L2 ACQUISITION AND SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ERROR GRAVITY IN UNIVERSITY LEARNERS' ENGLISH OF THE ARAB WORLD

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

APPLIED LINGUISTICS

by

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D E C L A R A T I O N

I hereby declare that the research embodied in the present thesis entitled "***L2 ACQUISITION AND SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ERROR GRAVITY IN UNIVERSITY LEARNERS' ENGLISH OF THE ARAB WORLD***" is my original work carried out under the supervision of Professor ***Panchanan Mohanty, C***entre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad for the full period prescribed under Ph.D. ordinances of the University.

I hereby also declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of this thesis was earlier submitted for the award of any research degree to any university or any institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to

My Late Father,

Qassem Ghanem Rajeh AL-Shormani

who has passed away while I am far away completing this work and whom I have been deprived of seeing at his last moment in this simple life

&

My Mother,

Muntaha Saif

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Arabic Letters, their Transliteration and their Phonetic Values in IPA

Letter	Name	Transliteration	Phonetic Value (IPA)
ء	hamza	--	[ʔ]
ا	alif	aa	various, including [æ:]
ب	ba:	b	[b]
ت	ta:	t	[t]
ث	t̲ha:	tħ	[θ]
ج	ɡi:m, Other Accents:(ji:m, gi:m)	j	[dʒ] / [ɡ]
ح	ḥa:	hž	[ħ]
خ	ḫa:	kħ	[x]
د	da:l	d	[d]
ذ	ða:l	dħ	[ð]

ر	ra:	r	[r]
ز	zāī	z	[z]
س	si:n	s	[s]
ش	Ši:n	sħ	[ʃ]
ص	ṣa:d	sž	[sˤ]
ض	đa:d	dž	[dˤ]
ط	ṭa:	tž	[tˤ]
ظ	ẓa:	dħž	[ðˤ] / [zˤ]
ع	ayn	rħ	[ʕ] / [ʔˤ]
غ	ġayn	għ	[ɣ] / [ʁ]
ف	fa:	f	[f]
ق	qa:f, Other Accents:(qa:f, ga:f)	q	[q]

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ك	ka:f	k	[k]
ل	la:m	l	[l], [lˤ] (as in *Allah,ðala:m (=darkness)*)
م	mi:m	m	[m]
ن	nu:n	n	[n]
ه	ha:	h	[h]
و	wa:w	w, uu	[w] , [uː]
ي	ya:	y , ii	[j] , [iː]

ABBREVIATIONS

Acc: Accusative

Adj: Adjective

Adv: Adverb

Advp: Adverb Phrase

Agr: Agreement

AP: Adjective Phrase

Aux. Auxiliary

CA: Contrastive Analysis

CAH: Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

CDS: Child Directed Speech

cf.: Compare

CP: Complementizer Phrase

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

CSs: Communication Strategies

DE: Discourse Analysis

Det: Determiner

DP: Determiner Phrase

EA: Error Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EG: Error Gravity

ELT: English Language Teaching

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

f. Female

Gen: Genitive

i.e.: that is

IL: Interlanguage

Inv: Inversion

IP: Inflectional Phrase

L1: First Language

L1A: First Language Acquisition

L2: Second Language

L2A: Second Language Acquisition

LA: Language Acquisition

LAD: Language Acquisition Device

LASS: Language Acquisition Supporting System

LSs: Learning Strategies

Lvl: Level

MH: Motherese Hypothesis

ms: Masculine

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

MT: Mother Tongue

N: Noun

Neg: Negative

NNS: Non-Native Speaker

No: Number

Nom: Nominative

NP: Noun Phrase

O: Object

Om: Omission

Or: Order

p.p. Past Participle

P: Percentage

PE: Performance Analysis

Per: Person

Phr. Phrase

Pl. Plural

Pp: Present Perfect

Prep: Preposition

Pron: Pronoun

Prp: Present

Prs: Present Simple

Pts: Past Simple

Qs: Question

R: Rank

RL: Relative Clause

S: Subject

sing. Singular

SIIP: Study in Indian Program

SL: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLL: Second Language Learning

SOV: Subject Object Verb

Sp: Spelling

Spec: Specifier

Sub: Substitution

SVO: Subject Verb Object

T: tense

TL: Target Language

TNS: Total Number of Students

UG: Universal Grammar

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

V: Verb

viz.: Namely

VSO: Verb Subject Object

WO: Word Order

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Arab World

The Arab world refers to the Arabic-speaking countries. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the Atlantic Ocean in the West, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Uganda, Kenya and the Indian Ocean in the South and Iran in the East. Its total area is (12.9 million km²) with a population of about 300 million Arabs. There were traditional professions like agriculture, gazing and cottage industries. However, in the middle of the twentieth century, a new trend of industry which depends on oil started to emerge. In fact, industrialisation has gathered momentum since the World War II and is replacing the traditional cottage industries (Encyclopedia International I: 501-510). By far, the largest industry, of course, is oil. Nearly half the world's oil reserves are in seven or eight Arab countries; they bring those governments nearly three billion dollars a year, a good part of which is used for development. Further, a labour movement has been growing in importance, and in the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Iraq and Algeria, which have nationalised most of the industries, there is a growing trend for workers to participate in management and share in the benefits (Akrawi and El-Koussy 1971).

It is Islam in which most of Arabs believe. However, there are minorities of Arabs believing in Christianity and Judaism. Arabic which belongs to the Semitic language family is spoken by over 300 million Arabs and is considered to be the official language of all Arab countries. Even those Arab countries which were colonised by European countries like Britain, France, Italy, just immediately after their independence, have Arabic as the official language.

1.2. Education in the Arab World: An Overview

In the 50s and early 60s, education in the Arab countries was following a two-track system with elementary education for the masses, and separate primary and secondary education for the elite. This lasted for a long time in some Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Abdul-Hadi 1968). In Lebanon, strangely enough, where the literacy rate is the highest among the Arab World, secondary education is still limited to a small group of the people who can economically afford to have it because the majority of the secondary schools are private institutions that collect hefty fees from students.

Arabic is the medium of instruction in the whole Arab World. In addition, English is introduced in the seventh grade in almost all Arab states. Some technical and scientific courses are offered in English at the secondary level. Instruction by native speakers of English is rare. No other foreign languages are taught in the public educational institutions. Some private schools, however, offer instruction in certain European languages such as French and Asian languages such as Russian. The academic year starts in September and ends in early June. The students, teachers and staff numbers have steadily increased in the private educational sector, in addition to siginificant growth in the public schools.

1.3. Education and Planning in the Arab World

Most of the Arab states are attempting to plan their economies and, obviously, education is a part of it. However, there are major difficulties. Quick political changes endanger the stability of policies. Here, education has been a factor of some account in view of the part played by the newly educated classes, the students and young leaders and the organisers of mass movements. In a more general way, the impact of Western cultures and the expansion of education tend to exacerbate the existing "generation tension," which is often instrumental in denouncing the old institutions and customs. Such phenomena point to a real need for an education which enables its recipients to appreciate what is good in the tradition, at the same time as they stress for improvements.

1.4. Education in the Arab World: Development and Reform

Although the Arab region is considered oil-rich and wealthy, all indications point to its knowledge deficit. This fact is clearly conveyed in the Arab *Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society* that was issued in 2003 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It points out that the Arab region trails behind all other regions in knowledge indicators, except sub-Saharan Africa. These indicators include the number of books, newspapers, radio stations, television channels, telephone connectors, personal computers and Internet access. In addition, a few small Arab countries have recently reversed this trend. For example, in the United Arab Emirates, nearly 30% of its nationals use personal computers, a number ten times more than those in Egypt. The Emirate of Dubai, for instance, has transferred its government transactions to electronic media. Furthermore, Dubai has established an electronic marketplace where all government agencies procure their needs in a totally transparent manner. This has, in fact, allowed the eradication of inflated prices and agent fees in addition to checking

corruption. These examples prove that it is possible to benefit from advanced technology while preserving the local culture.

Reform of education can play a central role in economic development. Education is very critical to a nation's growth because it develops the minds of the young to be good citizens. It must include teaching the young about how to think for themselves and to have confidence in their knowledge. This requires highly qualified and good teachers who are well versed in communicating with their students. Arab teachers must be kept aware of the new teaching methods, scientific breakthroughs and milestones in their fields. Thus, teacher preparation and continued training become integral parts of the necessary reforms. It is never too late to remedy a problem, particularly when it relates to the future of a nation. A factory that goes out of step with the times is retooled. By the same token, the objectives and mission of education in the Arab world need to be updated. The problem needs to be remedied starting at the very beginning.

University education particularly requires reform as well. At higher educational institutions, students should be taught how to acquire dynamic and renewable knowledge. Their minds must be challenged to achieve new heights and their energies should be directed to useful pathways. To do so, educators must be allowed a measure of autonomy. At the same time, they require systems of regular evaluation and monitoring and continued training. Other essential changes include upgrading the libraries and improving the information technology hardware and software to benefit from the vast resources that are now available on electronic media are also to be made use of by all Arab countries.   .

A significant component of education reform, particularly at the university level, must include an emphasis on scientific research and higher budgets to support it. Most Arab governments feel the burden of more pressing issues such as the provision of food and housing. Expenditure on scientific research is downgraded to the bottom of the priority list. Furthermore, funding of research and development by the private sector is nearly neglected. The opposite condition prevails in developed countries where the private sector allocates vast sums to this endeavor. For instance, in the U.S., the private sector spends twice as much as the government does for research and development. Expenditure in this sector is not a luxury; it assures the sustained innovation that enhances the growth of any economy and its continued leadership on the world stage.

1.5. English Language Status in the Arab World

It goes without saying that the importance the English language has in the world of today makes it the world language. In fact, English is now the most sought after language in the world. It is the only means for international communication. Arabs need English to communicate with the native speakers of English. They need to go abroad, have access to many books and sources in the fields of science, technology, politics, education, history, geography, commerce, industry, among the many other fields which are written in English. It is the language of medicine, mass media and internet. In fact, there is a growing need for learning English whether by Arabs or non-Arabs as it becomes the only means to know the "Other."

English in the Arab world enjoys an important status. It is being widely used in the field of business, industry, education and various other professional fields. Arab students go abroad for scholarships and while living there they need English for communication with these societies, and they need English in their studies as well. For disciplines other than English studies, the severe difficulty that Arab students studying abroad encounter is the fact that they are unable to either communicate or comprehend their subjects which are actually taught in English. Nowadays, there is a strong motivation for learning English and some abiding needs to speak it. English today is used extensively in everyday life to communicate with foreigners we meet everyday and to meet everyday needs.

English in almost all Arab countries had no official status. Learning English is confined to the classroom. In fact, English was taught and used only in schools, institutes and universities. However, this status has recently been enhanced by the rapid growth of science and technology. Unfortunately, English in many Arab countries is taught like other subjects in the school curriculum because the motivation for learning the TL in this context is not high. This is especially the case in the early stages because young children are still unaware of their individual needs and interests. English also remains irrelevant to the majority of population especially in rural areas. The Universities of Science and Technology, Medicine and Engineering are teaching in Arabic though the books and courses prescribed are written in English. There are only a few universities in the Arab world which teach their courses in English and these are not Arab universities. These are the American University in Cairo, Egypt, the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, and the American University in the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates has also a

branch of the British University. Arab public and most private universities teach their students the subjects in Arabic whether in scientific disciplines or in humanities.

However, English teaching has now started to take a dominant position in Arab schools, institutes and universities. It has occupied a prominent place in the university curriculum and some private universities took the right step by establishing a Language Unit teaching, which is an English programme consisting of 250 hours for all the students of the university. This promising step has been also taken by some private schools where they teach English from the first grade (Hussain 2001). In fact, English is taught in all Arab government and private schools as a compulsory subject and as the first foreign language. In the public schools, the teaching of English starts from grade seven and only for four to five 45-minute periods a week. Its teaching continues up to the end of the secondary stage. Moreover, after joining the university or technical colleges, Arab students study English as a college requirement either for general purposes or for academic purposes.

Almost all Arab students join university without any exposure to English. In fact, communicating in English for most Arab students is not that easy. An English teacher in the university finds him/herself in a dilemma to deal with students who do not have even the basic English. If one discusses the reasons, one is likely to find that there are many difficulties that influence teaching and learning of English in Arab schools. There are many problems related to the educational system. Instead of giving English a high place in the Arab curriculum and thinking about motivating the learners, the number of periods has been even reduced to 3 periods in some classes as in the case of Yemeni literary secondary sections (Al-Fotih 1999). This makes the duration of the course very short to enable the teacher to handle all activities and tasks and makes it difficult to achieve the expected objectives. In other words, the system of teaching and learning English used by the Arab teachers is still unsatisfactory because of the lack of language policy and planning. Some problems in the teaching/learning of English are related to the materials introduced due to the inadequacy of finance. Some other problems are related to the learners who are not interested in English classes. Other problems are related to the methods and approaches used in teaching English in Arab institutions.

1.6. English Teaching in Yemen: An overview

English was first introduced in schools of North Yemen, through a textbook, by Imam Yahya in 1926 whereas in South Yemen, namely Aden, it was introduced by the Britishers in the early thirties of the 19th century. In 1962, in North Yemen, Egyptian school textbooks such as *English For Use* were used in preparatory (intermediate) and secondary schools. The teaching practices were modeled, by and large, on Grammar-Translation Method. In the school year 1968/69, the *English For Use* course was replaced by *Living English for the Arab World*, a course used to be taught in the neighboring Arab Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait at that time. In the school year 1982/83, two different English courses were trialed at grades 7 and 8 in some preparatory schools in Sana'a and Taiz. An earlier version of the Crescent designed for the Yemeni schools by an Arab Gulf country was piloted at grade 8 classes in the two abovementioned cities. The other one was *English For Yemen*, prepared by the British Council team on the basis of some preliminary investigation about the local situation and the educational and social needs (A report by Mountford). Eventually, *English For Yemen* was chosen to be the official textbook in the schools of the northern governorates especially in 1992 when there was a felt need for having one common textbook for all the schools in the country after the Unification of Yemen.

In the school year 1992-93 an agreement was reached with Mr. Rod Web, the author of Crescent, to incorporate certain amendments to the course. By printing the new textbooks in cooperation with Oxford University Press, the Yemeni Ministry of Education has changed the old textbooks and replaced them by the revised Crescent, which is now captioned *The English Course For Yemen.* In addition to schools, English is also taught in the Faculties of Education, Arts and Languages, for specialisation as well as in those of Medicine and Engineering, Sciences and Humanities as a University requirement. There is a perceived need for more Yemeni citizens with a good level of proficiency in English. Creating a good number of competent users of English, as teachers to teach in schools and as users of English in a whole range of professions, businesses, workplaces and enterprises is undeniably a high national priority and an urgent need at which the Yemeni government is aiming.

For that purpose, the government encourages the private sector to be involved in the enterprise of teaching English. As a result, numerous language institutes and English medium schools have mushroomed through the length and breadth of the country, offering courses from the kindergarten to the

tertiary levels. Yemeni students are also eager to study English for their own occupational purposes such as joining the Faculty of Medicine or Engineering which demand a high level of proficiency in English. They also want English to get better jobs in the future, especially in the multinational companies or joint ventures or to study abroad. Therefore, *The English Course For Yemen* requires teachers to teach English communicatively in classrooms as it is mentioned in the Teacher's Guide (the teacher's manual book). In fact, communicative language teaching aims at promoting the learners' communicative competence, helping them fulfill their communicational needs. Thus, when an L2 learner is provided with the expected exposure by means of communication, his/her learning process will undoubtedly be successful.

1.6.1. Methods

Unfortunately, in Yemen and most Arab countries, the techniques and methods used for teaching English are the same as those used for teaching the mother tongue, i.e. Arabic. In fact, the English language teaching curriculum in the Arab institutions follows two methods, viz. Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual Methods. The Communicative Method is scarcely used. In addition, the English teachers who lack communicative competence, linguistic competence and professional skills play a role in escalating the problems in this regard. These teachers usually use the mother tongue in the classrooms much more frequently than the target language. Furthermore, teachers teach students the grammatical rules trying to help them put words together to form sentences. Accordingly, students find themselves obliged to translate some passages from English into their native language. In almost all Arab countries, pronunciation is hardly paid attention to. As a result, students' English pronunciation sounds foreign.

1.6.2. Curricula

As has been stated so far, there have been three courses which used to be taught in Yemeni schools the last of which is Crescent, *The English Course For Yemen*. Whether this or the previous two courses are made use of, the teaching of English starts in grade seven. The curriculum of English has been designed, developed and implemented by the Ministry of Education in Yemen. In spite of this limited teaching of English, (Johnson 1989 cited in Al-Fotih 1999:4) states "… that 65 resourceful, intelligent and determined students achieve their aims in spite of ill-conceived policies, poorly formulated syllabi, inadequate resources and incompetent teaching. However, a well-planned curriculum with appropriate

aims effectively realised and implemented achieves little if students are apathetic and unmotivated." It was believed that the learner is an empty vessel that can be filled by a teacher by means of a predetermined curriculum. This notion has been rejected and now the learner is believed to be an active participant in the learning process, i.e. there is a very important role played by the language learner. Not only do learners participate in the learning process but also they do so according to their predetermined 'agenda,' 'aims' of the 'official curriculum' and their awareness of achieving these aims. The modern view of a good curriculum is that a good curriculum should take into considerations those 'hidden agenda.' Only then, the planning of curriculum, its implementation and evaluation and research will get their fruits by considering the learners' perception of the learning process besides those of the theorists, what happens rather than what ought to happen, what is learnt rather than what is taught.

Thus, there have been three curricula in North Yemen, viz. Egyptian, Kuwaiti and the Ministry of Education curriculum. The Egyptian curriculum was used for five years, from 1962 to 1967, the Kuwaiti was used for 13 years, from 1968 to 1979 and the English language curriculum, viz. *English For Yemen* which was prepared by the Ministry of Education in North Yemen and the British Council, Sana'a branch started to replace the Kuwaiti gradually as follows:

Grade seven was introduced in 1980
Grade eight was introduced in 1980
Grade nine was introduced in 1981
1st Secondary was introduced in 1982
2nd Secondary was introduced in 1983
3rd Secondary was introduced in 1984. (The Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education, Sana'a, Yemen)

This curriculum of English language teaching in Yemen, especially in the North, remains until 1990. This date is so important in the history of Yemen since on May 22, 1990, a very important historical event has taken place. The two Yemeni States became one by reunification. In fact, this event has changed the geographical map and its consequences have been apparent on man and land. These consequences are beyond the scope of this study. What concerns us here, however, is what is related to education system and particularly English language teaching. The number of schools, whether public or private, institutes, educational institutions, intermediate schools and institutes, academic colleges, universities, with different specialisations in both sciences and humanities, has increased numerously all over the country. For

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instance, before unification, there were only two universities namely Aden and Sana'a, but there are now about 46 universities 15 of which are public.

The English language curriculum remains as it was before the unification. The Crescent, namely, *The English Course For Yemen*, mentioned earlier was generalised for all schools in the Republic of Yemen. It consists of Course Book, Work Book and Teacher's Book for each level. The Course Book is a text book, the Work Book is an exercise book and the Teacher's book is a manual guiding the teacher to what, when and how to teach which items throughout the year. The units in each course vary from level to another, for instance, the seventh grade's book has 16 units whereas the Secondary Scientific sections' book has 6 units (see **Appendix V-F**). Every course is accompanied with an audio cassette for each level. These cassettes include only dialogues which are prepared by native speakers and meant for listening comprehension. Unfortunately, those cassettes are not made use of due to several reasons among which are the teacher's inability to perform, remoteness of schools from the city, lack of distribution and the unavailability of electric equipments. However, some schools in some cities use them as in the case of Sana'a and Aden. Table (1) below, shows the entire curriculum for all levels:

Table (1): The English Language Curriculum of Yemeni Schools

Level	Student's Materials	Teacher's Materials
Seventh	Student's Book 1	Teacher's Book 1
	Work Book 1	Cassette 1
Eighth	Student's Book 2	Teacher's Book 2
	Work Book 2	Cassette 2
Ninth	Student's Book 3	Teacher's Book3
	Work Book 3	Cassette 3
1st Secondary	Student's Book 4	Teacher's Book 4
	Work Book 4	Cassette 4
2nd Secondary (Sci.)	Student's Book 5(Sci.)	Teacher's Book5 (Sci.)
	Work Book 5 (Sci.)	Cassette 5(Sci.)
(Lit.)	Student's Book 5 (Lit.)	Teacher's Book5(Lit.)
	Work Book 5 (Lit.)	Cassette 5(Lit.)
3rd Secondary (Sci.)	Student's Book 6 (Sci.)	Teacher's Book 6(Sci.)
	Work Book 6 (Sci.)	Cassette 6(Sci.)
(Lit.)	Student's Book 6 (Lit.)	Teacher's Book6(Lit.)
	Work Book 6(Lit.)	Cassette 6(Lit.)

Source: (The Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education)

Table (1) above shows how the English language curriculum of Yemeni Schools is designed and distributed. However, when considering its implementation, it is a pity. Teachers of English are imported by the Ministry of Education from other Arab countries. What those teachers do is just bring the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods followed in their own countries and use them in teaching English in Yemen. What is worse is that even when Yemeni teachers replace those foreigners, they are still using the same methods. In fact, what the curriculum in Yemen needs is teachers who are able to teach communicatively. Students' books are also not distributed in the beginning of every year, let alone Teacher's Books distribution which are not distributed sufficiently. To each school, only one Teacher's manual is given for each grade, if not at all. Describing such a phenomenon, Al-Fotih (1999: 9) states that "distribution of the Teacher's Book of English among English teachers was stopped in the next half of 1980 because of the budgetary reasons." He goes even further stating "[n]either inspectors nor the English teachers made any attempt to make copies of them." Cassettes are not made use of by the teachers even if they are distributed. All this results in students unable to use English as it is aimed at.

As stated so far, there are many reasons that make the outcome of these curricula weak in English though the Yemeni Government represented by the Ministry of Education states that the main goals of English language teaching in Yemen are: 1) to make Yemeni students able to communicate effectively and fluently with native speakers, 2) to enable students to use English language in Science and Technology fields and 3) to make students cope with their higher education (the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education). Thus, what has been discussed so far regarding the reasons behind inefficient outcome can be related to curricula, methods and teachers alike. However, there are some external reasons or factors which affect English teaching/learning process in Yemen, in particular and in Arab countries in general, the salient of which can be stated as follows:

1) **Students' late awareness of the value of the English language**:

In fact, students in Yemen do not take English learning seriously. They realise its value only after reaching the university level where they get a shock that even non-English specialisations require English knowledge especially when they want to read references in the subjects in question and when they go to study abroad. They realise that they are neither able to communicate nor understand the subjects they are studying. Only then, they come to know how important English is!

2) **Lack of assistance from parents and family**:

When English is introduced to students in the seventh grade, they are much in need for help from their parents or families. However, the same story repeats itself. For instance, when a student asks his/her parents about a meaning of a word or needs an explanation of a rule, he/she does not get that kind of help at the right time because the parents are either illiterate, as it is the case in the countryside, or they are busy. This actually makes students conceive a very negative attitude towards English. Had they been assisted when they need, they would have been able to overcome such difficulties but suppose a student asks his/her father/mother anything in English and the father/mother does not know, he/she then will get frustrated and this is exactly what happens in Yemen, unfortunately.

3) **Negative attitudes towards learning English**:

In almost all Arab countries, it has been held that learning English is bad because an Arab must speak only Arabic and speaking English is imitating the West. This is in spite of the fact that every Arab believes that the leaders of the Arab/Muslim civilisation opened their borders, their hearts and their minds to every contributor. This allowed them to preserve the findings of those who came before them. They established schools at all levels. They also supported highly advanced research centers to significantly add to the store of knowledge in every scientific and literary field. So there is nothing in the Arab personality that hinders growth and achievement. It is never shame to imitate the West to learn the most prominent language in the world which is a fact no one can deny. Further, it is never too late to remedy the weaknesses in our methods and curricula.

4) **Facing more than one teacher in a year**:

This affects the learning of English. As soon as a student gets familiar with a particular teacher, the administration changes him/her. In fact, this happens when powerful people intervene in educational policy. They use their power to move teachers from a school to another and thus the victim is the students. In addition, some teachers also prefer teaching in cities to that in villages. This, in fact, makes students in trouble because if a particular teacher is changed, they need time to adjust and get on well with the new one. The issue becomes even worse when students are obliged to face 3 and/or 4 teachers a year.

5) **Lack of using teaching aids**:

Teachers do not use teaching aids. It is very important to use visual aids in classrooms like coloured picture cards, flash cards, charts and overhead projectors, tape recorders, language laboratories among the

many other aids. Though some of these aids are simply made and can be made by the teachers themselves and in spite of the fact that the teachers know their value in making the students learn effectively, fast and learning lasts more because the more senses are involved in the leaning process, the better learning will be and the longer it will last, teachers scarcely try to make use of them.

6) **The focus is only on teaching grammar**:

Most, if not all, Arab teachers of English ignore *productive* and *receptive* skills. The former are speaking and writing and the latter are reading and listening, and how much important they are in stabilising the information learned. They are also important in making students able to master the four basic skills of English. Instead, what they do is just concentrate on grammatical rules and even then, they fail to teach them properly.

7) **The overcrowded classrooms**:

It is a pity to find a classroom containing 100 to 150 students especially in villages. How can one think of good education and good outcome and the situation in classroom is like this? In addition, the ratio of teachers to students is never adequate, i.e. nearly one English teacher for 400-500 students regardless of the grades the students are enrolled in. It is even worse to find many schools especially in the countryside that do not have English teachers. Who teaches English are not English specialised teachers. How could an Arabic or mathematics teacher teach English?! This is exactly the situation in some schools in Yemen.

1.6.3. Examinations and Marks

There have been two public examinations: one is conducted at the end of primary school phase and the other at the end of secondary school phase. The first public examination enables students to join secondary school and the second enables them to join the Universities and Colleges. These examinations are conducted by the Ministry of Education in all Arab countries in general and in Yemen in particular. All students who reach both phases sit for these examinations. In both of them, the pass mark is 50%. However, the real mark most students get is only around 50-70% in both examinations. Only few students get around 80% or 90%. As a result, only those who get around 80% in the secondary examination can join the Universities. So many of them do not get a chance to study in the Yemeni universities because of the policy of admission set by the universities' administrations. Indeed, the percentage required to joining Yemeni universities differs from faculty to another. This is discussed later in this chapter.

In addition, there are entrance examinations set by the different faculties of the Yemeni universities. These examinations are required for joining the university faculties, especially those of Science, Medicine, Dentistry and Engineering. One of the examinations required is English examination for these faculties. In Humanities Faculties, however, it depends on the department concerned. For instance, the Department of English sets an entrance examination for joining it. Only those students who pass the examination will join the department. To sum up, English is required for all Faculties in the Yemeni universities in addition to Faculty of Languages and the Departments of English in the Faculties of Education and Arts and it is in this status the importance of English lies.

1.7. English Language Teaching Curriculum in Yemeni Universities

In the Yemeni Universities, lecturers lecture and students receive the information. This is exacerbated by the widespread use of detailed course notes and materials often out of date and inappropriate. While it is true that the paucity of books and materials as well as the very inappropriate student-teacher ratios make other pedagogical approaches difficult, this spoon feeding of teaching is a long way from the requirements of the 21st century. In addition, like many Arab Universities, Yemeni Universities have different English curricula depending on the type of faculty. Faculties of Sciences, viz. Medicine, Dentistry, Medicine and Engineering have what is called 101, 102, 103, and 104 which last for two academic years divided into four semesters. 101 is taught in the first semester, 102 in the second semester and so on. Humanities Faculties like Arts, Education and Commerce etc. have 101 and 102 which are taught in one academic year divided into two semesters. These courses are called the English University Requirements. The time allotted is 2-3 hours, again, depending on the faculty, weekly for each course in each semester. For instance, the time allotted in the Humanities Faculties is 2 hours whereas in the Sciences Faculties, it is 3 hours a week. In fact, students come to universities having a hope especially those hardworking to get sufficient and a good deal of English. They hope of compensating for the insufficient knowledge they had in schools. However, what they get is only a 2-hour class a week. In spite of the high qualifications of the English language teachers in the Universities, they do not have enough time to teach the expected items. In fact, these teachers are BA and/or MA holders. Those holding BA certificates are always the toppers of their batches in the Departments of English, faculties of Education and Arts, and often chosen for demonstrator posts in these Universities.

The requirement courses are often prepared by the Departments of English in the faculties of Arts and Education under whose supervision the teaching of English in these faculties is conducted and run. So each faculty has its own items to be taught. For instance, the faculty of Dentistry has reading materials related to what students study like *Paraphomology, teeth morphology* etc. The faculty of Engineering has reading items like *Conductors*, *Amplifiers*, *computer technology* etc. They have also grammar like *tenses, sentence structure, passive voice* etc. Regarding Humanities faculties, each department has its own teaching materials. For instance, the Department of History has reading materials related to historical events and some grammar like *tenses, question tags, direct and indirect speech, parts of speech* etc.

1.7.1. Departments of English Curriculum

Before discussing the curriculum in the Departments of English in the Yemeni Universities, one has to consider the needs of students who join these Departments. Bose (2004:28-30) has grouped the students' needs under three heads: vocational (for getting jobs), Academic (for pursuing higher studies) and social (for bettering living)

1. Vocational needs:

i. Use of English by tourist guides: It is necessary here to note that Yemen is a country famous for its ancient tourist places like temples, dams and spa. People used to come to Yemen from all over the world but these tourists cannot speak Arabic and thus Yemen needs English speaking tourist guides. In fact, there is a growing need in these respects and the Yemeni Government has set plans to improve Tourism Industry. Here what the students need is just better their English skills which enable them to communicate with foreigners.

ii. Use of English in the Hotel Industry:

The Yemeni Universities represented by the Faculties of Commerce have initiated the Departments of Culture and Tourism teaching subjects like Hotel Industry among the many others. In fact, the Yemeni Government is paying more attention to Hotel Industry throughout the country. Recently, it has encouraged the foreign investment in the area of hotel investment especially after establishing "The One Window" for investment. This window has been established to solve the problem of investment which was randomly run. As a result, many foreign investors come to Yemen and invest in this aspect. Therefore, the English graduates need to develop English language skills to get jobs in these hotels.

iii. Use of English in media:

Yemen nowadays is paying more attention to English Press, TV, among other types of media. So many posts in these fields require candidates, viz. English graduates. So if they develop English skills they will be apt to occupy these positions.

iv. Use of English in the Computer Industry:

It is a fact that in Yemen, the private sectors and the governmental sectors begin to computerise their offices and thus they are in need for high qualification graduates to occupy these positions. If the English graduates develop English skills related to computerization, they will fit these posts.

2. **Academic needs**:

i. Use of English in higher education:

It is a dream of most Yemenis, nowadays, to pursue higher studies in developed and developing countries like UK, USA and India. So what they need is to be able to communicate in English in those countries. However, the fact that Yemeni like Arab students face the predicament of not being able to communicate in English no one can deny. Nor can they understand academic courses. This is due to the fact that they study even scientific subjects like physics, chemistry, mathematics among others in Arabic. It is to the extent that those who travel to such countries for study fail in most of these subjects not because they are bad at these subjects but because the medium of instruction is English.

ii. Use of English in understanding the English courses on hand:

The fact that many of those who join English departments cannot follow their teachers lecturing in the class is disappointing. Had they been equipped with good English, they would have been able to follow these lectures and teachers. Besides, they are not able to read the references recommended by their teachers and access the library.

3. Social needs:

English in Yemen nowadays, is moving from being foreign to being second language. That is because there are many foreigners coming to the country for investment establishing companies in different fields and above all the Oil Industry which becomes the main source of income in Yemen. Now, there are various fields that require well-equipped people to work efficiently like telecommunication, shipping, trade among the many others. Therefore, if language related to such fields is introduced to students, they will be able to work in such fields.

Now, after considering the needs of Yemeni students as well as that of Yemen in different fields, it is time to have a look at the English language teaching curriculum in the Departments of English in the Yemeni Universities. Now, consider Table (2) below which shows the English language courses offered taking the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibb, Ibb, Yemen as an example:

Table (2): The Department of English Curriculum in Yemeni Universities

Skills courses	Knowledge courses	Literature courses
Reading 1	Grammar 1	Lang. Thr. Lit
Reading 2	Grammar 2	Analysis of Lit. Texts
Writing 1	Advanced Grammar	Modern Eng. Prose
Writing 2	Int. to Linguistics	Eng. Hist Prosp.
Spoken English 1	Morph. & Syntax	19th C. Am. Lit.
Spoken English 2	Semantics	19th C. Poetry
Spoken English 3	Appl. Linguistics	19th C. Novel
Advanced composition	Phonetics &phonology*	19th C. Drama
Translation 1		20th C. Am. Lit
Translation 2		20th C Poetry
Translation 3		20th C. Novel
Advanced Translation		20th C. Drama
Writing 3		History of Eng
		Met. &Aug. Poetry
		Elizabethan Drama
		Literary Criticism
		Ret. &Aug. drama
		Shakespeare
		Comparative Lit

Source: Bose (2004:25)

* This course is not included in Bose (2004) taxonomy.

In addition to this, there are Arabic language courses, Islamic Culture, Computer Applications which are taught in Arabic and Research Methodology where students can do projects on their own choice.

1.7.2. Evaluation of the Existing English Curriculum

Now, looking closely at Table (2) above, it can be seen that the curriculum is overloaded with literature courses while ignoring the language and skills courses. This, in fact, does not go parallel with the needs of Yemeni students as well as that of Yemen as has been discussed above. The focus is only on

literature courses, 19 literature courses are offered. Only 7 linguistics courses are offered and 13 skills courses. In addition, Bose (2004:27) states that the credit time allotted for the three groups of courses is 144 hours allotted to all courses on the four-year program "literature courses get 57 hours, knowledge course 21 hours and skills courses 39 hours. The maximum marks allotted to these courses are 150 and the pass marks are 75." The purposes of these courses as summarised by Bose (2002) are the skills courses which develop language skills in the students. According to Bose(op.cit), the knowledge courses help develop a knowledge base in the students instead of developing a taste for literature by the literature courses in addition to developing advanced reading skills.

In fact, no one is certain whether these courses help students to achieve their goals or not as this depends partly on the ability of the teachers teaching them and partly on how these courses are prepared, i.e. what items are included in these courses. Skills courses may achieve their purposes due to having sufficient activities which may be handled in the classroom itself. However, one is doubtful whether literature courses achieve their linguistic purposes, i.e. developing reading skills in the students especially if the teachers of these courses believe that teaching literature is "for literature sake and not for language sake." However, the present researcher does not agree with Bose (2002:41) when he says that linguistics courses like Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics "…will not do any good to the students." In fact, such linguistics courses provide students with the necessary knowledge base with which students can use English properly. The researcher believes that such linguistics courses in addition to phonetics and phonology are the cornerstones of building good knowledge base about English especially if the teachers teaching them know how to handle them in the right way. For instance, phonetics and phonology courses enable the students to pronounce the English sounds, syllables, words correctly in addition to using pitch, intonation among other things. Syntax courses provide the students with a strong and stable linguistic base of how English sentences are formed without which the students will be unable to construct English sentences correctly.

1.8. Language or Literature

In addition to what has been stated above, many Arab scholars have questioned the issue of what to teach in the Departments of English in the Arab Universities. They argue in favor of teaching literature thinking that teaching literature will make Arab students well equipped, basing their arguments on the idea

that the more the learner knows about the target language culture, the more he/she will be proficient and fluent in that language. However, when one thinks and rethinks about the Arab Universities where even after four years of learning English some students cannot even spell Shakespeare and Marlowe correctly. Most of them reach the universities with insufficient English; the reasons could be several. What they need is language courses that develop language and study skills in them, with which they can study literature. When the foundation is weak, how can one build the superstructure? A recent survey by Al-Maqtari (2003) is a clear writing on the wall; students are categorical that they join the English departments for learning the language and not literature. The fact that English curriculum in the Arab Departments of English is overloaded with literature (cf. Table (2)) above, beginning with Chaucer and ending with Eliot is something that needs to be reconsidered and rethought. In fact, language courses that Arab students need are language skills courses such as reading and writing, speaking and listening which are the courses that will really equip them with what they actually need for their future needs.

Apart from this, many Arab and non-Arab researchers (e.g. Khowlah 2002, Maqtari 2003, Bose 2002, 2004) have been criticising the English Departments in the Arab Universities for many reasons one of which is paying no/enough attention to the Arab writing in English, which portrays the Muslim Arab students' culture and heritage. Here, the question one has to address is where is the need for highlighting the Elizabethan and Victorian lifestyles when the students cannot understand and appreciate their own lifestyles in the Arab world? According to a Norwegian novelist, "young people who were cut off from the culture of their parents lacked creativity as well as character" (Seller 1992 cited in Khowlah 2002:93). One also perceives a strong need for Arab students studying, as a part of their curriculum in the Universities, the English translations of Arabic literature, because, as Faiq (2003) points out, most of the translation courses taught in Arab Universities serve an imperialist appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic and political affairs and it is the English teachers' responsibility to empower the students to expose the English hegemony.

1.9. Statement of the Problem

A close examination of the studies that deal with the Arab learners' errors in English shows that Arab learners of English commit different kinds of errors at all levels, viz. phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, stylistics, etc. Those studies have employed different linguistic theories

like CA, EA and IL (Asfoor 1978, Sheikh-Ibrahim 1988, Obeidat 1986, Salim and Taha 2006, Hamad 1986, Rababah 2003, Alqazweeni 1990, Zughoul 1991, 2002, El-Sayed 1982, Noor 1996, Raimes 1985, Scott and Tucker 1974) among others. Such researchers have tried to list these errors whether syntactic, spelling, phonological, etc. without probing deeply their reasons, sources and/or consequences. These scholars do not also show to what extent the errors committed by Arab learners are serious. In fact, not all errors Arab EFL/ESL learners, like any other learners, of English commit are serious. There are those errors which need to be paid much attention to while others do not. Accordingly, this study is intended to investigate the issue of EG in Arab ESL University learners' syntactic and semantic production. According to the would-be results, a universal hierarchy will be established based on the seriousness concluded with. Needless to say, the phenomenon of assessing or evaluating Arab learners' errors in terms of their seriousness is an issue worth considering so that implications to Arab and non-Arab applied linguists, teachers, syllabi designers and course developers can be provided on the basis of such studies. It is in this sense this study will be carried out focusing on the seriousness of errors in the Arabic-speaking learners' syntactic and semantic production at the University level.

1.10. Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations:

(i) This study is limited to 102 first year Arab Yemeni students in English Departments in the University level.

(ii) It is confined to two campuses, viz. Ibb University campus and Taiz University campus.

(iii) It is also limited to the syntactic and semantic errors.

(iv) The medium of language is limited to written variety.

(v) This study is limited to the subjective as well as objective tests given to the subjects of the study in the form of questionnaires.

1.11. Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of this study can be stated as follows:

1. Syntactic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than semantic ones.

2. Semantic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than syntactic ones.

3. Within each category, which subcategory is more serious than the other? For instance, regarding syntactic errors, are **subject-verb agreement** errors graver than those in the use of **articles, prepositions** etc? Similarly, within semantic errors, are **lexical choice** errors, for instance, graver than those in **collocation**, **lexico-grammatical,** etc.?

1.12. Significance of the Study

SLA research has gained much importance in the recent 50 years or so in all over the globe. So has the situation in the Arab world. Researchers from different countries have done numerous and different studies investigating what affects SLA phenomenon. However, only a relatively small number of these studies have dealt with error gravity of the errors produced by SL learners (Nickel 1971, 1973, Olsson, 1973, 1974, Johansson 1973, James 1977, 1994 1998, Politzer 1978, Piazza 1980, Ludwig 1982, Delisle 1982, Lee 1990, Wright 2000, Giri 2007, Salem 2007, Rifkin 1995, Galloway 1980, Ensz 1982) among others. Thus, the significance of the study at hand lies in the fact that it is an empirical study dealing with the seriousness of Arab learners' syntactic and semantic errors in English. In fact, the existing error gravity (EG) studies depend on NSs and/or NNSs to judge the seriousness of an error or a group of errors in terms of **comprehesbility, intelligibility** and/or **irritation** (Khalil 1985, James 1977, Sheorey 1986). However, the present study employs a statistical method in judging or expressing the seriousness of an error or a group of errors based on the frequency of such an error or a group of errors.

Thus, it is hoped that the study at hand will provide Arab and non-Arab students, teachers, researchers, applied linguists, curricula and syllabi designers and textbook developers with the pedagogical implications, suggestions and linguistic bases related and necessary to better the English language acquisition phenomenon. This is because in addition to its potential contribution to EFL/ESL pedagogy, EG studies can provide data for wider linguistic enquiry, for linguists, pedagogical implications for teachers and linguistic suggestive bases for syllabi and text-book designers (Salem 2007) on the basis of which teaching English to Arab School and University learners will be improved to the expected.

1.13. Review of the Literature

As early as the 50s and well into the 60s of the 20th Century, errors and their committing were viewed as something sinful on the part of SL learners which have to be eradicated (Brooks 1960 cited in Hendrickson 1978). However, there are now a considerable number of researchers (Corder 1967, 1973, 1981, Selinker 1992, 1993, Richards 1972, 1974, Burt 1975, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982, Hendrickson 1978, 1980, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974, James 1977, 1998, Han 2000, 2004) among the many others who believe that SL learners' errors are not to be taken carelessly, but with a great interest and so much attention due to what they imply. These researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that language learners use to acquire a language (Richards 1974, Taylor 1975b, Dulay and Burt 1974a). Errors are also associated with the strategies that learners employ to communicate in a language. Further, errors are also believed to be an indicator of the learners' stages in their TL development. From the errors that learners commit, one can determine their level of mastery of the language system they are learning.

Consequently, a fresh look at error treatment and correction begins to emerge. However, there has been no consensus among researchers on whether all errors should be paid much attention to and hence, corrected or just those which impede communication, intelligibility and interpretation on the part of the listener and/or reader. Several important questions came to the surface such as should learner errors be corrected? If so, when, how, why should such errors be corrected? And who should correct which errors? (Hendrickson 1978). Here, researchers begin to look at what is called "Error Gravity." By definition, error gravity indicates a criterion for error correction, pinpointing the categories and instances of errors which need prior attention. Depending on the seriousness of 'error,' correction can be decided also on the basis of who corrects which 'error' (Lee 1990). Further, EG studies have been paid much attention to and got much interested in by SLA researchers for their value in SLA all over the globe. This, in fact, is due to the linguistic as well as the pedagogical bases they provide researchers and teachers with. Several studies have been conducted by different researchers dealing with the evaluation, assessment and correction of errors made by SL learners. These studies have not been confined to English language acquisition; however, they handle several languages learned as second/foreign languages (see Table (3)). In short, this

section presents a brief critical review of the important literature on EG in terms of the following headings:

1.13.1. Authenticity vs. Inauthenticity

If one considers the issue of whether the authenticity variable has been present in EG studies, one is likely to find that almost all EG studies lack this vital variable. McCretton and Rider (1993) have modified and presented only 21 sentences containing errors, making each sentence include only one error though it may have more than one. Torre (1996) has modified and categorised sentences including only errors in *articles, verb tense, verb-subject concord, adjective degree and lexis* though there could be more categories. Chastain (1981) has presented 22 paragraphs taken from compositions written by Native American students learning Spanish. These paragraphs were then typed in a series and duplicated for distribution to NSs. These paragraphs were read and evaluated by 59 NSs in Madrid. Thus, these data lack authenticity in the sense that before being presented to NSs/NNSs to evaluate judge and/or rate, researchers modify or slightly change them and hence, losing their authenticity. In Rifkin and Roberts' (1995:516) own words, "[r]esearchers may take a few sentences from each student's output and compile them for presentation to NS respondents….so that, for example, there is an error in every verb phrase…then ordered or sequenced, compiled and copied" and then presented to NSs/NNSs to react, judge, evaluate and/or rate. Khalil (1985), for instance, not only did he change the authentic R-text but also tried to set a context in which the error occurs. R-text refers to the inauthentic text which is modified by the researcher before presenting it to the respondents to judge and evaluate. It is called so because the actual data have been modified and changed by the researcher (Rifkin and Roberts 1995).

In addition, the EG data that are modified by such researchers are not confined to written data but include spoken data as well which are in turn presented in a written form. For instance, Galloway (1980), Guntermann (1978), Rifkin (1995), Gynan (1985), Gass and Polio (1998), Schairer (1992), Derwing and Munro (1997) among others have collected oral data. These data were first tape-recorded and then presented in written forms including sentences having only one error each. In fact, the EG studies have been noted to have been collecting only samples of L2 learners' errors. These data are selected from students' homework assignments or learner response to a picture stimulus, selecting only some of these data and presented them to NSs/NNSs to rate, judge and/or correct.

On the other hand, there are few studies which maintain authenticity of the R-text. Giri (2007), Sheorey (1986) and Olsson (1972, 1974) have done comprehensive studies in which authenticity of the R-text is preserved. Almost all the erroneous sentences were actual, i.e. produced by the students themselves. The researchers did not intervene, i.e. did not change even those having more than one error and more than one error category. Giri (2007) has collected the data consisting of 250 erroneous sentences and presented them to the evaluators without any modifications. Sheorey (1986) has collected 20 sentences including 8 types of errors. Almost all these sentences were actual sentences and then presented them to his subjects who were teachers from America and India. Politzer (1978:257) states that all studies "dealing with eliciting judgments of grammaticality and acceptability dealt with native speakers judging utterances that could have or were, in fact, produced by native speakers and not with reaction to errors committed by foreigners." Here, he means the inauthenticity of utterances presented to NSs to evaluate due to the interference of the researcher's modifications of such utterances before being presented to NSs. In fact, Politzer has questioned the validity of such studies implying that the judges should evaluate erroneous utterances produced by foreigners and not by NSs.

1.13.2. Subjective vs. Objective Assessment

Almost all EG studies have been based on subjective assessment of errors examined in these studies. Errors are presented to NSs and/or NNSs to judge and these judges are influenced by subjective factors, i.e. every evaluator or judge evaluates these errors on his/her own way. This proves the fact that there has been no consensus among such studies. McCretton and Rider (1993:177), for instance, have questioned the issue of how to define errors and how they can be categorised. They have examined how a properly established hierarchy can be formulated and on what bases. They believe that "correcting and marking of students' grammatical errors is so central to the role of the EFL teacher that it is usually taken for granted." Unlike others' studies, central to theirs is the issue of how to establish 'error hierarchy' based on judges' responses to errors committed by students. However, they doubt the assessors' ability to judge objectively as they ascertain that when assessors judge, they categorise errors and "*categorization brings its own problems of subjectivity*" (emphasis mine). This actually shows how subjectivity is imposed into such judgment and/or evaluation.

Chastain (1980:214) aims at "how native speakers would react to those second-language errors perceived by intermediate Spanish instructors as being the most troublesome in their classes." Thus, Chastain has ended up with a very remarkable conclusion that 'subjective assessments' of NSs to the language produced by NNSs have obvious weaknesses and that the results of such studies are "subjected to these same problems and inconsistencies." However, Khalil (1985) has done a study in which he has examined communicative error evaluation objectively. In fact, what makes Khalil's study more prominent is the fact that he has attempted an objective comprehension task by having his respondents choose, from a 4-option multiple choice test, the intended meaning of an utterance. The 4-options the respondents choose from are listed below each utterance. He has also noticed that the claim of comprehension on a subjective scale is not adequate to choose the intended meaning of an utterance.

Tong (2000) examines ESL instructors' perceptions of written errors among adult ESL learners. The data were collected from two 1-hour stimulated recalls from each of the instructors. Tong proposes a constructionist approach to error evaluation which, he believes, is a reaction to the conventionalist followed by Rifkin and Roberts (1995) which, as he holds, is not adequate for error evaluation. The conventionalist approach depends on "adopted subjective questions instead of the more desirable, objective assessments, making comparison of results from different studies impossible" Tong (2000:29) which he believes to have existed within a constructivist approach. As noted by Rifkin and Roberts (1995), almost all the studies have used what can be called 'subjective assessment' in which the respondents evaluate, judge and/or rate the R-text presented to them assessing whether it is acceptable, comprehensible, irritating or 'native-like. In addition, Tomiyana (1980:275) has her respondents evaluate the errors and then correct the errors they found in the R-text they have evaluated. Tomiyana then compares these results trying to make her study as objective as possible. However, she observes that objectivity depends on what criteria to be followed. In this regard, Ludwig (1982:273) in her study maintains that "while comprehensibility can be rated fairly objectively, irritation cannot."

Furthermore, many researchers have asked their respondents to perform some operations on the R-text or evaluate it trying to assess whether it is "comprehensible, irritating or native-like" (Rifkin and Roberts 1995:520). However, there are those researchers who have made use of both methods. It has been held that when the respondents are asked to do or perform some operations on the R-text, it is called

objective assessment and when they are asked to only evaluate the R-text, it is called subjective assessment. In this direction, some EG analysts have designed objective procedures to make their studies objective. The tasks performed on the R-text include ***paraphrasing*** (Rifkin 1995), ***reinterpreting*** (Chiang 1999) ***expressing their opinion*** (Gass and Polio 1998), ***selecting from multiple choice options*** (Khalil 1985) or even to ***correct the R-text*** (Tomiyana 1980). Almost these are the only studies that make use of objective assessments of the R-text and hence, evaluation of errors. Thus, almost all EG studies rely on subjective assessment in the evaluation of learners' errors. The consequences of this have their effects on the validity and reliability of such studies. This is due to the fact that what might be a ***serious, irritating, incomprehensible*** and/or ***unacceptable*** error to a particular respondent might not be so to another. This, in fact, has been questioned and addressed by researchers like Rifkin and Roberts (1995); however, no one has attempted to resolve it. Moreover, Tong (2000) has found that depicting error evaluation as interactive and context-sensitive activities are greatly influenced by the judges' beliefs and various contextual factors. He has also concluded that the meaning of an error is embedded in the larger context of teaching of which assessment is a part and thus objective assessment is greatly needed.

1.13.3. Serious Error Categories

Regarding which error category is more serious than another is still far beyond being settled. For instance, while (James 1977, Khalil 1985, Hughes and Lascaratou 1982, Olsson 1972) among others have found that NNSs consider semantic errors more serious than other kinds of errors, (Sheorey 1986, McCretton and Rider 1993, Torre 1996, Salem 2007) found that NN teachers marked lexical errors as the least serious. Hughes and Lascaratou's (1982) NSs scored semantic errors higher than other error types, while McCretton and Rider's (1993) NS teachers consider semantic errors the least serious compared to other errors. However, Khalil (1985) has concluded that semantically deviant utterances were judged less intelligible and hence, more serious than syntactic ones. These errors were also interpreted with less accuracy than were syntactic deviant utterances emphasising not only the quantity of the context but also the quality, i.e. "*not only the effect of more context but the effect of more coherent context*" (Khalil 1985:347) (emphasis mine). Thus, while Khalil (op.cit) has concluded that his respondents consider semantic errors more serious, graver and irritating, Salem (2007) has concluded that errors differ in their degree of 'word-sensitivity' which refers to the extent of 'generalizability' of a rule that has been

infringed. She refers to 'word-sensitive' errors as those which can be attributed to 'infringement' of a word-intrinsic requirement. She exemplifies that by providing the example ***enjoy to speak*** as a word-sensitive error; which can be attributed to a violation of a 'word-intrinsic restriction' of the verb, ***enjoy*** which cannot be followed by an infinitive. Torre (1996), however, has concluded that her judges be they NNSs or NSs consider semantic errors less serious than syntactic ones.

Further, Chastain (1980) has ended up his study with a conclusion that some linguistic errors are more serious than others from a communicative point of view. He adds that when NSs are unable to comprehend a writer's intent, the communication will not be successful. What can be inferred from Chastain's study is that the most serious errors, those interfering with comprehension, as he believes, should be paid much care for by trying to eliminate them and that at the same time errors not interfering with communication can be delayed to a later stage. Here, one has to note that Chastain has not ignored the non-serious errors, or what he refers to as those "that are understood and considered acceptable by native speakers," completely, but only temporarily (Chastain op.cit:194). In another study, namely, Chastain (1981), instructors of the intermediate Spanish courses at the University of Virginia were asked to list those learners' errors that were the most serious in their classes without ranking the errors in order of seriousness or of commonality. Guntermann (1978:252), however, states that as far as comprehensibility is concerned, syntactic errors are not serious obstacles paying no attention to context. In his own words, "… [o]n the basis of these results, it might be assumed that most errors in grammar do not impede communication to a significant extent…[i]f comprehensibility were the only objective, this conclusion might be warranted."

There are also those researchers who go even farther detailing the seriousness variable to a far degree of consideration, i.e. which errors are more serious than others even within specific categories. For instance, Politzer (1978:257-258) has concluded establishing a hierarchical taxonomy for the seriousness of the error types in German he has investigated. He has found that ***phonological errors*** are considered more serious than ***gender confusion*** but less serious than ***word order*** and ***verb morphology*** errors. In addition, ***confusion in case endings*** is less serious than errors in ***gender confusion***. Further, ***Case endings*** are less serious than ***word order*** and ***vocabulary*** errors. However, he has reached the conclusion that ***semantic*** errors are the most serious among the error types he has investigated and that after ***semantic***

errors comes the ***grammatical*** group followed by the ***phonological*** one and below ***phonological*** errors comes the syntactic category of ***Case confusion***.

Other researchers have also questioned the issue of determining the goal of evaluation purposes. That is, it is the goal of such an evaluation which determines the criteria of EG studies. In other words, if communication success were the ultimate goal, the criterion to be followed is different from that when the main goal is linguistic correctness. Researchers (e.g. Delisle 1982, Johansson 1973) maintain that when one evaluates errors, one does so having in mind a certain goal and if the ultimate goal is to get 'absolute linguistic correctness' all errors are ***equally serious*** and will be rated as such. Nevertheless, when the main goal is communicative success, there is another scale for that. Because the communicative purpose has dominated the learning scene nowadays, communicative goal becomes the target and so many EG researchers do their studies in this direction. Delisle (1982), for instance, believes that if this goal is achieved, the results of such studies can be applied to second language teaching and learning.

1.13.4. Error Hierarchy or Error Gravity

Error hierarchy, in principle, implies that there is a hierarchical order of gravity of errors. In other words, error hierarchy points to the fact that errors are not to be equally considered. Rather, there seems to be an order in which some errors come first, others follow and so on in a sequential order. Some EG researchers (e.g. McCretton and Rider 1993, Chastain 1981, Hughes and Lascaratou 1982, James 1977) have made attempts to establish that order in terms of comprehensibility, acceptability and/or irritation. In fact, only few studies done by EG analysts have questioned the issue of establishing error hierarchy. Gynan (1985), for instance, has made use of comprehensibility and irritation and refers to such criteria as 'an error hierarchy.' The results he has concluded with demonstrate that ***morphological*** errors are apparently more prominent than ***phonological*** errors in the speech of beginning SL learners. What is more important in Gynan's study is that an error hierarchy based on the relative salience of ***morphological*** errors to NSs is thus empirically justified through the types of errors he has investigated.

