kiswahili: the case of Libyan students learning Kiswahili at the Institute of Kiswahili and foreign languages (IKFL) — Zanzibar

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This study investigates number and agreement errors made by the native Arabic learners of Kiswahili focusing on the Libyan students who learn Kiswahili at the Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages (IKFL) Zanzibar. The specific objectives of the study were to identify and describe the number and agreement errors made by native Arabic learners of Kiswahili, to explain reasons which make them make such errors and to suggest ways that can help resolve the occurrence of these errors. By using the number and agreement structure of the Standard Swahili as the basis for identification and description of errors, the study found out that the native Arabic learners of Kiswahili make four types of errors, namely, errors relating to plural formation, subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement and noun-pronominal agreement. It was found out that majority of the errors made by the Libyan learners of Kiswahili were the result of mother tongue interference. The other notable reason was the learners' inability to follow the Standard Swahili rules that govern number and agreement formation. This study recommends that the native Arabic learners of Kiswahili and teachers who teach the language should know that Kiswahili and Arabic are different languages with different structures despite some lexical relationship between them. Therefore, when they are learning/teaching Kiswahili structures to Arabic native learners, they should expose the structural differences between the two languages to in still awareness of the differences. Also the study recommends that the Libyan learners of Kiswahili find time to stay with the native speakers of Kiswahili in order to improve their learning of Kiswahili.