As has been noted so far, Chastain (1981) has hypothesised that some errors would interfere with NS comprehension more than others and that the obtained information would be helpful in establishing a 'gravity hierarchy' of L2 learner errors. Moreover, Schairer's (1992:318) results of his study suggest a

hierarchy of errors with vowel production at the top, followed by consonant linkage, and then the production of the /r/ which is the only consonant demonstrating moderately strong correlation with NS assessments of comprehensibility. In addition, Rifkin (1995:477) has done a preliminary and fundamental study in which he tries to establish a hierarchy of errors based on their gravity investigating American learners' spoken Russian. Here, Rifkin uses 'irritation' as a criterion for judging Russian utterances and hence, establishing an error hierarchy for EG on that basis. Rifkin's respondents' selections of the least irritating utterances of each pair were analysed in order to establish a hierarchy of EG, and the "hierarchies established for each respondent class were compared to determine if representatives of each respondent class had similar or different views of the severity of different error types."

In addition, Vann et al. (1984) have found that errors are not judged as equally grievous; rather, a hierarchy of gravity of errors has to be established. In fact, the same conclusion has been emphasised by them in a later study, namely, Vann et al. (1991). Wright, (2000), moreover, has concluded that there is a simplistic error hierarchy because his respondents, viz. the business professors, judge concentrating on the content and not on the form. That is, the more the student writes, the better impression he/she will get on the professor. On the other hand, Tong (2000) has concluded that his findings have refuted the feasibility of a universal hierarchy and supported a constructivist perspective for language error evaluation. In addition, Awasthi (1995:215) aims at establishing "a rank ordering towards the development of a universal hierarchy." She has also attempted to find out "whether the native speakers have a meeting of mind with the non-native speakers or they leave a very wide gap in case of certain categories they evaluate" (Awasthi op.cit:214). She has concluded that there is an "intergroup consensus of opinion" between NSs and NNSs in *verbals, pronouns, conditionals, plurals* and *relative clauses*.

McCretton and Rider (1993) have aimed at properly establishing a universal hierarchy of errors. They have questioned the issue of how this hierarchy can be formulated and on what bases. Unlike others' studies, central to theirs is the issue of how to establish 'error hierarchy' based on their respondents' judgments of errors committed by L2 learners. On the basis of their judges' ranking of errors, they have based what they call *universal hierarchy* stating that the order in which both groups, viz. NSs and NNSs, rank the errors investigated is somewhat similar, leading them to consider the validity of establishing a *universal hierarchy* of errors. The conclusion they have ended up with, however, is different from the

abovementioned aim and "throws into dispute the whole value of such a hierarchy, by suggesting that such hierarchies are merely the subjects' conditioned responses to well-established educational practices" (McCretton and Rider 1993:183).

1.13.5. Nonlinguistic Variables

Unfortunately, most of the EG studies ignore the nonlinguistic variables. What is meant by nonlinguistic variables is variables like age, sex, culture, profession, experience and so on, be they of learners or evaluators. These variables have a direct effect on the results of EG studies. For instance, it is logically postulated that school-aged evaluators will under no circumstances produce reliable judgments as teachers or older evaluators, uneducated like educated, non-teachers like teachers, school teachers like university professors and so forth. According to Gass and Polio (1998:308), NSs' reaction to NNSs' errors is determined by several linguistic and nonlinguistic factors. The linguistic factors they have considered are *pronunciation* and *grammar* and the nonlinguistic ones include *familiarity* and *interaction*. Familiarity, to them, "encompasses several types the most important of which are familiarity with NNSs' accent, familiarity with the topic of conversation and so forth." Interaction, they hold, has a direct impact making the NSs comprehend NNSs' speech. The findings they have ended up with provide evidence that interaction between NSs and NNSs helps NSs comprehend NNSs' speech. Based on these findings, they have raised some methodological issues concerning scoring and actual implementations on SLA.

Further, Chastain (1980, 1981) has made use of the age variable. The native Spanish evaluators knew no English; most of them were of college age. Similarly, Delisle (1982) has concluded that 'age' is a very crucial variable playing a very important role in EG studies. So is education background. She also argues that errors are not judged uniformly especially those which fall into major categories like ***word order*** and ***verb morphology***. This orientation is supported by Ludwig (1982:275) who maintains that while considerable research on linguistic variables has been done on judgment of EG, little is there concerning the issue of personality or cultural variables that affect judgments of EG. These variables encompass "age, sex, education, profession or social class, and degree of familiarity with foreigners." In addition, Davies (1983:304), considering the importance of experience of the evaluators, holds that "…the judgments of error gravity are very much a function of [the teachers'] own experience and their knowledge of their pupils' experience."

Conversely enough, Ensz (1982) concludes that her respondents consider grammatical errors made by Americans learning French to be more irritating and hence, more serious than others and also the least tolerable irrespective of sex, age, occupation, or home region in France. However, she emphasises and stresses the importance of another nonlinguistic factor, namely, the active rather than passive learning on the part of the learner. In other words, Ensz(op.cit) is of the view that whenever the learner presumes an active role in the learning process, the learning will be rather stable and efficient. Mclendon (1999:112) has 102 NSs of Russian as respondents taking into account several variables like sex, age education, profession, contact with foreigners etc. She has concluded that the speakers' choice of literary or colloquial style has no effect on ratings. On the other hand, she has found that variables of respondent's gender and exposure to American media have a slight influence on the ratings. One of her significant findings that shows her insistence on nonlinguistic factors was that "word-stress errors were judged the most serious." and so Russian students should listen to music to help them master good pronunciation and memorise some lyrics in Russian.

In addition, there are those EG analysts (e.g. Delisle 1982) who consider *irritation* an extrlinfuistic variable. In fact, Delisle is of the view that *irritation* as a phenomenon is beyond linguistics. What Delisle means by this is that irritation depends most on personality of the evaluator and hence, what may irritate one evaluator may not necessarily irritate another and vice versa. In addition, there are some researchers (e.g. Santos 1988) who consider the academic discipline, a nonlinguistic factor, of the judges to play a significant role in judging the seriousness of an error. Santos has concluded that professors in humanities or social science differ in their judgments from those in physical sciences and this actually proves the effect of profession influencing the rating phenomenon. The former found the errors highly comprehensible and not irritating, but academically unacceptable, with lexical errors rated as the most serious. The latter, however, were less irritated by errors especially younger professors.

1.13.6. Communicative Context

Communication success becomes the main and ultimate goal in SLA. In this regard, when evaluators judge the validity of an utterance, communication has to be the main objective. The communicative context is so crucial to the reliability and validity of such EG studies due to the fact that

nowadays language learning has been overwhelmed by the communication phenomenon. Thus, a very significant variable in the EG studies that has to be taken into considerations is the context in which such studies are conducted. In that, Galloway (1980:428) holds that "[t]he acceptance of the goal of communicative competence in the foreign language classroom carries with it the need for measurement of attainment and a responsibility that charges the teacher with the realistic evaluation of a student's communicative proficiency not in terms of the mastery of isolated grammatical elements, but rather in terms of the effectiveness of message transmission and reception." If an L2 learner is able to communicate when producing an utterance, learning process is said to be successful irrespective of the errors this utterance may contain.

In fact, if one is to handle this very vital factor, one is likely to find that almost all EG studies have been done ignoring the communicative context. It is widely held that in evaluating communication in the TL, the NN teacher is especially faced with a number of questions regarding student's communicative competence in real life situations within the TL community such as does the knowledge of the student's native language, English for instance; interfere with the NN teacher's ability to evaluate SL communication properly? As a speaker of the student's L1, in the classroom, one often knows what the student is trying to say, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge these utterances consistently from a native speaker viewpoint. In that, Galloway (1980) holds that because almost all teachers are not native speakers of the foreign language they teach and because even those who have learned to interpret their students' meanings, it is impossible for them to consistently make corrections in terms of the comprehensibility of the students' utterances to non-English speaking natives.

Thus, there are several EG studies (e.g. Piazza 1980, Chastain 1980, 1981, Delisle 1982, Politzer 19878, Rifkin 1995) among others which do not provide a communicative context in which the R-text is evaluated and/or judged. In that, Rifkin and Roberts (1995:618-619) hold that all the existing EG studies include "a series of unconnected single sentences" whose discourse universe is "a single utterance" which does not appear in the course of interaction between both interlocutors, viz. learners and judges. As such, one could argue that in many languages, a single sentence including an error, and actually out of its communicative context, could be interpreted in many ways depending on the context in which it occurs. Thus, they have provided examples supporting their argument as in, *She bought the car tomorrow, She*

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will buy the car tomorrow and *She bought the car yesterday,* arguing that "without the presence of some other temporal indicator or a larger communicative context in which the utterance is set, the semantic contradiction between the adverb **tomorrow** and the tense of the verb **to buy** cannot be unambiguously resolved."

In addition, Ensz (1982) has stressed that the learner should communicate in the classroom activities for a stable learning process. This is what has recently been dominating the SLA scene. The orientation to what comes to be known as 'communicative competence,' (cf. **section 2.5.2**), has really lessened the emphasis on correction of learners' errors. This actually has its consequences on learning a second language. Although it is true that focusing on grammatical correctness may, to some extent, lead to 'linguistic competence,' (cf. **section 2.5.1**), foreign learners fail to communicate properly and appropriately. This is because emphasis on correct production of the foreign language, and especially grammatical correctness, is not incompatible with the encouragement of the spontaneous communication of ideas in the second language the learner is learning. The main goal of "the foreign language course has to more and more encourage the student to communicate freely [his/her] 'everyday concerns' in the foreign language" (Ensz 1982:137-138). This is primarily due to the fact, that "…[w]hile satisfying students' needs and interests in terms of course objectives and activities, the pedagogical approach can stress correct [language] grammar. Learning to speak or write using correct grammatical forms does not imply monotonous drills lacking meaningful communication." This is also what has been emphasised by (Galloway 1980, Guntermann 1978). Unlike other researchers, Khalil (1985) has made use of context by having two sentences each preceding and following the utterance being evaluated in an attempt to find out whether context affects the evaluation and to make the study as communicative as possible.

1.13.7. Error Gravity Criteria

The methodology used in considering what factors that should be taken into account when conducting EG studies varies among researchers. In other words, there seems to be no consensus among researchers as to a particular criterion that should be followed while conducting EG studies. While there are some researchers (e.g. Khalil 1985) who consider **intelligibility, acceptability and irritation** as criteria, there are those researchers (e.g. Guntermann 1978) who make use of **comprehensibility, acceptability** and/or **irritation** as criteria, there are also those researchers (e.g. Johansson 1973) who propose

comprehensibility and conformity as criteria. Other researchers (e.g. Piazza 1980) have proposed NS tolerance of NNSs' errors as criteria. In addition, there are also some researchers (e.g. Palmer 1980, Lennon 1991, Davies 1983, Johansson 1973, James 1977, Schachter 1974, Olsson 1973, 1974) who have argued in favor of frequency of an error or a group of errors as a criterion (cf. **section 1.13.9**).

A scrutiny at the EG studies done up to date reveals the fact that there is a correlation among *comprehensibility, acceptability, intelligibility* and/or *irritation* as criteria vis-à-vis *communication* taken into account when evaluating and/or judging learner errors for seriousness. These factors are not separable and have been considered together by a considerable number of researchers. For instance, Ludwig (1982:275) has set *comprehensibility, acceptability* and *irritation* as EG criteria. She defines *comprehensibility* as "the degree to which the interlocutor understands what is said or written," *irritation* as "the result of the form of the message intruding upon the interlocutor's perception" of the communication and *acceptability* as "the degree to which a given L2 violates language norms." Gynan (1985:160) has made use of comprehensibility and irritation. He has found that the study he has done "demonstrates that the concept of irritation needs clarification." He has maintained that NS response to IL is not merely the result of irritation but also of evaluation. He has found that the response of an NS to language is evaluative and only slightly affective calling such a response a *language attitude*. Pedagogically, Gynan has assumed that since phonology may be related to comprehensibility, teachers should encourage a global appreciation of the importance of a good pronunciation at the beginning and throughout the formal instruction of the language learner. In addition, Khalil (1985) has added ineligibility to the abovementioned criteria as he believes that when an utterance is unintelligible, communication will not be successful.

In addition, Galloway (1980) focuses on oral errors committed by students of Spanish and the respondents have been asked to evaluate comprehensibility variable on the part of the listener and rate pronunciation, speed and voice errors on a 1-5-point scale to find out to what extent these errors obstruct communication since, to him, if an utterance is comprehensible, it will not impede communication. Furthermore, Guntermann (1978:252) states that as far as comprehensibility is concerned, grammatical errors are not serious obstacles paying no attention to context. She states "[o]n the basis of these results it

might be assumed that most errors in grammar do not impede communication to a significant extent…[i]f comprehensibility were the only objective, this conclusion might be warranted."

Derwing and Munro (1997) have gone even further in considering the criteria that should be employed. In fact, they have investigated the relation of familiarity of accent to intelligibility and comprehensibility in English of 48 ESL learners who are speakers of 4 different languages, namely, Cantonese, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish. These subjects are asked to speak freely about a story they have listened to. Then, these subjects were evaluated by 26 NS listeners. They claim that there is a relationship among accent, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility of foreign learners of English. In this study, Derwing and Munro (op.cit.) have confirmed that there is what they term the quasi-independence of accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility in the speech of SL learners from several L1 backgrounds. In fact, there are some interesting differences in the findings reported in their study and those reported in previous research. Many of these differences can be accounted for by the lower proficiency level of the speakers. Thus, Derwing and Munro have concluded that there are individual differences in understanding accented speech. Thus, their results support the conclusions of Gass and Varonis (1984). Both studies have shown that familiarity with a particular accent facilitates intelligibility, but differences in familiarity *per se* cannot account for the range of responses in the accentedness and comprehensibility judgment tasks. They have also provided some implications the salient of which are likely to be of interest to second language teachers, viz. "…[i]mprovement in NNS comprehensibility, at least for intermediate and high-proficiency learners, is more likely to occur with improvement in grammatical and prosodic proficiency than with a sole focus on correction of phonemic errors" (Derwing and Munro 1997:15).

Chastain (1980:114) has examined native Spanish evaluators who read the sentences, underlined the errors they noticed in the sentences, and rated each as comprehensible and acceptable, comprehensible and unacceptable, or incomprehensible and unacceptable. In addition, Chastain aims, in this study, at "how native speakers would react to those second-language errors perceived by intermediate Spanish instructors as being the most troublesome in their classes." He has concluded that though NNSs' speech must be comprehensible in 'interpersonal communication,' NNSs must also fundamentally take into account that their language does not lead to a negative reaction on the part of the NSs with whom they are

interacting. Thus, Chastain has ended up his study with a very remarkable conclusion that 'subjective assessments' of NSs to the language produced by NNSs have obvious weaknesses and that the results of such studies are "subject to these same problems and inconsistencies."

Santos (1988) has pointed out that it is more likely that irritation includes concepts of 'acceptability' or the degree to which an NS judges a language sample as meeting implicit or explicit target norms. These norms can be of the nature of competence-based or performance-based. Santos has found out that his professor subjects consider double negation the most irritating errors of their learners. However, such sentences including such errors are still comprehensible. In fact, the issue of comprehensibility, irritation and acceptability as criteria is so much controversial. There is no point where researchers and EG analysts meet. In other words, there is no any consensus among researchers regarding what defines an error, comprehensibility, acceptability, irritation and so on as noted above. Therefore, one is to observe the fact that every researcher has tackled such criteria from his/her own perspective which in turn is different or contradicts and contrasts with the others'.

The judges' *tolerance* has also been used as a criterion by a considerable number of EG analysts. Such analysts have done so because, as they believe, the error the NSs are less tolerant for should be taken into considerations. In other words, if NSs are more tolerant for a particular error, it may not impede communication. However, tolerance of errors varies depending on who are the judges. In other words, many researchers have found that NS judges seem to be more tolerant for learner errors than NNS judges. Fayer and Krasinski (1978) have found that NSs of Spanish are more tolerant for NNSs of English than they are for NSs of English. In addition, Galloway (1980) reports that, compared to NN teachers, NSs who do not teach Spanish are more tolerant and demonstrate greater rapport with students who experience difficulty and exert effort in expressing themselves. Similarly, (Rifkin 1995, Ensz 1982, Piazza 1980, Delisle 1982, Politzer 1978, Chastain 1980, 1981, Schairer 1992, Galloway 1980, Guntermann 1978, Gynan 1985, Khalil 1985, Santos 1988, Sheorey 1986, Tomiyana 1980, Vann et al. 1984, Giri 2007) have concluded that native speakers are likely more sympathetic, tolerant, lenient, and encouraging of foreign students' efforts to communicate especially whose grammatical competence is good. This actually has its immediate consequences on foreign learners and may help motivate them to improve their lexical, syntactic, and discourse competence. In addition, Rifkin (1995:488) has provided some important

pedagogical implications, for instance, curricula when designed, should address students' communication successes and "weaknesses that have caused their failures, instructors are likely to select precisely those areas that would have been selected by native speakers who are not instructors of Russian."

Some researchers have gone even further investigating judges' tolerance as to whether the spoken errors differ from the written ones. Sheorey (1986), for instance, has concluded that NSs' degree of tolerance for written errors is less than that for errors in speech. Sheorey adds that the more tolerance NSs show towards NNSs' errors, the more successful these NNSs will be. Further, Gynan (1985) has found that native speakers of Spanish are more tolerant for morphosyntactic errors than they are for phonological ones because they find phonological errors more problematic for communication than morphosyntactic ones. Ensz (1982) has found that native speakers of French are most sensitive and hence, less tolerant for grammatical errors. Politzer (1978) has found that native speakers of German find lexical errors more important than errors in grammar or pronunciation. In addition, (Hughes and Lascaratou 1982, Awsathi 1995, Nickel 1973, Davies 1983) have found that NSs tend to be more lenient to L2 learner's errors than NNSs. (Awsathi 1995:136), for instance, has concluded that NSs are more lenient than NNSs claiming that this is because of NSs' "superiority in the TL itself" and the same thing has been proved true by Davies (1983:305) who states "…the native speakers' tendency to greater leniency may be attributed to their superior knowledge of the wide-range norm."

1.13.8. EG and Language Teaching

Almost every EG study has concluded with useful pedagogical implications. This trend, in fact, has been the concern of almost all EG analysts. Ludwig (1982:274), for instance, believes that EG studies related to the NS reaction to L2 use are not that much useful, however, she maintains, there are very essential and promising useful implications, especially in the field of SLA. She states that "among these is the establishment of pedagogical priorities in the development of communicative competence. Such priorities should certainly influence the construction of L2 course materials and the nature of teacher training in the future" and that teachers should pay more attention and focus on the main goal of language learning and/or instruction which is communication and not 'formal accuracy.'

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Most EG studies have postulated that teaching should address primarily those areas where errors cause a failure in communication. These conclusions can be best noted in (Johansson 1973, Chastain 1980, Delisle 1982, Piazza 1980, Politzer 1978, Ludwig 1982, James 1977, 1994) among others. Piazza (1980:422-426), for instance, is of the view that errors, like those made by NSs of the TL, may not interfere with communication and might safely be ignored in the classroom. However, the most severe ones may block communication. Only these errors require more attention. Between these two extremes, she noted, however, lie many other errors typical of SL learner; they deserve much attention because they irritate NSs of the language being learned. She adds that teachers, in the classroom, would select errors to correct, for instance, those for which NSs have the least tolerance, and not to correct "all errors, no errors, or only a few errors in some random fashion." Her purpose has been to determine: 1) the degree to which the grammatical errors interfere with sentence comprehensibility; 2) the degree of irritation caused by the errors; 3) whether the errors were more readily tolerated under spoken or written mode of presentation; and 4) the rank order of the errors in terms of sentence comprehensibility, irritation, and mode of presentation.

The concept of pedagogical implications provided by EG studies has been related to the criteria used in such studies. In Piazza's (1980) study, for instance, the term, 'comprehensibility' has been preferred to 'intelligibility' in addition to 'irritation.' Thus, one of her salient pedagogical implications is that a teacher might utilise any one ranking, making use of 'comprehensibility' and 'irritation' as criteria. In addition, Ludwig (1982) has maintained that if linguistic correctness is to be the norm, then only those errors which signal the insufficiency of linguistic competence should be paid more attention to than others in the classroom. There are also researchers (e.g. Palmer 1980, Lennon 1991, Davies 1983, Johansson 1973, James 1977, 1994, Schachter 1974) who have looked at the repetition and frequency of an error as a crucial norm having its pedagogical implications for learners and teachers alike. James (1977:124), for instance, argues that error frequency presents a better opportunity for evaluators to judge the seriousness of such an error properly and for SL learners for better learning. In James's own words "[f]requency is an essential ingredient when we assess the relative gravities of errors. If a certain grammatical category is employed three times more frequently in natural English than some other category, then it presents learners with three times that opportunity for error-making—as well as three times the opportunity for learning."

In the studies reviewed above, such factors as focus of study, language learned, R-text type, unit and context of error, source of leaner error and judges involved are not talked about or discussed. Therefore, Table (3) below summarises these factors for the most important EG studies done up-to-date.

Table (3): Focus of Study, Language Learned, R-Text Type, Unit and Context of Error and Source of Leaner Error and Judges

Study and Year	Focus of study	Language Learned	Written/ Spoken (R-text)	Unit of error And Context	Source of learner error	Judges
Salem 2007	NS & NNS teachers judge NNSs' compositions	English	Written	20 erroneous sentences	Classroom composition	33 NS & NNS teachers
Giri 2007	NS & NNS T&NT judge grammatical errors	English	Written	250 erroneous sentences	composition	600 NS & NNS teachers & non-teachers
Roberts & Cimasko 2007	NSs judge NNSs' compositions	English	Written	Sample of written composition	composition	57 NSs & 8 NNSs university Professors
Hyland & Anan 2006	NSs & NNSs judge NNSs' writing composition	English	Written	Sample of written composition	composition	NSs & NNSs teachers & Non-teachers
Derwing et al. 2002	NSs judge NNSs' speech frequency	English	Spoken	2 spoken samples	Speech	20 NSs experts & 20 NSs nonexperts & 20 Advanced NNSs
Shi 2001	NSs & NNSs evaluate and rate NNSs' composition	English	Written	10 expository essays	composition	23 NN teachers & 23 NNS teachers
Wright 2000	NSs judge NNSs' written samples	English	Written	16 written samples	composition	21 NS business professors
Tong 2000	NS instructors' perceptions of NNSs' writing errors	English	Written	Writing	Undergraduate Writing	4 ESL instructors
Chiang 1999	NSs rate NNSs' writing	French	Written	172 essays	College students' composition	3 NS instructors
Mclendon 1999	Evaluation of NSs' perceptions of NNSs' GR & Pr	Russian	Spoken	Speech samples	Russian Learners' speech	102 NSs
Gass & Polio 1998	Role of interaction b/w NSs & NNSs	English	spoken	board task& story telling	30 NS-NNS pairs	The authors

Derwing and Munro 1997	investigating accent, intelligibility and comprehensibility	English	Spoken	Speech samples	Speaking about a story after listening to it	26 NS listeners
Torre 1996	NS & NNS judge NNSs' grammar	English	Written	Written samples	Written samples	47 Potuguese teachers & 25 British teachers24 NSs non-teachers
Rifkin 1995	establish a hierarchy of Am. learners of Russian	Russian	spoken	Paired identical sentences including errors	Spoken samples	Russian NSs NNSs: Teachers & non-teachers
Umeda 1995	judgments of acceptability of ungrammatical English sentences	English	Written	15 erroneous sentences	Written samples	52 Japanese teachers and 32 American
Awasthi 1995	NSs & NNSs judge NNSs' writing compositions	English	Written	60 sentences samples	270 Written samples	50 NSs & 50 NNSs
Derwing & Munro 1995	NSs judge NNSs' speech samples	English	Spoken	36 speech samples	Extracted from NNs-told stories.	18NSs
McCretton & Rider 1993	Establishing universal hierarchy	English	Written	25 (21 erroneous & 4 controlling) sentences	Written sample	10NSs & 10 NNSs
Astika 1993	analytical assessments of foreign students' writing	English	Written	210 writing samples	Written sample	210 NSs
Arani 1993	inconsistencies in error production by NNSs	English	Written	20 erroneous sentences	creative writing assignments	3 NSs
Schairer 1992	Phonetic analysis of NSs judge NNSs' speech	Spanish	Spoken	19 taped speech samples	NSs speech samples in tapes	28 NSs
Kobayashi 1992	exploring NS and NNS reactions to ESL compositions	English	Written	Written samples	Written samples	269 NSs & NNSs
Lennon 1991	Analysis of learner corpus of spoken English	English	Written	208 occurrences of doubtful acceptability	Narration by German learners of English	6NSs
Vann et al. 1991	Evaluation of article' spelling and verb form	English	written	2 composition accompanied by a questionnaire	2 text including errors	215 NSs
Santos 1988	Professors rated and underlined error in 2 compositions	English	Written	2 texts as a whole	Authentic compositions by intermediate ESL	20 NS professors

Santos 1987	Ranking error poorness and irritation	English	Written	2 texts as a whole	2 authentic compositions	40 science professors
Sheorey 1986	Perceptions of NNSs' errors by NS & NNS teachers	English	Written	20 erroneous sentences	97compositions by college-level students	62 NS of America and 34 NNS from India
Gynan 1985	attitudes of NSs of English toward native and nonnative speech	Spanish	Spoken	24 recorded narrative description	oral compositions	2 grouped NSs & American bilingual NNSs
Khalil 1985	Context and noncontect NSs perceived sentences	English	Written	10grammatically erroneous &10 semantically erroneous	Objectively reconstructed syntactic and semantic errors	440 university faculty
Vann et al. 1984	NSs rank erroneous sentences	English	written	36 erroneous sentences	Researcher-instructor constructed errors	164 university professors
Ensz 1982	French attitudes: typical speech errors by American	French	Spoken	Recorded speech samples prepared by the researcher	taped speech samples	250 French people
Davies 1983	Contrasting NS & NNS and teachers and Nonteachers' reaction to errors.	English	Written	Moroccan Sec. School students	82 sentences most of which contain errors	40 Moroccan Teachers with 5-years' experience & 43 NSs
Delisle 1982	Communicative-purposed-defined errors	German	Written	60 pairs of erroneous sentences	Comparing perceptions of written errors	198 10-to17 high school students
Hughes & Lascaratous 1982	Judging the error seriousness of Greek students learning English	English	Written	32 sentences of penultimate year of High school	Students' compositions	10 NS teachers, 10 Greek E teachers and 10 educated NSs
Chastain 1981	NSs evaluate of NNSs' composition	Spanish	Written	22 paragraphs as samples	compositions written by students at the end of their	59 NSs of Spanish in Madrid
Chastain 1980	NSs react 'instructor-identified' to NNSs' errors	Spanish	Written	35 Spanish erroneous sentences	master list prepared by the researcher	48 NSs of Spanish in Madrid
Galloway 1980	Evaluation of unrehearsed Spanish speech	Spanish	Spoken	Oral response to unseen picked questions	10-secondsemester university students in US	Spanish NSs & NNSs; teachers & non-teachers
Piazza 1980	NSs' evaluation of Un. learners French errors	French	Spoken & written	100sentences:20 error types	Researcher-identified errors	260 French students aged 17-18
Tomiyana 1980	An examination of grammatical errors communication	French	Written	2 paragraph long written English texts	Articles, omission, insertion, and wrong choice	120 NSs

Guntermann 1978	NSs evaluate taped sentences	Spanish	spoken	Sentences as samples	Volunteer's errors in training course	70 college level Salvador students
Politzer 1978	Matched guise; matched pairs	German	Spoken	60 pairs of sentences	Errors by U.S. learners of German	146 teenagers
James 1977	Linguistic classification of errors	English	Written	Written samples	Students' compositions	20 NS Teachers & 20 NNS teachers
Olsson 1973	Evaluating frequency and repetition of an error	English	spoken	Spoken samples	Oral tests presented to 240 Swedish 14-year-olds	119 NS students

As the Table (3) above shows, EG studies vary in terms of focus of study, language learned, R-text type, unit and context of error, and so on. However, there are a few very important studies relevant to the study at hand. These studies will be discussed in some more detail in the following section.

1.13.9. Error Frequency as a Criterion

As has been discussed so far, the issue of which criterion to be employed in EG studies is very much controversial as these EG studies have employed different criteria, viz. comprehensibility, intelligibility, and/or irritation, NS and/or NNS tolerance to learner errors, communication obstruction, etc. leading to more contradiction than agreement among EG analysts. However, the EG studies this section will attempt to discuss are closely related to the study at hand. These studies include Lennon (1991), Palmer (1980), Olsson (1973), Johansson (1973) and Derwing et al. (2002) which make use of *error frequency* as a criterion for expressing EG.

Lennon (1991), for instance, has done a very significant study in which he questions some very important issues related to 'error' such as problems of definition, identification and distinction. Like Ellis (1997), Lennon claims that the up-to-date interest in the study of errors including collection, description and classification is done in "a rather unprincipled way of commonly occurring errors" (Lennon op.cit:180). He is also of the view that the current studies fail to provide a working definition of error, stating that the term 'error' cannot be easily defined because there exists no perfect or appropriate criterion for doing so. He notes that even correct sentences may sometimes be judged as erroneous even

by NSs themselves as in *neither of us feels quite happy* which was judged by NSs and NNSs alike as erroneous (cf. **section 3.3.2**). Hence, he has provided "a more cautious definition of 'error' as *a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speaker counterparts"* (Lennon op.cit:182) (emphasis mine) and employed it in his study and thus briefing the way 'error' is to be defined and identified.

Lennon's study involves a panel of 6 NSs as judges aged 20-24 years who were students in British Universities and out of them 2 were male and 4 female. These judges were asked to judge the acceptability of the utterances presented to them. The data presented to the panel consist of 21,000 spoken words produced by 4 female advanced learners aged 20-24 years. He has identified about 568 errors. What has to be carefully considered in Lennon's study is that ***14 of the presented errors the judges were unable to identify and some correct sentences were judged as erroneous*** as the one mentioned above. This is also noted in our study when American respondents were unable to judge certain sentence, be they correct or incorrect (cf. **section 3.3.2**). He has also concluded with what he terms as 'type and token' errors referring to 'type' errors as those occurring in categories such as ***article use, concord*** etc. and to 'token' errors as those occurring within these categories. For instance, ***a event*** is a 'token' error whose 'type' is ***article use*** and ***she go home*** is a 'token' error whose 'type' lies within ***subject-agreement*** category. However, the most significant contribution to the study of 'error' is his providence of two dimensions of error; what he terms as 'domain' and 'extent.' The former is defined as "the rank of the linguistic unit which must be taken as context in order for the error to become apparent." The latter is defined as "the rank of linguistic unit, from minimally the morpheme to maximally the sentence, which would have to be deleted, replaced, reordered or supplied in order to repair production" (Lennon op.cit:191). Further, he has associated errors that can be described in terms of 'domain' with that of Corder (1981), namely, 'covert errors' or with that of Burt and Kiparsky (1975), namely, 'global errors.' He has also associated errors that can be described in terms of 'extent' with that of Corder (1981), namely, 'overt errors' or with that of Burt and Kiparsky (1975), namely, 'local errors.'

Lennon has also "doubted" the validity and reliability of the current EG studies. He ascertains that a great attention has to be paid to the ***frequency of an error*** that occurs in a student's language production,

be it of spoken or written type, and not to judge from the point of view of NSs or NNSs. In fact, in this view, Lennon supports what has been provided by many researchers (e.g. Galloway 1980, James 1977, 1998, Davies 1983, Sheorey 1986, Johansson 1973, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974) who maintain that native speakers are not always the norm according to whom one has to regard an utterance as incomprehensible, irritating and/or unacceptable. What Lennon is suggesting here is that instead of paying attention to a single error in a single utterance, one has to consider how many times this error is repeated by the same student and hence, supporting Palmer's (1980) argument that will be detailed below. A very remarkable emphasis that can be drawn from Lennon's study, as he stresses, is that it is the *frequency of an error* which makes an error graver or more serious than another and not merely contradictory, subjective, haphazard and irrational assessments by NNSs or even NSs. When a specific error is repeated and noticed *frequently*, it is the very error that requires scrutiny and much attention to be paid to. Lennon (1992:41) has also found that even in the case of advanced learners errors remain frequent. In this study, Lennon has four advanced learners of English as subjects who study and stay in the U.S. investigating them for a period of six months to determine whether frequency persists in advanced learners' errors. He has concluded that "despite many years of classroom instruction and ongoing exposure to the L2 community, error is still frequent."

Olsson (1973) is another study that tries to refute the existing belief that NSs and/or NNSs' judgment is the main criterion according to which an error is to be expressed as more serious than another. In her study, Olsson has questioned the premise and value of the *frequency* or repetition of an error and how important it is to take this frequency into account in order for determining the severity of such an error. Olsson's study involves 240 Swedish 14-year-olds to whom an oral test was presented. An informant test based on the most frequent types of errors was relayed in English to 119 Norwegian native students. She has also observed the distribution of certain types of errors and found that *semantic* and *omission* errors occur more frequently than others.

Focusing on the frequency of an error, Olsson has found that *was + regular inflection* of the irregular verbs is the most frequent error. This finding was supported by studies tackling German learners of English by Nickle (1972), and in studies done on children learning to speak their first language by Ervin (1964) which are both cited by her. She has also found that the progressive form is more frequently

occurring instead of passive besides the use of *were* instead of *was*. In short, the most important point to be taken into consideration from Olsson's study is that she has based the seriousness of an error on the *frequency* of such an error. She has noted that semantic deviations are more frequent than syntactic ones and hence, more serious than syntactic errors. Olsson has provided some very important pedagogical implications. In that, teachers should be more lenient to syntactic errors since they do not impede communication as semantic errors do. She has stated that "[e]rrors are to be bound to occur more frequently if the speaking practice is less strictly patterned" and so learning procedure should be patterned. She has also noted that communicative learning skills should be stressed "as a means as well as an aim of successful foreign language instruction" (Olsson op.cit:159). In fact, Olsson, has done another very comprehensive study, namely, Olsson's (1974) where she refutes the existing EG studies which are based on NSs/NNSs' reactions to L2 learner's errors. Instead, she concludes that frequency is the most appropriate criterion for assessing or expressing the seriousness of an error or a group of errors.

Based on Nickel (1971), Johansson (1973) has done a study holding that only those errors with high *frequency* of occurrence that impede communication success. In fact, Johansson has proposed an approach to error evaluation. He proposes a number of principles the most important of which is the *frequency* of an error which determines the seriousness of that error. Further, he proposes that if "the goal [of EG studies] is comprehensibility, errors which make utterances difficult or impossible to understand should be regarded as more serious than others" (Johansson op.cit:102-103) emphasising that it is the *frequency per se* that makes a particular recurrent error impede the comprehensibility or communication as this type of error is not *easy to master and it is impossible for the learner to get rid of its committing*. He, further, states that "frequency [of an error] is the main principle of evaluation" believing that frequency errors include "common words and constructions [which] are considered more serious than others." In his approach of error evaluation, Johansson holds that "it is quite clear that comprehensibility is subsidiary to frequency and generality as principle of error evaluation." What Johansson means by this is that there may be several principles such as 'comprehensibility,' 'conformity' and/or 'generality' according to which an error may be evaluated but *frequency* of such an error occupies the first position.

What is significant in Johansson's approach is that though comprehensibility and irritation may be considered to be the principles or factors used while evaluating learner errors as subsidiary criteria, these

errors should be "evaluated according to the frequency of the word or constructions (high or low) and according to the degree of generality (high or low) of the construction used; if the degree of frequency/generality is high, the error is considered to be more serious" (Johansson op.cit:106-107) but it is the otherwise if it is low.

Derwing et al. (2002) have conducted a study examining NSs and NNSs' judgments of learners' errors. This study encompasses two experiments: first, 40 NSs listened to an NNS who was a 32-year-old female Polish graduate student, reading well-formed sentences containing grammatical errors of three types, namely, NNS, egregious NS, and high frequency NS. The errors were identified and judged for gravity on a 5-point scale. Second, 20 NS experts, 20 NS non-experts, and 20 advanced proficiency NNSs listening to a female NS of Canadian English. All the groups have identified the three error types mentioned above and rated them for gravity and irritation in an aural and written tasks. NNS and NS experts outperformed non-expert NSs on high frequency NS errors, perhaps because of heightened language awareness. Thus, they have concluded that the "NNSs were significantly more irritated by high frequency of NS and NNS errors than were the NSs and considered all errors to be more serious than did the NSs" (Derwing et al. 2002:84). This actually provides a very vivid clue of how NSs judge errors and rate them for seriousness and how they differ from NNSs in such a task. This also confirms and supports the findings reached by such studies as Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) among the many others. Thus, the very significant conclusion reached by Derwing et al. (2002) is that it is error *frequency* that matters in impeding communication and hence, irritating the judges, be they NSs or NNSs.

The most significant study related to the nature of EG has been done by Palmer (1980). In this study, Palmer has questioned the inadequacy of the current EG studies arguing that the gravity of an error has to be judged and accounted for by the *frequency* of its occurrence and this is what really matters. According to Palmer, it is the recurrence of an error which determines its seriousness. He has rightly pointed out that if error analysis is to be the "practical means for teachers to share insights into the linguistic difficulties" encountering language learners, "some standardized way of expressing these insights will have to be devised…[a] mathematical means of expressing which errors are the most serious and how serious they are would be useful" (Palmer op.cit:93-94).

Palmer (1980:94) argues that "seriousness of an error is related to frequency and not to notions of communicative difficulty or globality." This is what Burt and Kiparsky (1975) have also claimed. This approach depends on statistical computation of the frequency of an error occurrence which will give the students their "communication problem and the teacher his work." He has argued that "in addition to frequency, the EG also takes into account the distribution of an error type amongst the sample of students." Taking into considerations Palmer's proposal, one feels tempted to look at the frequency of an error made by a student to be more significant than how this particular error is evaluated by NSs and/or NNSs. This is due to the fact that if one knows how frequently an error occurs, one will be able to decide and determine the remedial consequences necessary to get rid of, eliminate or at least reduce the occurrence of such an error. Further, Palmer argues that there is no point at knowing the seriousness or gravity of an error from the point of view of an NS since this error will remain but rather real seriousness or gravity of an error lies in how frequently this error is repeated. In fact, Palmer, and the present researcher agrees with him, believes that "many students make one error of a certain type is more significant than the fact that very few make many errors of a certain kind." The EG method Palmer proposes can be computed by drawing a statistical table showing error type/category, number of errors and distribution of a particular error (cf. **section 3.9**).

1.14. Conclusion

Based on these studies that are valuable and interesting, one feels that there is still a scope to improve the existing EG studies. One can also neither describe learners' errors on the basis of NS evaluations for the contradictions they impose nor can one explain them on the basis of response to manipulations of linguistic variables *per se*. Here, it is worth taking into account that if one is to conduct an EG study, one has to take into account the importance of frequency of an error or a group of errors. L2 researchers, the present researcher believes, need not involve themselves in EG studies which have no consequences that can reach the ultimate goal these studies have been set for.

The present researcher may, therefore, argue that if successful communication is the goal of the learning process and hence, the criterion, it is only the repeated error which impedes success in communication. This is, in a sense, if a learner repeats or keeps committing an error or a group of errors, he/she, undoubtedly, will commit it when communicating with NSs, NNSs and/or his/her peers and

teachers and this is only what may really irritate NSs. Psychologically speaking, an 'error' is systematic and competence-based, rule-governed and is made unconsciously, i.e. the learner is unaware of the committing of it (Corder 1967). So its recurrence (repetition) and hence, frequency is much expected as the learner thinks that what has been said by him/her is correct. From this perspective, one can infer that, as raised above, it is only the keeping-repeated error that needs scrutiny and to be paid much more attention to.

Thus, based on the above critique, this study will be different from the existing EG studies. This is due to the fact that, and as has been reviewed here, no study is in full agreement with another regarding any of the several points discussed above. However, only diversity and divergence exist among such studies. So such approaches to error evaluation and hence, correction could be considered "unfair" to the student and the teacher alike. Although interesting and valuable, one cannot depend completely on them to base an appropriate conclusion and hence, setting curricula, designing textbooks and methodologies accordingly. In fact, this study, employing the method proposed by Palmer (1980) will try to investigate the seriousness of the syntactic and semantic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the University level and thus trying to provide a universal hierarchy of error seriousness based on statistically computed procedures of the frequently occurring errors. This very property of this study comes from the fact that if 'error gravity' is obtained from a statistical computation, this procedure can be generalised and applied to any other language. That is, if an error is proved to be statistically more serious or severe than any other, such findings can be extended and applied to any other language. To sum up, the seriousness of an error will be obtained by means of statistical computations, focusing on how often a particular error or a group of errors frequently occurs and upon which the seriousness and/or severity of such errors will be based.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Introduction

Language acquisition takes place through two main phases, viz. pre-linguistic and linguistic. The pre-linguistic phase constitutes the basis for the linguistic one. Thus, the pre-linguistic phase begins when infants employ a variety of nonlinguistic means of attention-directing and attention-sharing, including among other things pointing to interesting events and holding up objects to show them to other people. In fact, these species-specific communicative behaviours set the stage for language acquisition by establishing the "referential triangle," i.e. *me¸ you* and *object,* within which all the future linguistic communication, viz. the linguistic phase, will take place. After their birth, children begin to make their first serious attempts to acquire and use "pieces" of a conventional language (Tomasello 2007:1092-1093). These attempts are not aimed at learning words, quite simply because infants at this age do not know what words are (Cook 1991). They are aimed at learning the communicative behaviours, namely, utterances by means of which adults attempt to manipulate other persons' attention. Children, thus, learn first to comprehend and produce whole utterances they have heard other people using, though they may do this initially in a child-like form, i.e. they may learn just one part of the adult's utterance to express the entire communicative intention. This has been referred to as one-word stage (Mitchell and Myles 1998). Over time, children then learn to extract from these utterances words and other functionally significant "pieces" of language for future use as constituents in other utterances.

Chomsky (1968:100) holds that to study human language is to approach what is called "the human essence, the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to [humans]" because knowledge of language may be the most abstract piece of knowledge. One way to account for how children acquire their L1 in an early age when they are unable to grasp abstract concepts lies within Universal Grammar (UG) which holds that there is an underlying predisposition in the human brain which enables children to acquire language in that early age as opposed to ***behaviourism*** which sees LA as a matter of ***habit formation***. Whether the same view is extended to account for SLA is still a matter of controversy and hot debate. One UG-based hypothesis is that while UG principles remain available through life, post-critical-period learners have no access to UG parameters unless these have previously

been "triggered" by L1 input (Hawkins and Chan 1997). In addition, other SLA theories such as *Cognitivism, Interactionism* and *Acculturationism* have also dealt with SLA and each expresses its own perspective regarding when, where and how a SL is acquired. From a pedagogical perspective, studies in SLA have made language teachers and curriculum designers aware that language learning consists of more than rule-memorisation but rather rule-formulation, more importantly, perhaps, it involves learning to express communicative needs. In fact, the details of this new conceptualisation of language learning have resulted in methodologies which emphasise communication success rather than linguistic accuracy.

2.2. Second Language Acquisition

In SLA, there are many more questions unanswered than those answered. The SLA process takes place when there is an already existent language in the brain. In fact, studying SLA has been attempted by a great number of linguists and researchers. Every researcher or linguist has tackled it from the perspective he/she sees appropriate and defined it accordingly. For instance, Ellis (1997:3) tracing the development of the field holds that SLA is the "systematic study of how people acquire a second language" belonging only to the 2nd half of the 20th century. He adds that SLA emergence is not accidentally in this time but because of "the Global Village" and "the World Wide Web" when communication among people has expanded beyond their local speech communities. It is because of these fast and vast changes all over the globe, it has been necessary to learn a second language. Other researchers (e.g. Gass and Selinker 2008, Brown 1994, Chun 1980, Schachter 1996) maintain several reasons behind SLA the most salient of which is getting closer to the "Other" culturally, socially, economically and so forth. What can be implied here is that SLA involves learning any language "subsequent" to the first language of the learner. Ellis (1997) holds that second language in this sense does not contrast with 'foreign' language. What Ellis means by this is that there is *no difference* between to learn a language in a natural setting and to learn a language in the classroom. Ellis's view of SLA contrasts considerably with the view held by Krashen who strongly argues for an inevitable difference between SLA and SLL (cf. Krashen 1981, 1982). In this way, SLA can be understood as learning any language other than the native language the learner already possesses.

Saville-Troike (2006:2-3) sees SLA as referring "both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language" holding that the language to be acquired subsequently may be second, third,

fourth, etc. She adds that language can be acquired in a formal or an informal setting without distinguishing between learning and acquisition. In this view, Saville-Troike supports Cook's (2003) and Ellis's (1997) views of SLA and contrasts with Krashen's (1981). According to her, there are two types of acquisition, viz. formal and informal. The former occurs when, for instance, a Russian student takes a class in Arabic and vice versa and the latter occurs when an Arab child is brought to Japan and hence, "picks up" Japanese when he/she attends school and plays with his/her Japanese peers. So for the latter to take place, communication is a necessary step in the acquisition process while for the former "specialized instruction" is maintained. Apart from this, she questions three basic issues central to SLA, viz. a) the exact knowledge L2 learners come to know, b) the way in which such a learner acquires this knowledge, and c) the reasons behind the native speaker-like acquisition by some but not by all L2 learners. She believes that there is no complete consensus among SLA researchers regarding such phenomena ascribing such controversy to the different methodologies applied in studying SLA which are different in nature and that researchers who study SLA come "from academic disciplines which differ greatly in theory and research methods."

Gass and Selinker (2008:xv-5), who take a multidisciplinary approach to the study of SLA, hold that SLA is a field "about which everyone seems to have an opinion." What this implies is that like Saville-Troike (2006), Gass and Selinker point out, on the one hand, to the complexity underlying defining SLA and that there is no consensus among SLA researchers as to how to study it, on the other hand. They hold that to define SLA is to "state what it is not." In addition, to them, SLA is not a simple field but rather a complex one "whose focus [is understanding] the processes underlying the learning of a second language." SLA, in Gass and Selinker's view, refers to the process of learning a language after L1 of the learner is being acquired. What can be considered an addition introduced by Gass and Selinker to the field of SLA study is that they have used the term *acquisition* as referring to *acquiring* or *using* a second or foreign language. In addition, they hold that there is a strong relationship between L2 acquisition and L1, i.e. L1 acquisition underlies the basis of SLA and that many questions put forth by SL research stem from the same questions in child LA. From a pedagogical perspective, they see SLA as a process making "language teachers and curriculum designers aware that language learning consists of more than rule memorization [and that]…it involves learning to express communicative needs."

Dulay et al, (1982:3-6) hold that SLA "can be excited and productive ….or painful and useless." What they mean by this is that it is "[o]ne's efforts [that] can end in the acquisition of native-fluency or a stumbling repertoire of sentences soon forgotten." They have ascribed this difference to the role of the learner in acquiring the new language and that of the teacher who teaches it. The learner does not need particular "inborn talent" to be successful in learning that language. Rather, what the learner and teacher need is only to "*do it right*." (emphasis mine). Further, Dulay et al. hold that it is Chomsky who has "upset the prevailing belief that language is learned by imitating, memorizing and being rewarded for saying the correct things."

Now, an issue worth addressing is whether or not L1 and L2 acquisitions are related, similar and/or different. In fact, many SLA researchers have tackled this issue. For instance, Chun (1980:287) maintains that there is a similarity between L1 and L2 acquisition which is that "both processes result in a language system" which is not like that of the adult or native speaker's norm (see **section 2.12**). In addition, learners of both systems progress through a series of stages by means of internalising rules about each linguistic system and making use of them in their production (Schumann 1983, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Larsen-Freeman 1991, 2000, Sato 1985). Further, Brown (1973), in his morpheme studies, has shown that learners of L1 and L2 develop through similar stages. He has concluded that and as far as English as SL is concerned, acquiring the plural morpheme *–s/-es* or the past morpheme *-ed*, L1 and L2 learners pass through similar stages. However, L1 and L2 are still different in many ways. As stated so far, L1 acquisition takes place when learners are still young enough to deal with such an abstract process which involves internalising linguistic structures and rules. L1 takes place when the brain is "empty" but L2 comes while there is an existent language in the brain. Further, L2 learners are different and find themselves in very different situations more than children learning their L1. Many researchers (e.g. Han 2004, Dulay et al. 1982, Gass and Selinker 2008) point out that L2 learners are older and smarter, already have some knowledge of at least one language, and probably have a very different motivation for learning L2 than they did for learning their L1. Thus, the most salient two differences between L1 and L2 learners are related to *age* and *previous linguistic knowledge* which have generated considerable research and controversy. In short, SLA is a complex process that has not been fully accounted for yet, there are as many questions remaining as there are many facts that have been discovered.

2.3. Second Language Acquisition Theories

Acquiring an L1 is something every child does successfully in a matter of a few years and without the need for formal lessons. However, L2 acquisition seems to be of a mysterious and controversial nature; probably no other topic has aroused such a controversy. Many researchers (e.g. Towell and Hawkins 1994) hold that such issues as how people acquire a second language in addition to the already existing one they possess, when, where and what factors that affect such a process have been the main concern investigated by a great number of researchers and have been the main focus of theoretical linguists, applied linguists, researchers and even teachers in such a field. In SLA literature, there are several theories the most influential of which are *Behaviourism, Mentalism, Cognitivism, Interactionism* and *Acculturationism*. Such theories have attempted to account for how SLA process takes place. These theories will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.3.1. Behaviourism

In the 50s and early 60s of the 20th century, *behaviourism*, a psycholinguistic approach to language acquisition, was dominating the learning-teaching scene. In the behaviourist view, (Bloomfield 1933, Skinner 1957), language acquisition is seen as any other type of learning, i.e. as the *formation of habits*. This view, in fact, has initiated from work in psychology which sees the learning of any kind of behaviour as being based on the notions of *stimulus-response-reinforcement*. In this view, human beings have been regarded as being exposed to numerous stimuli in their environment. The responses they give to such stimuli will be reinforced if successful, that is if some desired linguistic outcome is obtained. Thus, L1 acquisition, from a behaviourist perspective, involves a process of learning a set of *habits* as humans respond to any stimuli in their environment.

However, L2 acquisition, according to the behaviourist language theory, is seen as running into problems because L2 learners have already a set of well established responses in their L1. In fact, behaviourists view L2 acquisition as involving replacing the old linguistic sets of *habits* with new ones and thus the behaviourists believe that L2 acquisition consists of learners imitating what they hear and develop *habits* in the L2 they are learning by *routine practice*. In this view, L2 learners are thought to relate what they know of their L1 to what they recognise in the L2 which results in *language transfer*, including both *positive* and *negative* transfer (see **section 2.8**) where the latter results in errors. In fact,

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such errors result from using *habits* of L1 in L2 especially those which do not exist in L2. What happens here is that those old linguistic *habits* will intervene either *facilitating* or *disfacilitating* the acquisition process. In other words, when the L1 structures are the same as those of L2, acquisition will take place without any difficulty but if not, it will be the otherwise. (Lado 1957:58-59) further describes such a process saying "[w]e know from the observation of many cases that the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language….we have here the major sources of difficulty or ease in learning the foreign language…Those structures that are similar will be easy to learn… [and] those structures that are different will be difficult."

On the other hand, behaviourism as a theory or approach to language acquisition has been attacked and criticised. This criticism has been initiated when linguistics has witnessed a shift from structural linguistics that was based on the description of the surface structure of large corpus of language to generative linguistics. Generative linguistics has emphasised the *rule-governed* and *creative* nature of human languages. The pioneer of this shift was Chomsky who proposed this thesis in his *Syntactic Structures* in 1957. In fact, Chomsky criticised Skinner's book *The Verbal Behaviour* (1957) which was a critique of not only Skinner's views but also of behaviourism as a whole. In Chomsky's own words, "I had intended this review not specifically as a criticism of Skinner's speculations regarding language, but rather as a more general critique of behaviorist (I would now prefer to say "empiricist") speculation as to the nature of higher mental processes"(Chomsky 1959:26). He argues that children acquiring their L1 do not by any means learn and produce a large set of sentences (i.e. corpus). Rather, they create sentences they have never learned and/or heard before. What they do is internalise rules rather than strings of words (Chomsky 1965, 1968). He further argues that if children learn language by imitation, then how it is that they produce sentences like *Tom goed* and *it breaked* which they have never heard or come across. This, in fact, shows that children are not copying, or in *parrot-like* imitating*,* language from their environment but applying rules. In fact, Chomsky was upset by the idea of comparing the behaviour of rats in labs learning to perform simple tasks to that of children learning a language which involves complexity and abstraction.

Pedagogically, behaviourist approach has twofold implications: behaviourists strongly believe that *practice makes perfect*, i.e. learning will take place by imitating and repeating the same structure time

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after time and teaching should focus on difficult structures, viz. those L2 structures that are different from those of L1. Therefore, the behaviourist approach leads to comparisons between L1 and L2 to find out the points of difference so as to make teaching address those differences in which the difficulty lies. This actually has been termed as Contrastive Analysis (see **section 2.7**).

2.3.2. Mentalism

As has been stated above, the behaviourist view of language learning was, to some extent, not adequate because of its failure to account for the occurrence of language which was not in the input learners are exposed to. Therefore, researchers attempt to look towards an alternative theoretical framework (Long 1983, 2003). Here, researchers have abandoned looking at 'nurture,' i.e. how environmental factors shape learning but they look at 'nature,' i.e. the role of innate properties of human mind in shaping learning. This new paradigm is referred to as mentalist or nativist in orientation. In the mentalist theoretical framework of LA, there are many things emphasised like the fact that only human beings are capable of learning language. In that, the human mind is equipped with a faculty for language learning, i.e. LAD and input is needed but only to "trigger" the operation of the language acquisition device (Ellis 1997).

Now, taking the complexity and abstraction of language to which Chomsky has provided examples such as the rules underlying the formation of wh-questions in any language and the use of reflexive pronouns in English, (Chomsky 1968), one feels embarrassed by the quick acquisition of these given the limited input the children are exposed to. This has been termed as the ***poverty of stimulus*** (Cook 1991) and referred to by Chomsky as *Plato's Problem* which explains the difference between what a child knows and his/her lack of experience as input. Chomsky (1987) adds that there are too complex linguistic structures that cannot be learned so quickly from the environment. To explain such a phenomenon, Chomsky holds that children have an innate faculty which is responsible for and guide children to master these complex linguistic rules in an early age. When children hear stretches of speech around them, they are, as Chomsky claims, programmed to discover the linguistic rules underlying such stretches. Muma (1986:xii) has noted that the mentalist theory of SLA is characterised by (i) the structure of language modular, i.e. it has its own unique formal properties, distinct from those of other domains such as cognition and perception. (ii) These properties are innate, part of a unique faculty commonly referred to as

the LAD. (iii) Acquisition can be conceptually viewed as instantaneous in the sense that these properties will appear in the child in their adult state with virtually no change over time. In fact, this leads Chomsky to propose his UG theory.

2.3.2.1. Universal Grammar

Most researchers and linguists argue that knowledge of language may be the most abstract piece of knowledge. However, Mitchell and Myles (1998), Schachter (1988, 1996), White (1996, 2003), Radford (2004), Cook (1983, 2003) among others hold that children acquire their L1 in an early age when they have difficulty to grasp abstract concepts. Then, how to account for this lies within UG theory which ascertains that there is an underlying predisposition in the human brain which enables children to acquire language in that early stage. This biologically endowed UG would make the task of acquisition facing children easier. The role of UG in children's acquisition, as mentalists believe, lies in equipping children in advance with a clear set of specifications about the shape language will take. Mitchell and Myles (1998) hold that this could explain why different languages of the world are strikingly similar in many aspects. In addition, it may well explain the fact that any child of any L1 would acquire any language provided that he/she is exposed to sufficient and efficient input of such a language. For instance, a Chinese child can acquire Arabic if he/she is exposed to sufficient and efficient Arabic input. The mere explanation for this is that there is a set of UG rules predisposed innately in the child's mind. SLA researchers like White (1989, 2003) hold that L2 acquisition process, like that of L1, is dominated by UG. She sees UG as part of an innate biologically endowed language faculty. Thus, Chomsky defines UG as "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages not merely by accident but by necessity" Chomsky (1975:29). It "is taken to be a characterization of the child's prelinguistic initial state" (Chomsky 1981:7).

UG, according to researchers (e.g. Chomsky 1965, 1981, White 1992, 1996, 2003, Schachter 1988, Cook 1983, Cook and Newson 2007, Gregg 1996, Hawkins, 2001), consists of principles and parameters. Principles are language-universal whereas parameters are language-specific. According to Mitchell and Myles (1998:33) the principles of UG "specify some limited possibilities of variation" such as the ***structure-dependency*** which specifies that language is highly "organised in such a way that it crucially depends on the structural relationships between elements in the sentence." In fact, this principle seems to

hold true for all languages all over the globe which are hierarchically organised in terms of phrases such as NP, VP, AP, etc. Parameters, on the other hand, are language specific, i.e. every language chooses from a set of available two possibilities. To put it the other way around, if all languages had the same parameters, they, then, would have worked similarly. An example of these language-specific parameters is the *head-position* parameter. This parameter specifies the relationship between the *head* in a phrase and its complement. For instance, English and Arabic are *head-first* languages whereas Japanese and Tamil are *head-last* languages. What this means, actually, is that while in English and Arabic the *head* of a phrase, be it NP, VP, PP, etc. comes first, in Japanese and Tamil the *head* of such phrases comes last. In fact, we will not delve deeply in discussing such properties of UG as this is beyond the scope and limit of this study. However, for the purpose of the study at hand so as to make the idea clearer, Figure (1) below illustrates the issues in question.
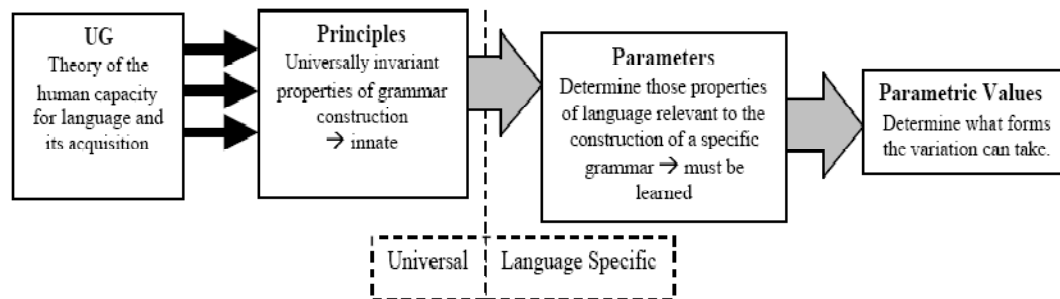
Figure (1): UG Principles and Parameters based on Hawkins (2001:355)

However, this does not mean that what has been expressed by *menatlism* is absolutely true. There are many scholars, for instance, the psychologist, Bruner (1983), who maintains that while there is, as Chomsky suggests, a LAD, there must also be a LASS (see **section 2.3.4**). Bruner holds that Chomsky appears to reduce language to its grammar. He seems to regard meaning as a secondary element. For instance, Chomsky's famous phrase *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously* may be considered as part of the English language, for it is syntactically well-formed, and therefore worthy of study by Transformational Grammarians. A sentence such as *My brother, she no cook food*, on the other hand, is of no interest to the Chomskyan school. In fact, what Chomsky does is disregard meaning and hence, the social situation in which language is normally produced. Specifically, Chomsky disregards the situation in which the child learns his/her L1 albeit somewhere else he attributes very little to environment in language acquisition as has been noted by (Cook 1983, Cook and Newson, 2007). Cook and Newson (2007) hold

that it is this reciprocal and affective nature of language that Chomsky appears to leave out of his hypotheses. By the same token, Macnamara (1972) and Carroll (1999) add that children, rather than having an *in-built* language device, have an innate capacity to read meaning into social situations. Supporting Macnamara and Carroll, Kivinen and Ristela (2003) state that it is this capacity that makes children capable of understanding language, and therefore learning it with ease, rather than only LAD.

2.3.3. Cognitivism

Cognitive theory has been initiated by Piaget which views SLA as a ***cognitive*** process. McLaughlin (1987) holds that SLA is a matter of two concepts, viz. ***automaticity*** and ***restructuring***. Automaticity implies that to learn an L2 is to learn a ***skill*** because language must be practiced since it involves internal representations that guide performance. Humans have the ability to process information but this ability is limited, so, to be efficient, the processing has to become ***automatic***. ***Automaticity***, in principle, implies that we must integrate a series of sub-skills that have to become ***automatised***. McLaughlin (1987:133-135) sees memory as being composed of "complexly interassociated" nodes (the complexity increases as learning progresses) containing information. These nodes become activated either through *automatic processing,* viz. appropriate input releases learned responses which are stored in long-term memory after enough training or through ***controlled processing***, i.e. where all the attention of the subject is required since it does not involve learned responses. The use of controlled processes normally leads to ***automaticity***. Gass and Selinker (2008:230-237) see ***automaticity*** as referring to "control over one's linguistic knowledge." They add that "in language performance, one must bring together a number of *skills* from perceptual, cognitive, and social domains. The more each of these *skills* is routinied, the greater the ease with which they can be put to use." In addition, there are a number of ways that automaticity can be conceptualised but the most central of these is that there is fast, unconscious, and effortless processing. When there has been a consistent and regular association between a certain kind of input and some output pattern, automatisation may result; that is, an associative connection is activated. Thus, it is the automaticity of controlled processes that regulate the information from short-term memory to long-term memory through ***information processing***.

The second concept within the cognitive framework of information processing is that of ***restructuring*** which takes place when *qualitative* changes occur in a learner's internal representation of

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the SL or in the change in the use of procedures—generally from inefficient to efficient. In terms of child language acquisition, McLaughlin (1990:117) describes *restructuring* as "characterized by discontinuous or qualitative change as the child moves from stage to stage in development. Each new stage constitutes a new internal organization and not merely the addition of new structural elements." In addition, McLaughlin (op.cit:139) states that cognitive theory of SLA is inductive, "like any other complex cognitive skill [that] involves the gradual integration of sub-skills as controlled processes" initially predominate and then become automatic. Thus, the initial stages of learning involve the development of skills and the gradual elimination of errors as the learner attempts to automatise aspects of performance. Several researchers (e.g. Muma 1986, McLaughlin 1990, Gass and Selinker 2008) agree that a natural order exists in SLA, i.e. certain structures are acquired before others reflecting the fact that learning is gradual. To conclude, it is obvious that *cognitivism*, to some extent, incorporates both behaviourism and mentalism agreeing with the mentalists that children must make use of innate knowledge but disagrees about its nature. In other words, *cognitivism*, on the one hand, admits the active processing by the learner, and on the other hand, attaches much importance to the input and the interaction between internal and external factors in SLA.

2.3.4. Interactionism

Interactionism as a theory of LA arouses when (Bruner 1983), criticising Chomsky's LAD, proposes *Language Acquisition Supporting System*, i.e. LASS. What Burner means by this is that the family and "entourage" of the child play a central role in the acquisition process. Farther, Pinker (1995:33-35) looks closely at the way a child interacts with the adults around him/her and he has found that adults constantly provide opportunities for him/her to acquire his/her L1 and hence, it is not merely LAD that enables children to learn a language. Parents provide "ritualised scenarios' - the ceremony of having a bath, eating a meal, getting dressed, or playing a game- in which the phases of interaction are rapidly recognised and predicted by the infant." It is within such clear and emotionally charged contexts that the child first becomes aware of the way in which language is used. In addition, Pinker (1989) ascertains that the parents' utterances are themselves "ritualized," and accompany the activity in predictable and comprehensible ways. Gradually, the child moves from a passive position to an active one, taking over the movements of the caretaker, and, eventually, the language as well.

In fact, Chomsky's ideas have been and continue to be enormously influential. Since the late 1950s, there has been an explosion of research into children's language, some of which has been aimed at finding evidence to support Chomsky's ideas (Masataka 1998). Other research has been aimed at finding counter-evidence for his ideas or evidence for different approaches. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Ferguson 1964, Foster-Cohen 1999, Snow 1986, 1995) hold that research into *motherese* or *Child Directed Speech* (CDS) and the early social interaction between mothers and babies was a response, at least in part, to Chomsky's view that the *poverty of the stimulus*, viz. the fact that real speech contains numerous hesitations, false starts and grammatical errors, makes it impossible for children to acquire a system as abstract and complex as human language without some prior *inborn* knowledge about the way it works. However, as far as SLA is concerned, *interactionism* postulates that interaction between L2 learners and their native interlocutors makes language learning process easier and far stable, providing the L2 learners with the sufficient input in L2 which will make such learners develop their linguistic, communicative and strategic competence in L2.

2.3.5. Acculturationism

Acculturationism, a sociolinguistic approach to SLA, has been defined by Thornbury (2006) as "the process by which a person integrates into a particular culture." SLA researchers (e.g. Schumann 1978, McLaughlin 1987) have claimed that success in SLA has a lot to do with the learner's degree of acculturation into the second language culture. In that, Schumann (1978) believes that Alberto's pidginised IL is due to his social isolation and his lack of any apparent desire or need to acculturate. In other words, Alberto does not feel any expressive needs to proceed acquiring English simply because the amount of language he possesses satisfy his actual needs to communicate with his interlocutors. Thus, the acculturation hypothesis was one of the first theories of SLA which attempt to prioritise social factors over purely cognitive ones and although ignored for a number of years, it has been now partly rehabilitated under the name socialisation.

McLaughlin (1987:109) states that *acculturationism* as a theory of SLA emphasises "sociolinguistic and social psychological factors" in addition to purely linguistic ones. He adds that several researchers and applied linguists investigating SLA without formal instructions got stuck by the relationship between social psychological acculturation and degree of success in learning L2. According

to several researchers (e.g. McLaughlin 1987, Schumann 1978, 1990, Mitchell and Myles 1998) among others, language is viewed as constantly changing over time. In that, there is a "dynamic paradigm" which contrasts with "static paradigm" maintained by structuralism and the transformational approach. Thus, the focus on pidgin-creole communities is consistent with the dynamic view because language change in these contexts is variable and accelerated. McLaughlin (1987:110) describes *acculturation* as involving modification in attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. These modifications require not only the addition of new elements to an individual's background but also the elimination of certain previous elements and the reorganisation of others. Thus, the overall process of *acculturation* demands both social and psychological adaptation and thus part of this process involves learning the appropriate linguistic habits to function within the L2 group.

The relationship between acculturation and SLA has been characterised by Schumann (1978:34) stating that SLA is "just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language." As such, acculturation and hence, SLA is "determined by the degree of social and psychological distance, between the learner and L2 culture" (McLaughlin 1987:110). McLaughlin adds that the social distance pertains to the individual as a member of the social group being in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. It is the result of such factors as *domination vs. subordination, assimilation vs. adaptation vs. preservation enclosure, size, congruence* and *attitude.* However, *psychological distance* is the result of various affective factors concerning the learner as an individual such as *resolution of language shock and culture stress, integrative vs. instrumental motivation* etc. Further, according to Schumann (1978), *acculturation theory* sees SLA as just one part of adapting to a new culture, namely, the L2 group culture to which the L2 learner will acculturate.

Schumann (1978:29) has identified or defined two types of acculturation stating that "[i]n type one of acculturation, the learner is socially integrated with the TL group and, as a result, develops sufficient contact with TL speakers to enable him to acquire the TL." Further, the learner is psychologically open to the L2 such that input to which he/she is exposed becomes intake. Type two of acculturation has all the characteristics of type one, but in this case the learner regards the L2 "speakers as a reference group whose life styles and values he consciously or unconsciously desires to adopt. Both types of acculturation are

sufficient to cause acquisition of the TL, but the distinction is made to stress that social and psychological contact with the TL group is the essential component in acculturation (as it relates to SLA) that that adoption of the life style and values of the TL group (characteristics traditionally associated with the notion of acculturation) is not necessary for successful acquisition of the TL."

Thus, the **acculturation** theory, as characterised by many researchers (e.g. McLaughlin 1987, Chumann 1978), is concerned with the issue of why L2 learners, unlike L1 learners, often fail to gain native or native-like proficiency in L2. In fact, an explanation to this phenomenon within **acculturation theory** is given in terms of "distance" discussed above. In that, the L2 learners may get cut off from exposure to L2 native speakers and hence, to the necessary input because of social "distance" and/or because of the psychological "distance." Accordingly, the learner's development fossilises and hence, no development will take place in their IL (see **section 2.13**). Central to **acculturation theory** of SLA are the notions of **pidginisation** and **creolisation**. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.3.5.1 Pidginisation

Schumann (1978:40) sees the importance of acculturation as deriving from the phenomena of pidginisation and creolisation. He states that pidginisation "occurs when speakers of different languages come into limited contact and when an auxiliary vehicle of communication develops to facilitate interaction between them." In fact, acculturation produces a pidginised IL characterised by simplifications such as the loss of inflectional morphology and the elimination of certain grammatical transformations and this has been observed in the case of Alberto. Schumann believes that it was Alberto's lack of acculturation that causes his pidginised IL. Alberto's lack of acculturation lies in the fact that he used to work at night having no TV and no native English speaker to converse with. Thus, Alberto's pidginised form of English has been characterised by uniform negative **no** which has been used for most negative utterances, questions **were not formed**, auxiliaries **were lacking**, possessives **were uninflected**, verbs were **not marked** for tense and subject pronouns were **often deleted**.

In addition, Schumann (1990) holds that a pidgin is a hybrid language of two or more languages. It is a simplified language that develops as a means of communication between two or more groups that do not have a language in common and which results as a consequence of second language development

under conditions of limited acculturation. Further, Schumann has elaborated the pidginisation model arguing that social and psychological distance from the target language group causes persistence of pidginisation in the speech of a SL learner. Some researchers (e.g. Naro 1978, Schumann 1978, 1990, Holm 2004, Faraclas 1996, Ushioda 1993) among others maintain that there are several purposes for which a pidgin is created among the most salient of which are of a commercial, political and social nature. The following are examples of Nigerian English Pidgin taken from (Faraclas 1996:5-7)

Dèm tok 'Wì layk yù.'   *'They said, "We like you."*

Dèm tok dèm layk mì.   *'They told me that they like me.'*

Dèm tel mi watîng dèm chop.   *'They told me what they ate.'*

Yù go maket.   *'You went to the market.'*

Abi yù go makèt ?   *'Did you go to the market?'*

Prâmeri na klas.   *'Primary is a class (in grade school).'*

Abi prâmeri nà klàs ?   *'Is primary a grade school class?'*

Prâmeri nà klas àbi ?   *'Primary, is it a class?' OR 'Is primary a class?'*

2.3.5.2 Creolisation

Schumann (1978:40-41) states that "[w]hen a pidgin becomes the native language of a group of speakers, it is called a creole." In other words, a creole is a stable language that originates seemingly as a nativised pidgin of a group of speakers. Schumann adds that in the process of creolisation "the former pidgin complicates and expands so that it functions not just as an auxiliary vehicle of communication but as genuine native language of a particular group. However, the complication and expansion that takes place in creolisation is not goal directed." In addition, Hummel (1990:2) holds that a creole as a language "arises when a pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a speech community." Unlike pidgin, a creole is a comprehensive language that is capable of expressing all communicative needs of the speakers. Its development includes both communicative and developmental processes. Any development on the part of the creole towards the standard form of the language is socially motivated and not communicatively determined. Naro (1978) states that creolisation serves as a model for the later stages of SLA. To conclude, English based creoles are found in such areas as the Bayhamas, Hamica, Barbados, Triniada, the

English-speaking Windward and Leeward Islands, in South Africa and so on. The following are some examples exemplifying West African English Creole taken from Hopper and Traugott (2003:216-217):

Mi bai di buk   *I bought the book(that you already know about)*

Bi bai wan buk   *I bought a (particular) book*

mi neva sii notn in dat bilin   *I never saw anything in that building*

mi witnis da wid mi ai wo gaad gi mi…   *I witness that with my eyes that God give me…the cousin*
dii kozn

Pieter taiga en pikin taki/dati/fu   *Pieter told his child to open the door.*
a sa opo na doro

2.4. Second Language Acquisition Models

In SLA literature, there have been several models that try to account for how second languages are acquired. However, three most influential models will be briefly discussed here. In fact, the models looked at below have tackled SLA from a different perspective each. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.4.1. Spolsky's Model

Spolsky (1989) has proposed a model in which he integrates various conditions for L2 acquisition to take place. This model is based on preference rules in which cognitive processes play an important role. In Spolsky's view, three types of conditions apply to SLL: necessary conditions, gradient conditions, and typicality conditions. A necessary condition is one that is required for learning to occur. Necessary conditions in SLA include TL input, motivation and practice opportunities. The gradient condition is one in which the more frequently the condition occurs, the more likely learning is to take place. The third type of conditions is one that typically, but not necessarily assists learning. An example of a typicality condition might be of risk taking; thus, outgoing personality tends to be of a good language learner as a rule (O'Malley and Chamot 1990). Thus, Figure (2) below summarises Spolsky's model where social context leads to attitudes of several kinds which in turn constitute motivation for the learner to learn a language. This motivation is integrated with some personal characteristics of the learner such as age, personality, previous knowledge and so on until the acquisition has been attained.
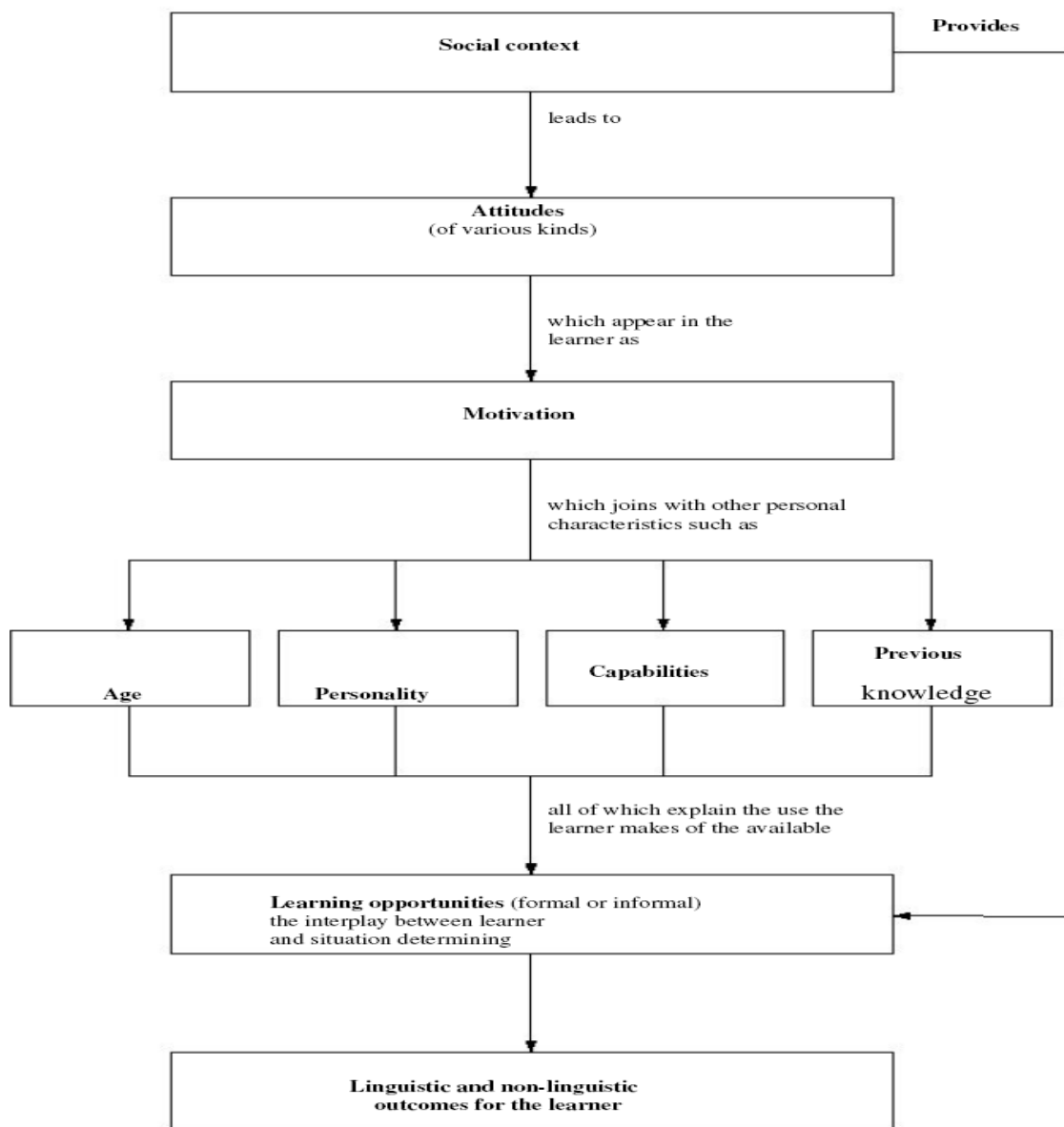
Figure(2): Spolsky's Model of Second Language Acquisition. Source: (Spolsky 1989:28)

2.4.2. Ellis's Model

Ellis (1993) provides a model for L2 acquisition in which a weak interface position is incorporated. As can be seen in Figure (3) below, input, intake, and implicit L2 knowledge are distinguished. Input, for instance, refers to the samples of the L2 that the learner is exposed to as a result of the contact with the language in communication (oral and written). Formal instruction can also provide input, i.e. general exposure to the L2. Intake, however, indicates the linguistic properties in the input to which the learner is attended. Not all of these properties will be immediately incorporated into the learner's IL system; only those features that are finally incorporated become implicit knowledge of the L2. Further, the model shows that implicit knowledge can be internalised in two ways. The main way is by

deriving intake from the input. A secondary way is directly from the explicit knowledge that is learned through formal instructions.
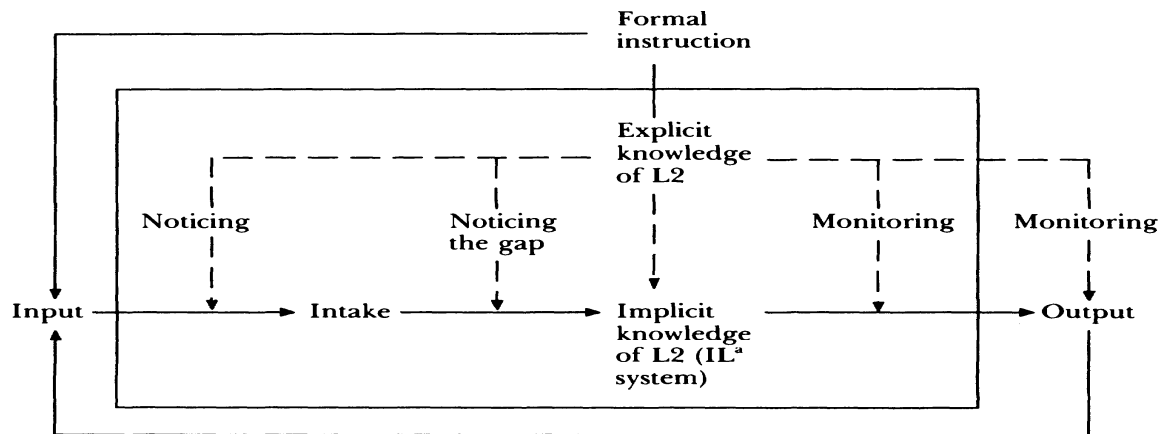
Figure (3): Ellis's Model of Second Language Acquisition. Source: (Ellis 1993:97)

2.4.3. Krashen's Monitor Model

Krashen's model of SLA encompasses five modules or hypotheses. The first is the ***Acquisition-Learning Distinction*** which states that adults have two different ways to develop competence in a SL, viz. *language acquisition* and *language learning*. According to Krashen (1982:10-27), there are many differences between ***learning*** and ***acquisition*** the most important of which are (i) ***acquisition*** takes place in informal settings where the input is authentic whereas ***learning*** takes place in formal settings such as classrooms. (ii) ***Acquisition*** is a subconscious process whereas ***learning*** is a conscious one. The second module is the ***Natural Order Hypothesis*** in which Krashen claims that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late, regardless of the L1 of the speaker. In the third, viz. ***Monitor Hypothesis***, Krashen states that the language that one has subconsciously acquired initiates learners' utterances in a SL and is responsible for their fluency whereas the language that learners have consciously learned acts as an editor in situations where the learner has enough time to edit, is focused on form, and knows the rule, such as on a grammar test in a language classroom or when carefully writing a composition.

Krashen's fourth module is ***Input Hypothesis*** which states that a language acquirer who is at "level i" must receive comprehensible input, that is at "level i+1." Krashen's fifth hypothesis of the model is the ***Affective Filter Hypothesis*** which states that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative role in

SLA. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in SLA and vice versa. Figure(4) below illustrates Krashen's model of SLA. This model, Cook (1996) claims, incorporates a combination model of acquisition and production.
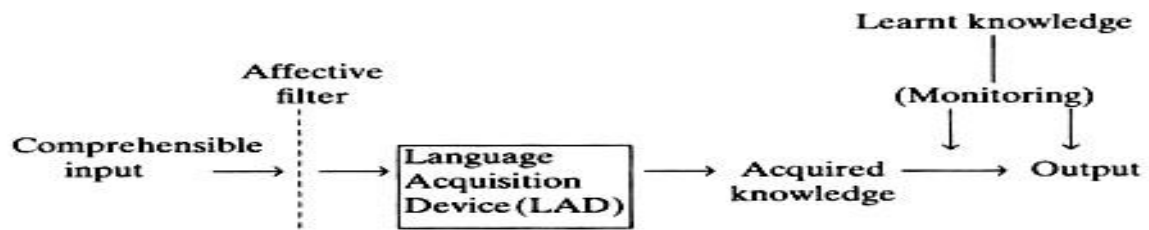
Figure (4): Krashen's Model of Second Language Acquisition, adopted from (Krashen1982:32)

2.5. Competence and Performance

If a learner's production closely reflects L2 norms of speaking, can't it be assumed that the learner's competence is manifested in his/her performance? It seems that this question is difficult to answer. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Clark 1974, Brown 2004) warn about the dangers of 'performing without competence' where a learner uses correct chunks of the language without analysis, giving the impression that the norm has been attained. Conversely, Sharwood-Smith (1986) points out that it is equally possible that a learner may have 100% competence but 90% performance, i.e. 'competence without performance.' For example, a rule may be 'acquired' (competence) without showing itself due to semantic redundancy or because of processing problems. Further, a learner may be able to hear the sound very clearly and know that it is the correct phonological representation of /θ/ in the word ***think***, nevertheless, produces the sound **/ð/** instead Sharwood-Smith (1986). In addition, Radford (2004:2) states that "[v]ery often, performance is an imperfect reflection of competence." This clearly rejects the simplistic notion that performance reflects competence and hence, the answer to the question raised above. Thus, the most related types of competence to SLA will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.5.1. Linguistic Competence and Performance

Cook (1996) holds that two scholars having helped structure what we think about language today are Saussure and Chomsky. Saussure, for instance, studies the relationship between many terms frequently

used in the literature such as *langue-parole*. Chomsky investigates *competence-performance* relationship. Chomsky (1965:3) first draws the distinction between competence and performance as a "[l]inguistic theory is primary concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of language in actual performance." In addition, performance can be simply defined as the production and understanding of utterances in particular languages in concrete situations (Cook 1996, Schachter 1996).

However, Chomsky rejects Saussure's concept of *langue* as merely a systematic inventory of items and returns rather to a more traditional conception of underlying competence as a rule-governed system of generative processes (Chomsky 1965:4). The distinction between the use and the product of the language system can be identified as the former with what Chomsky calls performance, viz. the use of language in concrete situations and the latter with what Saussure calls *parole*. A question to be raised here is how linguistic competence is acquired or stored in the brain? To answer such a question, therefore, competence must be distinguished from performance and the directionality of the relations of presupposition of dependency within this trichotomy (Alptekin 2002). In fact, the acquisition of linguistic competence allows for the possibility that the acquisition of competence is partly or even wholly dependent on performance. However, to distinguish between sentences as abstract theoretical entities and sentences as the products of utterance is to introduce what is arguably a false distinction between grammar and language, on the one hand, and between what Chomsky has distinguished as the I-language, i.e. internal mental language, and the E-language, viz. external language, on the other hand. Further, Chomsky draws what is at first sight a puzzling distinction between grammars and languages or alternatively between I-languages and E-languages, arguing that whereas the former are real and can be the object of scientific enquiry, the latter are indeterminate, amorphously suspect or mysterious.

In addition, Lyons (1996) holds that linguistic competence defines the system of rules that governs an individual's tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in the language he/she speaks. The empirical and formal realisation of **competence** would be **performance**, which thus corresponds to diverse structuralist notions of *parole* or so. Chomsky argues that the unconscious system of linguistic

relations, which Saussure named *langue*, is often mistakenly associated with *knowledge* or *ability* (or know-how). Performance, therefore, is a poor mirror of competence. In addition, McEnery and Wilson (2001:5-6) hold that "performance may be affected by other factors than our competence," e.g. short-term memory limitations, fatigue, drunken state, etc. This, in fact, brings one to Chomsky's initial criticism: a corpus is, by its very nature, a collection of externalised utterances, it is, actually, performance data and is therefore a poor guide to modeling linguistic competence. In this, Chomsky claims that 'competence' is an idealised capacity and so different from the production of actual utterances, viz. 'performance.' Further, Dornyei (2005) holds that competence, in the sense of being an ideal, is located as a psychological or mental property or function.

2.5.2. Communicative Competence

Opposing Chomsky, Hymes (1972) has proposed and developed what is known as ***communicative competence***. Hymes (1972) holds that ***communicative competence*** reflects the learner's ability to exchange information in a foreign language with the native speakers of that language. Further, communicative competence involves a range of skills for using language to accomplish social actions, including social aspects of language use such as knowing when, how, and with whom to engage in conversational activities. As has been discussed above, Chomsky has proposed linguistic competence maintaining that it is a property of an ***ideal*** speaker-hearer's knowledge of his/her language. However, to Hymes, Chomsky's conceptualisation of linguistic theory is inadequate. In fact, Hymes criticises Chomsky's linguistic theory depending on the inefficiency of Chomsky's linguistic theory in explaining the language problems of disadvantaged children and the communicative capacity of normal children. Neither, however, is Chomsky's concern in his specification of the linguistic theory. Such a theory, Chomsky claims, would require methodological and theoretical limitations. Such a limitation, in principle, is necessary since the system of language or linguistic competence has distinct characteristics specific to itself like ***phrase structure*** and ***inflectional system***.

Thus, while Hymes considers Chomsky's conceptualisation of the language system a limitation and attempts to formulate a communication theory, he puts the language specific processes in the same scale as the communication processes which show characteristics different from the language system. In addition, Hymes considers it necessary to distinguish *linguistic competence* that deals with producing and

understanding grammatically correct sentences and *communicative competence* which deals with producing and understanding sentences that are appropriate and acceptable in a particular situation. As such, Hymes (1972:277) coins the term *communicative competence* and defines it as "knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing both the referential and social meaning of language."

2.5.3. Strategic Competence

Perhaps the most related kind of competence to SLA is strategic competence. What is meant by strategic competence is to know how to recognise and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language and how to learn more about the language in context (Rababah 2002). Strategic competence attempts to answer such questions as how does one know when he/she misunderstands or when someone has misunderstood someone else? What does he/she say then? How can one express his/her ideas if they do not know the name of something or the right verb form to use? Thus, Canale and Swain (1998:30) define strategic competence as a strategy made use of by learners or speakers of SL to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. For some researchers (e.g. Dornyei 1991), this definition arouses two problems: (1) there are many situations in which strategic processes play an ***offensive*** rather than a ***defensive*** role and (2) a definition of strategic competence that focuses exclusively on language use may encourage the assumption that there is a psychological disjunction at the strategic level between language use and language learning. Moreover, Bachman (1990) has pointed out that strategic competence embraces all aspects of the assessment, planning and execution of communicative tasks. He considers strategic competence not only a component of communicative competence but also a more general cognitive capacity. In addition, Rababah (2002:26) argues that strategic competence refers to "the individual's ability to use 'communicative strategies' [such as] circumlocution, paraphrase, literal translation, lexical approximation" and so on to obtain their message across and to compensate for a limited or imperfect knowledge of rules or the interference of such factors as fatigue, distraction etc.

As far as SLA is concerned, it has been widely believed that language learners use communication strategies (see **section 2.6.2**) more often to cope with difficulties they encounter while trying to speak a second/foreign language. In fact, language learners attempt to solve these problems by avoiding a certain language form or grammatical items, abandon the message, paraphrase certain utterances among other

strategies when they do not have the appropriate form of language to communicate. They even try to compensate for a lack in their communicative competence by inserting a word from their L1 and sometimes apply their L1 morphology, phonology and/or syntax. In short, strategic competence consists of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that the speaker may resort to when breakdowns in communication take place due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. These strategies may relate to grammatical competence, i.e. how to paraphrase, how to simplify, etc. or to sociolinguistic competence, i.e. how to address strangers when unsure of their social status. Such strategies along with learning strategies will be looked at in the following sections.

2.6. Language Acquisition Strategies

One of the critical debates in L2 acquisition research has been how L2 acquisition proceeds and what strategies are followed. A strategy refers to the conscious or unconscious process which students employ in learning and using a SL (Oxford 1990). Some researchers (e.g. Cook 1983, Cook and Newson 2007, Kaplan 1998) argue that UG plays a significant role while others argue that, instead, it is general learning strategies which play the crucial role, i.e. L2s are learned in ways similar to learning any random skill. In addition, Kaplan (1998) holds that general LSs do not play a notable role in distinguishing L2 from L1 acquisition. Thus, several L2 acquisition researchers (Faucette 2001, Kaplan 1998, Gan 2004, Chamot and Kupper 1989, O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990, Gass and Selinker 2008, Corder 1981, Selinker 1972, Mitchell and Myles 1998, Bialystok 1981) among others have ascribed L2 acquisition process to involving psycholinguistic and cognitive strategies. These strategies are known as *learning strategies* and *communication strategies*.

2.6.1. Learning Strategies

Gass and Selinker (2008) hold that the term 'learning strategies' is commonly used in the SLA literature to refer to what learners do that underlies their learning process. Selinker (1972) believes that the endorsement for the separation of language LSs and CSs is, in principle, laid out, being postulated as basic processes leading to the formation of IL, though LSs and CSs are not always easy to disentangle. In addition, Gass and Selinker (2008:439) hold that the centrality of "the intersection of structure and strategy use is still robust and can be used as a springboard to integrate the formation of SL knowledge

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with strategic use of structural information on the part of learners." While some researchers (e.g. Faucette 2001, Kaplan 1998, Taylor 1975a, Gan 2004, Gass and Selinker 2008) have distinguished LSs from CSs, some others (e.g. Chamot and Kupper 1980, Chamot 1993, Oxford 1990, Dornyei and Scott 1997, Koda 1993) have confusingly conflated one over the other without recognising that they are theoretically different in research focus and purpose.

A strategy refers to the conscious or unconscious process learners employ in learning and/or using an L2. It is the way in which a learner attempts to figure out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical or spelling rules. A learning strategy may be applied to simple tasks such as learning a list of new words or more complex involving language comprehension and production (Saltourides 2005). Thus, language LSs have been classified by many scholars (e.g. O'Malley et al. 1985, Oxford 1990, Stern 1992, Ellis 1997, Tarone 1981, Hurd and Lewis 2008), however, most of such studies reflect more or less the same categorisations of language LSs without any radical changes. In fact, LSs have been classified into three major categories, viz. *metacognitive*, *cognitive* and *socioeffective*. *Metacotgnitive* strategies are those used in information processing theory. This category employs executive function strategies engaging planning for learning, thinking about such processes, 'monitoring one's production' and finally evaluating learning after performing learning activity. Further, *cognitive* strategies are those that are 'more specific to exact learning tasks,' while *socioeffective* strategies are particular to social mediating activities (O'Malley et al. 1985, Brown 1994). Table (4) below shows a classification of LSs based on O'Malley et al. (1985:582-584).

Table (4) Learning Strategies and their Description

Learning Strategy	Description
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	
Advance Organizers	Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity.
Directed Attention	Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore the irrelevant distractors.
Selective Attention	Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input.

Self-Management	Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions.
Functional Planning	Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task.
Self-Monitoring	Correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present.
Delayed Production	Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension.
Self-Evaluation	Checking the outcomes of one's own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy.

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Repetition	Imitating a language model including overt practice and silent rehearsal.
Resourcing	Using target language reference materials
Translation	Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language
Grouping	Reordering or reclassifying, and perhaps labeling, the material to be learned, based on common attributes
Note taking	Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing
Deduction	Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language.
Recombination	Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way.
Imagery	Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualization, phrases or locations.
Auditory Representation	Retention of the sound or signal sound for a word, phrase or longer language sequence.

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Keyword	Remembering a new word in the second language by 1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word and 2) generating easily recalled images of some relationship between the new word and the familiar word.
Contextualisation	Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence.
Elaboration	Relating new information to other concepts on memory.
Transfer	Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task.
Inferencing	Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predicting outcomes, or fill in missing information.
SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	
Cooperation	Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, fill in information, or model a language activity.
Question for Clarification	Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples.

2.6.2. Communication Strategies

It was Selinker (1972) who coined the term 'communication strategies' in his seminal paper "Interlanguage" in discussing the strategies of SL communication as one of the five central processes involved in L2 learning (see **section 2.9.3.5**). While defining CSs, Tarone (1980:420) holds that CSs "relate to a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared." She adds that "CS[s] are seen as tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal." In addition, Faerch and Kasper (1983:36) provide a very comprehensive definition, i.e. "[c]ommunication strategies are potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal."

Thus, it is difficult to find consensus on a specific definition of CSs among researchers. Perhaps the only criterion for the definition of CSs that keeps recurring is problematicity which arises from the disparity between the interlocutors' ends and means as expressed by Faerch and Kasper's (1983) definition above. Furthermore, some researchers (e.g. Oxford and Nyikos 1989, Macaro 2006) go even further stating that CSs are one of the main sources of errors in SLA as such researchers argue that regardless of having CSs in L1 or L2, L2 learners may not use them often enough, appropriately, efficiently and spontaneously in L2 (Macaro 2006). This is due to the fact that CSs are processes of interlingual transfer used by SL learners when attempting to convey a communicative message to their interlocutors whereas LSs are meant for L2 learning (Macaro op.cit). According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), CSs, for instance, changing the topic, using gestures or asking for help among other strategies, are used to achieve communicative goals. Thus, CSs result in communication success (Oxford 1990) as they lead to a speaker's staying in the conversation and thus provide the opportunity for further learning as well as further communication.

From a pedagogical perspective, teachers are advised to encourage and help students cultivate CSs habits. Faucette (2001) holds that teachers can still remind learners of what they have already done in their L1 and encourage them to do the same in L2. Dornyei (1995:62-64), therefore, states that even if learners use CSs effectively in L1, communication strategy instruction could aid strategic transfer by raising awareness of CSs, providing training in how to properly use them in L2 and providing opportunities for practice. Such practice should help learners develop SL communicative competence. In fact, CSs would serve as an excellent means for less proficient learners to have the tools to maintain the conversation, resulting in the opportunity to receive more language input and improve their language ability. Thus, there are many classifications of communication strategies in the literature including those by (Tarone 1977, Faerch and Kasper 1983, Kellerman 1991, Dornyei and Scott 1995, Rababah 2002) among others. However, Table (5) below illustrates the classification of communication strategies based on (Dornyei and Scott 1995) including the type of the strategy, definition/description and examples.

Table (5): Communication Strategies and their Description

Strategy	Description	Example
1. message abandonment	leaving a message unfinished because of some language difficulty	*it is a person er… who is responsible for a a house, for block of house..I don't know….[laughter]*
2. Messgae reduction (topic avoidance)	Reducing the message by avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic languagewise Or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources	[Retrospective comment by the speaker.] *I was looking for "satisfied with a good, pleasantly tired," and so on, but instead I accepted less*
3. Message replacement	substituting the original message with a new one because of not feeling capable of exceeding it.	[Retrospective comment after saying that the pipe was broken *in the middle instead of "screw thread was broken":] I didn't "and well, I had to say something.*
4. Circumlocution (paraphrase)	Exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action.	*it became under instead of "melt"*
5. Approximation	Using a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate Or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure.	*plate instead of "bowl"*
6. Use of all-Purpose words	Extending a general, "empty" lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking.	*The overuse of thing, stuff, make, do, as well as words like thingie, What-do-you-call-it; e.g.: I don't work until you repair my …thing*
7. Word-Coinage	Creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word.	[Retrospective comment after using *dejunktion and unjunktion* "street clearing":] *I think I approached it in a very scientific way: from 'junk' I formed a noun and I tried to add the negative prefix "de-": to "unjunk " is to 'clear the junk' an "unjunktion" is 'streat clearing'.*
8. Restructuring	Abandoning the execution of a verbal plan because of language difficulties, Leaving the utterance unfinished, and communicating the intended message according to an alternative plan.	On Mickey's face we can see the ... so he's he's he's wondering.
9. Literal Translation (transfer)	Translating literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1/L3 to L1.	I'd made a big fault [translated from French]
10. Foreignizing	Using an L1/L3 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology, i.e. with an L2 pronunciation) and/ or morphology.	reparate fro "repair"[adjusting the German word' reparieren']
11. Code-switching (language switch)	Including L1/L3 words with L1/L3 pronunciation in L2 speech; this may involve stretches of discourse ranging from single words to whole chunks and even complete turns.	using the Latin *ferrum* for "iron."
12. Uses of similar sounding words	Compensating for a lexical item whose form the speaker is unsure of with a word (either existing or non-existing) which sounds more or less like the target item.	[Retrospective comment explaining why the speaker used *cap* instead of "pan":] *Because it was similar to the word which I wanted to say:"pan".*

13. Mumbling	swallowing or muttering inaudibly a word (or part of a word) whose correct form the speaker is uncertain about.	And uh well Mickey Mouse looks surprise or of XXX [the 'sort of marker indicates that unintelligible part is not just a mere recording failure but a strategy].
14. Omission	Leaving a gap when not knowing a word and carrying on as if it had been said.	*then…er the sun is is .. hm sun is … and the Mickey Mouse…* [Retrospective comment: *I didn't know what 'shine' was*]
15. Retrieval	In an attempt to retrieve a lexical item saying a series of Incomplete or wrong forms or structures before reaching the optimal form.	*it's broke er…it's broken broked broke.*
16a. Self-repair	Making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech	*then the sun shines and the weather get be.. gets better.*
16b. Other repair	Correcting something in the interlocutor's speech.	*Speaker …. Because our tip went wrong…*[…] interlocutor: *Oh, you mean the tap. S: tap, tap…*
17. Self-rephrasing	Repeating a term, but not quite as it is, but by adding something or using paraphrase.	*I don't know the material..what it's made of…*
18.Over-explicitness (waffling)	Using more words to achieve a particular communicative goal than what is considered normal in similar L1 situations	(this CS was not included in Dornyei & Sctt's, 1995a, 1995b, taxonomy)
19. Mime (nonlinguistic/ paralinguistic strategies)	Describing whole concepts nonverbally, or accompanying a verbal strategy with a visual illustration.	[Retrospective comment:] *I was miming here, to put it out in front of the house, because I couldn't remember the word.*
20. Use of filters	Using gambits to fill pauses, to stall, and to gain time in order to keep the communication channel open and maintain discourse at times of difficulty.	Examples range from very short structures such as *well; you know; actually; okay,* to longer phrases such *this is Rather difficult to explain; well, actually, it's a good question.*
21a. Self repetition	Repeating a word or a string of words immediately after *They were said.*	[Retrospective comment:] *I wanted to say that it was Made of concrete but I didn't know 'concrete' and this is Why "which was made, which was made" was said twice.*
21b.Other repetition	Repeating something the interlocutor said to gain time.	Interlocutor: *And could you tell me the diameter of the Pipe? The diameter. Speaker: the diameter? It'sabout er… Maybe er… five centimeters.*
22. Feigning understanding	Making an attempt to carry on the conversation in spite of not understanding something by pretending to understand.	Interlocutor: *do you have the rubber? Speaker: the rubber washer?... No I don't.* [Retrospective Comment: *I don't know the meaning of the word and finally I managed to say I had no such thing.*]

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23. Verbal Strategy markers	Using verbal marking phrase before or after a strategy To signal that the word or structure does not carry the intended meaning perfectly in the L2 code	E.g.: (strategy markers in bold): (a) marking a circumlocution: *on the picture…***I don't really know what's it called in English…** *it uh this kind of bird that…that can be found in a clock that strikes out [laughs] comes out when the clock strikes;(b)* marking approximations: *it's some er… it's* **some kind of er…** *paper;* (c) marking foreignizing…. *A panel [with an English accent],* **I don't know whether there's a name in English or not***[laughter] just it's a panel flat;* (d) marking literal translation: *it's er… a smaller medium flat and in,* **we call them** *blockhouse, but it's not it's not made of blocks;* (e) marking code switching: *the bird from the clocks come out and say "kakukk"* **or I don't know what**; see also the example for message abandonment
24a. Direct appeal for help	Turning to the interlocutor for assistance by asking an explicit question concerning gap in one's L2 knowledge.	*it's a kind of old clock so when it struck ser…I don't know, one, two* Or three 'clock then a bird is coming out. What's the anme?
24b. Indirect appeal for help	Trying to elicit help from the interlocutor indirectly by expressing lack of a needed L2 item either verbally or nonverbally.	*I don't know the name…*[rising intonation, pause, eye contact]
25. Asking for repetition	Requesting repetition when not hearing or understanding Something properly.	*Pardon? What?*
26. Asking for clarification	Requesting explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure.	*What do you mean?, You saw what?* Also 'question repeats,' that is, echoing a word or a structure with a question intonation
27. Asking for Confirmation	Requesting confirmation that one heard or understood something correctly.	Repeating the trigger in a 'question repeat' or asking a full question, Such as *You said…? You mean…? Do you mean…?*
28. Guessing	Guessing is similar to a confirmation request but the latter implies a greater degree of certainty regarding the key word, whereas guessing involves real indecision.	E.g.: *Oh. It is then not the washing machine. Is it a sink?*
29. Expressing non-understanding	Expressing that one did not understand something properly either verbally or nonverbally.	Interlocutor: *What is the diameter of the pipe?* Speaker: *The diameter?* I: *the diameter.* S: *I don't know this thing.* I: *how wide is the pipe?* Also, puzzled facial expression, frowns and various types of mime and gestures.
30. Interpretive Summary	Extended paraphrase of the interlocutor's message to check that the speaker has understood correctly.	*So the pipe is broken, basically, and you don't know what t*o *do with it right?*
31. Comprehension check	Asking questions to check that the interlocutor can follow you.	*And what is the diameter of the pipe? The diameter. Do you know* w*hat the diameter is?*

32. Own-accuracy Check	Checking that what you said was correct by asking a concrete question or repeating a word with a question Information.	*I can see a huge snow…snowman? snowman in the garden.*
33a. Response: Repeat	repeating the original trigger or the suggested corrected form (after an other-repair)	see the example of the repair.
33b. Response: Repair	Providing other-initiated self-repair.	Speaker: *the water was not able to get up and I …* Interlocutor: *get up? Where?* S: *get down.*
33c. Response Rephrase	Rephrasing the trigger.	Interlocutor: And *do you happen to know if you have the rubber washer?* Speaker: *Pardon?* I: *the rubber washer … It's the thing which is the pipe.*
33.d Response: Expand	Putting the problem word/issue into a larger context.	Interlocutor: D*o you know maybe er what the diameter of the pipe is?* Speaker: *Pardon?* I: *diameter, this is er maybe you learnt Mathematics and you sign er with this part of things.*
33e. Response: confirm	Confirming what the interlocutor has said or suggested.	Interlocutor: *Uh, you mean under the sink, the pipe? For the…* Speaker: *Yes. Yes.*
33f. Response: Reject	Rejecting what the interlocutor has said or suggested without offering an alternative solution.	Interlocutor: *Is it plastic?* Speaker: *No.*

Source: Dornyei and Scott (1995:62-66)

2.7. Contrastive Analysis

From a historical perspective, the term *contrastive linguistics* was suggested by (Whorf 1941 cited in Fisiak 1981) for a comparative study which emphasises linguistic differences between L1 and L2. Meanwhile contrastive linguistics has been redefined as "a subdiscipline of linguistics concerned with the comparison of two or more languages or subsystems of languages in order to determine both the differences and similarities between them" (Fisiak 1981:1). In fact, it is Fries (1945) who first calls for applying scientific descriptions of the language to be learned vis-à-vis a parallel scientific description of the learners' L1 on the basis of which efficient teaching materials should be designed and hence, prescribed. However, the real beginning of modern applied contrastive linguistics is attributed to Lado (1957). Thus, James (1980:3) defines contrastive analysis (CA) as "a linguistic enterprise aimed at producing inverted (i.e. contrastive, not comparative) two-valued typologies (a CA is always concerned with a *pair* of languages), and founded on the assumption that languages can be compared." In fact, CA was used extensively in the field of SLA in the 1960s and early 1970s as a method of accounting for why some features of the L2 were more difficult to acquire than others.

According to Lado (1957:2), "those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult." This involves describing the languages, comparing them and predicting learning difficulties. Thus, CA proponents have assumed that learning L2 is facilitated whenever there are similarities between L1 and L2. In addition, learning may be interfered with when there are marked contrasts between L1 and L2 (Nickel 1971). Cultures of both L1 and L2 have also been considered. In that, Lado (1957:vii) states that "we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student." In addition, Fries (1945:9) states: "[t]he most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner." One of the most frequently applied techniques of CA is the search for L2 distinctions which are lacking in the L1 (Hadlich 1965). On the phonological level, for instance, the investigation reveals points in the system at which new sound

distinctions must be learned. For example, Arabic speakers learning English must learn to distinguish /p/ from /b/ in English, where /p/ does not exist in Arabic.

Empirically, there are three major sources contributing to a general rationale for conducting CA studies: 1) the observation by learners of language contact of the phenomenon of interference. Such a phenomenon was defined by Weinreich (1953:1) as "those instances of deviation from norms of either language which occur in speech of bilinguals as the result of their familiarity with more than one language." 2) The practical experience of teachers of foreign languages and their identification of deviations attributed to the learner's L1 provides the second source. 3) The learning theory of interference within L1 based findings in psychology constitutes the third dimension in question. Given the above argument, Lee (1968:2) holds that CA is largely based on five assumptions: i) the prime cause of difficulty and error in language learning is interference from the learners' native language; ii) these difficulties are due mainly to the differences between the two languages; iii) the greater these differences, the more acute the learning problems will be; iv) a comparison between the two languages will predict difficulty and error; and v) this comparison should determine what is to be taught. Thus, central to CA is the ***Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis*** which will be briefed in the following section.

2.7.1. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

According to several CA scholars (e.g. Fisiak 1981, James 1980, Sridhar 1981, Wardhaugh 1970, Vizmuller-Zocco 1990, Oller and Richards 1973, Hakuta and Cancino 1977), there are two versions of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), viz. ***strong*** and ***weak***. Within the ***strong version*** of this paradigm, researchers believe that errors in L2 learning could be attributed to patterns in L1. As such, it was considered theoretically possible to predict what errors would be made by making a careful detailed comparison of the learner's L1 and the L2 he/she is learning. Thus, differences would constitute potential sources of errors. The ***weak version***, as claimed by Wardhaugh (1970), is a model with an explanatory power as opposed to a predictive power of the ***strong version***. In other words, within the ***weak version***, researchers can look at errors once they have been committed, and according to that offer an explanation based on a contrastive analysis of that area of grammar as to why those errors have occurred. This view, in fact, has been associated with error analysis approach (see **section 2.9**).

In spite of the initial enthusiasm shown for CA, its value has been questioned by several researchers and applied linguists (Vizmuller-Zocco 1990). In fact, CA has been criticised by many researchers. (Johansson 1973:77) for instance, states that "(1) CA is not necessary since teachers are interested in known difficulties rather than theoretical predictions. (2) The requirements of CA have not been adequately met, i.e. CA provides no formal way of determining which elements of one language are to be compared with those of the other. (3) CA cannot account for everything within its domain since, for example, it cannot formally indicate which of these differences will lead to difficulties and which will not." In addition, Lee (1968) maintains that the best way to predict errors is through actual classroom observation by trained teachers since many errors are not revealed by CA and since some points of contrast do not cause confusion concluding that in planning and teaching a language course, the language itself should be kept in mind rather than the differences between L1 and L2. CA is valuable but it should not be overemphasised in language learning process. Similarly, Johansson (1975:334) concludes that "[l]inguists can only furnish part of the information which has to be taken into account. Finally, we must be careful not to overestimate the value of CA." He adds that "[t[he analysis must not lead to an over-emphasis of points of difficulty at the expense" of L2 learning as a complete system of communication.

Further, Hakuta and Cancino (1977) report that the predictive power of CA appears to be quite poor in the light of the evidence collected by (Oller and Richards 1973) that purports to show that a large portion of learners' errors are not predicted by CA. It thus becomes clear that CA could not predict learning difficulties, and was only useful in the retrospective explanation of errors (Sheen 1996). These developments, along with the decline of the behaviourist and structuralist paradigms considerably weakened the appeal of CA. Wardhaugh (1970:124) calls the ***strong version*** "unrealistic and impracticable." The ***weak version*** is explanatory in nature and "does have certain possibilities of usefulness." Thus, "the strong version moves from CA to the prediction of errors whereas the weak version moves from the observation of errors to a contrastive analysis to uncover possible causes of these errors."

In spite of the criticism directed against CA, current studies show a revival of interest in CA as a complementary and necessary part of the theory of SLA, and that it is a method that can never be

ignored (Fisiak 1981). Johansson (1975:330) holds that "[w]e can never achieve a full explanation of learners' errors by *error analysis alone*. There are also other difficulties. As always when a corpus is used,… one cannot expect [such a corpus] to provide complete coverage of possible errors. The best approach is probably to supplement the corpus by information gained from *experiments.* Tests can be constructed on the basis of a *contrastive analysis*"(emphasis mine). Further, some researchers (e.g. Duskova 1979, Fisiak 1981, Obeidat 1986, Lardiere 2009) have investigated the possibility of carrying a generative grammar into CA arguing that CA should rest on language universals. Otherwise, there is only 'arbitrariness' in the surface manifestation of the contrast. These researchers ascertain that the purpose of CA is to show that universal deep structures manifest themselves in surface structures via transformational rules. At this level, transformational rules must be contrasted to see where the problem areas lie. In addition, (Obeidat 1986:61) claims that "[CA] can be of value even to the theoretical linguist who seeks some support for his theory of language." In addition, Duskova (1979) attempts to find an answer to the question whether CA of L1 and L2 can be replaced by Error Analysis. Utilising a corpus of written papers of 50 Czech postgraduate students, Duskova summarises all sources of errors in foreign language learning. Her conclusion is that the value of CA cannot be underestimated, as a means of both preventing and remedying errors. She adds that the teaching materials based on CA will be much improved if they can merely include the most common errors predicted by CA. This actually proves it true that CA can be exploited efficiently in L2 learning theory with ramifications in pedagogy as well. While contrasting the features of English, Mandarin Chinese and Korean, (Lardiere 2009:175) has concluded that CA has an inevitable role in SLA when L2 learners base their learning on their L1. This is due to the fact that "the second-language acquirer brings to the SLA task an already-fully-assembled set of (L1) grammatical categories." The way in which these features have been combined and configured in the native language will to some (presumably non-arbitrary) extent differ from that of the target L2" and these categories will to some extent affect such learners' acquisition of L2.

From the present researcher's viewpoint, it seems that the truth lies between the two extremes. In other words, CA does not have the exaggerated power which claims that what the student has to learn equals the sum of differences between the two languages established by CA. However, to deny the possible insight of the prediction and explanation of CA is to dispute a fact which has been recognised by second language teachers and students everywhere particularly in phonological levels

(Richards 1972). For instance, Arab learners of English tend to make serious errors in pronouncing the English /p/, /v/ and /ʒ/ as /b/, /f/ and /š/ respectively due to the fact that the sounds, viz. /p/, /v/ and /ʒ/ do not exist in Arabic and hence, it is what CA goes to. Any contrastive analysis of English and Arabic could easily discover these problematic areas. Moreover, it has been found that those speakers of languages using articles, experience positive transfer from their native language in learning English (Al-Johani 1982:12). Al-Johani (op.cit.) also supports the idea of the usefulness of CA stating that CA "requires less effort and time [than error analysis] because it starts with already acquired knowledge of the learner."

2.8. Language Transfer

If an Arabic-speaking learner of English produces such sentences as *My friend he went to school yesterday, *This car took my attention* or *after finish firemen, return the fire again,* one is likely to observe that these sentences are not English. Neither are they even English-like. What the learner here does is just transfer some features or rules from his/her L1, viz. Arabic, into English. Since native speakers of English do not produce such sentences, it is unlikely that this learner is simply reproducing English sentences he/she has heard or come across. More likely, the learner's anomalous string of English words reflects his/her idiosyncratic mental representation or grammar of English. In fact, many researchers and applied linguists have questioned the issue vis-à-vis the role of the L1 in L2 acquisition. For instance, in Selinker's own words, questioning the phenomenon of transfer, "as what transfer consists of, as to what actually is transferred, as to what types of transfer occur have not been adequately treated in a scientific manner" (Selinker 1966:1).

Thus, there is a somewhat consensus among cross-linguistics researchers (Tarone 1978) that L1 influences L2 at least at the beginning stages of acquisition in ways that extend beyond borrowing or falling back on the native language, however, there is little agreement among them about what and how much of the L1 is transferred into the L2. Language transfer is defined as the process of using an L1 rule, structure or element in learning an L2 rule, structure or element. For instance, learning a task; let's say X in L1 will affect the subsequent learning of a task Y in L2. In fact, one of the key concepts in behaviourist theory was the notion of transfer. In that, L2 learning, according to the behaviourist theory, is seen as developing a set of *new habits* and L1 as interfering with the development of these habits (cf.

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section 2.3.1). Behaviourists view language transfer as an indispensible strategy that underlies L2 acquisition and hence, an important source of errors because L1 *habits* have been deeply rooted in the learner's brain and replacing such habits, the behaviourists believe, will result in interference and hence, errors. From a pedagogical perspective, Fries (1945:9) argues that because learners are strongly influenced by their L1, the most efficient materials for teaching are those based upon a scientific description of L1 vis-a-vis a parallel description of L2. In this respect, Lado (1957:2) has supported Fries in his conception suggesting that individuals transfer the knowledge of their L1 into the L2 they are learning. Lado claims that transfer can be observed in both production, viz. when learners attempt to speak and reception, viz. when learners attempt to grasp the language spoken by natives.

2.8.1. Factors Affecting Language Transfer

Several researchers and applied linguists (e.g. Gass and Selinker 2008, Long 1983, Pica 1991, Cummins 1980, 1991, Gass and Selinker 1992, Selinker and Lakshamanan 1992, Odlin 2005, 2008, James 1994, Fisiak 1981, Rosansky 1975, Zobl 1980, 1992, Kubota 1998) hold that there are several factors that affect the amount and kind of transfer which takes place in SLA. One of such factors is *age* of the learner. Thus, it has been pointed out that differences between child and adult second language learning may be tied to the Piaget's stage of formal operations. In that, the formal operation of adult's consciousness of differences, compared to the child's focus on similarities, may make transfer more likely in adults. In addition, Carroll (1968) ascertains that children are less subject to interference than adults are because their L1 is not as strongly enriched as that of the adults. However, children also show evidence of negative transfer. Hatch (1974), for instance, has found that interference occurring in most of the studies of the child SL learners seems less than that of adults. Hatch attributes this to the fact that children know very little about their L1 that can affect their learning of L2.

Another factor affecting transfer is the amount of *interference* in the level of language ability of the learner. In syntax, for instance, Taylor (1975b) demonstrates that there is more syntactic interference at the beginning level of acquisition than at more advanced levels. At the beginning stages of language acquisition, learners know very little of L2 so they have to rely on the syntactic rules and patterns of their L1 and as they learn more, they can rely on their acquired knowledge of L2. On the phonological level, Major (1987), for instance, holds that interference predominates at the beginning

stages of SLA, but decreases over time. Interference also has different effects on different types of language skills. It has more effect on productive skills, viz. speaking and writing than receptive skills, viz. listening and reading (Carroll 1968, Gass 1979, Rasier and Hiligsmann 2007).

In addition, *level of proficiency* is another factor affecting transfer. It is believed that the more proficient students are, the less they are likely to resort to their L1 (Gass and Selinker 1992, Selinker 1992, Han 2000, Zobl 1982, 1992, Sharwood-Smith 1991, 1993, Odlin 1989, 2003, Gass 1979, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008, Long 1983, 2003, James 1980, Fisiak 1981, Sridhar 1981). This is due to the fact that proficient learners have, to a great extent, internalised the linguistic system of the TL. In other words, why learners resort to their L1 is merely because they have not yet had that much of knowledge in the TL that qualifies them not to need any assistance from their L1. In fact, learners fall back on their L1 only when their knowledge in the L2 is not sufficient to enable them to perform and express their communicative needs successfully and properly.

2.8. 2. Negative vs. Positive Transfer

Within L1 transfer lie two types of transfer, viz. *negative transfer* which is referred to as *disfacilitation/interference* and *positive transfer* which is referred to as *facilitation* (Gass and Selinker 2008). The former takes place when learners transfer rules and norms from their L1 to the L2 and hence, resulting in errors. In fact, what makes researchers and applied linguists alike call this type of transfer *interference* is the fact that L1 intervenes with the expected acquisition of the L2 being learned. As a strategy, learners resort to transfer from their L1 trying to compensate for the lack of insufficient knowledge in L2 by falling back to their L1 for the purpose of successful communication. This type of transfer happens when learners apply an L1 rule in building up an L2 structure in which such a rule does not exist and hence, producing an error (LoCoco, 1976 cited in Dulay et al. 1982:143).

Positive transfer, on the other hand, takes place when an L1 rule or norm is applied in L2 structure rendering a well-formed structure and not the otherwise. In other words, *positive transfer* happens when learners apply an L1 rule in building an L2 structure and this rule exists in L2 (Richards 1974). In fact, both terms, viz. *negative* and *positive* transfer, refer respectively to whether transfer results in something incorrect or something correct, and, to repeat a point stated earlier, do not imply

two distinct cognitive processes. For instance, if an Arabic speaker learning English produces the utterance *Then, went he to college early*, he/she just transfers an Arabic word order, viz. **VSO** into English in which such a word order does not exist. This exemplifies the **negative transfer**. To exemplify **positive transfer**, an Arab learner may produce the sentence, *If you study hard, you will pass the exam* which is a well-formed sentence in English. Here, it is likely that the learner has applied the Arabic structure to form such an English sentence. With regard to negative transfer or interference, (Gass and Selinker 2008:94) have identified two types and called them (a) "*retroactive inhibition—where learning acts back on previously learned material, causing someone to forget (language loss)—* and (b) *proactive inhibition—where a series of responses already learned tends to appear in situations where a new set is required*" (emphasis in the original). They add that this characterisation is more akin to the phenomenon of SLA because L1 in this framework influences/inhibits/modifies the learning of the L2.

To conclude, there has been a debate as to whether 'transfer' is a valid concept for use in discussing language acquisition at all. Extremes range from Lado (1957) proposing that SL learners depend almost entirely on their L1 in the acquisition of the L2 to Dulay and Burt (1973:251) who have suggested that transfer was largely unimportant in the creation of IL. According to Dulay and Burt's (op.cit.) empirical study, only 3% of the learners' errors reflect their falling back on their L1. However, Dulay et. al. (1982:102) state that interference errors constitute 4-12%, in the case of children, and 8-23% in the case of adults. In fact, the issue of how much L1 transfer plays a role in committing errors is very controversial (cf. **section 2.9**). In addition, both types of transfer, viz. **negative** and **positive** refer to the automatic and subconscious use of old linguistic behaviours in new learning situations. Specifically, semantic and syntactic transfer of this nature reflects the most commonly understood uses of the term. Further, Corder (1981) has suggested the need for a word other than 'transfer,' viz. *Mother Tongue Influence,* which he has claimed, belongs to the school of behaviourist learning theory. Some researchers (e.g. Leung 2009, Sharwood-Smith 1991) have refined the idea still further by suggesting *Cross Linguistic Influence*, which would take into account the potential influence of L3 on L2 where another learned language, but not the L1 might have an effect on the learning of the L2.

2.9. Error Analysis

Looking at its pros and cons, CA has been criticized by many applied linguists, teachers and SLA researchers on the basis of the assumptions it has been based on. The criticism directed against CA has been because of the lack of its theoretical justifications, its failure in predicting that the difficulty lies in the difference between L1 and L2, and thus researchers were interested in finding out what accounts for such a phenomenon. Teachers in classrooms have found that constructions that were different in L1 and L2 are not necessarily difficult to learn and that constructions similar in both languages are not necessarily easy to learn, either. In addition to that, difficulty sometimes occurs in one level but not in another. Thus, if CA could not appropriately foresee the areas of difficulty, it actually fails to fulfill its premises. Furthermore, supporting this claim, Lee (1972:59) holds that "[i]t seems doubtful whether wholly reliable prediction of errors can be based on an L1/L2 comparison alone; an error which might be expected does not always occur."

Based on these findings, applied linguists and researchers become more interested in looking closely at the learner errors *per se* rather than focusing on the influence of L1 on L2 when explaining L2 errors. This was the very beginning of EA. EA has been defined as the systematic investigation of SL learners' errors developing for the purposes of identification and remediation of such errors. In fact, it was Corder (1967) who was the first to concentrate on the study of learners' errors as it has been evidently proved that learners' errors are not all originated from the L1 but rather there are other sources as opposed to the predictions of CA. Thus, several studies have clearly proved that the majority of learner errors can under no circumstances be traced to the influence of the L1 *per se*. Besides, the areas where the L1 should have prevented the occurrence of errors were not always error-free. For instance, if one considers the plural morpheme in Spanish and English which is realised as the same morpheme in both languages, many studies (e.g. Hernandez-Chavez 1972, cited in Mitchell and Myles 1998) show that Spanish learners of English continue to make errors in that particular issue. Ellis (1985), further, has concluded that most of the errors committed by L2 learners are not ascribed to L1 interference alone. However, there is no consensus among EA analysts on the exact proportion of the errors that can be ascribed to L1 interference. While Dulay and Burt (1973:251) have concluded that 3% of learner errors can be traced to L1, in another study, namely, Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) the

percentage is more, viz. 4.7%, Grauberg (1971) has found 36%, Flick (1980) 31%, Dulay et al. (1982:102) 4-12% by children and 8-23% by adults and in our study, it is 34.63% (cf. **section 6.5**). EA, therefore, has shown that the majority of learner errors are not caused by L1 interference.

Therefore, the major question concerning EA researchers to find an answer to is where do such errors come from? Many researchers (e.g. Corder 1981, Selinker 1972, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982, Taylor 1986) have concluded that these errors must be 'learner-internal in origin.' In addition, many EA researchers have attempted to classify those errors for the purpose of understanding them and try to compare them to those made by children acquiring their native language. As will be discussed later on, studies on IL have found that leaner errors belong to a system having its own rules developing systematically and dynamically. Tracing the development of EA, Ellis (1997:48) states that "it was not until the 1970s that EA became a recognized part of applied linguistics, a development that owed much to the work of Corder." Before Corder (1967), linguists observed learners' errors, divided them into categories, tried to see which ones were common and which were not, but not much attention was paid to their role in SLA. Thus, it was Corder who showed how the information about errors would be helpful in SLA.

2.9.1. The Concept of Error

From an EA point of view, the term *error* is used in SLA to refer to a systematic deviation from a selected norm of the TL (Dulay et al. 1982) or set of norms and thus distinguished from what is called in the literature a *mistake*. Corder (1981:10) distinguishes between errors as "systematic" and "competence-based" and mistakes as "unsystematic" and "performance-based." Mistakes are self-corrected while errors are not. In other words, the term *error* is exclusively restricted to repeatedly and consistently deviated forms of the learner's language from the norms produced by adult native speakers of the language being learned. A very significant definition of the term *error* has been provided by (Lennon1991:182) as "a linguistic form or combination of forms which*, in the same context and under similar conditions* of production, would, in all likelihood, not be *produced by the speakers' native speaker counterparts*"(emphasis mine).

2.9.2. Significance of Learner Errors

As has been stated above, Corder was the first to initiate the new movement, viz. EA arguing that a learner's errors are to be looked at as evidence of his/her knowledge rather than units of difficulty to be eliminated. From an EA point of view, errors are not seen as bad formation but as something indicating the learners' *transitional* process in language learning process. While describing the significance of errors, Corder (1981:12) points out that "they are best not regarded as the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is investigating the system of the new language." He also adds "the learner's possession of his native language is facilitative and errors are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning." One of the main arguments in favor of EA in general has been that, unlike CA, EA deals with the actual errors that are made by the language learner and hence, EA is based on empirical data and permits a realistic, as opposed to probabilistic, analysis of errors.

Almost all EA researchers hold that L2 learners' errors are to be taken seriously and with great interest and much importance due to the significance they imply. These researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable insights as to why, when, where and how SLA is acquired. In fact, researchers in SL learning process have recently started looking at the value of errors committed by language learners from another angle. They believe that errors play an important role in the study of LA in general and in examining second and foreign language acquisition in particular as opposed to the view that errors are negative signs on the part of the learners which have to be eradicated (Richards 1974, Taylor 1975b, Dulay and Burt 1974a). Errors are also associated with the strategies that learners employ to communicate in a language. Errors are also believed to be an indicator of the learners' stages in their target language development. From the errors that learners commit, one can determine their level of mastery of the linguistic system of the language they are learning. In addition, errors indicate that the learner is an active processor of the linguistic system of the language being learned. Error committing also shows the fact that the learner is trying to "build up" or internalise the L2 linguistic system. (Corder 1967, 1981, Selinker 1992, 1973, Nemser 1971, Richards 1974, Dulay and Burt 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982). Thus, from an EA perspective, the investigation of errors has thus a double purpose: it is diagnostic and prognostic. It is diagnostic because it can tell us the

characteristics of the learner's language system (Corder 1967) or what (Selinker1992) calls IL at a given point during the learning process and prognostic because it can tell course organisers and designers to reorient language learning materials on the basis of the learners' current problems.

2.9.3. Types of Errors

In the course of talking about errors committed by L2 learners, there are several types of errors investigated and classified by applied linguists and researchers. The following are the most prominent types of errors which will be discussed in some more detail.

2.9.3.1. Competence vs. Performance Errors

As has been alluded to above, there are two types of deviations made by a language learner, viz. *errors* and *mistakes*. On one extreme lie *competence* errors which have been attributed by Corder (1981) to a lack of knowledge in L2 manifested as a sign of lack of competence in L2. Thus, committing such errors, the L2 learner finds him/herself having no sufficient and efficient knowledge in L2 and thus these errors are characterised as "rule-governed," "systematic" and repeatedly committed. This has been proved true by the evidence that *competence* errors are not self-corrected and the leaner is unaware of. This type of errors is evident in the learner's IL during the committing of which the learner believes that what has been said or written by him/her is *correct* (Selinker 1992, 1972, Richards 1974, Corder 1973, Long 1983, Mitchell and Myles 1998, Gass and Selinker 2008, Taylor 1986) among the many others. On the other extreme lie what has been termed as *performance errors* or *mistakes*.

Contrary to *competence errors*, *performance errors* are not "systematic." Nor are they "rule-governed" and the learner is aware of their committing. Moreover, errors of performance are mistakes attributable to the learner's fatigue, distraction, or inattention and occur in the speech of native speakers. What makes this true is the fact that the learner is able to correct him/herself after committing them, provided that his/her attention has been drawn to. Corder (1973, 1981) describes such a type as slips of tongue, omissions, some spelling mistakes, repetitions and so forth. Further, committing such mistakes does not mean that the learner lacks the appropriate knowledge in L2 he/she is learning rather

he/she commits them because "he is in hurry, he is speaking or writing under stress, or is forgetful or simply careless" (Ngara 1983:184).

2.9.3.2. Global vs. Local Errors

Several researchers (e.g. Dulay et al. 1982, Ellis 1997, Burt and Kiparsky 1972, Burt 1975, Hendrickson 1978) have made a distinction between *global* and *local* errors. Dulay et al. (1982:35), for instance, have defined *global* errors as "those that affect the overall sentence organisation such as word order errors and involving sentence connectors." *Global* errors, as stated by Dulay et al. (op.cit.), block 'successful communication.' They prevent the message from being comprehended as in *I like bus but my mother said so not that we must be late for school*. However, those errors not blocking successful communication but affect only a "single element" in the sentence are called *local* errors. *Local errors* do not prevent the message from being understood because there is usually a minor violation of one segment of a sentence that allows the hearer to guess the intended meaning as in *The man which came yesterday is my friend* where the relative pronoun *which* is used instead of *who*. In addition, Burt and Kiparsky (1972) have distinguished between a *global* and *local* goof (an informal term used for error). They view the former as errors in overall organisation of the sentence but the latter as errors in relative clauses. Hendrickson (1978:391) has referred to global errors as "those that cause a listener or a reader to misunderstand a message or consider a sentence incomprehensible." On the other hand, Hendrickson (op.cit.) defines a *local error* as "a linguistic error that makes a form or structure appear awkward but, nevertheless, causes a proficient speaker of a foreign language little or no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of a sentence given its contextual framework."

In addition, Burt and Kiparsky (1972:73) state that global errors are higher on the hierarchy than local ones. Thus, a sentence with both global and local errors improves much more when a global error is corrected than a local one or even a group of local ones. For instance, …*but my friend said that not take this bus, we are late for school*. This sentence contains three local errors. The first one occurs as it omits the subject of the clause *that not take this bus* which should be *that we not take this bus*. Still this clause is deviant since it omits the auxiliary *do*. The correct form should be *that we do not take this bus*. The third local error is *wrong tense*, i.e. *we are late for school* must be rendered into *we will be late for school*. Thus, the whole sentence will be *…that we do not take this bus, we will be late for*

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school. In addition, Ellis (1997:20) considers local errors as those affecting only a single element in the sentence and are perhaps less likely to create any processing problems. Global errors, as maintained by Ellis are defined as those that violate the overall structure of a sentence and for this reason may make it difficult to process or understand. Thus, Burt (1975:56-57) classifies global errors as follows:

1. **Wrong word order** as in:

    English use many people. (Many people use English.)

2. **Missing, wrong or misplaced sentence connectors** as in:

    Not take this bus, we late for school. (If we do not take this bus, we will be late for school.)

3. **Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rule** as in:

    The student's proposal looked into by the principal. (The students' proposal is looked into by the principal.)

4. **Regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions** as in:

    We amused that movie very much. (We enjoyed that movie very much.)

Further, local errors are classified by Dulay et al. (1982:191-192) into the following types:

1. **Errors in noun inflection** as in:

    We have many car. (We have many cars.)

2. **Errors in verb inflection** as in:

    He sing well. (He sings well.)

3. **Errors in articles as** in:

    We eat a apple everyday. (We eat an apple everyday.)

4. **Errors in auxiliaries** as in:

    Why we like each other? (Why do we like each other?)

2.9.3.3. Interlingual vs. Intralingual Errors

Selinker (1974, 1992) has argued that there are two types of errors characteristic of an L2 learner, viz. *interlingual* and *intralingual* errors. He ascribes the former to the interference of L1 in the learning process of L2 and the latter to the gradual development in learning due to the influence of L2 itself. Further, the former are called transfer errors committed as a result of L1 interference because the learner having no sufficient knowledge in L2 resorts to his/her L1 as a strategy for successful communication. However, the latter are called developmental errors divided into overgeneralisation and simplification. These errors are committed because the leaner again has no sufficient knowledge in L2 he/she is learning and as such he/she tries to simplify and/or overgeneralise a particular rule in L2. In

fact, either case is vivid evidence that the learner is no more a passive participant in the learning process but rather an active one. Thus, such a learner, in fact, tries to internalise the L2 linguistic system so as to express him/herself in a given situation. Thus, in committing both types, the learner tries his/her best to "build up," internalise and comprehend the linguistic system of the L2 so as to be able to use it appropriately and accurately.

Moreover, *interlingual* errors may occur at different levels such as transferring phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic elements of L1 into L2. These different levels can be explained with some possible errors of Arab learners which will be discussed below. Suffice here to say that it is the learner's L1 which causes such errors. On the other hand, *intralingual* errors result from *faulty* or *partial learning, false conceptions, hypothesis testing* and/or *internalising the L2 system* rather than language transfer. They may be caused by the influence of one TL item upon another. For example, learners attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence since they have not mastered this aspect of the language yet. When they say: *He is comes here*, it is because the singularity of the third person requires *is* in present progressive, and *-s* inflected to a verb in simple present tense. In short, intralingual errors occur as a result of learners' attempt to "build up" concepts and test hypotheses about the TL from their limited experience in it. Learners may commit errors due to such reasons in many ways as exemplified below:

1. He made me *to* smile. (He made me # smile.)

2. I want *learning* English. (I want to *learn* English.)

3. The meat smells *freshly*. (The meat smells *fresh*.)

4. Doctors always give us good *advices*. (Doctors always give us good advice.)

5. I don't know why *did* he go. (I don't know why he went.)

2.9.3.4. Developmental Errors

While describing *developmental errors*, Dulay and Burt (1973:247) hold that L1 interference has nothing to do with the committing of these errors. Rather, these errors are committed as a result of the learner's "restructuring the new language independently of his knowledge of the structures of his first language….[these] error types should be the result of the processing strategies [he/she] uses to organize and produce the new language. These would be "developmental" errors similar to those

committed by children learning that language natively." In fact, such errors are called ***developmental errors*** because children acquiring their L1 also commit such errors at different stages. This view is held due to the fact that ***interference*** from the students' L1 is not the only reason for committing errors (Dulay and Burt 1973, James 1998, Corder 1981, Ellis 1997, Dulay et al. 1982) among the many others. Ellis (1997), for instance, states that some errors seem to be universal, reflecting learners' attempts to make the task of learning and using the target language simpler. He adds that ***developmental errors*** help diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes take place.

Richards (1974:173-179) states that ***developmental errors*** are committed due to ***ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application rules*** and ***false concepts hypothesised.*** Errors resulted due to *ignorance of rule restriction* include, for instance, **The man who I saw him* which "violates the limitation on subjects in structures with **who**. Errors as in **I made him to do it* ignores restrictions on the distribution of *make*." *Incomplete application of rules* includes "structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances" as in **He have to do write the address* as a response to *what does he have to do?* Here, the *incomplete application of rules* lies in using **have** instead of **has** and **do** is overused where it is not required since it is used in a statement. *False concepts hypothesised* result in developmental errors "which have to do with faulty-rule learning at various levels, there is a class of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. These are sometimes due to poor gradation of teaching items [whereby] the form **was** may be interpreted as a marker of the past tense, giving *one day it was happened* and **is** may be understood to be the corresponding marker of the present tense: *he is speaks French*" (emphasis in the original). In short, many researchers (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, James 1998, Richards 1974, Dulay et al. 1982) have ascertained that ***developmental errors*** are those that occur naturally as learners gradually develop more insights into the L2 linguistic system.

2.9.3.5. Overgeneralisation and Simplification Errors

Selinker (1972) considers ***overgeneralisation*** one of the five prominent processes in L2 acquisition, namely, *language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication* and *overgeneralisation*. In addition, Richards (1974:174)

defines ***overgeneralisation*** as a process involving the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures based on the learner's experience of other structures in L2; thus producing such utterances as *He can sings, *We are hope, *It is occurs, *He come from*. He adds that it may be the result of the learner's reducing of his/her linguistic burden. In omitting the third person singular morpheme *–s*, overgeneralisation/simplification removes the necessity for third person agreement and hence, getting the learner rid of considerable burden. Moreover, overgeneralisation sometimes may involve errors explainable in terms of ***hypercorrection*** (James 1998) such as *There does not comes anyone to the party* where the learner tries to correct his utterance and hence, using *double marking*. Richards (1974) has associated overgeneralisation with 'redundancy reduction' as in the case of the ***–ed*** marker in narrating stories where 'pastness' is generally indicated lexically in such stories. Such errors include *Yesterday I go to school and find my classmates there*. In fact, the generalisation phenomenon is closely related to simplification. This is due to the fact that when generalising, learners try to simplify the linguistic code of L2 when they internalise the linguistic system of the L2 as in the examples just mentioned. Dulay and Burt (1973:251) define overgeneralisation errors as those committed due to "applying a regular rule in the language to exception, such as the plural form *–s* in *foots* (for *feet*), the past *–ed* in *eated* (for *ate*)" etc.

Moore and Stenning (2001:720) hold that L2 learners "recover from these errors, in spite of the lack of negative evidence and the infinity of allowable constructions that remain unheard; it has been argued that this favors the existence of a specific language-learning device." In addition, Onnis, et al. (2002) holds that children are exposed to linguistic structures that they subsequently overgeneralise, demonstrating that they capture some general structure of the language. Dulay et al. (1982:157) have viewed regularisation as a more narrowly defined term than overgeneralisation which covers all types of developmental errors. They note that overgeneralisation is manifested in cases where, for instance, the past form of the verb ***eat*** is not ***eated*** but ***ate*** and the plural forms of some irregular nouns in English as ***sheep*** is not ***sheeps*** but ***sheep*** among others. Dulay and Burt (1973) hold that children overgeneralise rules as in *I goed home*, and they simplify their speech into telegraphic forms as in *Mummy water*. Thus, it is clear that there is probably a far greater proportion of oversimplification errors. On the other hand, ***simplification errors*** have been referred to by (James 1998:185-186) as ***undergeneralisation*** exemplifying such a phenomenon as in *Nobody knew where *was Barbie* where

the learners have "applied only two components of the interrogative formation rule: they have selected and fronted a wh-element (rule components 1 and 2), but have omitted to invert subject and verb." A correct form of such an example should be *Nobody knew where Barbie was*.

2.9.4. Attitudes towards Errors

All ESL/EFL teachers expect their students to speak fluent English. In Burt's (1975:53) words, "one of the joys of being an EFL teacher is to hear a student speak flawless English. It is unfortunate that most of us are more familiar instead with the frustrations of teaching English-correcting the same mistakes over and over, or having to teach parts of Lesson 3 again when the class is on Lesson 20." This clearly shows how researchers, applied linguists and teachers look at errors but the issue is still to date a matter of controversy. In fact, there are two linguistic schools which deal with errors almost differently from each other. One of these schools, viz. **behaviourism**, views errors as a sinful feature on the part of the learner. This school also believes that errors should not be permitted to occur at all because they are indicators of imperfect learning. Thus, it has been widely argued that in the 50s and well into the 60s of the 20th Century, committing errors was viewed (Brooks 1960 cited in Hendrickson 1978) as something sinful on the part of the SL learners which have to be eradicated. Brooks also sees errors as a negative aspect in the language learning process and hence, they must be eradicated. In addition, George (1972) sees errors as "unwanted forms." In fact, this school claims that errors are a clear sign of failure in the learning process and it is the duty of teachers to eradicate or at least eliminate them to a considerable degree.

On the other hand, the other school, viz. **mentalism** looks at errors as an indispensible and inevitable outcome of the learning process. Accordingly, errors are viewed as a valuable instrument providing insights about the teaching-learning process. As has been discussed earlier, it was Corder who was the pioneer of this school. In his seminal paper "The Significance of Learner's Errors" (1967), he has brought about a realistic change in the fields of applied linguistics and language teaching. Corder (1967:167) argues that the errors committed by the language learner are significant in three different perspectives: "first to the teacher, in that they tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far toward the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies

or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, (and in a sense this is their most important aspect) they are indispensible to the learner himself because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning."

Sridhar (1981:219-220) also supports the view of looking at learners' errors as something valuable in the learning process. He attests that errors have their most importance in classroom purposes for planning lessons, preparing drills, exercises and tests appropriately and effectively. They also play a prominent role in designing materials as well as material selection. What Sridhar seems to suggest here is that when a teacher finds errors in his/her students' writing and/or speaking, such errors provide him/her with the feedback as to whether he/she is using the appropriate teaching method, planning his/her lessons well and selecting materials to be taught in the right order and so forth. Sridhar, further, calls for making a distinction between 'productive,' i.e. systematic, and 'non-productive' errors to develop criteria so as to observe the degree of impairment they make in communication system. He also proposes to reexamine the concept of errors in the non-native contexts where learners need to communicate with their peers in their own native language because of the lack of exposure to L2.

Further, Seliger (1979:361) agrees with Corder and stresses the value of errors for teachers and learners alike. Seliger's viewpoint comes from the feedback errors can provide to the learners. According to Seliger, errors enable learners "to correct, confirm or reject" the new language forms which are acquired recently. In fact, the variation in opinions or attitudes towards errors comes from the aims and goals set forth by the teacher for language teaching. Accordingly, if the main aim of language teaching is to develop communicative skills in the process of which errors will be made, such errors will be tolerated. This is so because if the desired message is conveyed in the communication situation, then, errors do not impede communication. Indeed, this view is ascertained by those who call and stress communication as the end aim of the language learning-teaching process. However, if the main goal of language learning-teaching process is accuracy and linguistic correctness in L2, then, errors are no more tolerated. Hence, they have to be eradicated or at least reduced.

2.9.5. Stages of Error Analysis

Corder (1967) marks the paradigm shift in linguistics from a behaviouristic view of language to a more rationalistic one and claims that in language teaching, one noticeable effect is to shift the emphasis away from teaching towards a study of learning. He emphasises great potential for applying new hypotheses about how language is acquired, be it L1 or L2. He says, "[w]ithin this context the study of errors takes on a new importance and well I believe contribute to a verification or rejection of the new hypothesis" (Corder 1967:167). Based on the above view, Corder argues that for conducting EA studies, there must be a procedure or procedures and thus, Corder (1973) mentions three main stages of EA, viz. **recognition**, (also called *identification*), **description,** (also called *classification*) and **explanation**. In fact, he also adds two stages like **data collection** and **error correction** necessary for doing a successful EA. These stages will be briefed in the following sections.

2.9.5.1. Data Collection

Data collection is the first procedure necessary for doing EA. The data for EA can be collected from spoken and/or written TL. Further, Corder mentions two types of written materials, namely, **spontaneous production** and **controlled production**. By the former, he means *free composition* and by the latter, he means *translation*, *précis* among others. Each of these two types has its advantages and disadvantages, however. Corder, states that while the former shows *error-avoiding* tendency because learners here are free and can avoid error making, the latter is *error-provoking* as the learner here is controlled and has no choice to alter for alternatives.

2.9.5.2. Identification of Errors

Identifying or recognising an error is not that easy task. It requires proficient skills. Thus, as linguists pay attention to the distinction between an error and a mistake, it is necessary to go over the definition of the two different phenomena. According to many researchers (e.g. Corder 1973, 1981, Gass and Selinker 2008, Selinker 1992, Richards 1974), a learner makes a mistake when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. As has been discussed so far, mistakes can be self-corrected when attention is called. A mistake is similar to those made by native speakers of the TL. A mistake, in addition, encompasses *slips* and *lapses.* Slips

are a result of tiredness, carelessness etc. When slips are manifested as *false starts, confusions* of structures, they are called *lapses* (Corder 1973:259). However, an error is the use of a linguistic item in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning (Ellis 1997, Lennon 1991). To distinguish an error from a mistake, Ellis (1997) suggests two ways. The first one is to check the consistency of learner's performance. If he/she sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he/she always uses it incorrectly, it is then an error. The second way is to ask a learner to try to correct his/her own deviant utterances, where he/she is unable to do so, the deviations are errors; where he/she is successful, they are mistakes.

However, Chomsky (1965:10) has proposed two linguistic terms to judge an error, viz. *grammaticality* and *acceptability*. *Grammaticality*, as Chomsky postulates, refers to the 'internal structuring' of the language itself and thus provoking less problems in the judgement of an item. Regarding *acceptability*, Chomsky states that an utterance should be "perfectly natural and immediately comprehensible without *paper-and-pencil* analysis, and in no way bizarre outlandish" (emphasis mine). Chomsky refers to errors caused by fatigue, and inattention as *performance factors* and errors caused by a lack of knowledge of the rules of the language as competence errors. On the other hand, Corder (1973:273) has doubted the above procedure stating "[i]t is possible that a leaner's sentence may be both acceptable and appropriate but nevertheless erroneous" and adds that "learners probably quite often say something acceptable and apparently appropriate but which does not mean what they intend to mean." Further, Corder argues that there are three developmental stages of language the learner has to pass through. These three stages are *pre-systematic, systematic* and *post systematic*. Now, describing these three stages, Corder maintains that "[i]n the pre-systematic stage, since he has not yet realized that there is a system or that its function is, [the learner] can neither correct his error nor say that his problem is: in the systematic stage he cannot correct his error but he can give some explanation of what he was aiming at or trying to do; in the post-systematic stage he can both correct his error and explain what was wrong, i.e. that he had overlooked something, or simply forgotten to apply a known rule" (Corder 1973:272). Some researchers (e.g. Ellis 1997) go even further suggesting that an error analyst has to have a native speaker's ability to be able to distinguish between an error and a mistake.

2.9.5.3. Description of Errors

This stage has also been referred to as *error classification*. Accordingly, a number of different categories for describing errors have been identified. Firstly, Corder (1973) classifies the errors in terms of the difference between the learners' utterance and the reconstructed version. In this way, errors fall into four categories: *omission* of some required elements; *addition* of some unnecessary or incorrect elements; *selection* of incorrect elements; and *misordering* of such elements in the sentence. Nevertheless, Corder himself adds that this classification is not enough to describe errors. That is why he includes the linguistic level of the errors under the sub-areas of morphology, syntax, and lexicon. Ellis (1997:47) maintains that "classifying errors in these ways can help us to diagnose learners' learning problems at any stage of their development and to plot how changes in error patterns occur over time." This categorisation can be exemplified as follows:

Omission:

Morphological omission as in:

A strange thing **happen to me yesterday* (A strange thing ***happens*** to me.)

Syntactical omission as in:

*# must also say the names (***He/She*** must also say the names.)

Addition:

In morphology as in:

The books** is here.* (The ***book*** is here.)

In syntax as in:

 *****The*** London is a good place to visit.* (London is a good place to visit.)

In lexicon as in:

I have stayed there **during five years.* (I have stayed there ***for*** five years.)

Selection:

In morphology as in:

My friend is oldest** than me.* (My friend is old***er*** than me.)

In syntax as in:

I want **that he comes here.* (I want ***him to come here***.)

Ordering:

In spelling as in: *sifignicant* (for significant); *prulal* (for plural)

In morphology as in: *get upping* (for getting up)

In syntax as in:

He is a dear to me friend. (He is a *dear friend to me*)

In addition, there are two related dimensions of error, viz. *domain* and *extent* (Lennon 1991). *Domain* is the rank of linguistic unit from phoneme to discourse that must be taken as context in order for the error to be understood, and *extent* is the rank of linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied or reordered in order to correct the sentence. Further, Corder (1973:281) adds what he has called *referential* or *stylistic* level requiring the learner "to control appropriately the use of features of his mother tongue in relation to social, technical, intentional and emotional differences in situations." Moreover, Dulay et al. (1982) have pointed out that errors can be classified into *linguistic categories*, such as *phonological, morphological, syntactic*, *semantic* and *lexicon* and *discourse: surface strategy* like *omission*, *addition* exemplified above. On the other hand, some researchers (Lennon 1991, Ellis 1997, Gass and Selinker 2008, Doughty and Long 2003, Kroll and Schafer 1978, Tice 1997) among the many others have been classifying errors into general categories like *articles, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, tense forms, word order, collocation* which are in turn classified into *omission, substitution, addition* etc. based on the errors indentified.

2.9.5.4. Explanation of Errors

Many researchers (e.g. Corder 1981, Richards 1974, Ellis 1997, Dulay et al. 1982, Dulay and Burt 1974a, Gass and Selinker 2008) advocate that explanation of errors consists in knowing the sources of errors. As has been observed above, the description of errors is a *linguistic process* whereas explanation of errors is a *psycholinguistic* one. This is due to the fact that explanation of errors attempts to answer such questions as why, how, and where do errors committed by language learners come from? In fact, the answer to such questions lies in knowing the source of the errors committed by L2 learners. Thus, in what follows, an attempt will be made for discussing explanation of errors in terms of their sources and causes.

2.9.5.4.1. Sources of errors

Taylor (1976:190) holds that the immediate cause of a deviance can be the general muscular ability, L1 habits, psychological states, teaching methods, styles of course materials or introduction of written language. However, Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a) have found that there are four sources of errors, viz*. **interlingual, intralingual, ambiguous** and **unique**. These will be discussed briefly in the following sections.

2.9.5.4.1.1. Interlingual Errors

Interference from L1 is a significant source for language learners' errors. L2 researchers advocate that interference or interlingual errors are the result of language transfer, but not the only source of errors (Richards 1974, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a). However, EA does not regard them as the persistence of old habits but rather as signs that the learner is internalising and investigating the system of the new language. Interlingual errors may occur at different levels, such as phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. These different levels can be explained with some possible errors of Arab learners learning English. At the phonological level, the English sounds that do not occur in Arabic cause the learners to mispronounce such English sounds. For instance, Arab learners of English tend to pronounce the English /p/ as /b/ since the former does not exist in Arabic. Or else, since Arabic does not allow two-consonant clusters at the beginning of a word, learners tend to insert a vowel between them as in /*siteišn/*, instead of /*steišn/* for the word **station**. In the syntactic level, Arabs tend to omit auxiliaries in *wh-questions* as such a phenomenon is not applicable in Arabic as in *Why you came yesterday?*

In the semantic level, Arabs translate some Arabic expressions into the target language, viz. English, as in **This car **took** my attention* instead of *This car **attracted** my attention*. This is because in Arabic *took my attention* is used to mean *attracted my attention*. However, as has been stated earlier, interference or transfer from L1 is not the only source of errors (Dulay et al. 1982, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, James 1998, Corder 1981, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008). While Dulay and Burt (1973:251) have concluded that 3% of learner errors can be traced to L1, in another study, namely, Dulay and Burt (1974a:132), the percentage is more, viz. 4.7%. However, Dulay et al. (1982:102) state

that interlingual errors constitute 4-12% by children and 8-23% by adults. In fact, the percentage of the errors caused by L1 interference is arguable and there is no clear consensus (cf. **section 2.9**).

2.9.5.4.1.2. Intralingual Errors

In addition to what has been mentioned in (**section 2.9.3.3**) above, intralingual errors according to Richards (1971:14), are those "which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply." In fact, Richards's categorisation is similar to Corder's (1973). In addition, Richards (1974:6) holds that intralingual errors refer to "items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the target language but generalisation based on partial exposure to the target language."

Intralingual errors, in fact, are those resulting from the formulation of hypotheses or hypothesis testing by the learners. Having no sufficient knowledge in the TL, especially in the early stages of learning process, the learner tries to internalise and/or "build up" hypotheses to comprehend the L2 linguistic system. In the words of Dulay et al. (1982:165-170), describing intralingual errors state that they are "similar to those made by children learning the target language as their first language." According to Dulay et al. (op.cit.) intralingual errors include:

Omissions: Such errors are subdivided into *omissions* of major constituents such as *head noun, subjects, main verb, direct object*; *omission* of grammatical categories such as *preposition, article, short plural and long plural, auxiliary, copula, progressive -**ing*** morpheme, *regular past tense* **–ed**, *irregular past tense, third person singular morpheme* **–s/-es**, *infinitival marker **to***, etc.

Addition: Addition errors include *double marking* which is subdivided into *present indicative, regular past morpheme **-ed**, irregular past, direct object* and **simple addition** subdivided into *third person singular morpheme* **–s/es,** *past tense morpheme**–ed**, article, preposition*, etc.

Misformation: These encompass *overgeneralisation* errors subdivided into *reflexive pronoun, regular past morpheme **-ed**, third person singular morpheme* **–s/-es,** and **archi/alternating** *forms* which are subdivided into *auxiliaries, prepositions, subject pronoun, possessive pronoun, negative, quantifiers*, etc.

Misordering: These errors include *auxiliary in simple questions, auxiliary in embedded questions, adverb*, etc.

2.9.5.4.1.3. Ambiguous Errors

The errors that have been discussed earlier can, irrespective of their type, be attributed to either L1 interference or L2 influence. However, while describing the errors committed by their subjects Dulay and Burt (1972:115) recognise that sometimes one cannot determine whether an error can be ascribed to one such source. Therefore, they have established a category called **ambiguous** errors, which is defined as "those that can be categorized as either Interference-like Goofs or L2 Developmental Goofs" They provide examples in negative constructions made by their Spanish subjects. Such examples include:

I not have a bike.

Jose no wanna go.

These constructions do reflect Spanish negation structure as in the Spanish counterparts of the above English ones:

Yo no tengo bicicleta.

Jose no quiere ir.

However, these constructions are also produced by children learning English as their L1. Due to the fact that such errors are both L1-like and L2- like, Dulay and Burt (op.cit.) call them **ambiguous**. In addition, among the errors he has classified, James (1998) called such errors **compound** errors as they combine more than one source and reflect both the MT of the learner and the TL he/she is learning. He draws our attention to the fact that there may be a combination of sources or even inability to determine the true source of an error and attribute it to one single source. Gass and Selinker (2008:108) have found that such errors do occur in their data. They provide the example *Terina not can go,* produced by a Spanish speaker learning English which can be explained in terms of "either an interference error because it reflects the Spanish structure or as a developmental error because it is also found in English-speaking children" learning English as their L1. In our corpus, it has been found that **ambiguous errors** have been committed as in ******Ali not like swimming* which can be attributed to Arabic since its Arabic counterpart ʕ*ali-un   la: yuħib-u   ?alsiba:ħat-a* (literally: Ali not like swimming) is grammatical

in Arabic. However, such errors do occur in English children's language when acquiring English as their L1. Thus, such errors are called *ambiguous* due to their ambiguous nature or source.

2.9.5.4.1.4. Unique Errors

Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) have collected speech samples from 179 Spanish-speaking children learning English with varying amounts of English as SL instruction in three different areas in the U.S. They tallied errors that could be *unambiguously* classified as being either *interlingual* or *intralingual*. The results were dramatic and straightforward: of the 513 *unambiguous* errors only about 4.7% were *interlingual*, while 87.1% were *intralingual*, and the rest was termed as *unique*.

Dulay and Burt (1973:248) define *unique errors* as "those errors that are neither 'developmental' nor 'interference' but which appear in our sample" since it was clear that these errors could be attributed neither to Spanish, the subjects' L1, nor L2, i.e. English. *Unique* errors as investigated in Dulay and Burt (1974a:132) score 8.2% out of the *unambiguous* errors they investigated which is significant compared to those ascribed to L1 *interference*. Thus, Dulay and Burt have interpreted this finding as evidence that children do not use their 'first language habits' in the process of learning the syntax of the new language. While distinguishing *developmental errors* from *unique errors*, McLaughlin (1987:67) states that *unique errors* are "those errors [that] cannot be categorized as due either to interference or as developmental errors." In addition, Ellis (1997:60) attributes *unique errors* to "instruction [that] may constitute one source of what Dulay and Burt call 'unique errors." Arab learners commit such errors as in **Either Ali Fatma reads first* where *or* has been omitted. Here it should be noted that neither Arabic nor English allows such structure. For instance, the Arabic counterpart of such an utterance is *?ima ʕali-un # fatmat-un yaqra?-u ?wal-an* which is ungrammatical. This error cannot also be attributed to English since it is neither *overgeneralization* nor *simplification* error. Thus, such error is *unique* since it is unexplainable either in terms of Arabic or English.

2.9.5.5. Error Correction

The final stage of EA proposed by many researchers (e.g. Corder 1973, James 1998, Hendrickson 1978) is *error correction*. As has been discussed so far, errors have been looked at from different perspectives. However, after the *Communicative Approach* has come into "vogue," it was

commonly held that errors were not important as long as they do not affect communication (Littlewood 1981). On a pragmatic level, Long (1990b) suggests that much corrective feedback is erratic, ambiguous, ill-timed and ineffective, while Truscott (1998) maintains that error correction is ineffective and even harmful. In addition, Hendrickson (1978, 1980) has questioned the issue of ***error correction*** as to which, when, how and who should correct which errors and whether errors should be corrected at all.

Thus, many researchers (Hendrickson 1978, 1980, McCretton and Rider 1993, Corder 1967, Selinker 1972, James 1994) among others have proposed a criterion for error correction. This criterion looks at different factors necessary for correcting learners' errors. First, ***exposure*** which states that if one of the objectives in the L2 classroom is to promote linguistic creativity, then learners should be encouraged to make inferences and guesses about L2 using new, unfamiliar, or little-studied structures when they speak. On the contrary, learners should be truly asked and encouraged for attempting to push the boundaries of their language abilities. Moreover, encouraging signals from the teacher can also serve as motivation for other students to attempt new language in unfamiliar linguistic levels. ***Seriousness*** is the second factor which persists whether or not a particular error is serious and hence, requires correction. Again, the objectives of the L2 classroom should be considered before determining the gravity of an error (McCretton and Rider 1993). If a constant flow of communication is one of the objectives, the error must impede communication before it should be considered an error that necessitates correction (for a detailed discussion of *error seriousness* see **section 1.13.3**). In fact, within the confines of the classroom, and under the pressure of having to produce accurately in the L2, learners may be nervous, anxious, upset, or excited, causing them to stumble, even with familiar structures. Corder (1967) considers such performance slips as mistakes, hardly of a serious nature. On the other hand, "true" errors cannot be self-corrected without some additional information because there is a lack of understanding by the language learner. Hence, it is wise to allow learners as many opportunities and sufficient time to self-correct their errors as possible.

Third, an important factor that must be considered by the teacher is ***individual learners' needs***. The importance of this factor is mentioned in Corder (1967) who in turn notes that this idea had been suggested previously by (Carroll 1955, Ferguson 1966 cited in Corder 1967). Indeed, each student is different and thus may react differently to error correction. Walz (1982:15-27), therefore, claims that

the teacher must perform two main tasks: first, he/she has to assess some specific character traits of students such as self-confidence and language acquisition capability. Walz holds that self-confident and capable students can profit from even minor corrections, while struggling students should receive correction only on major errors. The teacher's second task, according to Walz, is to listen to learners' L2 utterances to determine where errors occur, i.e. which linguistic forms cause students' difficulties, their frequency and their gravity (according to the seriousness criterion mentioned above). Only then can the teacher combine the outcome of these tasks and decide on correction techniques for individual learners.

Walz (op.cit.) also proposes **consistency** as the fourth and final factor. In fact, **consistency** is placed at the pinnacle of importance when addressing errors in the classroom. Without it, thus, corrections will be offered arbitrarily, depending solely on the teacher's patience, mood, motivation, or attitude. Thus, consistency takes into account (a) self-correction with the teacher's help, (b) peer-correction, and (c) teacher correction. Self-correction with the teacher's help is an excellent way to address errors. The first type, Walz offers, is pinpointing, whereby the teacher localises the error by repeating the learner's utterance up until the point where the error has occurred, and exaggerates the word which has preceded the error with a rising intonation and finally the student him/herself will notice the error and self-correct it. In addition, peer-correction, as proposed by Walz, is a way whereby the learner's peer notices the error and hence, corrects it. If, however, both ways do not come up with the correction, then the teacher him/herself has to play the role of correction.

2.9.6. Error Analysis Criticised

In the 1980s, EA gradually lost its popularity as more and more criticism was made against its approach and method. According to Chau (1975:122), the most serious of these is the lack of objectivity in its procedures of analysis, of defining and categorising errors. Another limitation of EA is its lack of explanatory function, as most error analyses just classify lists of categories of errors according to their frequency of occurrence, rather than giving an explanation. In terms of categorisation, (Lennon 1991, Sridhar 1981) claim that some errors are obvious, but many are either multiple errors, viz. partly syntactic and partly lexical or are difficult to categorise in a clear-cut way.

Another major criticism against EA, made by Schachter (1974), is that most of the error analysis just focuses on errors and does not deal with avoidance. A learner who, for one reason or another, avoids a particular sound, word, structure or discourse category may be assumed incorrectly to have no difficulty therewith. For example, Schachter (op.cit.) found that it was misleading to draw conclusions about relative clause errors among certain learners of English including Arabs and Japanese. In addition, native speakers of Japanese and Arabic were usually avoiding relative clauses and thus, not manifesting nearly as many errors as some native Persian speakers. Furthermore, EA does not deal with what students are doing that causes them to succeed; that is, it does not deal with what leads to learning. Brown (1994) draws our attention to one danger of EA, i.e. it may overstress the importance of production data. That is, many researchers pay attention to production data, but comprehension data is also equally important in developing an understanding of the process of SLA.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:61-62) have summarised the most significant weaknesses of EA as (i) studying learner's errors but not what makes him/her successful, i.e. researchers and error analysts "[b]y focusing only on errors, were denied access to the whole picture," (ii) impossibility of identifying the unitary source of an error as in *The doges ran home* where the source of such an error is "ambiguous." That is, "it could be due to overgeneralization of the syllabic plural, but it is also a developmental error of the type children learning English as their native language (NL) commonly make," and (iii) the difficulty to explain why learners avoid certain structures. Larsen-Freeman and Long agree with Schachter (1974) that EA fails to account for why Arabic and Japanese learners, for instance, avoid using *relative clauses* in their composition or why Arabic speakers learning English tend to avoid passive sentences in their writing or spoken English. These EA drawbacks have initiated the need for approaching the learner's performance as a whole and not merely his/her errors *per se*. This leads to ***Performance Analysis***.

2.10. Performance Analysis

What has led to EA is the fact that CA fails to account for errors that are not explainable in terms of the differences between L1 and L2. As has been seen above, EA is also criticised for its failure to account for some errors produced by L2 learners, the difficulty of determining the unitary source of some errors and why learners of some languages tend to avoid certain structures. This, as ascertained

by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:62), however, does not "lead to the demise of EA, but rather to its incorporation into performance analysis an analysis of the learners' IL performance" and not their errors *per se*. In fact, **Performance Analysis** (PA) allows us to see the development of a learner and the changes in his/her way of using the language give us cues about L2 learning. Thus, Larsen-Freeman and Long state that PA includes the following types:

2.10.1. Morpheme Studies

The study of grammatical morphemes has been particularly fruitful for understanding the mechanisms involved in SLA by adults. Apart from merely telling us in what order certain structures are in fact acquired, these studies have also been of value in revealing the domain of the learned grammars, when performers appeal to conscious learning and when they do not. In fact, morpheme studies in LA begin with Brown's (1973). Brown's morpheme studies of **Adam, Eve** and **Sarah** show that there is an order through which acquisition of L1 proceeds. He demonstrates that children acquiring English as a first language show a similar order of acquisition for grammatical morphemes in obligatory occasions. In that, certain morphemes, such as *-ing* and the plural *–(e)s*, tend to be acquired relatively early, while others, such as the third person singular *-s* on verbs in the *present tense* or the possessive *'s* marker tend to be acquired late (Brown 1973:51-57). This discovery was extended to child SLA by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a). The child SL order was not identical to the child L1 order, "but there were clear similarities among second language acquirers" (Krashen 1982:51).

In fact, L2 researchers (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1974a, 1974b) have adopted methodologies from these L1 acquisition studies and applied them to L2 acquisition to find out whether the sequence children pass through while acquiring their L1 morphemes is the same in L2 morphemes. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:62) hold that morpheme studies deal with the "suppliance of grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts, i.e. contexts…where the TL requires a particular linguistic structures, such as the plural marker at the end of a common English noun preceded by a cardinal number." In Dulay and Burt's (1974a, 1974b) studies conducted on L2 learners, they look at the issue of whether an obligatory morpheme has been correctly supplied in such contexts, supplied but not correctly formed, or not altogether. Based on such empirical studies, Dulay and Burt have concluded that there is an evidence of a morpheme acquisition order. This conclusion has been based on the

relative suppliance of eleven English morphemes in obligatory contexts similar to that found by Brown (1973) as noted above.

2.11.2. Developmental Sequences

In this type of PA, investigation of developmental sequences involves longitudinal studies in which the speech of one or more subjects is recorded and transcripts are analysed for particular structures. Such studies include Ravem's (1974:138-141) study in which he tackled the development of English Wh-questions in first and second language learning in the speech of his Norwegian-speaking children over a period of four months. He found that, like monolingual children, his subjects used structures like *Where Daddy go?* and *Where Daddy is going?* before they produce the adult form, viz. *Where is Daddy going?* According to Ravem (op.cit.), this did not reflect interference from their native Norwegian, which would probably have led to a form like *Where go Daddy?* Instead they produce *Where Daddy go?* just like first language learners.

In fact, most of the research concerned with developmental sequences in L2A has been conducted on syntactic processing. There seems to be good evidence that many of the same strategies are employed in L2A as used in L1A. For instance, *word order* regularities are of prime importance in both L1 and L2. In both cases, children appear to work from simpler and gradually to more complex structures, to use meaning and to prefer simpler word orders to more complex order strategies such as verb-subject inversion (Ervin-Tripp 1974). Ravem's (1974) study referred to above lends support to the hypothesis that L2 development in children progresses through stages similar to L1 development. Thus, Ravem's study confirms findings ended up with by Brown (1973) and Dulay and Burt's (1974b) study in natural sequences in child SLA where they have found that their children subjects follow the same stages as they do in acquiring their L1 irrespective of which this L1 is. Thus, Dulay and Burt (op.cit.) have concluded that the similarity between the developmental sequences in both L1 and L2 and the errors produced reflect what they termed as "*creative processing*, more specifically, *the process in which children gradually reconstruct rules for speech they hear, guided by universal innate mechanism which cause them to formulate certain types of hypotheses about the language system being acquired*" (Dulay and Burt 1974b:37, emphasis is in the original). However, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:65) hold that this "similarity between L1 and L2 developmental sequences is not without opposition

[holding that] there were differences, that the differences were systematic and that they were due to the children's relying on their L1 only under a structural condition where there was a 'crucial similarity."

However, PA has been criticised and the main criticism against PA is that it is too limited. That is, it deals only with the learner's performance without tackling the input to which such a learner is exposed. For instance, Wagner-Gough (1975:301) pinpoints this criticism through his subject, **Homer**, who produces utterances such as **Where are going is house* which is not interpretable if we limit ourselves to examining his performance unless we look at the input preceding his utterance. **Homer's** utterance, in fact, is offered as a response to an adult's question *Where are you going, Homer?* **Homer's** utterance, thus, incorporates the question asked in his response. This is actually a strategy referred to as **incorporation** (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:69). This criticism actually leads to **Discourse Analysis** which incorporates also the input to which a learner is exposed by paying more attention to the context.

2.11. Discourse Analysis

The basic idea of **Discourse Analysis** (DA) is that the study of language in context will offer a deeper insight into how meaning is attached to utterances than the study of language in isolated sentences. DA is the examination of language use by members of a speech community. It involves looking at both language form and language function and includes the study of both spoken interaction and written texts (Sato 1985). It identifies linguistic features that characterise different genres as well as social and cultural factors that aid in our interpretation and understanding of different texts and types of talk. Thus, DA of written texts might include a study of topic development and cohesion across the sentences while an analysis of spoken language might focus on these aspects plus turn-taking practices, opening and closing sequences of social encounters, or narrative structure. In fact, the study of discourse has developed in a variety of disciplines, viz. sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology which are beyond the scope of this study. Suffice here is that DA includes two types, viz. **conversation analysis** and **composition analysis** which will be discussed in brief in the following sections.

2.11.1. Conversation Analysis

Larssen-Freeman and Long (1991:70) hold that ***conversation analysis*** is "[o]ne sub-area of Discourse Analysis." They have also examined the extent to which L2 learners can learn "when engaged in 'collaborative discourse." In fact, conversation analysis is a significant domain that interprets the patterns through which people handle conversations. Everyday conversation is one of the indispensable functions of a language. In addition, the understanding of the flows and structures of everyday language is essential to language learning (Sato 1985). Therefore, incorporating conversation analysis into language class is important in that it could facilitate learners' understanding of how real-world communication happens and is carried on. In addition, conversation analysis takes a close look at unplanned, spontaneous and interactive conversation, and thereby provides an ample database for probing the organisation of conversation.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:70) have exemplified this in the following conversation between Takahiro (T), a non-native speaker and H, a native speaker of English.

```
T:      this
        broken
H:                      broken
T:      broken
        This /az/ broken
        Broken
H:                      Upside down
T:      upside down
        this broken
        upside down
        broken
```

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:70-71) state that "[t]his conversation provides a good a example of 'vertical' conversation…where Takahiro and his interlocutor collaborate to produce a combined social discourse, with Takahiro relying on the strategy of scaffolding …or building his utterances on those of the native speaker." Thus, they have ascertained that "through the negotiation of such vertical conversation, learners acquire the 'horizontal' word order of the TL." In Larsen-Freeman and Long's view, there are other processes that contribute to L2A which are non-linguistically crucial to the learners' "discovery of linguistic elements that make up the system." They state, in addition, that "the connection between conversational integration and IL development is, unquestionably, a complex one." Moreover, in her longitudinal study which investigates the *IL development* of two Vietnamese

children acquiring English, Sato (1985) states that there are aspects of conversation which help acquire particular linguistic structures such as adverbial expressions.

2.11.2. Composition Analysis

The second type of DA deals with the analysis of ***compositions*** which are written texts. Analysing compositions aims at knowing the techniques such as mechanics, organisation, and paragraph development L2 learners deployed in writing such compositions (James 1998). Compositions, as has been stated by James (op.cit.), can be analysed in terms of ***cohesion*** and ***coherence***. ***Coherence*** refers to the underlying relationships which link the meanings of the sentences in a text. To exemplify these links in terms of the speaker-hearer's shared underlying knowledge, let's consider the following example:

A: *Could you give me a lift home?*
B: *Sorry, I'm visiting my sister.*

where there is no grammatical or lexical link between A's question and B's reply but the exchange has ***coherence*** because both A and B know that B's sister lives in the opposite direction to A's home. In addition, ***coherence*** refers to the way a text makes sense to the readers through the organisation of its content and the relevance and clarity of its concepts and ideas. In general, a paragraph has coherence if it is a series of sentences that develop a main idea with ***a topic sentence*** and supporting sentences which relate to it (Gee 2005:49). On the other hand, ***cohesion*** refers to the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text. This may be the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence. For example:

1. A: *Is Jenny coming to the party?*
    B: *Yes, she is.*

In (1) above, there is a link between ***Jenny*** and ***she*** and also between ***is*** and ***coming***.

In the sentence (2) below,

2. *If you are going to London, I can give you the address of a good hotel there.*

It is obvious that the link is between ***London*** and ***there***. The way that textual ***cohesion*** is achieved is best learned through paying close attention to the way sentences are linked in texts. Several researchers (e.g. Truscott 2007) hold that there are a variety of cohesive devices, both lexical and grammatical, of which linkers (*and, so, but*) are just one. The exact relationship between ***cohesion*** and ***coherence*** is a

matter of contention, however. While it is true that a sequence of unlinked sentences *can hardly* make sense, it is often the case that some form of linking with cohesive devices such as *and, but, so*, can make it easier for the reader to process and to make sense of what they read. Nevertheless, a text which is basically poorly organised is not going to be made more coherent simply by "peppering" it with *moreover, however and notwithstanding* (Gee, 2005:51). Thus, there are three major means for creating cohesion, viz. structural, syntactical, and lexical.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:72) hold that in analysing *composition* as a discourse unit, the analyst's concern should focus on "how coherence and cohesion are achieved at the superasentential level, i.e. in written texts composed of more than one sentence." They add that "[s]tudies have been conducted on how SL learners learn to comprehend and produce these texts." In addition, James (1998:161) states that *coherence* is related to "communicative function, involving the writer's intention and the reader's interpretation." He adds that a discourse analyst has to analyse a composition or a written text in terms of "relevance, clarity, development, and even originality." He thus distinguishes between *cohesion* and *coherence* as the former is "value-as-text," and the latter as "value-as-message" shared between the writer and the reader.

Thus, to be *coherent*, a text needs a discourse and accordingly, we can classify errors under text and discourse (James 1998:161). James adds that errors can be distinguished "in terms, first, of discourse being a process and text as its product, and secondly in terms of meaning versus interpretation. It is your discourse you read into my text… discourse is what the reader or listener does with the text." James relates *coherence* "primarily to content, to the conceptual relatedness of proposition. We are no longer looking at 'markers' on the surface: we are looking for underlying 'conceptual relationships.' That is what we do as analysts, and that is what we do as readers: the analyst steps into the reader's boots" (ibid:162). He adds that the first task we have to do as analysts is to identify these relationships to be able to see "where the writer has failed to conform or adhere to the optimum relationships."

Thus, after discussing the different types of analysis that have been employed in studying language learners' errors beginning with CA and ending in DA, it is obvious that there is a kind of complementarity between these methods. In other words, it has been seen how each new type of

analysis broadened our perspective and made its own contribution to the field of L2 acquisition. Therefore, it would be untrue to say that each type of analysis replaced its predecessor. Rather, we could argue that it *subsumed* or incorporated what came before it. For instance, those who used EA appealed to CA to explain a portion of the errors that learners commit (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991). Likewise, since learner errors are part of a learner's performance, EA has a role to play in PA. And finally, the learner's total performance must be taken into account in any DA which considers the input to which the learner is exposed. This type of complementarity, in fact, makes it clear that to get best results; an analyst should employ different kinds of methods when analysing the language learners' errors, though each type may be of more value than any other depending on the type of the text he/she is analysing.

2.12. Interlanguage

It has been widely held that learner language is a distinct linguistic system from both L1 and L2. Selinker (1972), for instance, argues that there is a latent 'psychological structure' in the brain activated when one attempts to learn a second language, i.e. whenever one tries to produce sentences in the SL using meanings one may already have. When such an attempt is made, the utterances which are realised are not identical to those which would have been produced by a native speaker of the TL. Nor are they identical to the sentences having the same meaning in the learner's L1. Thus, an independent linguistic system is hypothesised to account for the actual realised utterances. This system is called *interlanguage*. Interlanguage (IL), a term coined by Selinker (1972), is manifested in different levels of the linguistic system of the language being learned, be it in phonological, morphological, syntactic or semantic forms in the speech and/or writing of a speaker of a SL that do not conform to the TL norms even after years of instruction and exposure to the standard forms of such a TL.

Selinker (1972) defines IL as an emerging linguistic system that has been developed by an L2 learner independent of both L1 and L2. Accordingly, IL seems to make somewhat stronger claims than Corder's (1971) *idiosyncratic dialect* or Nemser's (1971) *approximative system*. It makes even clearer the similarity to L1 acquisition studies by focusing attention on the learner's knowledge of the TL as a whole, and provides "room," through the notion of fossilisation, for an ultimate connection with various sociolinguistic studies of language variation with communicative competence (Selinker 1972).

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Further, many researchers (e.g. Chun,1980, Adjemian 1976, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974b, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Long 1983, 2003, Han 2004, Mizuno 1999, Nakuma 1998) hold that L2 learners are also found to go through similar stages in acquiring it, be it English, French, Russian, German or any other language to be learned as an L2.

In addition, Corder's (1971) use of an alternative term for IL, viz. *idiosyncratic dialect*, emphasises that individual learners do not share the same ILs, although research showing commonalities across learners may make it feasible to talk of *mini-dialects* for a group of learners in the same class. Looking at Arab students learning English, Scott and Tucker (1974:72-75) find it very hard to discover some degree of regularity in their errors. Their conclusions suggest some confusion, however. They "found errors that were sufficiently frequent and regular, as well as instances of correct usage apparently following standard English rules, for us to assume that we were dealing with a rule-generated language system." Though they have done two studies in two different periods of time, they have had different results. Based on Arabic two known dialects, standard and colloquial, they thought that they could claim that they were dealing with "two approximate systems: although, recognizing all the differences that did occur," they recognised that they were dealing with "twenty-two idiosyncratic dialects." This is, in fact, because of the twenty-two dialects Arabs have, i.e. every Arab country has its own dialect which, to a considerable extent, is different from the other's and sometimes may be unintelligible, too. Thus, every dialect has a direct influence on the IL of its speakers. This conclusion may sound well and as far as English is concerned, linguists used to talk about Egyptian English, Yemeni English, Iraqi English and so forth. Another study done by Zughoul (2002) in the IL syntax of Arabic speakers learning English in the area of noun phrase, in which he has focused on the closed system elements that can occur before or after the noun head, is cited here. Zughoul has analysed 500 words of the respondents who were 25 Arabs from 7 different Arab countries. The respondents are from different backgrounds, i.e. they are from different linguistic backgrounds as every one of them speaks different dialect of Arabic because they are from different Arab states. Zughoul concludes that every dialect has its influence on English.

However, in a study on the speakers of four languages, viz. Arabic, Spanish, Persian, and Japanese, Larsen-Freeman (1975) has found a high level of agreement in the kinds of errors made, but

still a great deal of evidence of apparent individual and language group variation is still to be noticed. To deal with some of these contradictory results, Dickerson (1975:407) proposes that ILs, like real languages, should be seen as having variable rules: "Like native speakers, second language learners use a language system consisting of variable rules. Their achievement of the target language comes about through gradual change by using overtime, greater proportions of more target like variance in an ordered set of phonetic environments."

To prove this, Nemser (1971) cites Serbo-Croat learners of English who will produce *What does Pat doing now?* and thus this construction belongs neither to English, nor to Serbo-Croat. What has to be learned from this example, suggest applied linguists such as Nemser, Corder and Selinker, is that one needs to understand the learner's language as a system in its own right. This is both possible and interesting because learners tend to go through a series of ILs in systematic and predictable ways. However, a question to be addressed here is that how does the learner create his/her interlanguage? According to Selinker (1972), there are a number of basic processes but, particularly in his later work Selinker (1993), he insists upon learning strategies (cf. **section 2.6.1**), that is, activities that the learner adopts or employs in order to help him/her acquire the language.

Consequently, there are certain characteristics of IL that make it different from both L1 and L2 as an independent linguistic system of its own. Selinker (1972), for instance, has ascertained that IL has three main characteristics: (i) IL is independent in the sense that it comes from the native language and the target language of the SL learner; however, it is not the simple hybrid of the two languages. (ii) IL is systematic and thus it is not haphazardly developed. In that, Adjemain (1976:332) argues that the IL systematicity means that there exists an internal consistency in the rules and feature system which makes up the IL. (iii) IL is dynamic in the sense that it does not jump from stage to the next, but rather slowly and constantly revises the systems to accommodate new hypotheses about the TL systems. This usually takes place through the introduction of a new rule, first in one context and then in another and so on. In fact, IL is a process reflecting learning psychology. In that, (Piaget 1983 cited in Long 2003) holds that cognitive learning theory sees learning as basically a matter of meaningful dynamics whereby individuals constantly reconstruct their 'cognitive structures' or schemata and hence, learning occurs when the learner relates new information to previously acquired knowledge. As such, L2

learning involves assimilation and accommodation. In addition, Long (2003:513) argues that IL consists psychologically of reconstructing as an L1-dependent process and creating as an L1-independent process. In short, IL is a creative-construction process involving hypothesis testing activity since the perception of an L2 learner shifts from holistic to analytic and hence, showing the psychological process of IL.

2.13. Fossilisation and the Plateau Effects

The issue of why almost all L2 learners never attain native-like or near-native-like proficiency and only few, if any at all, can achieve it has been addressed by several researchers and applied linguists. This phenomenon has been referred to as *fossilisation* or *learning plateau* which attempts to visualise the issue of why the L2 learner ceases to stop-short of the native speaker's competence/proficiency. This phenomenon has, in fact, been dealt with by different scholars. For instance, it has been referred to as *backsliding*, (Ellis 1985, Schachter 1988, Selinker 1972), *stabilized errors* (Schumann 1978), *persistent non-target-like performance* (Mukattash 1986), *typical errors* (Kellerman 1984), *ingrained errors* (Valette 1991), *systematic use of erroneous forms* (Allwight and Bailey 1991), *variable outcomes* (Slobin, 1993), *cessation of learning* (Odlin 1993), *structural persistence* (Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992), *errors that are impervious to negative evidence* (Lin and Hedgcock 1996), *long-lasting free variation* (Ellis 1999), *persistent difficulty* (Hawkins 2000), *ultimate attainment* (Birdsong 1992) and *plateau effect in learning* (Richards 2008, Yi 2009). In addition, the present researcher presumes that fossilisation involves *recurring IL forms* which are not necessary to be always erroneous. However, as far as erroneous forms are concerned and which are resistant to correction, one can call such recurrent erroneous forms *irrecoverable errors*.

These different concepts imply that getting stuck at a particular point in language learning process is not easy to determine. It is rather a mysterious and challenging area of study. Selinker (1993) classifies fossilisation into two categories, viz. individual fossilisation and group fossilisation. While the former is the persistence of individual learner's IL development, the latter is the plateau in the diachronic development of a community language. According to Wei (2008:127), individual fossilisation is divided into two kinds, namely, "error reappearance, and language competence fossilization." The former refers to the inadequate IL structures which are "thought to have been

corrected but continue to appear regularly." This type of fossilisation is clearly observed in the IL of learners with low proficiency. The latter, however, refers to the "plateau in the development of L2 learners' phonological, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic competence" who spend a longer period of time learning such an L2 till reaching a relatively high level and then stopped for several reasons. However, L2 learners under the plateau effect can continue learning only if they are subjected to extensive learning by following appropriate learning strategies and techniques. Agreeing with Selinker (1993), Wei (2008) holds that if competence fossilisation becomes "pervasive in a community, group fossilization comes into being. Such pervasion often leads to a new dialect. Indian English and Singapore English are good cases in point" (Wei op.cit:128).

In addition, Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) have also classified fossilisation into temporary fossilisation and permanent fossilisation. Temporary fossilisation has been termed by them as *stabilisation*. They state that stabilisation indicates that fossilised IL consists of learning plateaus where development of given L2 features is simply 'arrested' or 'inhibited' *for shorter or longer periods of time*. Permanent fossilisation, however, occurs as a result of social, psychological and interactive variables. Wei (2008) states that fossilisation is a terminology of educational psychology and that in the process of learning a new structure, the learner cannot make a noticeable progress whatever effort he/she tries to exert. Further, Yi (2009:137) contends that "[o]n the learning curve, big improvements come very quickly; then the rate of improvement slows right down to almost nothing." He adds that in early stages of learning, SL learners of average intelligence do not experience much difficulty due to their high motivation and curiosity. In fact, it is believed that L2 learners, whatever their L1 may be, have been seen to be successful in the early stages of language learning. However, unfortunately, as they proceed in their learning process, this success begins to deteriorate or slow down. This has been accounted for by referring to the learners' early activities when they imitate, memorise, practice, speak and/or write eagerly. In addition, Yi (2009:141-142) argues that plateau effect on language learning is observable in terms of learners' *behaviour* and *psychology*. In the former, for instance, "the learners do not make active response to the teacher's instructions as they used to do." In that, learners often feel the difficulty of learning and they feel unable to remember new structures and words in a language. In the latter, however, L2 learners reject "new linguistic input." Learners feel the difficulty of recalling new words, patterns and usage under the influence of short-term memory. Yi has interpreted this by stating

that whatever the learners learn in the classroom is hardly processed by long-term memory. In addition, such learners find it difficult to apply their language knowledge automatically into performance. In spite of their long experience in the TL, they find it rather difficult to use what has been learned before "spontaneously and unconsciously to communicate." Their ability of creating novel utterances gets stuck. In other words, their acquired language knowledge remains in "the conscious and cognitive level; it is not efficiently transformed into language competence, forming an unconscious communicative ability."

Recently, effective and personality factors in language learning have been paid much more attention to (Stern 1983). Gardner et al. (1959), for instance, consider attitudes and motivation an essential cause of more or less successful L2 learning. That is, whenever L2 learners are well-motivated and have a positive attitude toward the language they are learning, they are successful learners. Researchers (e.g. Guiora 1972) have accounted for this phenomenon by proposing the concept of 'language ego' or what has been referred to as 'personal image' which a learner develops about him/herself in his/her language development process. In this regard, Yi (2009:142) holds that "[j]ust as a child acquires a 'body image,' every individual acquires his language ego." He adds that during the puberty "the language ego is fluid and its boundaries are not rigid." To Yi, this is the main reason why children acquire a new language, accent, dialect whatever the language in question might be more easily than adults. However, as an individual grows, "the language ego becomes less flexible and loses its permeability." He sees language ego as a "defensive barrier, psychologically protecting the identity and dignity of the individual." As far as L2 learners are concerned and getting on plateau, they have strong language ego arousing "frustration, depression, anxiety and embarrassment."

What has been discussed above shows how learning plateau differs from fossilisation. While the former is *temporary*, the latter is *permanent*. In this, learning plateau is similar to **stabilisation** used by (Selinker 1993, Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992). Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) point out that stabilisation is the first sign of (putative) fossilisation, and if the only difference between stabilisation and fossilisation is permanence (Bley-Vroman 1989, Vigil and Olle 1976), then including persistent "fluctuation" as a legitimate index of fossilisation creates another problem. However, not all stabilisation is a precursor to, or an indication of fossilisation (Gass and Selinker 2008, Han 2000,

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2004). In addition, Han (1998:86) views stabilisation and fossilisation as two parts of a continuum. She considers fossilisation a cognitive process, properly inferable only from long-term stabilisation, demonstrable only by longitudinal studies, occurring at the level of IL subsystems rather than the entire system. Accordingly, *stabilisation*, like *plateau effect* can be overcome and is not the end of learning as in the case of *permanent fossilisation* which cannot be overcome whatever efforts learners exert. Long (2003:521) adds that fossilisation manifests itself in three ways: "invariant appearance of IL forms over time, backsliding over time, and stabilized variations over time." As in any area of SLA theory construction, one way to account for plateau effect and fossilisation is to subject them to empirical tests: "[s]hort of other problems, any that can survive such testing are candidate explanations of [the latter] and any that cannot are probably of [the former]" In addition, fossilisation has been seen by Richards (2008:19) as referring "to the persistence of errors in learners' speech despite progress in other areas of language development. They are errors that appear to be entrenched and difficult to eradicate, despite the teacher's best efforts."

In the case of learning plateau, learners for one reason or another lose motivation to continue learning and this, unlike fossilisation, can pedagogically be overcome by creating new purposes and motivation for the learners. Richards (2008) points out that learning plateau can be moved over. In other words, learners under certain conditions can pursue their learning in the same track provided that they undergo particular pedagogical techniques and effective learning strategies which can create the required motivation, attitudes and interest in L2 learners. Fossilisation, according to Richards (op.cit.), is permanent in the sense that when L2 learners get stuck in a particular domain, they cannot move forward in spite of motivation, desire and new stimuli. This is clearly manifested in the case of Professor Wu who in spite of her proved intelligence could not overcome her difficulties with English (Han 2004). In fact, Professor Wu has spent 56 years in the U.S. which furnish her with excellent exposure to English but she remains suffering from the difficulties with English she has experienced since her early life. Unlike learning plateau, the fact that fossilisation is a permanent secession of learning has been proved true by a considerable number of researchers (e.g. Vigil and Oller 1976, Han 1998, 2000, 2004, White 1998, 2008, Ellis 1997, Long 2003, Selinker 1993, 1996, Gass and Selinker 1992, 2008, Selinker and Lakshmanan 1992, Birdsong 1992, 1999, Wei 2008, Yi 2009, Lardiere 1998, Richards 2008).

2.13.1. Preventing Fossilisation and Overcoming Learning Plateau

Several researchers do not submit to fossilisation but attempt to provide solution to prevent fossilisation to occur and others have proposed methods for changing fossilised levels in L2. Such researchers as (e.g. Acton 1984, Valette 1991, Nakuma 1998, Lardiere 1998) argue that the key strategy for the prevention of fossilisation lies in providing a ***maximum degree*** of accurate and appropriate input in early levels of instruction. This input is of three types: ***teacher input***, ***recorded input*** and ***student input***. In ***teacher input***, for instance, teachers should attempt to prevent fossilisation, viz. only those teachers who have a good command of the L2 being taught and near-native accent should teach beginning classes. Unfortunately and as far as Arab world is concerned, untrained and incompetent teachers are teaching beginning classes. Those who have native-like or near-native competence teach advanced classes. Regarding ***recorded input***, the best of this type of input is video-recorded for correct pronunciation. For ***student input***, when communicating with their peers, students should focus on and acquire the patterns they hear from them.

In addition, Acton (1984:71) has proposed a method for changing fossilised pronunciation. He feels that when a learner reaches puberty, it seems axiomatic that his/her "ability to learn a second language, including the possibility of acquiring a native-like accent, begins to deteriorate." He adds that learners' pronunciation becomes "inevitably and irrevocably" fossilised when they have achieved a level of competence which indicates that they become functionally bilingual. The method proposed by Acton consists of seven steps: 1) ***conversation control*** in which learners have to be relaxed and feel not threatened in conversation, 2) ***monitoring strategies*** which specify that "[f]ossilized learners generally find it necessary to do some type of conscious monitoring in order to be able to ultimately affect change in everyday conversation," 3) ***non-verbal correlates of pronunciation***, 4) ***dictionary use*** in which the learners have to focus on "the relationship between pronunciation and orthography" for which dictionary use is emphasised for checking especially the pronunciation of vowels, many of which the learners are not aware of, 5) ***oral reading*** in which learners are advised to prepare 200 to 300 word texts for revising their pronunciation, 6) ***informant use*** where each student solicits the assistance of an informant, a native speaker of English for improving pronunciation, and 7) ***integration*** which is a phase that

entails using, in an "on-the-job conversation," i.e. what learners have 'corrected' in isolation, in formal exercises and oral readings they have gone through previously (ibid:76-78).

As far as plateau effect is concerned, several researchers and applied linguists have concerned themselves with how to make their learners overcome learning plateaus and what effective techniques and learning strategies they can apply to help them move from the plateau dilemma. For instance Wei (2008:130) has proposed that to overcome learning plateau, L2 learners should be involved in extensive learning by creating motivations and enhancing their attitudes toward the L2 they are learning stating that "successful language learning involves attention to both form and meaning." He adds that curricula should provide stimulating, sufficient and optimal input. From acculturation point of view, learners should be immersed in authentic or pseudo-authentic situations in which learners will be involved to identify themselves with native speakers. Thus, objectives can be set for such learners providing them with the advantages of communicating with native speakers and the value of communicating fluently. In addition, Richards (2008:20) holds that teachers can involve learners in learning situations for "becoming active monitors of their own language production through listening to recordings of their own speech and through having others monitor their speech for fossilised errors in focused listening sessions" applying *noticing* and *output hypothesis*. He adds that teachers should be selective, i.e. they should focus on "error correction and the issues of what kinds of errors to correct and when and how to correct them."

As far as activities to be involved in classroom to overcome learning plateau are concerned, Richards (2008:20) suggests three main techniques or activities: (i) incorporating a more explicit treatment of grammar within the curriculum, (ii) building a *focus on form* into teaching through the use of activities centering on raising consciousness, or noticing grammatical features of input or output and (iii) using activities that require stretched output (i.e. which expand or "restructure" learners' grammatical systems through increased communicative demands and attention to linguistic form). As far as learners are concerned, Richards (op.cit:21) provides the following techniques to be paid much attention to and achieved by them.

1. Expand their grammatical competence, including acquiring new ways of using known forms, as well as adding more complex language resources to their linguistic repertoire.
2. Become more fluent and accurate language users.

3. Develop the capacity to monitor their own language use as well as that of others, and to notice the gap between their productive competence and those of more advanced language users.

4. Continue to develop their vocabulary, particularly at the 5,000 to 6,000 word range.

5. Develop a greater awareness of and familiarity with patterns of lexical collocation.

6. Master the use of conversational routines and other means of participating actively in conversation and other forms of spoken discourse.

7. Further develop their proficiency in listening, reading, and writing.

However, Richards (2008:21) stresses that to achieve these objectives, learners should be provided with "a rich source of language learning experiences that allow for the gradual development of language skills across the different modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing." He adds that such experiences will make learners "successful monitors and managers of their own learning, aware of the limitations of their current level of language ability, but also aware of the means by which they can move beyond the intermediate learning plateau to more advanced levels of language use."

2.15. Conclusion

Thus, in this chapter, the very important theoretical foundations which underlie the study at hand have been discussed. SLA, its theories and models, UG, linguistic, communicative and strategic competence and performance, SLA strategies among many other related issues have been discussed. Very salient theories related to the concept, analysis and the committing of "error" such as CA, CAH, EA, PA, DA, IL, fossilisation, learning plateau and the different views on these areas enriching the study of errors through different eras which contribute to the development of this very essential field of research have also been examined and discussed. As has been discussed so far, the study of errors and their gravity is not only important to teachers and students but also to linguists, syllabi designers and textbook developers due to the essential pedagogical insights it provides them with. In short, the study of errors and their gravity is nowadays the cornerstone of successful language learning process and understanding its essential aspects and secrets.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the techniques and methods followed in conducting this study. It discusses the questionnaires used to collect the data from the population of the study. It also discusses the syntactic and semantic categories and subcategories involved in the preparation of such questionnaires. It presents the types of tests, viz. objective and subjective, how they are prepared; when, where and to whom they have been administered. The error identification, error classification, error correction and error tabulation are also discussed. It also discusses the subjects of the study and their overall contact with English. In addition, this chapter presents and discusses the native speakers' questionnaire and the items included in it. It also discusses the corpus of the study and the method used in the analysis of the data and how EG is statistically computed among other things.

3.2. Subjects of the Study

This study involves 102 Arabic speaking learners of English who have been admitted in the first year of English Language Departments, Faculties of Arts and Education. They have spent seven years learning English. Three years in primary school, namely, the seventh, the eighth and the ninth grades and three years in the secondary school, namely, the first, the second and the third grades and almost a year in the university. There are two campuses involved in this study, viz. Faculty of Arts, Ibb University campus, Ibb, Yemen and Faculty of Education, Taiz University campus, Taiz, Yemen. In order to be admitted in such universities, as it is the case in all Arab Universities, students have to finish secondary school and get the required percentage in addition to having passed the entrance exams set by the Department of English in each University (cf. **section 1.6.3**). These two campuses have been chosen to correspond to the geographical differences the subjects of the study are coming from. In other words, to get better results, the subjects of the study have to represent the stratification of the society, i.e. from different strata including urban as well as rural areas of the society. For the students coming from the countryside, if the village is not far from the place where the university is located, they used to go and come daily to the university as in the case of Al-Sahool, Djebla, Maitam, Al-Daleel, Ba'adan

Al-Odain students whose villages are not far from Ibb University or Al-Hawban, Mawya, Jabal Saber students whose villages are not far from the University of Taiz. If, however, their villages are far, then students rent houses in the city or stay at University hostels.

As has been motioned above, the subjects of this study have already spent six years learning English in schools in addition to spending almost a year in the university. At the time of conducting the tests, the subjects are at the age of 21-25 years, though some students may be older but not younger than that. This is so because in almost all Arab countries, students join primary school at the age of six or seven years. They spend twelve years in the primary and secondary schools. After finishing the secondary school, they spend one or two years not joining the university and as far as many Arab countries including Yemen are concerned, the students in this period join military system for *National Defence Service* and only then can they join the University for the study of B.A. Some students may also stay more than two years before joining the university to study the degree.

3.3. The Questionnaires

To collect the data for the study at hand, two types of questionnaires have been prepared and used. These are *The Students' Questionnaire* and *The Native Speakers' Questionnaire*. The two types of questionnaire will be discussed in the following sections

3.3.1. The Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire begins with an *Informed Consent Form* (see **Appendix I**) in which an introduction to the researcher, the supervisor and the study at hand and how the questionnaire has been prepared has been presented. Instructions and guidelines have been given to the subjects as to what tasks they are asked to do. In fact, the questionnaire consists of six parts. Each part begins with instructions for the subjects for what they should do in such a test and in each task. To make the respondents' task easier, an example is provided in the beginning of each test. After the questionnaire has been prepared, it has been shown to the supervisor of the dissertation, Prof. *Panchanan Mohanty,* Center for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, University of Hyderabad, India and to Dr. Mahmoud Al-Maqtary, Head, English Department, Ibb University, Yemen. Their valuable suggestions and modifications have been taken into account in developing the questionnaire.

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3.3.1.1. Students' Overall Contact with English Questionnaire

To explore to what extent the population of the study has contact with English, a questionnaire has been prepared for such a purpose (see **Appendix II**). This questionnaire begins with some personal items the purpose of which is to elicit some personal information from the subjects like **name** (optional)**, gender** (optional)**, place of birth, province, town, village, faculty** and **university**. The questionnaire also includes 14 other questions the answer to each of which requires each subject to choose one of four alternatives, namely, **always, sometimes, rarely** or **never** abbreviated as **A, S, R** and **N**, respectively. These questions are generally related to the overall students' contact with English outside the classroom.

The results of this questionnaire show the economic status, the area and the social strata of the subjects involved in this study. In that, most of the respondents admitted in both Ibb University and Taiz University are from the countryside such as Ba'daan, Al-Sahool, Hubaish, Al-Saiaani, Al-Hawban, Mawya, Jabal Saber, Yareem, Al-Sadah, Al-Hugariah, Shara'b Al-Qabaita and so forth. In addition, the questionnaire reveals that most students under study do not join any institute to study English before joining the university due perhaps to their families' low income. Some of the subjects, especially those from villages, do not watch English movies as they might not have TVs and/or Satellite dishes in the countryside. Thus, Table (6) below shows one question asked in this questionnaire and the responses chosen by the informants (see **Appendix II-B**) for more details.

Table (6): Students' Overall Contact with English

Please, read the following questions and answer them by taking (✓) in the boxes provided against each question. Please note that (A=Always, S= Sometimes, R=Rarely and N= Never)

	A	S	R	N
1. Did you get high marks in your Secondary School English exams?	34	56	12	

In fact, the purpose of this questionnaire is not to involve the results of what has been said by the subjects in explaining the gravity of their errors. It has been meant, however, just to find out the subjects' background including their **geographical areas, gender, faculty** and **university** where they are

studying. The other 14 questions of this questionnaire evaluate their previous as well as present overall contact and exposure to English. As can be seen in Table (6) above, the answers to the 14 questions asked vary and this variation clearly shows that the students are not of the same background and they do not have the same contact with English. This variation also reflects the fact that some of the subjects are from urban areas and some others from rural areas, some are rich and some are poor. In fact, the answers to questions 1-14 show the subjects' economic, cultural as well as social strata. Some of the subjects are able to join English institutes while others are not. Some of them have TVs and some others do not. Some of them have travelled abroad but others have not and so on. For instance, the answer to question 13, viz. *Have you studied English in any institute before joining college*? is 17 *always*, 12 *sometimes,* 28 *rarely* and 45 *never*. The same can be inferred from the answers to the rest of the questions (see **Appendix II-B**).

3.3.1.2. Test Types

The test types include (i) objective tests and (ii) subjective tests. Objective tests include ***Error Identification Test, Multiple Choice Test*** and ***Error Correction Test***. The subjective tests include ***Translation Test*** and ***Free Composition Test***. The items included in objective tests have been based on two backgrounds: 1) the secondary school English courses approved by the Ministry of Education, Yemen and 2) the prescribed courses taught in the Departments of English. For this purpose, a review of the secondary courses including Scientific and Literary sections has been attempted (see **Appendix V-F**). In addition, some prescribed courses in the Departments of English, **Level I** have been reviewed for the sake of not exceeding such limits while devising the test items (see **Appendix V-G**). These tests are discussed as follows.

3.3.1.2.1. Error Identification Test

This test begins with some instructions guiding the subjects to what to do and also illustrated with an example (see **Appendix III-A**). It includes 80 sentences. Each sentence contains an error which the subjects are asked to identify and then correct. The syntactic categories included along with the number of items are shown in Table (7) below.

Table (7): Syntactic Categories and Number of Items Included in Error Identification Test

Syntactic category	Number of items
1. Prepositions	18
2. Subject-verb agreement	8
3. Yes/no questions	4
4. Wh-questions	5
5. Tag questions	2
6. Conditionals	3
7. Tenses	5
8. Articles	12
9. Passives	4
10. *To*-infinitive	5
11. Gerunds	4
12. Pronouns	3
13. Modals/ auxiliaries	4
	5

As Table (7) above shows, this test includes the syntactic categories intended to be examined in this study. The number of the syntactic items included under each syntactic category points to the fact that an attempt has been made while constructing this test to include as many items under each category as possible focusing on the area of difficulty the subjects may encounter. However, the sequence in which these items are presented in Table (7) does not reflect such a difficulty. What the subjects have to do in this test is identify the error in each sentence and after that they are supposed to correct it.

3.3.1.2.2. Multiple Choice Test

This test has been designed to test a semantic category, namely, *lexical choice errors* and their categories and subcategories. It also tests syntactic categories like *Yes/no questions, negation, relative clauses* among others. It consists of 40 items containing four choices each as an attempt to make it as objective as possible (see **Appendix III-B**). In fact, this test has been meant for assessing the subjects' ability to choose the right semantic and/or syntactic item from four multiple choices. Thus, Table (8) below shows the lexical and syntactic items presented and their number.

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Table (8): Semantic/Syntactic Categories and the Number of Items Included in the Multiple Choice Test

Category	Number of items
1. Nouns	5
2. Adverbs	2
3. Prepositions	1
4. Adjectives	5
5. Verbs	14
6. Infinitival particle	1
7. Conditionals	1
8. Relative Clauses	2
9. Wh-questions	2
10. Yes/No questions	4
11. Negation	1
12. Personal pronouns	2

3.3.1.2.3. Error Correction Test

This test has been designed to test ***collocation, lexical choice and lexico-grammatical*** errors and their categories and subcategories (see **Appendix III-C**). It consists of 80 items. Here, the error has been identified by underlining it and what the subjects have to do is only correct the error. The items containing collocations vary in their representation. That is, collocations are several such as *verb+noun, adjective+noun, adverb+adjective* and so on. Again, lexical error assessment has been included in this test as well. The difference between this test and Error Identification Test in presenting lexical choice errors is that while in the former, the subjects are asked only to correct the error, in the latter, they are asked to identify the error and then correct it. In fact, this has been done for the purpose of examining whether the students choose the right item according to knowledge or they just choose it randomly.

In addition, this test also assesses the use of ***lexico-grammatical*** category and its subcategories. It has been widely noticed that Arabic speaking students learning English get confused using ***lexico-grammatical*** categories in the place of others. For instance, using ***nouns*** in the place of ***adjectives***,

adjectives in the place of *nouns, adjectives* in the place of *adverbs* and so on. In the items presented, all these have been included. Thus, Table (9) below presents each category involved in this test and the number of items under each category.

Table (9): Collocation, Lexical Choice and Lexico-grammatical categories and the Number of Items under each Category

Collocations		Lexical Choice		Lexico-grmmatical choice	
Category	No. of items	Category	No. of items	Category	No. of items
V+Noun	15	Adjectives	10	Adj in place of noun	3
2. Adj+Noun	10	Nouns	11	Adj in place of Adv	3
4. V+Adv	4	Verbs	13	N in place of Adj	4
5. Adv+Adj	2	Adverbs	3	Adv in place of Adj	2

3.3.1.2.4. Translations Test

In this test, the subjects of the study have been asked to translate a passage from their mother tongue, viz. Arabic into English for the purpose of detecting their syntactic and semantic errors (see **Appendix III-D**). It is also meant for examining the syntactic and semantic categories Arabic speakers learning English escape or avoid while translating. In this regard, Schachter (1974) has pointed out that Japanese and Chinese EFL learners he has studied try to avoid using English relative clauses as both languages do not have relative clauses. However, he points out to the fact that Arabic speakers learning English avoid using passive sentences as passivisation process is greatly different in both languages. Schachter adds that Arabic speaking learners of English also avoid using relative clauses but not as much as Japanese speakers do. This has also been supported by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) and Yuan and Zhao (2005). It is also meant for exploring the semantic difficulties Arabic speakers learning English encounter while translating. However, an English passage has not been given to the subjects to translate into Arabic because it has nothing to do with the scope of this study. Two samples of the students' translation have been provided (see **Appendix V-D**)

3.3.1.2.5. Free Composition Test

This test has been given to the subjects for two purposes, viz. to detect the subjects' syntactic and semantic errors and to identify the areas of difficulty Arabic speaking learners of English encounter (see **Appendix III-E**). It has been widely held that composition tests are subjective because in such a kind of tests, the students feel free in their choice. They are, in fact, not confined as it is the case in the objective tests such as **Multiple Choice Test** or **Error Identification Test** where the subjects do not have a chance to escape or avoid any structure they might not know. Such types of tests have only two alternatives whether correct or incorrect. Thus, in this test, the subjects have been asked to write on one of the following topics in ***not more than 150 words***:

1. Your first day at college.
2. Your ambition in life.
3. What English means to you.
4. A memorable event in your life.
5. The Reunification of Yemen.

For each topic the students have written about, a sample has been provided (see **Appendix V-E**)

3.3.2. Native Speakers' Questionnaire

After identifying and correcting the syntactic and semantic errors obtained from the different types of tests, there have been some sentences whose erroneousness the present researcher was not sure of because he is not a native speaker of English. Thus, there was a need for asking and consulting native speakers of English so as to identify the sentences which are erroneous. For this purpose, ***native speakers' questionnaire*** has been prepared. After preparing the questionnaire, it has been shown to Prof. ***Panchanan Mohanty***, the dissertation supervisor. His suggestions and amendments have been taken into consideration. Thus, this questionnaire begins with an ***Informed Consent Form*** (see **Appendix IV**) in which the respondents are requested to do the tasks involved in this questionnaire. The respondents of the questionnaire were 8 Americans from different cities in the U.S. including New York, Los Angeles, Oakland, Texas etc. They aged between 21 and 28 years. Of these respondents, 6 are male and 2 are female. They are students in ***Study in India Program*** (**SIIP**) at the University of

Hyderabad. They have different areas of interest including social science, Indian history, Indian languages, etc.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first is ***personal information*** in which the respondents have been asked to provide some personal information such as ***name*** (optional)***, age, gender***, ***place of birth*** and ***area of interest***. The second part consists of a list of 174 sentences. The list includes 139 sentences which are erroneously doubtful and 35 incorrect sentences. The purpose of including such 35 incorrect sentences is that the researcher intends to examine the native speakers' responses to these sentences particularly because the questionnaire also involves the respondents' evaluation of such sentences in terms of seriousness and to see whether such responses correspond to the findings reached by some EG analysts such as James (1977), Lennon (1991), Sheorey (1986), Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) and Davies (1983) who have concluded that NSs fail to judge the erroneousness of some sentences. Thus, before responding to such sentences, the respondents have been given the following instructions:

1. Use (E) for erroneous and (N) for not erroneous.
2. Use (A) for less serious, (B) for serious and (C) for most serious.
3. Circle the choice you think appropriate.

Given below are some of the sentences involved and the scale according to which the evaluation of such sentences has been based (see **Appendix IV**)

1. I surprised at your way of teaching.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
2. You feel sad.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
3. You are too friendly, Sir.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
4. I call everyone to visit Yemen.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
5. Life is sweet in the city.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
6. He is my great enemy.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
7. The teachers are the builders of minds. I like the teachers who give us much homework.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
8. There comes student.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
9. The water is used for washing.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
10. I had amazing experience last week.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)

After responding to the questionnaire items, a long discussion took place between the researcher and the respondents on different issues including their evaluation and judgements of the erroneous sentences and it has been video-recorded. The discussion includes their views and opinions about the errors committed by Arab learners of English which are involved in such sentences. These opinions and

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views, in fact, represent their evaluation of the seriousness of such errors and how serious they are. Surprisingly enough, there were incorrect sentences among the list of sentences given to them, which were not judged as erroneous by them. In fact, this confirms what many researchers (e.g. Lennon 1991, Sheorey 1986, James 1977, Hughes and Lascaratou 1982) have stated, i.e. there are certain erroneous sentences that even NSs of English fail to identify which is one of the drawbacks of considering NSs's judgements to express the seriousness of errors committed by L2 learners. This issue has been thoroughly discussed in (**section 1.13**). It will also be referred to in Chapters four and five. To conclude, the sentences which have been considered neither *erroneous* nor *serious* by the NS respondents have been excluded from our corpus.

3.4. Test Administration

As has been stated above, the tests of this study have been administered to students of the English department, Faculty of Arts, Ibb University, Ibb, Yemen and English Department, Faculty of Education, Taiz University, Taiz, Yemen. The questionnaires have been sent to both departments. The researcher has sent a message to each Department's head, requesting him to administer the questionnaire to his students. In Ibb University, the questionnaire was administered on Monday, 15th December, 2008. The time allotted was 120 minutes. In Taiz University, the questionnaire was administered on Saturday, 27th December, 2008. The time allotted was 120 minutes. The questionnaire has been distributed to 120 students. However, only 102 have returned their answer sheets.

3.5. Identification and Correction of Errors

After the administration of the questionnaires in both campuses, the answer sheets have then been corrected by the researcher himself after preparing the answer keys for objective tests, viz. ***Error identification Test, Multiple Choice Test*** and ***Error Correction Test*** (see **Appendices III A-C**). In fact, the answer scripts have been marked according to these answer keys. Regarding the ***Translation Test*** and ***Free Composition Test***, errors have been marked on the basis of the errors found in each answer script. Erroneous sentences have been verified on the basis of several researchers' work such as (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, Wood 1984, Thomson and Martinet, 1986, Eastwood 1984, Garner 2003) among others. In verifying the erroneous sentences, two major categories were taken into

account, viz. syntactic and semantic errors. Within these two major categories, several categories and subcategories of errors have been noted. For instance, within the syntactic category, viz. ***prepositions***, subcategories of errors such as ***substitution omission*** and ***addition*** of articles have been considered. Within the semantic category, namely, ***lexical choice,*** subcategories of errors such as ***assumed synonymy, paraphrase*** and ***homophony*** have been considered.

3.6. Item Facility

Many researchers (e.g. Oller 1979) prefer 'item facility' to 'item difficulty.' While item difficulty indicates how difficult it was for respondents to endorse the item, item facility indicates how easy it was for the informants to endorse the item. Oller argues that in item difficulty, the proportion of the students who answer an item is not expressed correctly. However, in item facility, Oller holds that the proportion of the subjects answering the item is expressed properly. Item facility can be simply defined as the degree of facility of a test item which is calculated on the basis of a group's test performance. In other words, item facility equals the number of students who answer such an item correctly divided by the total number of the students who undergo the test (Oller 1979).

According to Oller (op.cit.), a good item is one whose item facility falls between 15 and 85. What the results show in this study is that the item facility of the items of the tests falls between 18% and 83%. Table (10) below presents the item facility of all the objective tests, viz. ***Error Identification Test, Multiple Choice Test*** and ***Error Correction Test***.

Table (10): Item Facility of the Objective Tests' Items

Serial No.	Item No.	Item Fac.	Serial No.	Item No.	Item Fac.
01	61	0.18	101	109	0.55
02	194	0.19	102	113	0.55
03	27	0.19	103	174	0.55
04	53	0.20	104	103	0.55
05	99	0.20	105	143	0.55
06	11	0.20	106	165	0.55
07	83	0.20	107	22	0.56
08	47	0.24	108	168	0.56
09	13	0.26	109	138	0.56
10	192	0.27	110	97	0.56
11	02	0.27	111	104	0.57
12	06	0.27	112	45	0.57
13	49	0.27	123	188	0.58
14	08	0.27	124	175	0.59
15	01	0.27	115	151	0.59
16	04	0.27	116	155	0.59
17	17	0.27	117	70	0.60
18	28	0.27	118	158	0.60
19	115	0.27	119	172	0.60
20	92	0.27	120	149	0.60
21	100	0.27	121	182	0.60
22	101	0.27	122	22	0.60
23	90	0.30	123	178	0.60
24	87	0.30	124	54	0.60
25	42	0.30	125	160	0.60
26	64	0.30	126	176	0.60
27	68	0.30	127	58	0.60
28	159	0.33	128	60	0.60
29	69	0.33	129	146	0.61
30	12	0.33	130	152	0.61
31	137	0.33	131	141	0.61
32	55	0.33	132	26	0.61
33	96	0.33	133	119	0.61
34	50	0.33	134	144	0.61
35	187	0.33	135	147	0.61
36	52	0.34	136	193	0.63
37	18	0.35	137	79	0.63
38	19	0.35	138	150	0.64
39	199	0.35	139	63	0.65
40	198	0.35	140	72	0.65
41	36	0.35	141	31	0.67
42	25	0.35	142	162	0.67
43	14	0.35	143	145	0.67
44	98	0.35	144	24	0.67
45	105	0.35	145	108	0.67
46	111	0.35	146	29	0.67
47	161	0.35	147	163	0.67
48	183	0.35	148	153	0.67
49	139	0.35	149	191	0.67
50	140	0.35	150	116	0.69
51	179	0.35	151	197	0.70
52	166	0.36	152	74	0.70
53	128	0.36	153	186	0.70
54	135	0.36	154	120	0.70
55	51	0.36	155	164	0.70
56	95	0.37	156	154	0.70
57	56	0.38	157	81	0.71
58	91	0.38	168	77	0.71
59	132	0.38	159	32	0.71

60	129	0.39	160	122	0.72
61	89	0.40	161	62	0.72
62	102	0.40	162	86	0.73
63	57	0.40	163	117	0.74
64	190	0.40	164	195	0.75
65	48	0.40	165	33	0.75
66	130	0.42	166	80	0.77
67	185	0.42	167	123	0.77
68	169	0.42	168	157	0.77
69	133	0.42	169	34	0.77
70	171	0.44	170	124	0.77
71	170	0.44	171	84	0.77
72	134	0.44	172	41	0.78
73	156	0.44	173	75	0.78
74	181	0.47	174	76	0.78
75	112	0.49	175	125	0.80
76	148	0.49	176	37	0.80
77	64	0.50	177	126	0.80
78	10	0.50	178	85	0.80
79	9	0.50	179	40	0.80
80	184	0.51	180	127	0.80
81	71	0.51	181	39	0.81
82	66	0.51	182	94	0.81
83	106	0.51	183	27	0.81
84	177	0.51	184	15	0.81
85	43	0.51	185	88	0.81
86	173	0.51	186	30	0.81
87	167	0.51	187	93	0.81
88	142	0.51	188	07	0.81
89	118	0.51	189	110	0.81
90	21	0.51	190	131	0.82
91	200	0.51	191	67	0.82
92	23	0.54	192	16	0.82
93	196	0.54	193	107	0.82
94	20	0.55	194	03	0.82
95	44	0.55	195	121	0.82
96	189	0.55	196	38	0.83
97	180	0.55	197	114	0.83
98	73	0.55	198	59	0.83
99	54	0.55	199	05	0.83
100	136	0.55	200	09	0.83

As can be seen in Table (10) above, the facility of the tests falls between 18 and 83. In addition, as argued by (Oller 1979), the best item is that whose facility falls between 15 and 85 and thus the test items are neither easy nor difficult and thus the results are suitable for the study under investigation.

3.7. Classification of Errors and Tabulation of Data

The tests, both objective and subjective, have been devised for two major underlying purposes: (i) to assess the syntactic and semantic abilities of the subjects involved in this study through the syntactic and semantic errors they have committed and (ii) to express the seriousness of such errors by means of statistical procedures. Thus, under the syntactic categories, errors have been classified into

articles, subject-verb agreement, yes/no questions, wh-questions, negatives, prepositions, relative clauses, pronouns, word order, VP construction, conditionals, etc and each of these categories has been classified into further categories and subcategories such as *omission, addition, misuse* etc. The semantic errors have been classified into *lexical choice, collocations* and *lexico-grammatical* and their subcategories. *Lexical errors*, for instance, have been classified into *formal errors* and *lexical choice* and each of such categories is subdivided into further categories and subcategories. *Formal errors*, for instance, are classified into *formal misselections, formal misformations* and *distortion due to* s*pelling.* *Distortion due to* s*pelling* errors, for instance, are subdivided into *omission, misordering, overinclusion, misselection* and *L1 Based errors* etc. *Lexical choice errors* have been classified into *assumed synonymy, paraphrase* and *homophony*. *Collocation errors* have been classified into *word choice, contextualisation, wrong forms* and each of such categories has been classified into further categories and subcategories. *Lexico-grammatical errors* have been classified into further categories and subcategories such as *Adjectives in place of nouns, Nouns in place of adjectives, Adjectives in place of adverbs* and *Adverbs in place of adjectives*. Such classifications will be discussed in detail in chapters four and five.

In addition, tabulations of the syntactic and semantic errors have been presented according to their *frequency*, *the number of the subjects committing them, sum, percentage, mean* and *EG*. Based on the findings of this study, pedagogical implications will be provided to help Arab and non-Arab applied linguists, teachers, syllabi and curriculum designers and textbooks developers devise necessary and important remedial materials that can cover such areas where Arabic learners face difficulty in learning English.

3.8. Corpus of the Study

As has been stated above, the questionnaires whether students' questionnaires or native speakers' questionnaires were the instruments of this study for collecting the data. Thus, the corpus of this study encompasses those erroneous sentences which have been obtained from both types of tests, viz. objective including *Error Correction Test, Error identification Test* and *Multiple Choice Test* and subjective including *Free composition Test* and *Translation Test*. However, not all the data collected have been considered as corpus. Only those errors which are *most serious, serious* and *less serious* and

have been committed by more than 50% of the subjects involved have been considered as our corpus. In other words, all those errors which have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved have been considered not *serious* and hence, excluded.

Thus, the corpus of the study includes a total number of 39515 errors both syntactic and semantic. The syntactic errors are 19494. The semantic errors, however, are 20021. In fact, this has been discussed thoroughly in the course of examining the L1 and L2 sources of the EG (see **section 6.5**). Thus, within each category, there are errors of different nature and sources. These are interlingual, intralingual, ambiguous and unique. The interlingual errors are 13686 constituting 34.63% of the total number of errors committed in our study. However, the intralingual errors are 24284 constituting 61.46% of the total number of the errors committed. 1239 errors have been found to be ambiguous constituting 3.14% of the total number of the committed errors and 306 have been found to be unique constituting 0.77% of the total number of the errors committed in our study.

3.9. Methods of Analysis

After reviewing the literature on EG studies (see **Section 1.13**), the present researcher has come to a conclusion that such studies, though valuable and interesting are not adequate because they lead to no consensus among researchers as to what EG is, what criteria should be followed when judging the seriousness of an error or a group of errors, which errors, viz. phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, are more serious than others, who the judges are, i.e. NSs or NNSs or both, what type of R-text that should be involved in this judgement among other important arguments. Thus, the existing EG studies lead to contradiction more than consensus. Hence, the results of such studies cannot be relied on to come up with realistic conclusions on which one can clearly formulate which errors are serious and which are not and how serious they are. However, there are some studies, the present researcher believes, which are more reliable to whose results almost all researchers agree. These studies include (Lennon 1991, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974, Nickel 1971, 1973, Johansson 1973, Davies 1983, James 1977, 1998, Palmer 1980, Tong 2000, Wright 2000) among others. The reliability of these studies lies in the fact that they employ a criterion, viz. *error frequency*, i.e. the number of times an error or a group of errors repeatedly occurs in one's linguistic production, be it written or spoken. These researchers have concluded that it is *error frequency* that matters most when judging which errors are

serious and how serious they are. This is due, these researchers believe, to the fact that the more an error or a group of errors repeatedly occurs in the student's linguistic production, the more it will be a characteristic of his/her failure to apply the rules of the language system of the language being learned. As such, it is the frequency of such an error which impedes communication and not what the NSs or NNSs think of that error.

Based on these conclusions, the study at hand employs a statistical method proposed by Palmer (1980) for judging and evaluating the seriousness of an error or a group of errors. The usefulness of this method consists in proposing a different criterion for judging the seriousness of an error. Palmer proposes this criterion based on his belief that the criteria that are in use by EG researchers are not adequate for judging the seriousness of L2 learner errors because of the contradictions they lead to (see **section 1.13.8**). In fact, Palmer has questioned the inadequacy of the existent EG studies arguing that the gravity of an error has to be judged and accounted for by the frequency of its occurrence and this is what really matters. According to Palmer's proposed method, it is the recurrence of an error which determines its seriousness or gravity. He states that if error analysis is to be the "practical means for teachers to share insights into the linguistic difficulties" encountering language learners, "some standardized way of expressing these insights will have to be devised…[a] mathematical means of expressing which errors are the most serious and how serious they are would be useful" (p.93-94).

Palmer (1980:94) has proposed such a method arguing that the "seriousness of an error is related to frequency and not to notions of communicative difficulty or globality" or in "the way Burt and Kiparsky (1972) have claimed." This approach depends on statistical computation of the frequency of an error occurrence which will give the students their "communication problem and the teacher his work." He adds that "in addition to frequency, the EG also takes into account the distribution of an error type amongst the sample of students." Palmer here points out to a very significant pedagogical fact which is whenever a learner makes an error of any type; it becomes a very clear characteristic of his/her IL. In addition, to overcome these "fossilized patterns" in the IL of a learner, to Palmer, is to design remedial courses according to the 'size of the group' making such an error. The EG model Palmer proposes can be statistically formulated by drawing statistical Tables showing error type, number of errors, mean, the number of students committing the errors, percentage and distribution of a

particular error. EG can also be compared in "histograms to give a graphic EG-profile for a certain group of students" (Palmer op.cit:96). Table (11) below shows how statistically the seriousness of any error category of errors can be computed:

Table (11): Palmer's Statistical Model of Expressing EG

Statistical Category	Error Categories			
TNS				
N				
$\sum$				
$\bar{x}$				
P				
EG				

where **TNS** is the total number of the subjects involved, **N** is the number of the students who committed errors in the use of …., $\sum$ is the sum of the committed errors, $\bar{x}$ is the mean, **P** is the percentage of students committing the errors and **EG** is the Error Gravity. Thus, EG of an error or a group of errors can be computed statistically by "taking the product of percentage of students making the error (p) and the square-root of the mean number of errors made by those students ($\bar{x}$), $\bar{x} = \sum/N$" Palmer (op.cit:94) and thus statistically, the seriousness of an error or a group of errors can be obtained from the following formula:

EG = p x $\sqrt{\bar{x}}$

Thus, such a statistical method to expressing the EG will actually lead to consensus among researchers because it depends on statistical computation, rather than NSs and/or NNSs' subjective intuition, and to which no one can have an objection. As such, this method is applicable to any language because of its objectivity which is, as a criterion; far reliable from the subjective criteria followed by the existing EG studies which lead to different and contradict opinions and points of view (cf. **section 1.13.9**).

However, it should be noted here that the categories and subcategories, be they syntactic or semantic, which are considered for analysis in our study are only those *the errors of which have been*

committed by more than 50% of the total number of the subjects involved. This is due to the fact that the errors in a category committed by less than 50% are considered to be *not serious* and hence, excluded from our analysis. The *seriousness* of a category or a subcategory will be expressed in terms of a 3-point scale, viz. *most serious, serious* and *less serious*.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA: THE GRAVITY OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS

4.1. Introduction

Compared to other types of errors, viz. phonological, morphological, semantic, etc., syntactic errors have been widely studied. Several researchers have conducted different kinds of studies on syntactic errors committed by L2 learners and in different languages including English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Persian, etc. As far as the seriousness of syntactic errors is concerned, a considerable number of researchers and applied linguists have dealt with the seriousness of such errors and how serious they are. Such studies have come up with different views, findings and conclusions. In fact, Nickel (1971, 1973), Johansson (1973), Olsson (1972, 1973, 1974) were the pioneers of such EG studies in their seminal papers on EG. Consequently, several and different criteria for judging, assessing and/or evaluating the gravity of an error or a group of errors have been emerged. These criteria include *comprehensibility, intelligibility, irritation* and/or *grammaticality* (cf. **section 1.13.7**) and all are based on NSs and/or NNSs's judgements according to which an error or a group of errors is considered more serious than any other.

However, a considerable number of researchers (e.g. Dresdner 1973, Allwright, 1975, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974, Davies 1983, James 1977, 1998, Lennon 1991, Awasthi 1995, Tong 2000, Palmer 1980, Schachter 1974) have proposed and emphasised *error frequency* as a criterion in judging the gravity of errors. For instance, James (1977:124) states: "[f]requency is an essential ingredient when we assess the relative gravities of errors. If a certain grammatical category is employed three times more frequently in natural English than some other category, then it presents learners with three times that opportunity for error-making—as well as three times the opportunity for learning." Such researchers have emphasised such a trend in evaluating the seriousness of errors because of the subjectivity of the subjects which plays an important role in the results ended up with by these EG studies. As such, they consider such studies inadequate and instead they believe that there must be a statistically standardised criterion which lies within error frequency where objectivity prevails and the results of which could be generalised to similar studies on different languages.

Thus, this chapter analyses and interprets the seriousness of the syntactic errors committed by the subjects of this study and how serious they are. Syntactic errors identified in our corpus are first classified into categories and subcategories and then according to such classifications, the seriousness of such errors is statistically computed employing Palmer's (1980) statistical method. To repeat a point mentioned earlier, only those errors committed by more than 50% of the subjects involved will be considered, classified and hence, regarded as serious. Those errors committed by less than 50% of the subjects are considered *not serious* and hence, excluded. In addition, expressing the seriousness of such errors will be by means of a 3-point scale, viz. *most serious, serious* and *less serious*. In the course of expressing the seriousness of syntactic errors, the issue of how much L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English contribute to the committing of such errors is also discussed so as to determine to what extent these sources contribute to the overall gravity of such errors.

4.2. Classification of Errors in the Use of Prepositions

Quirk et al. (1985:657) define a preposition as a word expressing "a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence. The prepositional complement is characteristically a noun phrase, a nominal *wh*-clause, or a nominal *ing* clause." In addition, Quirck at el. (1985) classify prepositions into two categories: simple and complex. Simple prepositions include such prepositions as *at, for, to,* etc. Complex prepositions are represented by prepositions like *in front of, out of, in case of* etc. As far as their classification is concerned, errors in the use of English prepositions have been classified by many researchers (e.g. Zughoul 1979, Hamdallah and Tushyeh 1993, Mukattash 1976) into different types. However, as far as the errors committed by the subjects of this study are concerned, it has been found that the serious errors in *prepositions* fall into three categories: 1) *substitution,* 2) *omission* and 3) *addition*. Table (12) below illustrates the classification of *prepositions* errors committed in terms of the categories mentioned above, the number of errors committed in each category and the percentage of such errors:

Table (12): Classification of Errors in the Use of Prepositions

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Substitution	1648	49.28%
Omission	1069	31.97%
addition	627	18.75%
Total	3344	100%

What is meant by *substitution* errors is those errors where a wrong preposition is substituted for a correct one as in *Ali got married from Fatma* where *from* has been substituted for *to*. By *omission* errors is meant those errors where a necessary preposition is omitted as in *Ali will come 2.30* where *at* has been deleted and by *addition* is meant those errors where a redundant preposition is added as in *Sameera realises of her dream* where *of* has been added unnecessarily. As presented in Table (12) above, *substitution* category scores the first rank with 1648 frequent errors, i.e. 49.28% of the total number of errors committed. In addition, *omission* category includes 1069 frequent errors, i.e. 31.97% of the total. The *addition* category includes 627 frequent errors, i.e. 18.75% of the total *prepositions* errors.

4.3. EG in the Use of Prepositions: Analysis and Interpretation

For expressing the seriousness of the errors identified in this study, as has been discussed in Chapter three, statistical tables are presented where the total number of the subjects involved, the actual number of the subjects committing the errors, the mean, the percentage, the sum, the EG etc. are provided. As far as the seriousness of errors committed in the use prepositions is concerned, Table (13) below presents the number of subjects committing such errors, the sum, the mean, the EG of each category among other things.

Table (13): EG in the Use of Prepositions

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Substitution	**Omission**	**Addition**
TNS	102	102	102
N	102	99	63
∑	1648	1069	627
$\bar{x}$	16.16	10.79	9.95
P	100%	97.06%	61.74%
EG	401.99	318.28	194.75

4.3.1. Substitution

Dulay et al. (1982) call such errors ***replacement*** errors which are those where L2 learners replace a wrong item for a correct one. ***Substitution*** errors have been found to be the most recurrent among the preposition errors involved in this study. As can be seen in Table (13) above, ***substitution*** errors have been committed by 102 students, i.e. 100%, viz. all the subjects of the study. These learners have committed 1648 frequent errors and hence, having an overall average of 16.16 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG calculated here is 401.99. As such, errors in ***substitution*** are considered the ***most serious***. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented below.

(1)*Samia lives **on** Ibb.*
(2)*My first day **in** college was very nice.*
(3)*We should look **on** our grandmothers.*
(4)*I like to listen **at** music.*
(5)*In my free time I help my mother **in** home.*

The examples (1) through (5) illustrate the phenomenon of substituting a wrong preposition for a correct one. For instance, in (1), the learner uses the preposition ***on*** instead of ***in*** which renders the sentence ungrammatical. In (2), the learner substitutes the preposition ***in*** for ***at*** and hence, rendering the sentence ungrammatical. The same thing can be said about the other three examples where the preposition ***on*** has been wrongly used instead of ***after*** in (3), ***at*** instead of ***to*** in (4) and ***in*** instead of ***at*** in (5). Now, considering the source of such errors, it is clear that L2 is the main source of such errors

due to the fact that Arabic does not allow such structures. Had it been a transfer from Arabic, the utterances in (1-5) would have been grammatically correct. Thus, such errors are intralingual and hence, the EG scored by *substitution* category can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se*.

4.3.2. Omission

Arabic speakers learning English tend to commit *omission* errors when they write or speak English. The number of *omission* errors varies significantly from one syntactic category to another. So does their seriousness. As far as omitting prepositions is concerned, the learners under study have committed 1069 with an overall mean of 10.79 as per individual learner. These errors have been committed by 99 learners, i.e. 97.06% of the total subjects involved. Accordingly, the EG scored by this category is 318.28. As such, *omission* errors are *serious*. In fact, the *omission* errors are one of the characteristics of L2 learners. Dulay et al. (1982:154) hold that "omission errors are characterized by *the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance*" (emphasis in the original). Accordingly, when the subjects of this study commit an *omission* error, they actually omit a preposition necessarily required without which the sentence is ill-formed or ungrammatical. Below is a sample of such errors identified in our corpus.

(6)*Ali will come #2.30.
(7)*I'm very proud #my country.
(8)*Our exam will begin #Saturday.
(9)* Aziza was afraid #the teacher so she did not come to class.
(10)* She got married #Ali.
(11)*I will visit you #5.45.
(12)*Salma is looking #her book

The examples (6) through (12) exemplify the *omission* errors committed by the subjects of this study in the use of preposition. In (6), for instance, the learner has omitted the preposition *at* which is a necessary element in the sentence and the absence of which renders the sentence ungrammatical. In (7), the error lies in omitting the preposition *of*. The same thing can be said about (8-12) where the prepositions *on, of, to, at*, and *for* have been deleted respectively. Now, considering the source of such errors, in fact, there are those which are interlingual, i.e. caused by the L1, i.e. Arabic interference, those whose source is L2, i.e. English influence and those which are ambiguous, viz. those that can be

ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English. Errors representing L1 interference are committed in such examples as (8), those representing L2 influence are found in examples such as (7, 9, 10 & 12) and the ambiguous ones are represented by (6 & 11). (8), for instance, is ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic because its Arabic counterpart, viz. *?imtiha:nana: swafa yabda? ?alsabt* is absolutely grammatical in Arabic. However, the error in (7) where the learner has omitted the preposition *of* is intralingual. Had the learner transferred the Arabic structure into English, the sentence would have been absolutely grammatical since Arabic, in such a context, has a structure similar to that of English where the prepositions *bi* in *?ana faxu:r-un jidan bi wa*ṭan-i (literally: I am very proud *with* my country) is obligatory. What makes the learner commit such an error is the fact that he/she is still building hypotheses about L2, viz. English. He/she, in fact, is trying to internalise the English rule system regarding using prepositions. In addition, the errors committed in (6 & 11) are ambiguous. In fact, one source lies within L1, i.e. Arabic where the Arabic counterpart equivalent of (6), for instance, is *ʕali-un sawfa ya?ti ?alθaniat-a wa θalaθi:n* (literally: Ali will come 2.30) which is absolutely grammatical in Arabic. However, it can also be attributed to L2 where such an error is similar to those committed by native children of English as developmental. While describing such errors, Dulay et al. (1982:172) state that ambiguous errors are those that could be classified either developmental or interlingual (cf. **section 2.9.5.4.1.3**). As such, the EG scored here can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

4.3.3. Addition

Dulay et al. (1982:156) state that "addition errors are the opposite of omission. They are characterized by the *presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance*" (emphasis in the original). They add that ***addition*** errors indicate that "some basic rules have been acquired but the refinements have not yet been made." Thus, the ***addition*** category includes the lowest number of errors where there are 627 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by only 63 learners, i.e. 61.74% of the total number of the subjects involved. The average is 9.95 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 194.75 which indicates that these errors are ***less serious***. A sample of such errors is provided below.

(13)*Aziza realised **of** her dream.*

(14)*I came to school **in** happily.

(15) *Djibla city is located in south-west of **from** Ibb city.

(16)* I came back **to** home.

(17)* We enjoyed **with** the film.

(18)*He asked **to** me something.

The examples (13) through (18) exemplify the **addition** of prepositions the presence of which renders the sentences ungrammatical. In (13), for instance, the preposition **of** has been added. In (14) through (18), the prepositions **in, from, to**, **with** and **to** have been added respectively. Now, considering the source of such errors, there are, in fact, those whose source is L1, i.e. Arabic as in the case of (14), (16) and (17). For instance, (16) is stated in Arabic as *?ana   raja ʕ-u   ?ila   ?albait-i* (literally: I came back to home). Thus, these errors are interlingual. However, there are also those errors whose source is the confusion the learners get within English itself as in (15) and (18) where the Arabic counterpart examples of such constructions are ungrammatical in Arabic. For instance, the Arabic counterpart equivalent of (15) is **madi:nat-u   Jibla(h)   taqa ʕ   fi   ?aljanu:b-i   ?alɣarb-i   min   madi:nat-i ?ib-i* (literally: Djibla city is located in south-west from Ibb city) where **of** is absent. Therefore, this error might be explained in terms of overgeneralisation. In that, because in English, a two-word preposition such as **out of** exists, the learner thinks that such a structure is possible where he/she overgeneralises such a use. In addition, in (18) where **to** has been added by analogy in similar constructions as *He said to me* leads to *He asked to me*. This was, in fact, long back interpreted by (Richards, 1971:175-176) saying that "[t]he learner, encountering a particular preposition with one type of verb, attempts by analogy to use the same preposition with similar verbs." However, there are errors which have no justification either in L1, i.e. Arabic or L2, i.e. English. For instance, (13) whose Arabic counterpart example **ʕazi:za   adrakat min   ħulmaha:* is ungrammatical. In fact, it is neither an L1-like nor L2-like error. Such errors have been termed by (Habash 1982:48) as "errors with no identifiable source." The same view has been contended by (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991) who argue that such errors are unexplainable either in terms of L1, or L2. In fact, Dulay et al. (1982:164) refer to such errors, in general, as **unique** because again they have no identifiable source.

Thus, the errors in the **use of prepositions** seem to constitute three levels of seriousness, viz. **most serious** as those committed in **substitution, serious** as in the case of **omission**, and **less serious** as

in the case of *addition*. *Substitution* errors are considered the *most serious* due to the statistical factors contributing to such high seriousness. For instance, the number of the errors committed is very significant where 1648 frequent errors, i.e. 49.28% of the errors have been committed. Moreover, the number of the subjects committing such errors is also very significant where all the subjects involved commit them and the EG scored is significant, viz. 401.99. However, *omission* errors are considered *serious* because the statistical factors involved are less significant while those involved in committing *addition* errors are not significant and hence, such errors are *less serious* as can be seen in Table (13) above. Regarding what causes such seriousness, it is ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic, L2, i.e. English and/or to both in some cases.

Now, considering the seriousness of errors in the *use of prepositions*, one is likely to observe the difficulty experienced by Arab learners of English while acquiring English preposition system as the more the gravity scored, the more the difficulty experienced. In fact, there seems to be a general consensus among researchers and teachers of English as a SL "concerning the difficulty of prepositions" (Zughoul 1979:24). In addition, Khampang (1974:215) states that "English language teachers and researchers are well aware that English prepositional usage is one of the most difficult areas for students of EFL." Further, "[p]repositions are an ever-lasting problem for foreign learners of English" (Mukattash 1976:269). English prepositions are difficult for any L2 learner because he/she usually relates them to his/her own L1 prepositional system. The difficulty is also caused by the difference in number, meaning and usage of the prepositions in the L1s and L2s. Verbs and other parts of speech play a great role in the omission, addition and selection of a wrong preposition in English which may affect the whole meaning of the idea intended by the learner. The different constructions of prepositions as one-word prepositions like *in,* two-word prepositions such as *out of* and three-word prepositions as *in place of* create a great difficulty and confusion for L2 learners irrespective of their L1s. However, in our study and as far as Arab learners of English are concerned, the difficulty experienced varies. While it is high in *substitution*, it is less in *omission* and the least in the *addition* of prepositions. In fact, the prepositions included in this study include prepositions of time such as *in, at, on* etc., prepositions of place such as *in, at, behind* etc., prepositions of relation such as *for, by, of, to* and so forth.

4.4. Classification of Errors in VP Constructions

Traditionally, a verb has been defined as that content word which describes the action of the sentence. However, from a modern linguistic perspective, a verb is considered a lexical item which is inflected for φ-features, viz. **tense, person, number, gender** and **Case** (Radford 2004). Verbs are classified into several and different categories but this is beyond the scope of this study. What concerns us here is only one classification in which verbs are broadly classified into two major groups, namely**, auxiliary verbs** and **main verbs** according to the formation of which errors committed in our study are identified. In fact, the errors identified have to do with the formation of VPs according to which we call such errors **VP construction errors**. Anderson (2006) maintains that the main difference between these two major categories is that while the former cannot occur *per se* in the sentence, the latter can. In addition, both can occur in combination constituting VPs as in *He would have been eating an apple* where **would have been eating** constitute a VP consisting of the auxiliary construction **would have been** and the main verb **eat**.

Regarding the classification of errors in **VP construction**, it has been found that the serious **VP construction** errors committed in this study fall into three categories: 1) **verb formation,** 2) **tense** and 3**) voice**. In fact, two more categories have been identified, namely, **aspect** and **non-finite verb form** but errors in these two categories have been committed by less than 50% and hence, excluded. Table (14) presents this classification, the number of errors committed in each category and their percentage.

Table (14): Classification of Errors in VP Constructions

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Verb formation	1277	40.44%
Tense	1014	32.11%
Voice	867	27.45%
Total	3158	100%

As can be seen in Table (14) above, the total number of frequent errors in the **VP constructions** is 3158. These are distributed among the three categories in which these errors have been classified. While **verb formation** category scores the highest rank with 1277 frequent errors, i.e. 40.44% of the total number of errors committed, **tense** category includes 1014 frequent errors, 32.11% and **voice**

category involves 867 frequent errors, i.e. 27.45% of the total number of the errors concerned. In fact, each category will be divided into further subcategories as will be seen below.

4.5. EG in VP Constructions: Analysis and Interpretation

Now, let us consider Table (15) below which presents a statistical account of the categories of *VP construction* errors: the number of errors, the number of learners committing such errors, the average, the EG of each category among other things.

Table (15): EG in the VP Constructions

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Verb formation	**Tense**	**Voice**
TNS	102	102	102
N	101	89	56
$\sum$	1277	1014	867
$\bar{x}$	12.64	11.39	15.48
P	99.02%	87.25%	54.90%
EG	352.04	294.46	216

4.5.1. Verb Formation

What is meant by this category is those errors which result from wrongly constructing VPs in which the subjects involved fail to construct these VPs according to the English VP syntactic rules. As can be seen in the Table (15) above, this category includes 1277 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 101 learners, i.e. 99.02% of the total number of the subjects involved and as per individual learner, the mean is 12.64. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 352.04 which indicates that such errors are the *most serious*. The high seriousness of the errors committed in this category indicates that Arab learners of English encounter a considerable difficulty in learning *VP constructions*. In addition, this category is divided into three further subcategories, viz. *copula deletion, auxiliary deletion* and *auxiliary substitution*.

4.5.1.1. Copula Deletion

As for ***copula deletion***, the learners committing such errors delete the copula ***be*** from the sentences they construct. Now, consider a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(19)*You said you not # tired.*
(20) *They # intelligent students in our class.*
(21) *Ali and Nabeel # absent yesterday.*
(22) *Dr. Mahmoud # good teacher.*
(23) *I # a student at the university of Taiz.*
(24) *Ibb # a green city allover the year.*

In (19) through (24), the copula ***be*** is deleted irrespective of its form (# stands for the deleted ***be***). For instance, in (19 & 20) the deleted form of ***be*** is ***are***. In (21), ***were*** is deleted, in (22), ***is*** is omitted, ***am*** in (23) and ***is*** in (24). It has been pointed out by several researchers (e.g. Ouhalla 1999, Al-Fotih 1996, Asfoor 1978, Noor 1996, Mukattash 1981) that the most frequent type of deviation Arabic speakers commit in forming English VPs is the deletion of the copula ***be***. These studies refer such deviations to L1, i.e. Arabic interference. Ouhalla (1999), for instance, ascribes such errors to the absence of the copula ***be*** in Arabic surface structure though ***be*** is available in the deep structure. Now, consider the following examples:

a. Surface structure:
Arabic sentence   ʕali-un ta:lib-un ðaki-un
Literal translation   Ali student intelligent

      'Ali is an intelligent student.'

b. Deep structure
Arabic sentence   yaku:nu ʕali-un   ta:lib-un   ðaki-un
Literal translation   #is   Ali   student   intelligent

      'Ali is an intelligent student.'

Thus, the Arabic verb ***yaku:nu*** in (b) corresponds to the English ***be***, specifically ***is*** but it occurs only in the *deep structure* and not in the *surface structure* (Ouhalla 1999).

It goes without saying that the absence of ***be*** in the Arabic surface structure makes Arab learners and specially those of low proficiency commit such errors. Here, what the learner does is just transfer

his/her linguistic competence of Arabic into English and thus resulting in such deviant sentences. The issue of interlingual transfer and hence, errors have been proved true by a considerable number of researchers. For instance, Dulay and Burt (1972:130) confirming this fact state that "[a] well known corollary of the habit formation theory is "negative transfer" in the form of first language interference…[learners] will tend to use (transfer) the structures of their first language when trying to speak the second, and therefore, will make mistakes when the structures of the two languages differ." However, they Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a) that less 5% of L2 learners' errors are ascribed to their L1. In fact, this percentage differs from researcher to another (cf. **section 2.9**).

4.5.1.2. Auxiliary Deletion

The second subcategory of ***verb formation*** errors is ***auxiliary deletion***. It comprises those errors which result from the deletion of a necessary auxiliary be it ***do, have*** or modal. Now, consider the following sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(25)*They #go to Taiz tomorrow. Let's go with them.*
(26) *You# speak English in the class.*
(27) *The grammar class #been very good so they attended.*
(28) * You #be polite in the class.*
(29) *If you attended, you # get much information.*
(30) *We #punish him unless he works harder.*
(31) *The books# been bought last year by our class leader.*

In fact, the errors in ***verb formation*** included here are limited to declarative sentences alone. ***Verb formation*** errors in interrogative sentences, for instance, have been discussed in terms of ***Yes/No*** and ***wh-questions*** (see **sections 4.11 & 4.17**). Thus, in (25) through (31), what is common to such sentences that makes them ungrammatical is the fact that there is an auxiliary deletion in each. The auxiliaries deleted in (25) through (31) are ***will, should, has, must, would, will*** and ***have*** respectively (# stands for the deleted auxiliary). Now, as far as the source of these errors is concerned, it is clear that L2, i.e. English has nothing to do with the committing of such errors. In other words, Arabic is the main source of such errors which can be ascribed to the absence of such auxiliaries in Arabic. However, if one examines such errors again, one is likely to find that such errors resemble developmental errors committed by children acquiring English as their L1 (Dulay and Burt 1972, 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al.

1982, James 1998, Moore 2001) and hence, being of an *ambiguous* nature. However and as far as Arabic language is concerned in which such auxiliaries do not exist, one can argue that the main reason behind committing the errors in (25) through (31) is Arabic *per se* where transfer from Arabic prevails.

4.5.1.3. Auxiliary Substitution

The third subcategory is ***auxiliary substitution***. What is meant by ***auxiliary substitution*** is those errors occurring in sentences in which an auxiliary, be it ***be, have, do*** or modal*,* is substituted for another. A sample of errors in this subcategory is presented below.

(32) **They **do** not distributed them yet.*
(33) **You **have** writing the lesson.*
(34) **He **can** singing well.*
(35) *…*because our unity **does** not reflected difference between south and north.*

In (32) through (35) an auxiliary is substituted for another. For instance, ***do*** is substituted for ***have*** in (32). ***have*** is substituted for ***are*** in (33), ***is*** is replaced by ***can*** in (34) and ***does*** replaces ***has*** in (35). In fact, these errors can no longer be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic interference since such auxiliaries do not exist in Arabic and hence, there is nothing to be transferred. They are, in fact, intralingual errors that are caused because of lack of the sufficient linguistic competence in the English auxiliary system (Dulay et al. 1982, Dulay and Burt 1972, 1973, 1974a) which results in such ungrammatical sentences. Thus, Table (15) above tells us that the errors committed in ***verb formation*** are the ***most serious***. This is due to the statistical factors involved. For instance, the number of errors committed is very significant where 1277, i.e. 40.44% of the total errors have been committed. The number of the subjects committing the errors is also significant, i.e. 101 students, i.e. 99.02% of the total subjects involved and the EG scored is also significant, i.e. 352.04. This also indicates that the difficulty encountered by Arab learners of English is high. In addition, since some errors are interlingual and some others are intralingual, the EG scored here can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

4.5.2. Tense

Comrie (1985:9) defines tenses as "grammaticalised expressions of location in time: past, present, future." However, there are languages that did not grammaticalise time as tenses, such as Chinese Mandarin and so these languages are called tenseless. In English and Arabic, however, tenses

are grammaticalised and formed by morphological marking on the verb and are obligatory in use. The fact that tenses are grammaticalised categories requiring morphological marking implies that time references which are not morphologically marked cannot be called tenses. In addition, a difference between tense and time is of value here. While tense is a grammatical category like **gender, Case, person** etc. time is a common term used to denote **second, minute, hours**, etc. In fact, tense is not directly related to physical time; rather it is a grammatical category that expresses temporal relations in a given sentence. As can be seen in Table (15) above, the **tense** category includes 1014 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 89 students, i.e. 87.25% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study. As per individual learner, the mean of such errors is 11.39. Therefore, the EG of this category is 294.46. According to such statistical factors, the errors of **tense** seem to be **serious**. In addition, it has been found that errors committed in **tense** fall into two categories: (i) **tense sequence**, (ii) **tense substitution**. These are discussed in the following two sections.

4.5.2.1. Tense Sequence

For **tense sequence** errors, Arab learners of English tend to commit such errors especially in compound and complex sentences. In fact, the most notable errors found in this study concern the use of **simple past** instead of **simple present** and vice versa. Thus, a sample of such errors is presented below.

(36)*Ali and Fatma **came** late yesterday and **go** directly to class.
(37) *When the class **begins**, the students **were** not excited and **go** asleep.
(38) *My hope **is** to become a translator but my problem **was** that I **don't** have so many words.
(39) *I think the marriage in Yemen **is** good because girls **got** married very young.
(40) *So many students in my class **study** hard but they **failed** in the exam.

In (36) through (40), the learner begins by using a particular tense but he/she deviates to another tense as he/she proceeds in the sentence. For instance, in (36), the learner begins his/her sentence with the use of *simple past,* i.e. **came** but then, as he/she proceeds, he/she uses *simple present*, i.e. **go** and thus resulting in a deviant utterance. In (37), however, the situation is a little bit complex where the learner begins the sentence with *simple present*, i.e. **begins**, then uses *simple past*, i.e. **were** and then again comes back to *simple present* represented by **go**. The same thing can be said about the rest of the

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examples where the learner either begins with *simple past* and then changes to *simple present* or vice versa. As for what causes such errors, Arabic under no circumstances is the source. This is due to the fact that Arabic does not allow such deviations. Had the learners transferred these structures from Arabic, they would have been absolutely grammatical. Let us consider the Arabic example equivalent of (36) above which should be like:

ʕ*ali-un wa fatmat-un ?ata-u muta?xr-i:n ?ams-i wa ðahab-u mubašarat-an ?ila ?alfasl-i*
Ali and fatma   came   late   yesterday   and   went-they   directly   to the-class

where the verbs *?ata-u* and *ðahab-u* (came and went respectively) are in *simple past* and this makes it clear that errors in (36) through (40) are intralingual. They may be a result of **false conceptions** or **hypothesis testing** applied by the learners. What happens here is that the learner is not sure or just confused about the fact that such a sequence in the use of tenses is obligatory in English. In addition, lacking the sufficient linguistic competence in English tense usage, the learner would think that such structures are grammatical.

4.5.2.2. Tense Substitution

As for the **tense substitution**, it has been found that the subjects commit tense errors by substituting *past* for *present* tenses and vice versa. Such errors include the following, for example.

(41)*The sun **rose** from the east.*
(42)*The cows **gave** us milk.*
(43)*I **miss** the grammar class yesterday.*
(44)*She **cooks** fish tomorrow.*
(45) *Yesterday I **have got** a party that's why the house **is** in a mess.*

In (41) and (42) the learner uses *simple past* where *simple present* is required because they are facts and according to English syntax, *simple present* is a *must*. In (43), the learner uses *simple present* where *simple past* is required. In (44), however, the learner uses *simple present* where *future tense* is required. In (45), the learner uses *present perfect* instead of *simple past*. Now, as far as the source of such errors is concerned, it actually varies. That is, while the source of (41) and (42) is Arabic interference, the source of (43, 44 & 45) is L2, i.e. English. Indeed, Arabic allows (41) and (42). Now, let us consider the Arabic equivalent of (41) which should be like:

?alšams-u	*?ašraqat*	*min*	*?alšarq-i*
The-sun	rose	from	the-east.

The fact that Arabic allows sentences as in (41) is because Arabic does not distinguish facts from non-facts in the use of tenses. However, it does not allow such structures as (43, 44 & 45). Therefore, one can argue that the source of such errors is English itself. That is, errors in (43, 44 & 45) are intralingual. Thus, since some *tense* errors are interlingual and some others intralingual, the EG scored by *tense* category can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

4.5.3. Voice

Quirk et al. (1985:168) define *voice* as "a grammatical category which makes it possible to view the action of a sentence in either of two ways without a change in the facts reported:

The butler *murdered* the detective. [ACTIVE] [1]

~ The detective *was murdered* by the butler. [PASSIVE] [2]

As can be seen in [1] and [2] above, the ***active-passive*** relation involves two grammatical levels: the verb phrase level and the clause level. In the former, the passive VP contains a construction having ***be+ p.p***. of the main verb and, in that, it contrasts with the active VP which is simply a VP constructed for an active voice verb. In the latter, the construction of the passive clause differs from that of an active one. In the passive clause, the object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb regardless of being acted upon and the subject of the active verb becomes the passive *agent* or the complement of the *prep **by***.

What is meant by *voice* errors here is those committed in the passive constructions identified in our corpus. As can be seen in Table (15) above, the frequent errors committed by the subjects of this study in *voice* seem to be of less significance compared to those in ***verb formation*** and ***tense***. This category includes only 867 frequent errors. The number of the learners committing such errors is only 56 i.e. 54.90% of all the subjects involved. As per individual subject committing the errors, the average is found to be 15.48. Accordingly, the EG of such errors is 216. This means that the errors committed in *voice* are ***less serious***. In addition, it has been found that the *voice* errors committed in this study are of two types. (i) those in which the learners add an appropriate ***tensed*** form of ***be*** but not adding the ***p.p*** of the main verb and (ii) those in which the learners add the ***p.p*** of the main verb but not adding the appropriate ***tensed*** form of ***be*** and/or not adding it at all. Here is a sample of (i) found in our corpus.

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(46)*In Yemen, Oil was **discover** in 1985.

(47)*The Yemeni Unification has been **achieve** in 1990.

(48)*In Yemen, Oil was first **export** in 1997.

(49)*All my future will be **gave** to my parents.

(50)*English language is **study** in all Yemeni schools.

As can be seen in (46) through (50), the learner fails to provide the correct passivised form of the main verbs *discover, achieve, export, give* and *study* respectively which should be *discovered, achieved, exported, given* and *studied* respectively. With respect to errors in (ii) mentioned above where the learners fail to provide a correct *tensed* form of *be* and/or not adding it at all, the following sample represents such errors.

(51)…*but when Oil # exported, all Yemeni people are happy.

(52)*Yemeni girls **is** married in early age.

(53)*Many of our teachers **was** sent to Sana'a University last week.

(54)*She has **be** beaten by her big brother.

(55)*The letter # sent to Ali by his sister.

It is obvious that in (51) through (55), the learner fails to use the correct form of *be* or not using it at all (# stands for the deleted *be*). For instance, in (51 & 55), the learner does not provide any form of *be* at all. However, in (52, 53 & 54), the learner uses a form of *be* but not the appropriate one, providing the forms *is, was* and *be* respectively which should be *are, were* and *been* respectively.

Now, questioning the source of such errors, it is necessary to consider first how the passivised verb is constructed in Arabic and whether it is different from that of English. In fact, the passivised verb is constructed differently in both languages. As has been discussed so far, a passivised VP in English requires the addition of an appropriate form of *be* according to *number, person, tense* besides adding the *p.p* of the main verb involved. However, in Arabic, the passivised verb is formed by means of *infixation*, i.e. a morphological process consisting in infixing (inserting) the vowels *–u-* after the first *consonant letter* of the triliteral or quadiliteral *root* and *–i-* before the final *consonant letter* of the triliteral or quadiliteral *root* in the case of *past tense*. In the case of *present tense*, in addition, the infixes *–u-* and *–a-* are added where *–u- i*s added before the first *consonant letter* of the triliteral or quadiliteral and *–a-* is added before the final *consonant letter* of the triliteral or quadiliteral *root*.

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Consider the following constructions of the Arabic passivised verbal root **k-t-b** as an example for both tenses.

Root	Active	Passive		
k-t-b	*kataba*	*ku<u>ti</u>b-a*	[PAST]	[1]
k-t-b	*yaktubu*	*yuktab-u*	[PRESENT]	[2]

Now, as can be seen in [1] and [2] above, Arabic passivised verb formation is completely different from that of English. However, at the clausal level both languages are similar where the object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passivised verb and the subject of the active verb becomes the *agent* positioned after the prep **by** and in both languages, the occurrence of the *by-phrase* is optional.

Thus, it is clear that L1, i.e. Arabic interference has nothing to do with **voice** errors where Arab learners use the wrong form of **be** and/or the main verb because such an auxiliary does not exist in Arabic. Thus, such errors are intralingual and of a developmental nature resulting from the lack of the sufficient linguistic competence that enables them to construct well-formed English passive structures. However, when Arab learners "delete" **be** completely, here, lies the role of L1, i.e. Arabic since what the learner does is just transfer the passive structure from Arabic into English. This, in fact, seems obvious (cf. 51 & 55) above where the learner provides the correct form of the main verb but deletes **be** completely. Thus, the EG scored by **voice** can be ascribed to both Arabic and English.

In this regard, Noor (1996:1444) holds that Arabic speaking learners find English passive structures quite difficult and hence, they tend to avoid them. Further, Asfoor, (1978:197) believes that **voice** errors committed by Arab learners of English are due partly to the Arabic interference but most of them are the result of the learners' lack of "basic knowledge of how passive [VPs] are formed in English." Further, Mukattash (1981) agrees with Asfoor holding that **voice** errors specially those where learners fail to provide the correct form of the main verb result from the influence of English and consider them to be developmental. Now, compared to other categories, **voice** errors are **less serious** due to the statistical factors involved. For instance, when one considers the number of errors committed, there are only 867 frequent errors, i.e. the lowest number of errors committed in **VP constructions**. The number of the subjects committing such errors is less significant where only 56 learners, i.e. 54.90% of the total subjects involved. This indicates that Arab learners avoid using passive

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constructions. In fact, this finding supports what has been stated by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) and Schachter (1974) who hold that Arab learners of English try to avoid using passive constructions because of their complexity. In fact, Larsen-Freeman and Long (op.cit.) argue that passive structures are error-provoking for Arabic speakers learning English and hence, they tend to avoid them.

Thus, the seriousness of the errors in *VP constructions* varies according to the statistical factors involved in each category. In that, while the errors in *verb formation* are *most serious*, errors in *tense* are *serious* and errors in *voice* are *less serious*. For instance, the number of errors in *verb formation* is very high, i.e. 1277 frequent errors and the number of the subjects committing them is very significant, too, where 101, i.e. 99.02% of the total subjects involved have committed them. However, such statistical factors in *tense* and *voice* are not as significant as those in *verb formation*. As can be seen in Table (15) above, while in *tense*, errors have been found to be *serious*, errors in the *voice* are found to be *less serious*. Central to this is the considerable difficulty encountered by Arab learners when learning English *verb formation* which is more than that encountered in *tense* and *voice*. In fact, the results ended up with as presented in Table (15) all illustrate the overall difficulty in forming *VP constructions* in English encountered by Arab learners of English. However, the difficulty faced varies. That is, while it is very high in *verb formation*, it is less in *tense* and it is the least in *voice*. In addition, since the errors committed in *VP construction* are interlingual and intralingual, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

4.6. Classification of Errors in the Use of Articles

Mayo (2008:551) holds that the "English article system is claimed to be one of the most difficult structural elements for L2 learners of English due to its high complexity and its frequency of use." The same view is shared by (Master 1997, 2002) that L2 learners have a considerable difficulty in article acquisition and sometimes never reach native-like levels of proficiency. Arab learners of English seem to be no exception. In that, several researchers (e.g. Abu-Ghararah 1989, Zughoul 2002, Abbas 2005, Mizuno 1999) hold that the use of English articles is considered one of the most confusing areas for Arab learners of English. These researchers ascribe this difficulty to the difference between English article system and the Arabic one. In that, while in Arabic there are only two articles, viz. *?al* (the) and

the *zero* article, there are four different articles in English, i.e. the definite article *the* and the indefinite

articles *a* and *an* and the *zero* article.

Thus, Arab learners of English commit different types of errors in the use of articles. As far as

the subjects of this study and the errors committed by them are concerned, an attempt has been made

here to classify such errors. Thus, it has been found that the serious errors committed in the *use of*

articles fall into three categories: (i) *substitution* (ii) *omission*, and (iii) *addition*. Table (16) below

presents the categories in which errors *in the use of articles* have been classified, the number of errors

in each and their percentages.

Table (16): Classification of Errors in the Use of Articles

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Substitution	1264	42.83%
Omission	1029	34.87%
Addition	658	22.30%
Total	2951	100%

As presented in Table (16) above, the first category, namely, *substitution* scores the first rank

with 1264 frequent errors, i.e. 42.83% of the total number of errors committed. Next comes *omission*

category with 1029 frequent errors, i.e. 34.87% of the total errors. *Addition* category comes third with

658 frequent errors, i.e. 22.30%. By *substitution* is meant those errors where a particular article has

been substituted or replaced by another, for instance, *a* is used in the place of *an* or *the* or the

otherwise. In addition, by *omission* is meant those errors where an article, be it *a, an* or *the*, has been

omitted where its occurrence is necessary and without which the sentence is considered ungrammatical.

In contrast, *addition* errors are those in which a redundant article is added and hence, resulting in a

grammatically deviant utterance.

4.7. EG in the Use of Articles: Analysis and Interpretation

Now, consider Table (17) below which presents the number of errors committed, the number of

the subjects committing them, the mean, the EG of each category among other things.

Table (17): EG in the Use of Articles

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Substitution	**Omission**	**Addition**
TNS	102	102	102
N	102	85	69
Σ	1264	1029	658
$\bar{x}$	12.39	12.11	9.54
P	100%	83.33%	67.65%
EG	351.99	289.98	208.61

4.7.1. Substitution

As can be seen in Table (17) above, there are 1264 frequent errors in ***substitution*** category. In addition, these errors have been committed by 102, i.e. all the subjects involved in the study and hence, the mean is 12.39 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of such a category is 351.99 which is also significant and indicates that these errors are the ***most serious*** in the use of articles. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(56) *<u>*A*</u> sun always rises in <u>*an*</u> east and sets in the west.
(57)* Can you give me <u>*a*</u> books?
(58)* It has been <u>*a*</u> hour since he has come.
(59)* I saw <u>*an*</u> one-eyed person in the shop.
(60)*My first day in <u>*an*</u> university was very nice.
(61)*<u>***The***</u> teachers are the builders of minds. I like the teachers who give us much homework.

The examples (56) through (61) illustrate the phenomenon of substituting an article for another in Arab learners' writings. In (56), for instance, two articles have been substituted. According to English syntax, *a* cannot be used with the noun *sun* as this noun must be accompanied with *the*. In fact, some English nouns like ***Nile, sun, moon*** etc. always take the definite article *the* because there is only one ***sun, moon, Nile*** etc. in the world (Quirk et al. 1985, Eastwood 1984). *an* is also substituted in (56) for *the* as accompanying the noun *east*. In (57), *the* has been substituted by *a*. In (58)*, a* has been substituted for *an* whose main reason is the confusion as the learner committing such an error thinks that the noun ***hour*** begins with the letter *h* which is actually silent and hence, resulting in a grammatically deviant utterance. In contrast, the learner in (59) thinking that ***one-eyed*** begins with the

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letter *o*, he/she can use *an* which is not correct as it is the sound */w/* here that must be considered and not the letter. The same thing can be said about (60) where the learner mistakenly uses *an* instead of *the* thinking that since the word *university* begins with *u,* he/she can use it without realising that it is the sound */j/* which must be considered here. In (61), the learner uses *the* with a common noun occurring for the first time. In such a context *zero article* is used. As has been stated above, Arabic language has only two articles, viz. *?al* which is a definite article and the *zero article* and therefore the main source of such errors is L2, i.e. English itself and hence, such errors are intralingual. In fact, such errors are of a developmental nature resembling those committed by native speakers of English. Arab learners in this stage lack the sufficient competence that enables them to use articles properly. They may have also false conceptions about English article system. Thus, these errors are the *most serious* due to the statistical factors which state their high frequency as can be seen in Table (17) above. In addition, the high seriousness of errors committed in this category can be ascribed to English *per se*.

4.7.2. Omission

Omission of articles is one of the Arab learners' writing characteristics and many errors are committed by such learners where they omit articles necessarily required. This is obvious as can be seen in Table (16) above where *omission* errors score the second rank with 1029 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 85 learners, i.e. 83.33% of the total number of the subjects involved. As such, the average of these errors is 12.11 as per individual learner. Consequently, the gravity of such errors is 289.98. This scored EG indicates that such errors are *serious*. Now, consider the following sample which exemplifies such a phenomenon.

(62)* *#Cat has #tail.*
(63)*There comes# student.*
 (64)*The Ibb city is one of #most beautiful places in Yemen.*
 (65)*#Nile is located in Egypt.*
(66)*Sana'a is #capital of Yemen*
(67)*All Yemenis like# unity of Yemen*
(68)*We live in #Middle East.*

The examples (62) through (68) show how the learners omit necessary articles (# stands for the deleted article). In (62), for instance, *a* has been omitted twice. It has also been omitted in (63). In (64),

however, *the* preceding the superlative *most* have been omitted. *The* is also deleted in (65, 66, 67, 68) which must co-occur with the nouns *Nile, capital, unity* and *Middle East* respectively. Considering the source of such errors, Arabic under no circumstances is the source. Had it been a transfer from L1, i.e. Arabic the sentences in (67) and (68) would have been syntactically correct as Arabic does not allow the counterparts of these sentences. Thus, one can argue that such errors are caused by L2, i.e. English and hence, intralingual. It is due to not understanding how, when, where to use or not to use an article that causes such erroneous sentences. Thus, the EG scored here can be ascribed to English alone.

4.7.3. Addition

As shown in Table (17) above, the ***addition*** errors include the lowest number in the ***use of articles***. Thus, there are 658 frequent errors committed in this category. These errors have been committed by 69 learners, i.e. 67.65% of the total number of the subjects involved and thus the mean of such errors is 9.54 as per individual learner. Consequently, the EG of this category is 208.61 which indicates that these errors are ***less serious***. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(69)*__*The*__ water is used for washing.*
(70)*Yemeni people enjoy __*the*__ democracy after unity.*
(71)*He came __*the*__ yesterday.*
(72)*__*An*__ earth is round.*
(73)*__*The*__ life is very nice.*
(74)*__*The*__ honesty is a very good quality.*
(75)*It is __*the*__ honor that makes people respect us.*

The examples (69) through (75) above exemplify the addition of articles where no article is required in such contexts. It should be noted that according to English syntax, the nouns ***water, democracy, yesterday, life*** etc. cannot be premodified by the article ***the***. In (69), for instance, the noun ***water*** cannot take the article ***the*** especially in this context. Unlike the other two categories mentioned above, these errors are purely interlingual caused by L1 interference. The Arabic counterpart equivalents of (69) through (75) are absolutely grammatical in Arabic except that of (72). For instance, the Arabic equivalent of (71) is *hwa   ?ata   bi   ?al?ams-i* (literally, he came by *the* yesterday) where *?al* (the) is used with *?ams* (yesterday). In fact, the words ***water, democracy, yesterday, earth, life, honesty*** and ***honor*** do not take any article in English at least in such contexts but in Arabic, they do.

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However, while the errors in the above examples can be attributed to the influence of Arabic syntactic structure, (72) is still mysterious where the *an* does not exist in Arabic. However, it can be argued that this particular error can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English itself and thus this very error can be said to be intralingual. In that, the learner thinking that the noun *earth* begins with *e*, he/she can use the article *an*. As presented in Table (17) above, *addition* errors are *less serious* because the statistical factors involved are less significant.

Thus, the errors committed in *substitution* of articles are the *most serious* due to the statistical factors involved. These factors include the number of the subjects committing the errors, i.e. all the subjects involved, the high mean as per individual learner, the number of errors committed, i.e. 1264 and the EG scored, i.e. 351.99. Further, the errors committed in *omission* are termed *serious* as all the statistical factors involved in *omission* presented in Table (17) above indicate such seriousness. For instance, the number of the subjects committing the errors is quite high, i.e. 85, i.e. 83.33% of the total subjects involved in the study. The number of errors committed is also significant since 1029 frequent errors have been committed. The EG scored, i.e. 289.98 is also significant as the second high EG scored in the *use of articles*. In *addition,* however, the statistical factors seem less significant. For instance, the number of the subjects committing such errors is the lowest among the three categories, i.e. 69 learners. In addition, the number of errors committed is also the lowest, i.e. 658, the mean and the EG scored are less significant. As such, *addition* errors are considered *less serious*. Since errors committed in the *use of articles* are interlingual and intralingual, the EG scored can be ascribed to Arabic and English both.

As has been stated above, English articles present a considerable difficulty for L2 learners for many reasons. One reason is the vastness and complexity of the rules and exceptions governing English article usage. (Cromwell 1964:38 cited in Norris 1992) states: "[e]very student of English has my sympathy in his struggles with the articles 'a,' 'an,' and 'the." He then goes on to detail 16 pages of rules and exceptions. He lists 44 separate rules of using English articles. Quirk, et al. (1985) go even further, devoting 32 pages on article usage. Apart from this, whether the learners' L1 has articles or not affects their speed in acquiring the article system of L2 has been much investigated. James (1998:222) has, for instance, rightly pointed out that if learners' L1 does not have article system, it will be difficult

for them to deal with an L2 having such a system. He adds that while he was lecturing "on the British Council's annual summer school for Soviet teachers of English, most of whom spoke Russian as their L1 [and] since Russian has no articles, these teachers spoke article-less English." Here, we, partially, notice that because Arabic, the learners' L1, does not have indefinite articles, it is difficult for them to master the English indefinite article system. Instead, they have to struggle internalising the English indefinite article system to understand and hence, wherever they get confused which article to use or not to use, they just leave 'article-less' English in the same way as Russian speakers did in James' example. This is proved true in our study in the *omission* category where errors have been expressed as *serious*. In fact, the difficulty encountered by Arab learners of English is manifested here. The highest difficulty is faced in *substitution* or selection where all the subjects have committed errors and hence, such errors are considered the *most serious* and then it decreases gradually to reach the least in *addition* errors.

4.8. Classification of Errors in the Use of Subject-Verb Agreement

In a well-formed sentence, the subject must agree with the verb in number and person. In fact, subject-verb agreement errors are commonly committed by all ESL learners in general and Arab learners in particular. Arabic speaking learners encounter a considerable difficulty when acquiring English subject-verb agreement system which has been attributed by researchers (e.g. Zughoul 1979, Noor 1996, Obeidat 1986, Raimes 1985) to Arab learners' confusion about English agreement system among other things. As far as the *subject-verb agreement* errors committed by the subjects of our study are concerned, it has been found that the serious errors fall into two categories: (i) *number agreement* and (ii) *person agreement*. Table (18) shows the classification of errors in subject-verb agreement, their number and percentage.

Table (18): Classification of Errors in the Use of Subject-Verb Agreement

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Number agreement	1072	53.49%
Person agreement	932	46.51%
Total	2004	100%

As can be seen in Table (18) above, the total number of errors committed by the subjects of this study in ***subject-verb agreement*** is 2004 errors. There are 1072 errors committed in ***number agreement,*** i.e. 53.49% of the total number of errors committed. In addition, the subjects of this study have committed 932 frequent errors in ***person agreement***, i.e. 46.51% of the total number of errors ***subject-verb agreement***.

4.9 EG in the Use of Subject-Verb Agreement: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (19) below shows the categories into which errors in ***subject-verb agreement*** are classified. It also presents the number of learners who have committed such errors, the sum of the errors committed, the mean and EG among other things.

Table (19): EG in the Use of Subject-Verb Agreement

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Number agreement	**Person agreement**
TNS	102	102
N	98	86
$\sum$	1072	932
$\bar{x}$	10.94	10.84
P	96.08%	84.31%
EG	317.79	272.58

4.9.1. Number Agreement

By the ***number agreement*** is meant, as pointed out by Dulay et al. (1982:149), those errors resulting from disagreement between the subject and the verb in number as in *There was many cars in the garage* where the subject ***many cars*** does not agree with the verb ***was*** in number which must be ***were***. As can be seen in Table (19) above, this category includes 1072 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 98 learners, i.e. 96.07% of the total number of the subjects involved and the mean of these errors is 10.94 as per individual learner. Thus, this category's overall EG is 317.79. This EG indicates that the errors committed in this category are ***most serious***. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is provided below.

(76)*The number of people speaking English **are** large.*

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(77)*_One of the books **were** stolen._

(78)…*_and there **comes** many students to the patty._

(79)*_A lot of sheep **is grazing**._

(80)* _The man who wrote the books **are** my friend._

(81)*_Many students **doesn't** attend the class._

(82)*_The books **has** been bought._

(76) through (82) exemplify disagreement of subject and verb in number. In that, the subject is singular and the verb is plural or vice versa. In (76), for instance, the subject, **the number of people speaking English** and the verb **are** disagree in number. In that, the subject is singular but the verb is plural. (77) shows almost the same phenomenon. Here, the subject, **one of the books** and the verb **were** disagree in number, i.e. the subject is again singular and the verb is plural. In (78), the subject **many students** and the verb **comes** do not agree in number, i.e. the subject is plural and the verb is singular. In (79), the subject **a lot of sheep** is plural but the verb **is grazing** is singular and thus do not agree with each other. In (80), the subject, **the man who wrote the books** and the verb **are** are not in agreement. In that, the subject is singular and the verb is plural. The same thing can be said about the errors committed in (81 & 82).

Now, considering the source of such errors, Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of such errors because Arabic does not allow such structures. Had it been a transfer from L1, i.e. Arabic, (76) through (82) would have been well-formed. A plausible interpretation of the error committed in (76), for instance, is that because the subject of the sentence is a long NP, viz. **the number of people speaking English,** learners get confused and thus apply the principle of **proximity** wrongly. That is, they may refer to the nearest noun, i.e. **people** and hence, use the plural form of **be** which is **are** and thus rendering the sentence ungrammatical. Therefore, such errors are intralingual. Dulay et al. (1982) ascribe such errors to the lack of sufficient knowledge in L2 since learners are still trying to build systematically a knowledge base about the L2 rule system. The same thing can be said about the rest of the examples. Thus, the EG of this category can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se.*

4.9.2. Person Agreement

By **person agreement** is meant those errors which result from disagreement between the subject and the verb in person as in *He never watch English movies* where the subject **he** and the verb **watch**

do not agree in person, viz. while the subject is 3rd person singular the verb is not. This category includes 932 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 86 learners, i.e. 84.31% of the total number of the subjects involved. The mean of these errors is 10.84 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 272.58 which indicates that these errors are *serious*. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented below.

(83)*_I **knows** Arwa very well._

(84)* _You **was** there yesterday._

(85)*_We **is** happy._

(86)…* _and she **feel** my hair and I can shy._

(87)*_It **be** my friend's dog._

(88)* _Who **study** well does well in the exam._

As can be seen in (83) through (88), these errors lack ***person agreement*** between the subject and the verb. In (83), for instance, the subject *I* is in the 1st person form but the verb ***knows*** is in the 3rd person form and thus resulting in a ***person agreement*** error. In (84), while the subject *you* is in the 2nd person form, the verb *was* is in the 3rd person form and thus rendering the sentence ungrammatical. (85) exhibits another error of the same kind. That is, while the subject *we* is 1st person form, the verb *is* is in the 3rd person form. However, (86) shows that the error might be attributed to more than one element. In fact, while the subject *she* is in the 3rd person form, the verb *feel* carries more than one particular feature. That is, the verb *feel* can be said to indicate 2nd person, 1st person or even 3rd person plural. (87), however, has a special case. In that, the subject of the verb *it* is in the 3rd person form but the verb *be* does not represent any person features because it is in the infinitival form. In addition, (88) exhibits a rather interesting phenomenon. Here, the error might well be explained in terms of not knowing that *who* as a subject takes a 3rd person verb form, however, interestingly enough, the second verb, namely, *does* agrees with the subject *who studies well*. In fact, such constructions present a considerable difficulty to all ESL learners in general and Arab learners in particular. In that, Zughoul (1979) holds that the clausal subjects are very difficult for L2 learners to master. Richards (1972) adds what is called in English ***what-cleft*** clauses to be very difficult for ESL learners with respect to ***subject-verb agreement***. Now, considering the agreement system in Arabic, the only thing that Arabic and English share is that it is expressed in both by grammatical morphemes. Thus, L1 has nothing to do here because Arabic agreement system is vastly different from that of English. Thus, these errors can be

termed intralingual. Such errors have been termed by many researchers (e.g. Corder 1981, James 1998, Johansson 1975, Dulay et al. 1982, Moore 2001) as developmental. They are so because they reflect the developmental stages through which L2 learners proceed in learning any L2.

In both categories, the seriousness of errors committed varies. While the errors in *number agreement* are *most serious,* they are *serious* in *person agreement*. The seriousness of both types of errors is a result of the statistical factors involved in both. The high gravity of the former is a result of such factors as the number of the errors committed which is very significant where 1072 frequent errors, i.e. 53.49% of the total errors have been committed. The number of the subjects committing the errors in this category is also significant where 98 learners, i.e. 96.07% of the total subjects involved and the EG scored is also significant, i.e. 317.79. However, as presented in Table (19), the statistical factors in the latter category are quite significant which result in *serious* errors. Being *most serious* and *serious*, the errors in *subject-verb agreement* indicate that Arab learners of English encounter a considerable difficulty while learning *subject-verb agreement* but this difficulty varies. That is, while it is relatively high in *number agreement,* it somehow less in *person agreement*. Since the errors in both categories are intralingual, the EG scored in both categories can be ascribed to English alone.

4.10. Classification of Errors in the Use of Yes/No Questions

Yes/No questions in English are those formed by initiating a sentence with an auxiliary verb. These auxiliaries include *be, have, do* and modals. Quirk et al. (1985:81-81) call these auxiliaries *operators* stating that when forming a Yes/No question, the auxiliary must be inverted with the subject of such a sentence. Now, if the declarative sentence has an auxiliary, and hence, an *operator*, this operator has to be inverted with the subject so as to form a well-formed Yes/No question. However, if the sentence has no auxiliary, and hence, no *operator*, the operator *do* is used according to the tense of the sentence in what is known as *do-support* phenomenon. That is, *do* and *does* are used in *present simple tense* and *did* is used in *past simple tense*.

Regarding the classification of the errors in *Yes/No questions*, there are many researchers who have dealt with such classifications. For instance, Mukattash (1992) has studied the errors in *Yes/No questions* committed by Arab students in the University of Yarmouk, Jordan. He has classified such errors into *do* **replacing** *be*, *be* **replacing** *do, Inversion without do* and *Verb Form*. Another

classification is made by Al-Fotih (1996) in which he has put *Yes/No questions* errors into two categories, viz. *verb tense* and *verb form*. However, as far as the serious errors committed in this category are concerned, it has been found that such errors fall into two categories: (i) *auxiliaries,* (ii) *main verb*. However, there is also another category identified, namely, *main verb-subject inversion* but the errors in this category have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (20) below presents such categories, the number of errors committed in each category and the percentage.

Table (20): Classification of Errors in the Use of Yes/No Questions

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Auxiliaries	1132	60.20%
Main verb	754	39.80%
Total	1886	100%

As presented in Table (20) above, the total number of errors committed in the *use of Yes/No questions* in this study is 1886. The first category, viz. *auxiliaries* includes 1132 frequent errors, i.e. 60.20% of the total. The second category, i.e. *main verb* includes 754 frequent errors, i.e. 39.80% of the errors committed.

4.11. EG in the Use of Yes/No Questions: Analysis and Interpretation

Now, consider Table (21) which presents the number of the errors committed, the number of learners committing them, the category of errors, the sum, the mean, the EG of such categories among other things.

Table (21): EG in the Use of Yes/No questions

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Auxiliaries	**Main verb**
TNS	102	102
N	95	87
$\sum$	1132	754
$\bar{x}$	11.92	8.67
P	93.14%	85.29%
EG	321.57	251.14

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4.11.1. Auxiliaries

As shown in Table (21) above, there are 1132 frequent errors committed in this category. These errors have been committed by 95 learners, i.e. by 93.14% of the total number of subjects involved. As per individual learner, the average is 11.92. Consequently, the EG of this category is 321.57. Due to scoring the highest rank in the number of errors committed, the mean, the number of subjects committing the errors and the EG scored, the errors committed in this category are *most serious*. In addition, the errors committed in this category are subdivided into two further categories: 1) *auxiliary types* and 2) *auxiliary tokens*.

4.11.1.1 Auxiliary Types

This category includes errors where an auxiliary verb is substituted for another but in *types* and not in *tokens* as in **Are you speak English?* where *be*, i.e. *are* is used instead of a modal, i.e. *can*. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented below.

(89)* ***Do*** *Dr. Mahmoud's car there?*
(90)* ***Has*** *you a student?*
(91)* ***Is*** *he come yet?*
(92)* ***Do*** *he watching TV now?*
(93)* ***Are*** *you studied English before joining college?*
(94)* ***Are*** *you speak English well?*

The examples (89) through (94) show such a phenomenon. In (89), for instance, the correct auxiliary to be used is *be* and not *do*. Thus, the correct auxiliary to be used here is *is* and not *do* because the question concerns *Dr. Mahmoud's car **being there***. Like (89), in (90) the learner uses *have* instead of *be*. Thus, the learner should have used *are* to render the sentence grammatical. The same thing can also be said about (91) where the learner uses *be,* i.e. *is* instead of *have*, i.e. *has* which is the correct form of *have* that can make such a sentence grammatical. Likewise, in (92, 93 & 94) the learner uses *do,* i.e. *do* instead of *be*, i.e. *is, be*, i.e. *are* instead of *have*, i.e. *have* and *be*, i.e. *are* instead of modal, i.e. *can* respectively.

4.11.1.2. Auxiliary Tokens

By this category is meant those errors where one form (token) of an auxiliary is used in place of another form (token) of the same auxiliary as in *Has you bought that book?* where **has** has been substituted for **have** as required by the subject of the sentence, i.e. **you.** A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(95)*__Was__ *you there yesterday?*
(96)*__Has__ *Aziza and Ali answered that difficult question?*
(97)*__Have__ *she visited your village?*
(98)*__Do__ *Ali play chess?*
(99)*__Is__ *your parents here?*
(100)*__Does__ *you cook chicken every Friday*?

Now, looking at the examples (95) through (100), it is clear that these errors involve using a wrong auxiliary form where the learner wrongly uses one token of any auxiliary, be it **be, do** or **have** in place of another token of the same auxiliary to form a Yes/No question. For instance, in (95) he/she uses the form **was** of **be** which is not correct. The correct token of **be** to be used here is **were** as the only one which agrees with the subject **you** and tense, **past** and thus resulting in an ungrammatical sentence. However, in (96), the learner uses a wrong token of **have,** viz. **has** which is not the correct form to be used here, instead, he/she must have used **have** as the one to agree with the subject **Aziza and Ali** and thus such a use of the wrong token of **have** renders the sentence ungrammatical. The same thing can be said about (97) where the learner uses **have** instead of **has**. In (98), for such a sentence to be grammatical, the learner must have used **does** but by using **do** the sentence is ungrammatical. In (99), the sentence would have been grammatical had the learner used **are** instead of **is**. In addition, in (100), another case of using the wrong form of **do** is demonstrated. Here, the sentence would have been grammatical had the learner used **do** and not **does**.

Now, considering whether the source of these errors is L1, i.e. Arabic or L2, i.e. English, let us first examine how Yes/No questions are formed in Arabic. In fact, Arabic has three words used to form Yes/No questions in the language, which are not auxiliary verbs but words. These words are   **hal, ?alam**   **and ?a(?a)**. **hal** is used to form Yes/No questions in the present tense, **?alam** is used in the past and **?a(?a)** is used in the future tense. In fact, while **?alam** and **?a(?a)** are limited to what has been

mentioned, the word, ***hal*** can replace both words in past and future. That is, ***hal*** can be used in forming Yes/No questions in past, present and future, In fact, what these words do is what auxiliaries in English do in the sense that initiating the Arabic statement with one of these words renders such a statement a Yes/No question. However, there is no restriction in their uses. In that, they can be used with all pronouns and nouns, singular or plural, masculine or feminine and so on. Therefore, unlike English, such auxiliaries and constraints do not exist in Arabic and so one cannot assume that the source of such errors is L1, i.e. Arabic. Accordingly, all the errors committed in the ***use of Yes/No questions*** are no longer due to L1, i.e. Arabic interference. Thus, such errors are intralingual. Here, either the learners have not acquired the sufficient competence as to how ***Yes/No questions*** are formed in English or they are confused about which way to follow to express themselves in this respect. In fact, either case, one is likely to assume that they are still developing and internalising the English syntactic system regarding Yes/No question formation. As such, the EG scored here can be ascribed to English *per se*.

4.11.2 Main Verb

In this category, there are 754 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 87 learners, i.e., 85.29% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study. As per individual learner, the average of the errors is 8.67. Thus, the EG of this category is 251.14 which indicates that these errors are ***serious***. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(101)*Didn't he **_liked_** anything?
(102)*Has internet **_cover_** all aspects of life?
(103)*_Does_ he **_playing_** football?
(104)*Are they **_come_** today?
(105)*Should he **_speaking_** English with his friends?
(106)*Can you **_spoke_** English?

The examples (101) through (106) exemplify the phenomenon of using wrong form of the main verb while forming ***Yes/No questions***. For instance, in (101) the learner uses ***liked*** instead of ***like***. In fact, the tense feature in this sentence is "carried" by the auxiliary ***didn't*** and hence, the main verb must be in the ***infinitival form***. In (102), the learner uses the verb form ***cover*** wrongly. Here, he/she should have used the ***–en*** form, i.e. ***covered*** due to coming after the verb ***has***. (103) would have been grammatical had the learner used ***play*** as being in the ***infinitival form*** instead of using ***playing*** which is

in the ***progressive form***. Similarly, in (104), the correct form is ***coming*** as being in the required ***progressive form*** and thus the learner wrongly uses ***come*** which renders the sentence ungrammatical. In (105), the learner uses ***speaking*** incorrectly. He/she must have used the ***infinitival form***, i.e. ***speak*** to render such a sentence grammatical. The same thing can be said about (106) where the learner uses ***spoke***, and to render such a sentence grammatical, the ***infinitival form***, i.e. ***speak*** must be used. Now, considering the source of such errors, Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of such errors simply because such restrictions do not exist in Arabic. Thus, such errors are intralingual. In fact, many researchers (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982) call them developmental errors similar to those committed by native speakers while acquiring English as their L1. Thus, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se*.

Thus, errors in ***auxiliaries*** are ***most serious*** because of the statistical factors involved which are very significant. For instance, the number of errors committed is significant where 1132, i.e. 60.20% of the total errors committed. This indicates that the frequency of errors is high. In addition, the number of the subjects committing the errors is also significant where 95 learners, i.e. 93.14% of the subjects involved. This indicates that almost all the subjects encounter difficulty in forming Yes/No questions which leads to such high seriousness. However, the errors in ***main verb*** are considered ***serious*** due to the statistical factors involved. For instance, the number of errors committed is quite significant where 754, i.e. 39.80% of the errors have been committed. The number of the subjects committing the errors is also quite significant where 87 learners, i.e. 85.29% of the total subjects involved. All these factors make the ***main verb*** errors ***serious***. Since errors committed in ***Yes/No questions*** are intralingual, the EG scored by both categories can be ascribed to English alone.

4.12. Classification of Errors in the Use of Relative Clauses

A relative clause construction carries information about a particular element in the sentence quantified by a relative pronoun. Sadighi (1994:141) has defined a relative clause as a subordinate clause which gives more information about someone or something mentioned in the main clause. The relative clause comes immediately after the noun which refers to the person or thing being talked about. The relative clause is initiated by a relative pronoun such as ***who, whom, which, where, that*** and ***whose***. In addition, there are two types of relative clauses, viz. defining and non-defining relative

clauses. These two types have been referred to by Quirk et al. (1985) as restrictive and non-restrictive respectively. A restrictive relative clause by definition is one which restricts the information it provides to a person or thing spoken about in the main clause as in *The man who teaches us Spoken English is my uncle*. Here, the relative clause *who teaches us spoken English* is a defining relative clause since it defines the NP *the man* it postmodifies, and if it is omitted, the meaning will change because it provides necessary information about the NP it modifies. Thus, it restricts the NP *the man* by attributing the *teaching of spoken English* to it. Conversely, a non-defining or non-restrictive relative clause provides only additional information about the person, place or thing talked about in the main clause as in *I have bought a syntax book, which is written by Chomsky*. Here, the non-defining clause *which is written by Chomsky* does not state necessary information, and if omitted, the meaning does not change. In other words, it is not restricted to the NP *a syntax book* but only stating extra information about it. This is actually manifested through the fact that while a restrictive relative clause does not take a comma, non-restrictive relative clause does in written English. Further, all relative pronouns that can be used in defining relative clauses can be also used in non-defining relative clauses.

As far as the errors committed in this study are concerned, it has been found that the serious errors in the use of relative clauses fall into two categories: 1) **substitution of relative pronouns** and 2) **omission of relative pronouns**. In fact, there is another category which has been identified, viz. **addition of resumptive pronouns** but the errors in this category have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (22) below presents the categories in which the errors in the **use of relative clauses** have been classified, the number of errors committed in each and their percentage.

Table (22): Classification of Errors in the Use of Relative Clauses

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Substitution of relative pronouns	1015	63.39%
Omission of relative pronouns	586	36.61%
Total	1601	100%

Substitution of relative pronouns errors in relative clauses occur when the learners substitute a particular relative pronoun for another as in **The teacher which teaches us English writing is my uncle*

where *which* has been substituted for *who*. ***Omission of relative pronouns*** errors in relative clauses occur when the subjects of this study omit relative pronouns whose presence is necessarily required for well-formed sentences as in **The student came yesterday is my neighbor.* As shown in Table (22) above, there are 1601 errors committed by the subjects of this study. The category**, *substitution of relative pronouns*** scores the first rank with 1015 frequent errors constituting 63.39% of the total number of errors in ***relative clauses***. ***Omission of relative pronouns*** category occupies the second rank with 586 errors constituting 36.61% of the total errors committed in the ***use of relative clauses***.

4.13. EG in the Use of Relative Clauses: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (23) below presents the number of learners committing the errors, the category of errors, the sum, the mean, the EG among other things.

Table (23): EG in the Use of Relative Clauses

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Substitution of relative pronouns	Omission of relative pronouns
TNS	102	102
N	97	74
$\sum$	1015	586
$\bar{x}$	10.46	7.92
P	95.10%	72.55%
EG	307.57	204.17

4.13.1. Substitution of Relative Pronouns

Now, looking at the Table (23) above, the category referred to as ***substitution of relative pronouns*** includes 1015 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 97 learners, i.e. 95.10% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study with an average of 10.46 as per individual subject. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 307.57. This indicates that ***substitution of relative pronouns*** errors are ***most serious***. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is provided below.

(107)**He asked me to take the pen **where** is on the table.*
(108)**The teacher **that** name is Dr. Mahmoud teaches us English writing.*
(109)*…* and this is the teacher **who** I like.*

(110)*The woman **which** described the direction was wearing a Yemeni veil.

(111)*Alhawbaan **who** is located in Taiz is my village.

(112)…*and the village **that** I live is very beautiful.

The common feature of the errors in (107) through (112) is that they reflect the ***substitution of relative pronouns*** where the learners wrongly substitute an incorrect relative pronoun for a correct one. For instance, in (107), the learner has substituted the relative pronoun **where** for **which**, in (108), the relative pronoun **that** has been used instead of **whose**, in (109), **who** has been substituted for **whom**, in (110), **which** for **who**, in (111), **who** has been used instead of **which** and in (112), instead of using **where**, the learner has used **that**.

Now, the question is how and why do Arab learners commit such errors? A plausible answer to this question can be stated after considering how relative clauses operate in Arabic. In fact, in Arabic, relative pronouns are marked for φ-features, viz. ***gender, Case, number*** and ***person***. Arabic also has dual relative pronouns which are also marked for φ-features which is not the case in English relative pronouns. Now, consider Table (24) presenting Arabic relative pronouns.

Table (24): Relative Pronouns in Arabic

Number *Gender*	Singular	Dual	plural
Masculine	*?alaði* *ma:(n)*	*?ala:ða:ni-Nom* *?alaðaini-Acc, Gen*	*?alaði:na*
Feminine	*?alati*	*?alata:ni-Nom* *?alataini-Acc,Gen*	*?ala:ti*

Now, looking at Table (24) above, one is likely to observe the difference between Arabic and English relative pronouns. In English, for instance, the relative pronouns ***who, whom*** and ***whose*** are the only marked relative pronouns for ***Case*** and not for any other φ-features and this actually creates a great difficulty for Arab learners learning English though they are simpler than Arabic ones. In addition, an equivalent relative pronoun of ***whose*** does not exist in Arabic at all. In (108) for instance, the learner uses the relative pronoun ***that*** instead of ***whose*** which is a direct translation from Arabic. Further, the Arabic counterpart of (109) reads something like *wa haða ?a?ustað-a ?allaði ?uħib-u* in which the relative pronoun *?allaði* is used for all φ-features mentioned above which is not the case in English and hence, such an error is interlingual. As has been motioned above, the relative pronoun

whose does not exist in Arabic and the relative pronoun to be used in such a case in Arabic is *?allaði* which is equivalent to *that* or even *who* and *which* in English and what the learner does here is just transfer this very feature from Arabic into English and thus resulting in an ungrammatical sentence.

Something more can be said about the Arabic relative pronoun *?allaði*, i.e. it is marked for **Case** abstractly. In other words, the same form, *?allaði* is used for **Nom, Acc** and **Gen Case** and thus the learner uses the relative pronoun **who** in (109) instead of **whom**. In (112), however, the error is far interesting because it can be ascribed both to L1 interference and L2 influence as well. This indeed lies in its **ambiguous** nature. Thus, ascribing it to Arabic comes from its Arabic counterpart, viz. *?alqariat-a* **?alati** *?askun jami:lat-an jidan,* where **?alati** (f. sing. **that**) is used, is absolutely grammatical. It can also be ascribed to English because in this case, one might argue that the learner committing such an error has a false conception about the use of **that**. Thus, such an error can be said to be **ambiguous**. However, the error in (108) is purely intralingual where the learner uses **that** instead of **whose**. It is because the equivalent of **whose** does not exist in Arabic. Arab learners get confused with respect to the use of relative clauses in English and hence, Arab learners tend to avoid using relative clauses (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, Yuan and Zhao 2005). Since some errors are interlingual and some others intralingual, the EG scored in this category can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

4.13.2. Omission of Relative Pronouns

Table (23) above shows that this category includes 586 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 74 learners, i.e. 72.55% of the total number of the subjects involved with a mean of 7.92. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 204.17. As such, these errors can be said to be *less* **serious**. A sample of the errors found in this study is given below.

(113)*In the library, there is a book # is new.
(114)*There are many people # speak English.
(115)*Nabeel likes his wife # is a good housewife.
(116)*My mother is good at making fruit salad # is her hobby.
(117)*The teacher # came here is very nice.

In (113) through (117), different relative pronouns have been omitted (# stands for the omitted relative pronoun). In (113), for instance, the learner omits the relative pronoun *which*. The source of this error is interference of Arabic. The Arabic counterpart reads something like *fi   ?almaktabat-i, huna:ka   kita:b-un   jami:l-un*   (literally: in the library, there is a book beautiful). In fact, what the learner does here is transfer this very structure from Arabic into English resulting, of course, in such an ungrammatical sentence. In (114 & 115) above, the learners commit errors by omitting the relative pronoun *who* from both sentences. Like (113), (114) reflects L1, i.e. Arabic structure. Thus, the Arabic counterpart of (114) reads *huna:ka   na:-uns   kaθi:r-u:n   yatakalam-u:n   ?al?injli:ziat-a.* (literally, there are many people speak English). Therefore, the errors in (113 & 114) are interlingual. However, in (115), the error is of an intralingual nature because its Arabic counterpart, viz. **ʕali   yuħib-u zawjata-hu #* (*hya*) *rabat-a   bait-in   jaidat-an,* where a relative pronoun is a must, is ungrammatical in Arabic. The same thing can be said about (116 & 117) where the learners have omitted the relative pronoun *which* in (116) and *who* in (117). Thus, the errors in (115, 116 & 117) are intralingual because had it been a transfer from Arabic, these examples would have been absolutely grammatical because learners will have to use relative pronouns. As such, the EG scored in this category can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English both.

Thus, it has been found that errors in *substitution of relative pronouns* are *most serious* due to the significance of the statistical factors involved. These factors are the number of errors committed where 1015, i.e. 63.39% of the total errors in relative clauses, the number of the learners committing such errors is also significant where 97 learners, i.e. 95.10% of the total subjects involved and the EG scored is also significant, viz. 307.57. However, the errors in *omission of relative pronouns* are *less serious* due to the statistical factors involved which are not significant as can be seen in Table (23) above. In addition, in both categories, the seriousness has been scribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English because some errors have been found to be interlingual and others intralingual.

As far as EG is related to the frequency of an error, (Schachter 1974) states that errors with high frequency indicate learning difficulties and that the frequency of a particular error is an evidence of the difficulty learners have in learning such a particular form. In fact, Schachter has studied the errors in the acquisition of English relative clauses and his subjects were Persian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese

speakers. He has concluded that Persian subjects score the least in committing errors among his subjects followed by Arabic, then Chinese and finally Japanese subjects. Schachter has ascribed such findings to the fact that English, Persian and Arabic place relative pronouns to the right of the NP whereas Japanese and Chinese place relative pronouns to the left of the NP they modify. Further, he refutes the claim that similarities between L1 and L2 lead to ease of learning and differences between them lead to difficulties stating that these results contradict the priori hypotheses presumed by him. In addition, Schachter (op.cit.) argues that the less errors committed by Arab learners are a result of avoidance. This has also been supported by (Yuan and Zhao 2005, Freeman and Lon 1991) who have ascribed such a phenomenon to the fact that Arabic speakers learning English tend to avoid using relative clauses especially in their composition assignments.

4.14. Classification of Errors in the Use of Negation

Wu (2005:53) holds that "[n]egation is a linguistic universal: for cognitive and pragmatic reasons, every language must have the possibility of assertion that the state of affairs expressed by a sentence is not true." Thus, as a typical *SVO* language, the negative of an English affirmation is *S NEG-V O*. However, negatives are more difficult to interpret and may often cause ambiguity. In logical terms, it is easy to distinguish an affirmative proposition from a negative one because the meaning of a negative proposition is just the opposite of its affirmative one. Further, Quirk et al. (1985:121-123) state that there are different ways to negate a sentence in English, viz. negation with the negative particle *not* as in *He did not smoke*, determiner negation with *no* as in *He has no time*, *pronominal negation* where an indefinite pronoun is used in the negation as in *Nobody has come* and adverbial negation where an *adverb* of negation is used as in *He never smokes*.

As far as the classification of errors in *negation* committed by the subjects of this study is concerned, it has been found that the serious errors fall into two categories: (i) *omission of auxiliary* and (ii) *double negatives*. In fact, a third category has been identified, viz. *using <u>NOT</u> before the auxiliary* but errors in this category have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (25) presents these categories, the number of frequent errors in each category and their percentage.

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Table (25): Classification of Errors in the Use of Negation

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Omission of auxiliary	911	64.20%
Double negatives	508	35.80%
Total	1419	100%

As can be seen in Table (25) above, *omission of the auxiliary* category scores 911 frequent errors, i.e. 64.20% of the total number of errors. *Double negatives* category includes 508 frequent errors, i.e. 35.80% of the total errors concerned.

4.15. EG in the Use of Negation: Analysis and Interpretation

By *omission of the auxiliary* is meant those errors in the use of *negation* which result from deleting the auxiliary, be it *be, have*, *do* or modal and hence, using *not* per se as in *You said you not tired* where the learner deletes the auxiliary *were*. In addition, by *double negatives* is meant those errors where the learner uses two negative elements as in *I didn't see him nowhere* where the negative elements, viz. *n't* and *nowhere* are used. Now, consider Table (26) presenting the EG of the abovementioned categories, number of the subjects committing the errors, the mean, number of errors among other things.

Table (26): EG in the Use of Negation

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Omission of auxiliary	**Double negatives**
TNS	102	102
N	97	61
$\sum$	911	508
$\bar{x}$	9.39	8.29
P	95.10%	59.80%
EG	291.42	172.18

4.15.1. Omission of Auxiliary

As shown in Table (26), this category includes 911 frequent errors. Such errors have been committed by 97, i.e. 95.10% of the total number of the subjects involved and the mean of such errors

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is 9.39 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 291.42 which indicates that these errors are **serious**. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented below.

(118)*Ali # not coming to class.
(119) *You said you # not tired.
(120) *# Not go now.
(121) *He # not attend the lecture tomorrow.
(122) *I# not gone to Taiz since two years.

The learners committing such errors fail to add the auxiliary which "supports" the negative particle **not**. As can be seen in (118) through (122), the auxiliaries omitted vary. In that, the deleted auxiliary may be **be** as in the case of (118 & 119), viz. **is** and **were** respectively, **do**, i.e. **do** as in (120), modal, i.e. **will** as in (121) and **have**, i.e. **has** as in the case of (122).

Although such errors are native-like, viz. errors committed by native children when acquiring English as their L1, there is a strong reasoning behind assuming that their source is L1, i.e. Arabic because Arabic does not have such auxiliaries and the Arabic counterparts of (118) through (122) are absolutely grammatical in Arabic. For now, let us consider how **negation** operates in Arabic after which our claim will be clear. In fact, there are three negative particles which negate a sentence. These are **lam**, **la:** and **lan**. Each of these three particles means **not**. **Lam** is used when negating a sentence in the past, **la** in the present and **lan** in the future Holes (2004:163). The following examples exemplify the issue in question.

Lam   yaktub   ʕali-un   ?aldars-a
Not   write   Ali   the-lesson

    'Ali did not write the lesson.'

ʕali-un   **la:**   yuħib-u   ?alsiba:ħat-a
Ali   not   like   the-swimming

    'Ali does not like swimming.'

Lan   yaðab-a   ʕali-un   ?ila   ?almadrsat-i   ɣad-an
Not   go   Ali   to   the-school   tomorrow

    'Ali will not go to school tomorrow.'

These examples illustrate the phenomenon that unlike English, the Arabic negative particles *lam, la:* and *lan* (meaning *not*) do not need an auxiliary to "support" their occurrence in Arabic sentences. Now, coming back to our argument, what the learner does in (118) through (122) is just transfer the Arabic negative structures into English and thus omitting the auxiliary which is required to "support" the negative particle *not* without which the syntax of English *negation* is violated. On the other hand, several researchers (e.g. Mitchell and Myles 1998, Dulay and Burt 1972, 1973, 1974b, Dulay et al. 1982, Brown 1994, James 1998) hold that such errors are developmental as they resemble those made by children acquiring English as their L1. However, there is a strong temptation that makes Arab learners commit such errors which lies within their MT, i.e. Arabic as a knowledge base. In fact, the Arabic equivalents of (118) through (122) are absolutely grammatical in Arabic and hence, L1, i.e. Arabic as the source of such errors prevails. Thus, such errors are interlingual and the EG scored by this category can be ascribed to Arabic *per se*.

4.15.2. Double Negatives

As shown in Table (26) above, there are 508 frequent errors in this category. Only 61 learners, i.e. 59.80% of the total subjects of the study have committed such errors and as per individual learner, the average is 8.29. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 172.18 which indicates that these errors are *less serious* A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(123) …*but I **didn't** see **nobody** in the lecture today.
(124) … *and to achieve my ambition, I **won't** go **nowhere** so I will stay in my country.
(125) *__No one__ has __not__ received his handout.
(126) *She __never__ __does__ __not__ like her friend's behavior.
(127) …*but in Taiz, __nobody__ __cannot__ walk in the streets at night.

In (123) through (127), what the learner does is use two negative elements in each sentence. In (123), for instance, the negation is repeated twice, viz. one is the negative contraction, i.e. *didn't* and the indefinite pronoun *nobody* and thus violating the syntax of **negation** in English. The same thing can be said about (124) where the learner uses *won't* and *nowhere*. In (125), *no one* and *has not* have been used, *never* and *does not* in (126) and *nobody* and *cannot* are used in (127). Thus, to be grammatically correct, each of these sentences needs one of these two negative elements to be deleted.

Now, as far as the source of such errors is concerned, Arabic has nothing to do with this. In fact, as it is the case in English, in Arabic, too, *double negative* is not allowed and hence, these errors are intralingual, i.e. developmental occurring as a result of the learners' insufficient syntactic competence at this stage of learning process. In addition, Burt and Kiparsky (1972) point out that these L2 learners' errors resemble in their developmental nature those committed by children acquiring English as their L1. In this regard, O'Grady (2005:167) points out that such errors are committed by children when they acquire English and these children even resist correction providing the following example between a mother and her child:

Child: Nobody don't like me
Mother: No, say, "Nobody likes me."
Child: Nobody don't like me.
(*Eight repetitions of this dialogue*)
Mother: No, now listen carefully: say, "Nobody likes me."
Child: Oh! Nobody don't likes me.

Thus, being *less serious*, the number of errors committed in *double negatives*, the number of subjects committing them and the EG scored indicate that the difficulty encountered by Arab learners of English while trying to overcome such problems is less than that faced when trying to overcome *omission of auxiliary* problems. Since the errors committed here are intralingual, the seriousness of these errors can be ascribed to L1, i.e. English alone.

4.16. Classification of Errors in the Use of Wh-questions

Unlike *Yes/No questions* which are meant for asking about specific information that could be expressed and/or answered by *yes* or *no*, *wh-questions* are meant for asking about detail information. For instance, considering *Did Ali pass the exams?* and *who passed the exams?*, in the former, the speaker seeks only a yes/no answer, i.e. *yes* or *no* but in the latter he/she seeks more information specifying *who did the action of passing*. *Wh-questions* query specific information; and, because of the variety inherent in what specific information can be queried with *wh-questions*, their formation is not grammatically universal; some *wh-questions* require *subject-verb inversion* when the information queried is in the predicate while others, when information gap is in the subject, do not (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999:144). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman add that because of the variety and the grammatical complexity they involve, *wh-questions* are often difficult for English language

learners to master. However, they hold that the usefulness of *wh-questions* in acquiring new information and therefore expanding communicative competence in English makes it important for the learners to be able to employ *wh-questions* from an early stage of language development.

Every wh-word has something to ask about. For instance, *what* is used for asking about the object, *when* is used for asking about time, *where* about place, *why* about reason, and so on. In *Ali has eaten an apple*, if one asks about the object, i.e. *an apple*, *what* is used for such a purpose, for instance. However, from a transformational generative point of view, the deep structure will be something like *Ali has eaten what?*, where *what* replaces the object *an apple*. Now, *what* is preposed or undergoes the *Wh-movement* to the Spec Complementiser Phrase (CP) position and after subject verb inversion, the surface structure will be something like *What has Ali eaten*? This is really a complex phenomenon for ESL learners. It is so because of the many operations that the learners have to do for producing a well-formed wh-question. Thus, this complexity will certainly result in different kinds of errors.

Classifying errors in the use of *wh-questions* has been dealt with by several researchers. For instance, (Al-Fotih 1999) classifies them according to the wh-operator involved. However, as far as the serious errors committed this study are concerned, it has been found that such *wh-questions* errors fall into two categories: (i) *no subject-verb inversion* and (ii) *omission of auxiliary*. In fact, there has been a third category, namely, *no wh-fronting* identified but the errors in this category have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Thus, Table (27) below shows the categories in which *wh-questions* errors have been classified, the number of errors committed in each category and the percentage of each in relation to the total number of such errors.

Table (27): Classification of Errors in the Use of Wh-questions

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
No subject-auxiliary inversion	847	62%
Omission of auxiliary	519	38%
Total	1366	100%

As can be seen in Table (27) above, there are 1366 frequent errors as the total number of errors committed in the two categories. In *no subject-auxiliary inversion,* there are 847 frequent errors, i.e.

62% of the total number of errors committed, ***omission of auxiliary*** category includes 519 frequent errors, i.e. 38% of the total number of the errors concerned.

4.17. EG in the Use of Wh-questions: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (28) below presents a statistical account of the two categories, viz. ***no subject-auxiliary inversion*** and ***omission of auxiliary***, i.e. the number of errors, the average, the percentage of errors committed, the EG of each category among other things.

Table (28): EG in the Use of Wh-questions

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	No subject-auxiliary inversion	Omission of auxiliary
TNS	102	102
N	91	64
$\sum$	847	519
$\bar{x}$	9.31	8.11
P	89.22%	62.75%
EG	272.23	178.69

4.17.1. No Subject-Auxiliary Inversion

Now, as can be seen in Table (28) above, there are 847 frequent errors committed in ***no subject-auxiliary inversion*** category. In addition, these errors have been committed by 91 learners, i.e. 89.22% of the total number of the subjects involved and as per individual learner, the mean is 9.31. Consequently, the EG of such errors is 272.23 which indicates that these errors are ***serious***. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is provided here.

(128) *When ***you are*** *coming?*
(129) **Where ***she is*** *studying?*
(130) *What ***Ali and Salem are*** *doing?*
(131) *Why ***he will*** *go to Taiz?*
(132) *Where ***Aziza has*** *gone?*

(128) through (132) exemplify one of the major problems Arab learners face in forming ***wh-questions*** in English. In (128), for instance, it is clear that the learner does not invert the subject ***you*** with the auxiliary ***are*** which is necessarily needed for forming a well-formed wh-question in English.

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The same thing can be said about (129) through (132) where the learner fails to invert the subjects and the auxiliaries *she* and *is*, *Ali and Salem* and *are*, *he* and *will* and *Aziza* and *has* respectively.

Now, considering the source of such errors, the main source is L1, i.e. Arabic interference and thus such errors are purely interlingual. As has been mentioned above, such *subject-verb inversion* constraints are not at all needed in Arabic to form *wh-questions*, and so it seems that the learners under study just transfer this very Arabic feature into English which results in committing such errors. However, there are some researchers who believe that these errors are developmental resembling those committed by children when acquiring such structures. Gass and Selinker (2008:35) hold that *wh-questions* "maintain declarative order" and that children pass through stages in their acquisition of *wh-question* formation beginning with inversion in *yes/no questions* but not in *wh-questions* citing examples like:

Do you like ice cream?

Where I can draw them?

Here, children use inversion in *yes/no* questions, but not in *wh-* questions.

Gass and Selinker (op.cit.) add that English *wh-questions* formed by children with different L1s like Norwegian and Japanese do not reflect their MT (ibid:126). Likewise, Ravem (1974) reports on a study of the development of two children acquiring English as a second language with Norwegian as the MT. These children produce such wh-questions as *what John will read?, when Daddy will come?* However, our argument that the errors in (128) through (132) are of an interlingual nature consists in the fact that since Arabic lacks **subject-auxiliary inversion** in forming *wh-questions*, and since Arabic lacks *auxiliaries,* one can assume that the main source of such errors is the transfer from Arabic and thus L1 interference prevails here. As such, the EG scored in this category can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic *per se*. In addition, the seriousness of the errors committed in this category is due to the statistical factors involved. In that, the number of errors committed, the number of the subjects committing the errors and the EG scored are, to some extent, significant and hence, contributing to the seriousness of such errors as can be seen in Table (28) above.

4.17.2. Omission of Auxiliary

In this category, the learners fail to provide an auxiliary necessary for forming a well-formed *wh-question*. In fact, this happens particularly when the tense is *simple present* or *simple past* where auxiliary is not stated in the sentence and where *do-support* is needed to form a *wh-question*. However, this does not mean that such errors do not occur in other tenses. For instance, such errors as in *What Ali doing?* and *where Aziza gone?* do occur in our corpus but they are actually less than those in *simple past* and *simple present*. This category includes 519 errors, i.e. 38% of the total number of errors committed in the *use of wh-questions*. These errors have been committed by 64 learners, i.e. 62.75% of the total number of the subjects involved. As per individual learner, the average is 8.11. Consequently, the EG of such errors is 178.69 which indicates that the errors committed here are *less serious*. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is exemplified below.

(133)*What # you bought?*
(134) *Where # you go?*
(135) *What # you call this in Taiz?*
(136) *What # you think Ali # doing?*
(137) *When # Salma coming?*
(138) *What # she done?*

(133) through (138) exemplify the issue in question. (133), for instance, is in *simple past* and what the learner does is just form the *wh-question* changing nothing except putting the wh-word *what* in the beginning of the question. He/she, in fact, fails to provide the *do-support* operator which is *did* in this case. (134), however, is in the *simple present* where the learner fails to provide the auxiliary *do* and the same thing can be said about (135). Further, (136) exhibits a far interesting case. Not only does the learner omit the *do-support* necessary for forming the *wh-question* in question but also he/she omits the auxiliary *be*, i.e. *is* necessary for *present progressive* and thus rendering such a wh-question ungrammatical. (137) and (139) are in *present progressive* and *present perfect* respectively where the learner fails to provide the auxiliaries *be* and *have* which are *is* and *has* respectively. The source of such errors is L1, i.e. Arabic interference due to the fact that Arabic does not require auxiliaries in forming *wh-questions,* on the one hand, and the absence of such auxiliaries in Arabic on the other

hand. Thus, like errors committed in ***no subject-auxiliary inversion*** category, these errors are purely interlingual and thus the EG scored here can be ascribed to Arabic *per se*.

Our argument that L1, i.e. Arabic is the main source of errors committed in ***wh-questions*** formation has supported what Ravem (1974) has gone to where he argues that the inversion errors without ***do*** come from the MT interference, Norwegian, in his study where he finds such errors as *When John come?* where ***did*** is not mentioned. Regarding Arabic, our claim supports what Mukattash (1981) has pointed out to. Mukattash argues that ***no subject-auxiliary inversion*** errors are a direct result of Arabic interference. He claims so arguing that Arabic requires no inversion in ***wh-questions*** formation and that what the learner does is just transfer the Arabic structure into English, i.e. without inversion. Thus, the EG scored by the two categories of errors committed in ***wh-questions*** can be ascribed to Arabic alone. In addition, while the errors in ***no subject-auxiliary inversion*** are ***serious***, those committed in ***omission of auxiliary*** are ***less serious*** due to the statistical factors involved in each of them. That is, while these factors are somewhat significant in the former, they are not in the latter as can be seen in Table (28). In fact, the seriousness of the errors committed in the ***use of wh-questions*** and the difficulty encountered by Arab learners of English when acquiring ***them*** is not that much significant compared to other syntactic categories discussed above. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter six.

4.18. Classification of Errors in the Use of Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are divided into five different categories: (i) **subject pronouns** such as *he, she, it, I, they, we* and *you*. (ii) **object pronouns** such as *him, her, it, me, them, you* and *us*. (iii) **possessive pronouns** functioning as determiners such as *his, her, its, my, their, our* and *your*. (iv) **possessive pronouns** functioning as nouns such as *his, hers, its, mine, theirs, ours* and *yours*. (v) **reflexive pronouns** such as *himself, herself, itself etc*. However, as far as the classification of errors in the ***use of personal pronouns*** is concerned, a considerable number of researchers have dealt with such a classification. For instance, Awasthi (1995:195-196) classifies such errors into five categories, namely, ***omission of pronouns, use of pronouns without antecedents, superfluous use of pronouns, use of subject pronouns for object pronouns*** and ***misformation of reflexive pronouns***. However, as far as the serious errors committed in ***the use of personal pronouns*** by the subjects of this study are

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concerned, it has been found that such errors fall into two categories: (i) *omission* and (ii) *addition*. In fact, a third category namely, *substitution of personal pronouns* has been identified but such errors have been committed by less than 50% and hence, excluded. Thus, Table (29) below presents the categories of errors, their number and their percentage.

Table (29): Classification of Errors in the Use of Personal Pronouns

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Omission	752	60.02%
Addition	501	39.98%
Total	1253	100%

Table (29) above shows the categories in which the errors in *the use of personal pronouns* have been classified. There are two categories, namely, *omission* including 752 frequent errors, i.e. 60.02% of the total number of errors committed and *addition* including 501 frequent errors, i.e. 39.98% of the total number of errors concerned.

4.19. EG in the Use of Personal Pronouns: Analysis and Interpretation

As has been stated so far, the errors in the *use of personal pronouns* have been classified into two categories and the seriousness of such errors, in principle, varies statistically according to the frequent errors occurring in each category. Table (30) below presents the number of errors in each category, the mean, the EG of such categories among other things.

Table (30): EG in the Use of Personal Pronouns

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Omission of pronouns	**Addition of pronouns**
TNS	102	102
N	79	52
Σ	752	501
$\bar{x}$	9.52	9.63
P	77.45%	50.98%
EG	238.97	158.20

4.19.1. Omission

By *omission* is meant those errors where a personal pronoun is omitted as in **He ate an apple when # went out.* As Table (30) shows, this category includes 752 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 79 learners, i.e. 77.45% of the total number of the subjects involved. As per individual learner, the mean is 9.52. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 238.97 which indicates that the errors in this category are *serious* due to such statistical factors. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(139)* *…#and goes to school early everyday.*
(140)**Salma visited me when # was sick.*
(141)…**but I asked my friends about the class after # came home.*
(142)**Ali and Mariam asked # about our journey.*
(143)…* *and after that # has come from college.*

(139) through (143) point out that the learners committing such errors delete a personal pronoun in each sentence without which such a sentence is considered ungrammatical (# stands for the deleted personal pronoun). The deleted personal pronouns are *he/she, I, they, us* and *he/she* in (139) through (143) respectively. It goes without saying that the source of such errors is L1, i.e. Arabic. Now, let us consider the following examples in Arabic:

(i) *ðahaba*   *?ila*   *almadrasat-i*

[he]#went   to   the-school
'He went to school.'

(i) *za:ratni*   *ʕindma*   *kunt-u*   *mari:ḍ-an*

[she]#-visited-me   when   [I]#was   sick
'She visited me when I was sick.'

(i & ii) show how Arabic allows the omission of subject personal pronouns. This makes it clear that these sentences, though personal pronouns- one in each is missed- are still grammatical in Arabic. In fact, this is because, unlike English, Arabic language is a *PRO-drop* language. Several scholars (e.g. Radford 1997, Ouhalla 1999) see Arabic as a *PRO-drop* language because it allows such sentences as in (i & ii) above. A *PRO-drop* language is a language which allows sentences to occur without *overt* subject pronouns because such pronouns are understood from the context of the sentence. As such,

Arabic is considered a ***null subject language***. Now, after this sketchy description of Arabic as a ***PRO-drop*** language, it becomes clear that Arabic is the only source of such errors. As such, what the learners committing such errors do is just transfer the ***PRO-drop*** property of Arabic into English and hence, violating such a syntactic rule in English in which ***overt*** subject pronouns are *a must*. However, Arabic is not a ***pro-drop*** language where objects could be deleted as in the case of Japanese. Thus, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic *per se*. In addition, what makes the errors in ***omission*** of personal pronouns ***serious*** is the statistical factors involved such as the number of errors committed, the number of the subjects committing them and the EG scored as presented in Table (30)

4.19.2. Addition

By ***addition*** errors is meant those errors where a personal pronoun has been added unnecessarily as in **My father he is a great man.* Thus, as can be seen in Table (30) above, there are 501 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 52 learners, i.e. 50.98% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study and the average of such errors is 9.63 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 158.20. This indicates that such errors are ***less serious***. A sample of such errors identified in our corpus is given below.

(144) **Aziza **she** is my best friend.*
(145) **My father **he** will come now.*
(146) **The book **it** is very new.*
(147) **The teacher I like **him** is Dr. Mahmoud.*
(148) …**and I like Aziza **she** my friend at college.*
(149) **Internet **it** helps students in their studies.*

As can be seen in (144) through (149), the learners committing such errors have added redundant pronouns. The pronouns added are ***she, he, it, him, she*** and ***it*** respectively. Now, considering the source of such errors, in fact, Arabic allows structures like (144-149), in what is called ***nominal sentences*** which may sound odd to someone who does not know Arabic and this oddity lies in the absence of ***be*** in Arabic. Now, let us consider the counterpart of (144) in Arabic, for instance:

ʕazi:za   hya   ?afďal   sadi:qat-in   li

Aziza   she   best   friend   to-me

'Aziza is my best friend.'

which is absolutely grammatical in Arabic. Thus, the above Arabic counterpart of (144) makes it clear that Arabic allows such an addition of personal pronouns and hence, such errors are interlingual. In fact, both categories of errors in the *use of personal pronouns* are interlingual and hence, the seriousness in both categories can be ascribed to Arabic *per se*. However, it is clear that the seriousness of the errors in the *use of personal pronouns* is not as significant as those discussed so far and the difficulty encountered by Arab learners of English while acquiring *personal pronouns* is significantly less, too.

4.20. Classification of Errors in the Use of Word Order

In SLA literature, much has been done on *word order* of languages and how it affects SLA process. Several researchers (e.g. Dulay et al. 1982, Obeidat 1986, Noor 1996, Zughoul 1991, 2002, Farghal and Obeidat 1995, El-Sayed 1982, Al-Jarf 2000, Raimes 1985, Ellis 1997, Birdsong 1992, Gass and Selinker 2008) have dealt with the issue of how English word order is acquired and how L1 word order affects or contributes to the committing of errors in English word order. In fact, English has only one word order which is *SVO* as in *John read a story* where *John* is the *S, read* is the *V* and *a story* is the *O*. However, Arabic has six different word orders the dominant of which are two, namely, the basic *VSO and* the alternative *SVO*. From a transformational generative point of view, *VSO* is the normal and *SVO* is derived by means of *Subject-Raising* movement to Spec IP (Ouhalla 1999). As a result, Arabic is widely known as a *VSO* language. The two dominant word orders are exemplified below:

a) *?akal-a*   *ʕali-un*   *tufa:ħat-an*   (VSO)

    ate   Ali-Nom   apple-Acc

        'Ali ate an apple.'

b) *ʕali-un*   *?akal-a*   *tufa:ħat-an*   (SVO)
    Ali-Nom   ate   apple-Acc

        'Ali ate an apple.'

In addition to the obvious difference between English and Arabic in word order at the sentence level, there is still a difference between them at the phrase level specifically NP. In other words, while according to the English syntax, the NP is ordered as *Det + Adj +…+ N* as in *the good boy*, Arabic NP is ordered differently, viz. *Det + N + Det + Adj*   as in   *?al*   *walad-u*   *?al*   *jaid-u* (the-boy the-

good) and thus it has been found that Arab learners commit such errors as *the Cafeteria School* (Mohanty 2006) intending to say *the School Cafeteria*. However, and surprisingly enough, it has never been found that Arab learners learning English commit such errors as *the School the Cafeteria* which exists in Arabic where **?al** (the) is a necessary constituent to form a well-formed NP postmodified by an adjective as in *?al   walad-u   ?al   jaid-u*   where the adjective *jaid-u* (good) has to be premodified by **?al** (the).

As far as the classification of errors in word order is concerned, many a researcher has dealt with such a classification. However, in terms of seriousness, it has been found that the serious errors committed in **word order** in this study include only one category, viz. **misordering at the phrase level**. In fact, another category has been identified, namely, **misordering at the sentence level** but the errors in this category have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (31) below presents the only category of errors in **word order**, the number of errors and their percentages.

Table (31): Classification of Errors in the Use of Word Order

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Misordering at phrase level	512	100%
Total	512	100%

As Table (31) above shows, **misordering at phrase level** is the only serious category including 512 frequent errors, i.e. all the errors committed.

4.21. EG in the Use of Word Order: Analysis and Interpretation

What is meant by **misordering at phrase level** errors is those errors where misordering takes place within the phrase, be it NP, AP, DP, PP, etc. This phenomenon will be thoroughly exemplified below. Table (32) below presents the number of errors, the number of learners committing them, the mean, the EG among other things.

Table (32): EG of Errors in the Use of Word Order

Statistical Category	Error Category
	Misordering at phrase level
TNS	102
N	64
$\sum$	512
$\bar{x}$	8
P	62.75%
EG	177.48

4.21.1. Misordering at Phrase Level

As Table (32) above shows, ***misordering at phrase level*** category includes 512 frequent errors. Such errors have been committed by 64 learners, i.e. 62.75% of the total number of the subjects involved. The average of such errors is 8 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 177.48 which indicates that ***word order*** errors at ***phrase level*** are ***less serious***. The less seriousness ended up with is a result of the statistical factors involved which are less significant. For instance, the number of the errors committed, i.e. 512 is very less compared to other categories discussed so far, the number of the subjects committing them is also less significant where only 64 learners have committed such errors. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(150) *___University Taiz___ is better than other universities.
(151) *I saw ___a boy good___.
(152) *Our ___Union Students___ helps us a lot.
(153) *Our teacher is ___enough intelligent___.
(154) *I like to invite ___other many people___ from outside to visit Yemen.

Dulay et al. (1982:149) have exemplified such a phenomenon by errors in *adjectival modifiers placed after nouns* as in *He put it inside his house a little round* where ***a little round*** comes after the noun it modifies, i.e. ***house***. The errors in (150) through (154) exemplify how the learner fails to order the underlined phrases according to the English syntax. In (150), for instance, the phrase ***University Taiz*** is inverted and deviant from the normal English word order, viz. ***Taiz University***. The phrase ***a boy good*** in (151) can also be accounted for in the same way where the correct English word order is ***a***

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good boy. The same thing can be said about (152). As these examples show, the **word order** errors committed by Arab learners of English are not limited to *NPs* but they include *APs* as well. For instance, in (153), the *AP *enough intelligent* is misordered as the correct English word order of this *AP* is **intelligent enough**. In fact, **enough** is the only English adverb which must follow the adjective it modifies. These errors also include determiners as in the case of (154) where the phrase ***other many people** is misordered and the correct order is **many other people** where **many** has to precede **other**. Now, considering the source of such errors, there are, in fact, those whose source is L1, i.e. Arabic interference as in the case of (150-152) which are a direct translation from Arabic and thus such errors are interlingual. However, there are those whose source is L2, i.e. English itself as in the case of (153 & 154). As far as (153) is concerned, Arabic and English share the same order with respect to **intelligent enough** which corresponds to the Arabic *ðaki-un   bi   šakl-in   ka:fi-in*   where **bi šakl-in   ka:fi-in** (enough) follows   *ðaki-un*   (intelligent) and hence, had it been a transfer from Arabic, this phrase and/or sentence would have been grammatical. By the same token, the source of (154) is L2, i.e. English. In fact, Arabic does not allow such a structure. Thus, such errors can be said to be intralingual. As such, the less seriousness ended up with here can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English.

As mentioned above, there are many researchers and applied linguists who tackle the issue of how Arabic word order affects Arab learners of English production. For instance, in the course of discussing the misspelling of the word **two** as <u>**tow**</u>, Mohanty (2006:127) holds that Arabic word order affects his Arab students' production providing an illustrative example of such a phenomenon as in **The cafeteria school** which is a direct translation of the Arabic phrase   *kafitrya   ?al   madarasat-i*. Obeidat (1986:62-64), in addition, holds that Arab learners of English commit errors in ordering at the phrase level as in **the car new** resembling the Arabic structure of this phrase, i.e. *?al   siarat-u   ?al jadi:dat-u* (the-car the-new). Thus, **word order** errors in our study include only one category because the other identified category, namely, **misordering at sentence level** whose errors have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved has been excluded.

4.22. Conclusion

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the serious syntactic errors identified in the data collected by means of the questionnaires discussed in Chapter three. In fact, there are several categories of errors that have been excluded from analysis and interpretation. Such categories include, for instance, errors in ***adjectives, nouns, conditionals, reflexive pronouns, indefinite pronouns, tag questions, reported speech*** etc. in addition to the excluded subcategories mentioned above. In fact, the main reason behind this exclusion is the fact that the errors committed in such excluded categories and subcategories have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved. Thus, only those errors committed by more than 50% of the subjects have been considered, classified and analysed. In the course of analysing and interpreting the seriousness of the errors, we have followed a 3-point scale, viz. ***most serious, serious*** and ***less serious*** and such seriousness has been statistically expressed where the EG is a result of computing the statistical factors such as the number of the subjects involved, the actual number of the subjects who commit the errors, their percentage and the mean applying the statistical formula stated in Chapter three (see **section 3.9**). In fact, this study is considered the very first study which tackles the gravity of syntactic and semantic errors by means of statistical procedures. To express the seriousness of the syntactic errors committed by the subjects of this study, first we have classified these errors into categories and subcategories such as ***prepositions, articles, subject-verb agreement, Yes/No questions, wh-questions, VP constructions, relative clauses*** etc. These categories have in turn been classified into further categories and subcategories in order to make the results more reliable. Thus, it has been found that the ***most serious*** errors are those committed in prepositions and the ***least serious*** errors are those committed in word order. Between these two extremes lie the other categories. This will also be detailed in Chapter six where we discuss the findings and conclusions. In the course of discussing the EG of syntactic errors committed in this study, we have also discussed the issue of how much L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English have contributed to the committing of such errors so as to find out the role these sources play in the overall EG scored by each and every category and subcategory.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA: THE GRAVITY OF SEMANTIC ERRORS

5.1. Introduction

Compared to phonological, morphological and syntactic errors, semantic errors have not been studied extensively. This view, in fact, has been held by several researchers (Channell 1981, James 1998, Obeidat 1986, Stieglitz 1983, Zughoul and Abdul-Fattah 2003, Zughoul 1991, Laufer 1991, Taylor 1986, Wray 2000, Ryan and Meara 1996, Mohanty 2010) among others who ascertain that unlike syntactic and phonological errors, investigation into semantic errors has been neglected until recently. This neglect has been due to the fact that more interesting problems do not emerge until relatively late in L2 development, whereas many studies on L2 acquisition have been concerned with beginners and intermediate learners (Obeidat 1986). Another reason according to some researchers (e.g. James 1998) is that semantic errors present the greatest difficulty for descriptive analysis. However, the significance of studying semantic errors in L2 development lies in the fact that analysing "language beyond sentence level gets a prominent role in the study of language with the basic tenet that the study of language in context will offer a deeper insight into how meaning is attached to utterances than the study of language in isolated sentences" (Obeidat 1986:74). For instance, meaning discriminations are difficult to make in sets of words when their semantic ranges cross. It goes without saying that the effect a semantic error leaves on the receptor in both speaking and writing makes studying semantic errors a very essential phenomenon in SLA because "it is in the choice of words that effective communication is hindered most" (Sonaiya 1988:12). Further, Mohanty (2010:505) ascribes the neglect of vocabulary in the L2 learning/teaching process to its being "an open set …[and] the limits of vocabulary is hard to specify because of its open-ended nature…teaching of vocabulary was neglected to a secondary position after the rise of structural linguistics between 1940s and 1970s."

However, vocabulary acquisition has gained much importance in recent years as an essential component for SL learners and the proper use of lexes even becomes a parameter to measure the IL proficiency of such learners. There is "a lot of attention given to English vocabulary teaching in the recent years because of the dismal performance of learners even after years of learning…vocabulary has now occupied the central place in all language teaching/learning activities Mohanty (op.cit:505).

Thus, in the course of expressing the gravity of semantic errors involved in this study, such errors will be identified through relating L2, i.e. English words and/or patterns to those of L1, i.e. Arabic and/or relating L2 words and/or patterns to familiar L2 words and/or patterns. In addition, while examining the gravity of semantic errors, the issue of how much L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English contribute to the committing of such errors is also discussed so as to determine to what extent these sources contribute to the overall gravity of such errors.

As has been stated above, investigations into semantic errors are relatively few. So are the classifications of these errors. However, there are, in fact, some studies which have tackled semantic errors and their classifications in the literature. Such studies classify semantic errors into largely three broad categories, viz. *lexical, collocational and lexico-grammatical* (Obeidat 1986, Khalil 1985, James 1998, Jiang 2004, Bogaards and Laufer 2004). However, classifications of such errors into categories and subcategories will be based on the errors identified in our corpus. As has been done in Chapter four, the gravity of the semantic errors identified in our corpus will be expressed using a 3-point scale, viz. *most serious, serious* and *less serious*. In addition, categories and/or subcategories in which semantic errors have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved will be excluded as being *not serious*.

5.2. Classification of Lexical Errors

As far as lexical errors are concerned, researchers have ascertained that a lexical error is the use of a wrong lexis, i.e. a word, which has been inappropriately used in an utterance. To take Llach's (2005:49) definition, for instance, a lexical error is "the wrong use of a lexical item in a particular context by comparison with what a native speaker of similar characteristics as the L2 learner (age, educational level, professional and social status) would have produced in the same circumstances." As for the classification of *lexical errors,* researchers (e.g. Engber 1995, Duskova 1979, Zimmermann 1986, Schmitt and Zimmermann 2002, Laufer 1990, 1991, Zughoul 1991, Llach 2005, Shalaby et al. 2007, Sonaiya 1988, 1991) have classified lexical errors committed by ESL learners into different types, i.e. taxonomies consisting of categories and subcategories. Duskova (1979), for instance, has examined the writing of fifty Czech postgraduate students using only four categories of lexical errors: *confusion of words with formal similarity, similar meaning, misuse of words* and *distortions among lexical nonce mistakes*. The categories used by Duskova are obviously too broad, however. For

example, the category *misuse of words* can, in fact, incorporate many subcategories. However, depending on the classification or taxonomy provided by James (1998), *lexical errors* are classified into two broad categories, namely, *lexical choice errors* and *formal lexical errors*. These two categories will be subdivided into several categories and subcategories depending on the errors identified in our corpus as will be seen in the following sections and subsections.

5.2.1. Classification of Errors in Lexical Choice

The study of lexical choice, an area that may be classified under interlanguage semantics, has not received as much emphasis in language learning/teaching research as the other two components of interlanguage, namely, phonology and syntax (Hemchua and Schmitt 2006, Mohanty 2010). Thus, Arabic speakers learning English encounter difficulties in learning English lexes and so they usually commit errors which can be attributed to the transfer from their L1, viz. Arabic, and also to their transitional development, having false conceptions about and/or overgeneralisation caused by English itself. Regarding the classification of *lexical choice* errors, there are some researchers who have dealt with such a phenomenon. For instance, Zimmermann (1986) has classified *lexical choice* errors into four categories, namely, *paraphrase, wrong choice, verbosity* and *sense relation*. In addition, Hang (2005) has classified *lexical choice* errors into three categories, viz. *individual lexical items, combined lexical items* and *derivational errors*. However, as far as the serious errors in *lexical choice* committed in this study are concerned, it has been found that such errors fall into three categories: 1) *assumed synonymy,* 2) *paraphrase* and 3) *homophony*. In fact, there have been other categories indentified such as *verbosity* and *analogy* but the errors committed in such categories have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (33) below presents these categories, the number of errors committed in each category and their percentage.

Table (33): Classification of Errors in Lexical Choice

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Assumed synonymy	2417	46.29%
Paraphrase	1725	33.04%
Homophony	1079	20.67%
Total	5221	100%

As presented in Table (33), there are 5221 frequent errors committed in *lexical choice* category. The number of errors varies remarkably from one category to another. The **assumed synonymy** category, for instance, includes 2417 frequent errors, i.e. 46.29% of the total number of the errors concerned. **Paraphrase** occupies the second position with 1725 frequent lexical errors, i.e. 33.04% of the total errors committed. Finally, **homophony** category includes 1079 frequent errors, i.e. 20.67% of the total errors committed here. What is meant by the **assumed synonymy** errors is those errors where two or more words are assumed to be synonymous where one of them is correct to use such as **teach** and **learn** as in *Dr Mahmoud learns us spoken English* where **teach** is the correct verb to be used here. In addition, by **paraphrase** errors is meant those errors where the learner lacks the exact word and/or phrase in his/her repertoire and hence, tries to paraphrase the meaning of such a word and/or phrase to express him/herself in the intended context like using **change my clothes** instead of **get dressed** as in *When I get up, I change my clothes immediately* instead of saying *when I get up, I get dressed immediately*. Finally, what is meant by **homophony** errors is those errors where two words are pronounced the same but different in spelling and meaning. Such words include **sight** and **site** in sentences like *Miss Mona has her own internet **sight*** where **site** is the correct word.

5.2.2. EG in Lexical Choice: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (34) below presents the error categories in which errors in the use of *lexical choice* have been classified, the sum of the errors committed in each category, the number of learners committing the errors, the mean, the EG, the percentage among other things.

Table (34): EG in Lexical Choice

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Assumed synonymy	**Paraphrase**	**Homophony**
TNS	102	102	102
N	102	100	82
$\sum$	2417	1725	1079
$\bar{x}$	23.70	17.25	13.16
P	100%	98.04%	80.39%
EG	486.83	407.19	291.63

5.2.2.1. Assumed Synonymy

As Table (34) above presents, the category, namely, ***assumed synonymy*** comprises 2417 frequent lexical errors. These errors have been committed by 102 learners, i.e. all the subjects involved in the study. As per individual learner, the mean of such errors is 23.70. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 486.83 which indicates that such errors are the ***most serious*** compared to the other two categories. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(155)*Your **sound** is nice like that of singers.(voice)

(156)*After Reunification, many Yemenis go to cities to get better **careers**. (jobs)

(157)*Coeducation establishes friendship between the two **races**. (sexes)

(158)*The teacher asked us to meet him when he is **empty.**(free)

(159)*There are not many **occupations** in the village.(jobs)

(160)*When her father comes back from his **job**, she looks happy. (work)

(161)*I have **leisure** for 3 hours everyday. (free time)

(162) *Yemeni TV **contains** a lot of educational programs. (offers)

(163)*Ali is a **long** man.(tall)

(164)*I will **communicate with** you through email. (contact)

Synonymy depends on how many words that have the same meaning in a language. English is full of synonyms. In that, Zughoul (1991:48) holds that "English is said to be very rich in synonyms because of the French, Latin, and Greek influences on the language and because of the vast number of borrowings from different languages." On the other hand, it has been widely argued in semantics that there is no real and exact synonymy between two or more words. In this regard, Griffiths (2006:26-28) argues that two words may be synonymous by having the same or related meaning but when one considers ***entailment***, the matter differs. For instance, if one says that the words ***huge*** and ***big*** have the same or related meaning, the entailment they should represent is not true. That is, "while the sentence *The bridge is huge* entails *The bridge is big*, we do not get entailment going the other way; when *The bridge is big* is true, it does not have to be true that *The bridge is huge* (it might be huge, but it could be big without being huge)" (emphasis in the original). Thus, Griffiths believes that assumed synonymy creates much confusion to L2 learners and hence, resulting in committing errors. Moreover, as Nilsen and Nilsen (1975:154-155) hold, there is some kind of a continuum where a word would be at one end, its antonym on the other end, and its synonyms would be placed as close as possible to each other which makes L2 learner's task even harder than he/she could think.

Furthermore, English words which are considered synonyms, particularly those listed in dictionaries, to which L2 learners in general and Arab learners of English in particular are often exposed, are, in fact, different in meaning in some way. As Griffiths (2006:30-34) holds, there is a difference in style, in geographical distribution, in formality, in vulgarity, in attitude of the speaker, in collocation, in connotation, and possibly some other ways. In a great number of cases, these differences can be specified in terms of features which tend to be more language specific than universal as a foreign language learner might assume. In (163), for instance, the words *tall* and *long* are different though they have the same meaning. The difference could lie in the fact that *tall* might have the feature [+human] while *long* might have the feature [-human]. A man can be *tall*, and a distance *long* in English, but both *man* and *distance* when described in terms of 'length' in Arabic are *tawi:l*, encompassing both *long* and *tall*. This actually depends on "selectional restrictions" placed on the choice of lexical items which seem so fine to the extent that the distinction between two synonyms becomes so hard to realise and hence, a SL learner thinks that he/she could use the words in the set of synonyms in an interchangeable way and thus rendering such utterances as in (155) through (164) semantically deviant.

Accordingly, the *assumed synonymy* in (155) of *sound* and *voice* makes the learner committing such an error think that he/she could use one of them to express him/herself in such a situation basing his/her hypothesis on the fact that both terms *sound* and *voice* in English have the same equivalent in Arabic, viz. *ṣawt* and here such an error could be said to be of an interlingual nature. The same thing can be said of (158), (161), (163) and (164) where the errors committed are caused by Arabic interference. In fact, such errors can also be said to be *ambiguous* because they can also be ascribed to L2, i.e. English. This is due to the fact that the learners committing such errors, having no sufficient knowledge about the uses of such lexes, overgeneralise the use of one lexis for another. However, in (156), (157), (159), (160) and (162), the errors are purely intralingual due to the fact that had it been a transfer from Arabic, such errors would not have been committed because Arabic, specially MSA, has the exact equivalents of the words bracketed. Thus, what contributes to the EG here is not only L1, i.e. Arabic but also L2, i.e. English. In addition, it is observed that the errors committed in *assumed synonymy* are the *most serious* in the *lexical choice* category. This is due to the statistical factors

involved such as the number of errors committed, the number the subjects committing them, the mean and the EG scored as presented in Table (34) above.

5.2.2.2. Paraphrase

Paraphrase has been defined as a restatement of a word, phrase, sentence or a text in one's own words. However, as far as this study is concerned, a paraphrase is simply defined as a restatement of a word or a phrase where the subjects lack the exact word or phrase in their repertoire to express themselves but such a restatement is lexically incorrect and hence, leading to lexically deviant utterances. What has been observed in the errors committed is that *paraphrase* errors may result in a longer and wordier version of the original one. Thus, as shown in Table (34) above, there are 1725 frequent lexical errors. These errors have been committed by 100 learners, i.e. 98.04% of the total number of the subjects involved and as such the mean of such errors is 17.25 as per individual learner. Therefore, the EG of this category is 407.19. As such, the errors committed in this category can be said to be *serious* in *lexical choice* category. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(165)*In Yemen, there is no **white and nice ice**.*(snow)
(166)*The women who are **carrying babies** should stay at home*. (pregnant)
(167) …*and they* (women) *should go to doctors to make **check on their bodies***. (checkup)
(168)*Yemeni Unity is the **small and big people's** right*. (generations)
(169)*Two **rooms** in our house are **for sleeping***. (bedrooms)
(170)*When I went abroad, I took my **big bag of clothes***. (suitcase)
(171)…* and my ambition is **to change English language to Arabic***. (a translator)
(172)*Tomorrow, I have a party of my **day I was born***. (birthday)

What makes Arab learners commit such errors is the lack of the exact word in their lexicon and thus they try to "exploit" the "paraphrase strategy" to express themselves in such contexts. In (165) for instance, the learner may not have acquired the word *snow* and he/she tries to paraphrase its meaning but unfortunately such an attempt results in an error. In (166) the learner committing such an error does not know the word *pregnant* and instead he/she paraphrases its meaning, viz. *carrying babies* which leads to such a semantically deviant utterance. Similarly, in (168) the learner wrongly substitutes the phrase *small and big people* for *generations*. In (169) through (172) the learner has used the phrases *rooms… for sleeping, big bag of clothes, change English to Arabic* and *day I was born* for *bedrooms, suitcase, a translator* and *birthday* respectively. In fact, *paraphrase* as used here differs from

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frequently used types of lexical paraphrase as those of lexical corporation (Nilsen and Nilsen 1975:163) (e.g. covered with cement -- cemented, learn -- become knowledgeable) normally used in English. However, paraphrase as used by Arab learners in these examples is generally of the decomposition type but not normally allowed in English. It strikes anyone to think that they are "unEnglish." Now, considering the source of such errors, in fact, Arabic has nothing to do with committing them. Accordingly, such errors are purely intralingual caused by adopting *paraphrasing* strategy. Thus, it is L2, i.e. English *per se* which causes the subjects of the study to commit these errors and to which the EG scored by this category can be ascribed.

5.2.2.3. Homophony

Homophony can simply be defined as a phenomenon underlying two or more words having the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings. Such homophony includes lists of frequently confused words (homophones) such as ***air ⇔ heir, bare ⇔ bear, be ⇔ bee, buy ⇔ by, cell ⇔sell, cent ⇔sent, cereal ⇔ serial complement ⇔ compliment, dear ⇔ deer, fair ⇔ fare, flour ⇔flower, plane ⇔ plain, site ⇔sight, knight ⇔ night*** among the many others. As shown in Table (34) above, this category includes 1079 frequent semantic errors. These errors have been committed by 82 learners, i.e. 80.39% of the total number of the subjects involved and hence, the average of such errors is 13.16 as per individual learner. Therefore, the EG of this category is 291.63 which indicates that such errors are the ***less serious*** among the errors committed in the three ***lexical choice*** categories discussed above. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is provided here.

(173) ….* but Aden has ***greet*** weather in winter.(great)
(174)*My father travels from Sana'a to Taiz by ***plain***. (plane)
(175)*Yemeni history is fall of brave ***nights***. (knights)
(176) … *and our garden has different kinds of ***flours***.(flowers)
(177) …*and after unification, every Yemeni has a ***rite*** to express his thought in media. (right)
(178)*Children ***through*** the stone on the window.(throw)
(179) *Yesterday I saw a very big ***beer*** in TV. (bear)
(180) …*but now ***sell*** phones spread in allover Yemen. (cell phones)
(181) … *but there are many ***pour*** people in Yemen.(poor)
(182)* Dr. Samia has her own internet ***sight.*** (site)

(173) through (182) exhibit a tendency of wrongly choosing a homophone similar in spelling to

that intended and thus resulting in semantically deviant utterances. Duskova (1979) identifies this kind of errors in her study of Czech learners of English, and several other studies of learners from various language backgrounds corroborated Duskova's taxonomy. In (173) through (182), the wrongly used homophony are *greet, plain, nights, flours, rite, through, beer, sell, pour* and *sight* respectively. These wrongly chosen homophones have been used instead of *great, plane, knights, flowers, right, throw, bear, cell, poor* and *site* respectively. Now, considering the source of these errors, Arabic language has nothing to do with the committing of such errors because such forms are not allowed in Arabic. In fact, had it been a transfer from Arabic, (173) through (182) would have been absolutely grammatical. In fact, this supports some studies done by researchers and applied linguists (e.g. Duskova 1979, Zughoul 1991, Shalaby et al. 2007, Laufer 1990, 1991, Schmitt and Zimmermann 2002, Llach 2005, Hemchua and Schmitt 2006) who ascertain that *homophony* errors are intralingual caused by the lack of the sufficient knowledge that enables the learners to distinguish between homophones and their specific usages. As such, the EG scored by this category can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se* which causes the subjects to commit such errors.

It should be sated here that within *lexical choice* errors, the *most serious* errors are those committed in *assumed synonymy* where 2417 frequent lexical errors, 46.29% of the total errors have been committed. The number of the subjects committing such errors is also high, i.e. all the subjects involved and the EG scored is greatly significant, i.e. 486.83 which is the highest among all EGs discussed so far, be they syntactic or semantic. In addition, the *serious* errors are those committed in *paraphrase* category where 1725 frequent errors, i.e. 33.04% of the total errors have been committed. In addition, the number of the learners committing the errors is also high, i.e. 100 constituting 98.04% of the subjects involved and the EG scored is also significant, i.e. 407.19. Moreover, the *less serious* errors are those committed in *homophony* where the number of errors committed is 1079 frequent errors, i.e. 20.67% of the total number of errors concerned. The number of the subjects committing such errors is 82, i.e. 80.39% of the total number of the subjects involved and the EG scored is not as significant as those in the two abovementioned categories. Moreover, the average of errors committed as per individual learner is also significant with some kind of difference. The means scored are 23.70, 17.25 and 13.16 in the three categories respectively. Apart from this, the high seriousness scored by *lexical choice* categories indicate that the difficulty encountered by Arabic speakers learning English

lexes choice is considerably high and that lexis choice constitutes the most difficult area for Arab learners of English. However, this difficulty varies. That is, while it is the highest in *assumed synonymy*, it is less in *paraphrase* and the least in *homophony*.

5.2.3. Classification of Formal Lexical Errors

As has been noted above, the second type of lexical errors is *formal lexical errors*. *Formal lexical errors* are classified into three major categories, namely, *distortions due to spelling, formal misformations* and *formal misselections*. Each of these categories will be classified into further categories and subcategories depending on the errors identified in our corpus.

5.2.3.1. Classification of Errors in Distortion Due to Spelling

Ryan (1997:181) has pointed out that "[l]earning L2 vocabulary is a complex process which involves not only an understanding of how a word looks on the page but also how it is spelled and how it sounds, both when listened to and spoken, plus a whole list of other features such as grammatical status, appropriate register, what the word collocates with, how frequently the word is used and what it means." Thus, a spelling error can be simply defined as an error in the word level resulting from *omitting, misordering, overincluding* and/or *misselcting* (James 1998) of letters when writing that word as in *vilage, recieve, visitting* and *cent* representing *village, receive, visiting* and *sent* respectively. Thus, when spelling a word wrongly, such a word will be semantically distorted and this affects the semantic correctness of an utterance in which such a word is used. As far as the serious errors committed in this study are concerned, it has been found that the errors committed in this category fall into three categories: (i) *omission,* (ii) *misordering* and (ii) *L1 based*. In fact, there have been other categories identified the important of which is *misselection* and *overinclusion* but the errors in such categories have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (35) below presents the categories in which *distortions due to spelling* errors have been classified, their number among other things.

Table (35): Classification of Errors in Distortion Due to Spelling

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Omission	2137	46.83%
Misordering	1619	35.48%
L1 based	807	17.69%
Total	4563	100%

As can be seen in Table (35), *omission* category includes 2137 frequent errors, i.e. 46.83% of the total number of spelling errors committed here, followed by *misordering* category with 1619 frequent errors, i.e. 35.48% of the total spelling errors committed and *L1 based* with 807 frequent errors, i.e. 17.69% of the total number of errors committed in this category..

5.2.3.2. EG in Distortion Due to Spelling: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (36) below shows a statistical account of errors in *distortion due to spelling*: the total number of the subjects involved, the number of learners committing the errors, the mean, the EG among other things.

Table (36): EG in Distortion Due to Spelling

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Omission	Misordering	L1 based
TNS	102	102	102
N	102	93	61
$\sum$	2137	1628	807
$\bar{x}$	20.95	17.51	13.23
P	100%	91.18%	59.89%
EG	457.71	381.54	217. 84

5.2.3.2.1. Omission

As Table (36) above presents, *omission* of letters category includes 2137 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 102 learners, i.e. all the subjects involved and hence, the mean is 20.95 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 457.71. This indicates that these errors are the *most serious* in this category. In fact, omission of letters when spelling is one of the most

characteristics of ESL learners in general and Arabic speaking learners of English in particular. For now, let us consider the following sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(183)*My **ambtion** in life is to be a doctor.
(184)*In **Ymen** **mariag** is **expnsiv**.
(185)***Intrnt concton** in the **wrld**.
(186)*My **Englsh** is not **god**.
(187)*I **com** from my **vilage**.
(188)*Yemeni **unifiation** has been **achied** in 1990.
(189)* I will **by** **nw** books from Sana'a **nxt** week.
(190) *My **fathr** is a doctor in the **unvrstiy**.
(191)***Thre** are **svaral** **studnts** so the class **crwded**.
(192)* I **wuldn't** play football **agan**.

A close look at the examples (183) through (192) shows that vowels are deleted more than consonants. Ryan (1997:188) explains this stating that in Arab learners' English writing, "[c]onsonants seem to be relatively unaffected, but vowels are frequently mispositioned, omitted or substituted for each other." Mohanty (2010:509) supports this stating: "vowels perform different functions in English and Arabic." He hypothesises that "Arabic speakers ignore the vowels while storing words in their lexicon." In fact, there is a very significant difference between Arabic and English scripts. English language belongs to Indo-European language family with a Roman script while Arabic language belongs to Semitic language family with a different script and this leads to confusion by Arab learners of English in spelling. Mohanty (op.cit) ascribes such Arabic learners' problem to "the difference in root structures between Indo-European languages and Arabic. When stable roots are a norm in Indo-European languages, Arabic words normally possess three consonants" which combine with vowels "to create words that belong to one semantic domain." He exemplifies this taking the Arabic triliteral root **k-t-b** from which "words like *ki:ta:b* 'book', *kataba* 'he wrote', *maktaba* 'library', etc. can be formed." In fact, Haynes (1984) calls such a problem 'vowel blindness.' This seems also true of Indian learners of English. While examining the effects of ***pronounceability***, Mohanty (op.cit:509-510) holds that the "difference between the scripts of Indian languages in general and that of English" hinders Indian learners of English from successful learning because "Indian languages have syllabic scripts whereas the English script is alphabetical… Indian languages have more or less a stable relationship between

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letters and sounds whereas spelling and pronunciation of English words do not match with each other due to their orthographical idiosyncrasies."

Thus, Mohanty (2010) and Ryan (1997) opine that there is a sort of L1 transfer from Arabic into English manifested through **vowel blindness**. Ryan (1997:191-192) states: "the canonical word structure of Arabic, the tri-consonantal-root, requires a specific cognitive process which Arabic-speaking readers continue to make use of even when reading in English...a powerful L1 influence at work…effective Arabic readers who have developed this process for their first language, in which they have achieved the automaticity of a native reader, transfer to their second language a system which is, as we have demonstrated, totally unsuited to the morphological system of English." This leads us to conclude that the **omission** errors in the words **Ymen, mariag, expnsiv, svaral, studnts** and **agan** are interlingual.

Thus, Mohanty's and Ryan's views seem to contradict James's (1998). In fact, James (op.cit.) has ascertained that **omission** of letters errors committed by L2 learners are intralingual, however the L2 is. The reason might be that the data on which James has based his conclusions are taken from Indo-European languages like German, French, Spanish, etc. on whose NSs he has conducted his studies in addition to the studies he has referred to like Laufer (1990, 1991). These languages in a way or another are similar to English in their scripts, i.e. Roman. Arabic, on the other hand, is a Semitic language and has a different **orthographical system**. However, there are those errors which are intralingual. The source of these errors cannot be accounted for in terms of L1, i.e. Arabic interference. For instance, Arabic, specifically MSA, does not allow more than two-consonant clusters. Accordingly, had it been a transfer from Arabic, the words **ambtion, intrnt, englsh**, **nxt**, **studnts**, etc. which are spelt wrongly would not have been the way they are. For instance, the words **ambtion** and **intrnt** include three and four consonant clusters respectively and according to Arabic consonant clustering, there must have been some vowel letters inserted in between these clusters irrespective of the vowels to be inserted to correspond to the Arabic clustering. Thus, the word, **ambtion**, would have been spelt as **amibtion**, **ambetion**, or so. Thus, it is untenable to say that such errors are caused by L1, i.e. Arabic interference and hence, this seems to be in line with what James (1998) has gone to. Therefore, the EG scored in this category can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English both. Now, looking at the high

seriousness the errors in this category score, it is clear that such seriousness is due to the statistical factors involved which are remarkably significant as can be seen in Table (36).

5.2.3.2.2. Misordering

The errors in this category occupy the second significant rank after *omission* errors. In other words, this category includes 1628 frequent lexical errors. Such errors have been committed by 93 learners, i.e. 91.18% of the total number of subjects involved, with a mean of 17.51 as per individual learner. Consequently, the EG of such lexical category is 381.54 which indicates that these errors are *serious*. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(193)*My **frist** day at college was very nice **becuase** of with **mnay** friends.
(194)*He **deos** not like **Engilsh** grammar.
(195)*Students of English improve **spet** by **spet**.
(196)*Yemeni **poeple** is very generous.
(197)…*and water in Yemen becomes **littel** and **littel**.
(198)*I **recieved** **yuor** letter yesterday **alos**.
(199)***Intrenet** is **duoble** expensive in Taiz.
(200) …*but I **msut** get good **freinds**.
(201)*I **beleive** that my **amibtion** is **vrey** high but I can **acheive** it.
(202)*I have **tow** sisters and **tow** brothers nothing **eles**.

Now, looking at the examples (193) through (202), there are many words that are 'misordered' in spelling. These words are *frist, becuase, mnay deos, Engilsh, spet, poeple, littel, recieved, yuor, alos, intrenet, duoble, freinds, beleive, amibtion, vrey, acheive, tow* and *eles* respectively. Whether these errors can be attributed to L1 or L2, James (1998:150) ascertains that such errors are a result of "intralingual [influence] created without recourse to L1 resources. The outcomes are forms non-existent in the TL." In addition, James's views have been supported by Mohanty (2006:127) arguing as to what makes Arab learners at all levels of English learning process, viz. "school-going children, freshmen, sophomores, senior university students including [even] those working for their doctoral degree," commit *misordering* errors in the cardinal number *two* and spell it as *tow*. He states that the source of such an error is not L1. In fact, Mohanty (op.cit.) emphasises that the source of the *misordering* of *two* as *tow* is L2, i.e. English itself. He further adds that the reason behind this error of *misordering* lies in the fact that "the English words the Arabic speaking students are exposed to during their courses of

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study show that 'consonant-w-o' is an extremely rare sequence of letters vis-à-vis 'consonant-o-w', which is very common specially at the end of words" providing a list of such words as "arrow, bow, cow, how, low, mow, now, row…" etc. and because of this, Arab learners get confused in the spelling of the word ***two*** and consequently they spell it as ***tow*** Mohanty (op.cit:128). Accordingly, the errors of ***misordering*** are purely intralingual caused by the developmental strategies the learners are employing while trying to internalise the English spelling system. As such, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se*.

5.2.3.2.3. L1 Based

As can be seen in Table (36) above, this category includes 807 frequent errors, i.e. only 17.69% of the total number of errors committed. These errors have been committed by 61 learners, i.e. 59.89% of the total number of the subjects involved and thus the mean is 13.23 as per individual learner. Consequently, the EG of such a category is 217.84 which indicates that the errors committed in this category are ***less serious***. Here is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(203) …*and my friend is **apsent** today.
(204)*My **apmition** is to be a translator.
(205)….*but there are no **barks** in our city.
(206)*My ambition is to <u>serfe</u> my country.
(207)*I do not have **leisher** for rest after my **admisshion** in faculty.

The examples (203) through (207) exemplify the ***L1 based*** errors in ***distortion due to spelling*** found in this study. Opposing James's (1998) considerations that ***distortions due to spelling*** errors are purely intralingual, the committing of such errors could lie in the fact that unlike Indo-European languages (languages having Roman scripts such as Spanish, German, French, Czech…etc.), for Arabic, the issue seems to be different (cf. **5.2.3.2.1**). As far as Arabic language is concerned, there are no sounds corresponding to English /p/, /ʒ/ and /v/ and thus Arabic speakers learning English find considerable difficulty in pronouncing these sounds. Accordingly, one can argue that Arabic speakers tend to pronounce the English /p/, /ʒ/ and /v/ as /b/, /š/ and /f/ respectively because of the L1 interference. In fact, as far as the sounds /p/ and /v/ are concerned, there are many researchers (e.g. Al-Shabbi 1994, Salim and Taha 2006, Mukattash, 1986, Noor 1996, Mohanty 2006) who state that the

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absence of /p/ and /v/ in Arabic affects not Arab learners' spoken English but extend to their writing as well. Mohanty (2006), for instance, maintains that such spelling errors are a result of interlingual transfer stating that "Arabic does not have /p/; so the Arabs substitute /b/ for /p/ while speaking English. This habit of speech is also extended to writing and, as a result, we get 'bark' for 'park', 'bush' for 'push." Mohanty (op.cit:127). In addition, as far as the sound /ʒ/, is concerned, it has been found that such errors as in (207), viz. *leisher* and *admisshion* (for *leisure* and *admission* respectively) among others as in ***measher*** and ***vishion*** (for *measure* and *vision* respectively) are committed by the subjects of this study. The reason behind committing such errors lies in the fact that since the sound /ʒ/ does not exist in Arabic, the learners' pronunciation of it as /š/ extends to their writing and hence, committing such errors. This can, in fact, be expressed by analogy with Mohanty's (op.cit.) conclusion just mentioned.

Thus, in (203) through (207), this is exactly what happens where the words *apsent* <absent>, *ampition* <ambition>, *barks* <parks>, *serfe* <serve>, *leisher* <leisure> and *admisshion* <admission> are a result of L1 interference and hence, resulting in such errors. In addition, one may also argue that the main reason behind some of such errors as in the case of *apsent* <absent>, *ampition* <ambition> could be *hypercorrection*. In that, the learners try to correct their *spelling* errors in writing but actually commit such lexical errors which leads to *distortions* as a result of *hypercorrection*. As far as EG is concerned, the errors committed in this category are considered *less serious* and generally can be ascribed to Arabic *per se*. Central to this category is what has been gone to by Laufer (1990:301) who ascertains that "what it is that makes a foreign word pronounceable to a particular learner will be determined by his L1 sound system."Laufer (op.cit.) adds that "[i]f the foreign word could be easily pronounced by the learner it had a better chance to be learnt than the one that was difficult to pronounce" and hence, its spelling will be easily acquired specially words having the same sounds found in such a learner's L1.

Thus, it has been found that the *most serious* errors in *distortion due to spelling* category are those committed in *omission* of letters which scores an overall EG of 457.71. The scored EG by this category makes the errors committed in this category the *most serious* due to the frequency such errors have where 2137 frequent errors, i.e. 46.83% of the errors involved have been committed in addition to

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the number of the subjects committing such errors, viz. all the subjects involved. In addition, errors in *misordering* category can be described as *serious* where the gravity scored is 381.54 and 1628 frequent errors, i.e. 35.48% of the errors concerned have been committed. It is also due to the number of the subjects committing such errors which is 93, i.e. 91.18% of the subjects involved. However, errors committed in *L1 based* category are found to be *less serious* again because of the gravity scored by this category as a result of the statistical factors involved including the number of the errors committed, the number of the learners committing them, the mean and the EG scored as can be seen in Table (36). Thus, it goes without saying that spelling acquisition is one of the most difficult areas for L2 learners in general and Arab learners in particular. This is clear from the gravity of the errors committed in this study. However, such difficulty varies, viz. while it is very high in *omission* errors, it is less in *misordering* and the least in *L1 based* errors.

5.2.3.3. Classification of Errors in Formal Misformations

James (1998:149-150) defines *formal misformations* errors as those "that produce 'words' that are non-existent in FL." He adds that these words "can originate in the MT or be created by the learner from the sources of the TL itself." Thus, according to James's taxonomy, *formal misformations* errors are subdivided into three categories, namely, (i) *borrowing* where L1 words are used in L2 without any change (for example, *I shoot him with gun in kopf <In German kopf = head>*), (ii) *coinage*, i.e. "inventing a word from L1 (for example, *Smoking can be very nocive to health <In Portuguese nocivo = harmful>*), and (iii) *calque*, i.e. "if the L2 word created is the result of literal translation of an L1 word, we have a calque" as in **We have to find a car to bring us go to <bring us to> the hospital*). However, as far as the serious errors committed in this study are concerned, it has been found that *formal misselections* errors fall into one category, viz. *direct translation from L1*. In fact, there have been two more categories identified, namely, *borrowing* and *coinage* but the errors in these two categories have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded as being not serious. Table (37) below presents this category along with the number of frequent errors committed in it among other things.

Table (37): Classification of Errors in Formal Misformations

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Direct translation from L1	1794	100%
Total	1794	100%

Table (37) shows the only category, namely, ***direct translation from L1*** encompassing 1794 frequent errors, i.e. all errors committed. What is meant by this category is those errors where a word or a phrase is translated from L1, i.e. Arabic into English completely and directly as in *There are many bread ovens in Taiz* where **maxa:biz   ?alxubz** (literally: bread ovens) has been translated from Arabic and used instead of ***bakeries***.

5.2.3.4. EG in Formal Misformations: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (38) below presents the only category of errors in ***formal misformations*** namely, ***direct translation from L1,*** the number of learners committing such errors, the sum of the errors committed, the mean, the EG among other things.

Table (38): EG in Formal Misformations

Statistical Category	Error Category
	Direct translation from L1
TNS	102
N	101
$\sum$	1794
$\bar{x}$	17.76
P	99.02%
EG	417.29

5.2.3.4.1. Direct Translation from L1

As can be seen in Table (38) above, there are 1794 frequent errors committed in ***direct translation form L1***. These errors have been committed by 101 learners, i.e. 99.02% of the total number of the subjects involved and hence, the mean is 17.76 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 417.29 which is very significant indicating that such errors are ***most serious***. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

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(208)*In Taiz, we invite people to eat at our home as our **customs and imitations**. (traditions)

(209) *In summer, trees are full of **green papers**. (green leaves)

(210) *She always goes to the **oven** in the morning to buy bread. (bakery)

(211) * It is my wish to go to Mareb to see its **traces**. (ruins)

(212) *Can you bring me that book? Yes, **from my eyes**. (with my pleasure)

(213) *In Yemen, coeducation is **prohibited**. (rejected)

(214) *Good dealing is an **adjective** which people in Ibb have. (quality)

(215)*I have **Cairo envelops** which make me not come to class. (compelling circumstances)

The highlighted words/phrases in (208) through (215) are literally translated from Arabic and have been used instead of the English words/phrases bracketed against each. It is, in fact, the direct translation from Arabic that causes these errors and hence, such errors are purely interlingual. In that, the learner does not have that rich repertoire in lexes and what he/she does is just translate from his/her L1, i.e. Arabic what he/she thinks will express him/herself through in such situations. This is not confined to lexes but it includes also transferring conjunctions and complete phrases as in (208, 209, 212 & 215) where the phrases, ***customs and imitations, green papers, from my eyes*** and ***Cairo envelops*** are used respectively. In (208), for instance, the conjunction ***customs and imitations,*** which is a direct translation of the Arabic term ***ʕa:da:t wa taqa:ali:d*** has been used instead of ***traditions***. In (209) the phrase ***green papers,*** which is a direct translation of the Arabic phrase ***ʔawra:q xaḍra:*** has been used instead of ***green leaves*** which is the correct phrase to be used here. The word ***oven***, which is a direct translation of the Arabic term ***maxbaz***, has been used instead of the English ***bakery*** in (210).

In addition, the Arabic word ***ʔa:θa:r*** meaning ***traces*** is used in (211) instead of the English word ***ruins***. In Arabic, the phrase ***from my eyes*** is used when someone pleasingly responses to someone else asking him/her to do him/her a favor and this actually what has been done in (212) where the phrase in question has been used instead of the English phrase ***with pleasure***. In (213 & 214) the Arabic directly translated words ***prohibited*** and ***adjective*** have been used instead of ***rejected*** and ***quality*** respectively. In (215), a funny phrase, namely, ***Cairo envelops,*** like that of (212), has been used instead of the English ***compelling circumstances*** where ***Cairo,*** the capital city of Egypt, means ***compelling*** and ***envelops*** means ***circumstances*** have been wrongly used. In fact, such errors result not only in semantically deviant but also in funny utterances. This has also been gone to by Zughoul (1991:51) stating that "the choice is an equivalent for an Arabic word or an expression on the literal level, but

does not convey the meaning intended in the target language. Sentences produced with this kind of error sound odd and "funny," and sometimes such sentences are coined by proficient speakers of English as jokes and puns." Thus, what an Arab learner does here is actually formulate his/her sentence in Arabic, translate it and then transfer it into English. As such, the high EG scored here can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic *per se* and hence, such errors are interlingual. In fact, errors committed in this category are *most serious* due to the statistical factors involved such as the number of errors committed, i.e. 1794 constituting the total errors committed, the number of the subjects committing such errors which is also significant, i.e. 101 learners, i.e. 99.02% of the total subjects involved and the high EG scored, i.e. 417.29. All these statistical factors altogether make such errors *most serious.* Though *direct translation from L1* is the only category in *formal misformations* errors included in our analysis after excluding *borrowing* and *coinage* errors as being not serious, the seriousness of the errors committed shows obviously that Arab learners face considerable difficulty in overcoming such a translation strategy. In this regard, Al-Jarf (2000) argues that Arab learners of English as a SL resort to translation strategy due to the lack of the sufficient lexical knowledge in English which enables them to express themselves appropriately. She believes that such a difficulty lies in the fact that Arab learners of English have no real exposure to authentic English. Here, one may suggest a remedial technique which lies in providing such learners with compensated exposure to English. This exposure can be attained by means of extensive reading of English stories, watching English movies and giving the students home assignments because such difficulty is, in principle, a cultural one and to overcome this difficulty, Arab learners of English have to be acculturated to English language as has been gone to by (Schumann 1978).

5.2.3.5. Classification of Errors in Formal Misselections

A *formal missléction* error is one which consists in violating formal rules in selecting one or more morphemes to be affixed in a word. It has been defined by James (1998) as an error which involves misselction of a prefix and/or a suffix affixed to a word. James (op.cit.) has classified *formal misselections* errors into *misselection of a suffix*, *misselection of a prefix*. Further, Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) add to James's classification *the vowel-based type* and *the consonant-based type* as these categories have drawn from their Thai data. However, it has been found that the serious *formal*

misselections errors committed in our study fall into two categories, viz. *suffix* and *prefix*. Table (39) presents these categories, their number of errors and their percentages.

Table (39): Classification of Errors in Formal Misselections

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Suffix	813	60.13%
Prefix	539	39.87%
Total	1352	100%

As Table (39) shows, the two categories of errors in *formal misselections*, namely, *suffix* and *prefix* include a total number of 1352 frequent errors. The *suffix* category includes 813 frequent errors, i.e. 60.13% of the total number of errors concerned. The *prefix* category includes 539 frequent errors, i.e. 39.87% of the total number of such errors.

5.2.3.6. EG in Formal Misselections: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (40) below presents the categories in which *formal misselction* errors have been classified, the total number of the subjects involved, the total number of errors, the number of learners committing the errors, the seriousness of such errors among other things.

Table (40): EG in Formal Misselections

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Suffix	Prefix
TNS	102	102
N	73	59
$\sum$	813	539
$\bar{x}$	11.14	9.14
P	71.57%	57.84%
EG	238.88	180.91

5.2.3.6.1. Suffix

As presented in Table (40) above, the *suffix* category includes 813 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 73 learners, i.e. 71.57% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study. As per individual learner, the mean is 11.14. Accordingly, the EG of such a category is 238.88

which indicates that those errors are *serious*. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(216)…*but our President is **<u>helpable</u>** to his people. I thank him.
(217)…*and this indicates Dr. Mahmoud's **<u>honestness</u>**.
(218)…* and I am an **<u>ambitionable</u>** person in my life.
(219)* She is **<u>interesting</u>** in reading English books.
(220)*Marriage in Taiz is **<u>espenssiver</u>** than in Aden.

The examples (216) through (220) show how suffixes have been wrongly selected. For instance, in (216), the learner committing such an error uses the suffix –*able* and attaches it to *help* instead of –*ful*. In (217), the error lies in using the suffix –*ness* attached to *honest* instead of –*ty*. (218), in fact, is more interesting where the suffix -*able* has been added to the noun *ambition*. The interesting aspect in such an error lies in the fact that there is an independent adjective of the noun *ambition* which is *ambitious* needing no suffix. In (219), the learner adds the suffix –*ing* to the verb *interest* instead of –*ed*. The difference between *interesting* and *interested* is interesting. In that, some researchers (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985, Eastwood 1984) state that *interesting* can be used to describe things, places and objects which cause interest while *interested* is used to describe people's feelings and emotions. In fact, this error has been noted to be more committed by the subjects than others in the same category where learners were not able to distinguish between the suffixes –*ing* and –*en* to be added to form adjectives as in *The writing book was on the table* where –*ing* has been used instead of –*en* added to *write* and *We do not have a cleaned machine in our house* where –*en*, viz. –*ed* has been used instead of –*ing* added to *clean*. In fact, such errors do not include *verb formation* errors which have been discussed under *VP constructions* (cf. **section 4.5.1**). The errors included under *suffix* category are only those concerned with adjectives formed by adding –*en* and/or –*ing*. Likewise, the comparative degree suffix –*er* is among the many errors committed in this category as in (220) above. Thus, this misselection of a suffix renders such sentences semantically erroneous.

As McCarthy (1981) and Holes (2004) among others have pointed out, Arabic word formation/derivation belongs to what is called *nonconcatenative morphology* which depends on *root* and *pattern* mechanism while English word formation belongs to what is called *concatinative morphology* which depends on concatenating (combining) morphemes to form new words. In concatenative morphology, words are simply formed by concatenating (combining) morphemes

together as in *re-+ write + -ing* ➔ *rewriting* while nonconcatenative morphology depends on the root and pattern mechanism. That is, from the triliteral and/or quadriliteral *root* of a word, words can be derived from such a *root* and some of the derivations may seem irrelevant to someone who does not know Arabic. Let us take the triliteral *root* of the verb to write *k-t-b* as an example, the following paradigm is formed, *maktab* (office), *kita:b* (book or letter), *ka:tib* (clerk), *maktaba(h)* (library or bookstore), among many others. In fact, going deeply in such a phenomenon is beyond the scope of this study. What concerns us here is just noting that L1, i.e. Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of the *suffix* errors. Thus, they are intralingual, i.e. developmental and specifically overgeneralisation errors where learners overgeneralise the use of a particular suffix to more than one stem and this actually happens when learners are in the process of internalising the morphological system of English. They may also be attributed to *false conceptions* the learners have about the use of suffixes at least in this stage of acquisition. Therefore, the gravity scored by these errors can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English alone.

5.2.3.6.2. Prefix

As can be seen in Table (40) above, the *prefix* category includes 539 frequent errors, These errors have been committed by 59 learners, i.e. 57.84% of the total number of the subjects involved. As per individual learner, the average of these errors is 9.14. Consequently, the EG of this category is 180.91 which indicates that such errors are *less serious*. A sample of these errors is provided below.

(221)*I am **nonhappy** in my study.
(222)*Don't talk with him. He is **unsane**
(223)*This verb is **unregular** so you must keep it by heart.
(224)…*so we should **inlarge** our minds and not to marry young.
(225)*This question is **disclear** to me.

The learners committing the errors in (221) through (225) fail to select the appropriate prefix to form the correct word to express him/herself in such situations. For instance, in (221), the learner uses the prefix *non-* and adds it to the adjective *happy* instead of *un-*. In (222), the wrongly used prefix, namely, *un-* which is added to the adjective *sane* instead of *in-* renders the sentence semantically deviant. In (223) through (225), the wrongly prefixed prefixes are *un-, in-,* and *dis-* added to the words, *regular, large,* and *clear* instead of *ir, en-* and *un-* respectively. In fact, the addition of such wrong

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prefixes to such words renders such sentences semantically erroneous.

A cursory look at (221) through (225) gives us a clue that the wrongly used prefixes consist of two types: (i) **verbal prefixes** as in (224) where **in**- is prefixed inappropriately to form a verb from the adjective **large**. (ii) **negative prefixes** as in the rest of the examples above where such prefixes have been used to negate the adjectives in question. Now, the question worth addressing here is that what makes Arab learners commit such errors. In other words, is it L1, i.e. Arabic interference or L2, i.e. English influence which makes Arab learners commit such errors? Let us first examine the Arabic **words** which are used for negating adjectives. Here, the term **words** is used instead of **prefixes** due to the fact that in Arabic and specifically negating elements are considered **words** and not **prefixes**. Bearing this in mind, there are two words in Arabic which are used for negating adjectives. These are **laisa** and **γairu** (meaning **not**) exemplified in (i) and (ii) below:

(i) **γairu** meaning **not** as in:

| *ma:* | *qultuh-u* | *γairu* | *şaħi:ħ-in* |
| what | said-you | not | true |

'What you have said is untrue.'

(ii) **laisa** meaning **not** as in:

| *ha:ðehi* | *alşu:rat-u* | *laisa-t* | *jami:lat-an* |
| this | picture | not | beautiful |

'This picture is unbeautiful.'

In (i & ii) above, both words, viz. **γairu** and **laisa** are used as adverbs and as can be observed, they are not prefixes but **words** used for negating adjectives. As for how verbs are derived from adjectives in Arabic, there is only one prefix in Arabic which when prefixed to an adjective or even a noun, the resultant word is a verb, namely, **yu**- as in **yu**- + *jami:l* (beautiful) ➔ *yujamil* (beautify) with some changes as it is clear in this example where the long vowel /i:/ has changed into /i/. According to this sketchy description of negating and verbal derivative **words/prefixes** in Arabic, Arabic has nothing to do with committing such errors as in (221) through (225). Accordingly, it is only L2, i.e. English influence which causes such errors and hence, such errors are intralingual. Thus, the seriousness of the errors committed in **prefix** category can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se*. In fact, the **seriousness**

these errors score is a result of the statistical factors involved. Thus, if one considers the EG of both categories, viz. *suffix* and *prefix,* the former having an overall EG of 238.88 and the latter 180.91, there is a significant difference between the two categories. In fact, the difference between the seriousness scored by both categories is due to the difference between the statistical factors of both catgeories as can be seen in Table (40) above.

5.3. Classification of Errors in the Use of Collocation

Wray (2000) holds that collocation knowledge is considered a fundamental part of a native speaker's communicative competence. In addition, Keshavarz and Salimi (2007:83) have ascertained that "any speech community establishes a set of idiomatic ways of expressing ideas by favoring, purely through repeated use, certain complete phrases and a great many partly filled phrase-frames" holding that collocations belong to formulaic language. Thus, it can be argued that NNSs including Arab learners of English with "insufficient communicative competence find formulaic language extremely difficult." In fact, the term *collocation* was first used as a technical term by Firth saying that he has "proposed it to bring forward as a technical term, meaning by collocation, and apply the test of collocability" (Firth 1957:194). Several researchers (e.g. McCarthy 1990, Xiao and Mcenery 2006, Zughoul 1991, Farghal and Obeidat 1995, Mahmoud 2005, Keshavarz and Salimi 2007, Lewis 1997) who define collocation agree that it is a lexical unit consisting of a cluster of two or three words from different parts of speech. These definitions, in fact, are just paraphrases of Firth's (1957:183) definition that collocations are "words in habitual company." According to O'dell and McCarthy (2008:3), "[c]ollocation means a natural combination of words; it refers to the way English words are closely associated with each other." For instance, *pay* and *attention* go together but not *give* and *attention*, *commit* and *crime* but not *do* and *crime* and *heavy* and *rain* but not *strong* and *rain* and so on. For the purpose of this study, a collocation will be defined as two words belonging to different grammatical categories to exclude binomials where the two words are from the same category and are connected implicitly or explicitly by a connector (e.g. and, or) as in *push and shove, sick and tired, here and there, in and out, life and death, dead or alive*.

Collocations, according to Keshavarz and Salimi (2007), typically consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs which form "habitual company" with each other. However, the way such

grammatical categories collocate fall into four categories: (i) ***adjective–noun*** as in ***strong tea, heavy rain***, (ii) ***verb–noun*** as in ***make an impression***, ***make a decision***, ***inflict a wound***, (iii) ***verb–adverb*** as in ***affect deeply***, ***amuse thoroughly***, (iv) ***noun–verb*** as in ***alarms go off*** (ring, sound), ***blood circulates*** (clots, runs). Thus, as far as the serious errors committed in ***collocations*** are concerned, it has been found that the errors committed by the subjects of this study fall into three categories: 1) ***collocate choice,*** 2) ***contextualisation*** and 3) ***wrong forms***. Table (41) below presents ***collocation*** errors, their categories, their numbers and their percentages.

Table (41): Classification of Errors in the Use of Collocation

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Collocate choice	2206	49.55%
Contextualisation	1319	29.63%
Wrong forms	927	20.82%
Total	4452	100%

What is meant by ***collocate choice*** errors is those errors where one of the collocates is incorrect or both constituting the collocation are incorrect. In addition, ***contextualisation*** errors represent those errors where the collocation is grammatically correct but contextually not. Further, by ***wrong forms*** errors is meant those errors where the grammatical category of one collocate or both is incorrect. As can be seen in Table (41) above, there are 4452 frequent errors as a total number of errors committed and these are distributed differently among the three categories. For instance, ***collocate choice*** includes 2206 frequent errors, i.e. 49.55% of the total number of errors committed here. ***Contextualisation*** category includes 1319 frequent errors, i.e. 29.63% of the total. ***Wrong forms*** category includes 927 frequent errors, i.e. 20.82% of the total number of ***collocations*** errors.

5.4. EG in the Use of Collocation: Analysis and Interpretation

Table (42) below presents the categories in which ***collocation*** errors have been classified, the number of learners committing such errors, the mean, their percentages and their gravity among other things.

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Table (42): EG in the Use of Collocation

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Collocate choice	**Contextualisation**	**Wrong forms**
TNS	102	102	102
N	102	98	62
$\sum$	2206	1319	927
$\bar{x}$	21.63	13.50	15.20
P	100	96.08%	59.41%
EG	465.08	350.02	231.59

5.4.1. Collocate Choice

As Table (42) above shows, the category, namely, ***collocate choice*** includes 2206 frequent semantic errors. These errors have been committed by 102 learners, i.e. all the subjects involved in this study and hence, the mean is 21.63 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 465.08 which is one of the highest EGs scored and discussed so far. In fact, it is ***the second highest EG scored after that of assumed synonymy*** (cf. **section 5.2.1.2**). This also indicates that these errors are the ***most serious*** in ***collocation*** errors. In fact, this category is also further subcategorised into two types: (i) ***one collocate incorrect*** and (ii) ***both collocates incorrect***. These are discussed in the following sections.

5.4.1.1. One Collocate Incorrect

This type of ***collocation*** errors involves only one collocate, i.e. one of the words constituting the collocation is wrong. The error here has nothing to do with the grammatical category of the word rather it is the use of such a word which makes the collocation formation incorrect and hence, resulting in a semantically deviant collocation. Below is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(226)*It is not too late to **repair** one's mistakes. (correct)
(227)…* and after every lecture, I used to **make** my homework. (do)
(228)…*and he said everyone should **work** his or her work properly. (do)
(229)*This car **took** my attention. (attracted)
(230)*He got a **killing** accident. (fatal)
(231)*The teacher gives us **expensive** advice. (valuable)

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(232)*We must **_produce_** *our decision.* (make)

As is clear in (226) through (232), the errors in the collocates, viz. **repair one's mistakes, make my homework, work his or her work, took my attention, killing accident, expensive advice** and **produce our decision** are a result of the first wrong collocate in each respectively which indicates that only one constituent of the collocations is incorrect. This is due to the fact that **repair, make**, for instance, cannot collocate with **mistakes** and **homework** respectively. The same thing can be said about the rest of the examples. Thus, in (226) through (232), the collocates **repair, make, work, took, killing, expensive** and **produce** have been used instead of **correct, do, do, attracted, fatal, valuable** and **make** respectively. Now, considering the source of such errors, it, in fact, varies. In that, there are those errors which can be ascribed to L1, i.e. Arabic interference and those which can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English influence which results from the **false conceptions** the Arab learners have about the rules of how English collocations are formed and used. In (226), for instance, the learner transfers the Arabic word **yusliħ** which means both **repair** and **correct** in English. In other words, while **repair** and **correct** in English have a related meaning but a different usage, they have one equivalent, meaning and usage in Arabic which is **yusliħ**. In (227) and (228), the learner transfers the Arabic term **yaʕmal** which means both **make** and **work** in English. In fact, errors committed in (226, 227 & 228) can also be described as **ambiguous**. In such errors, one may argue that the learners, having no sufficient competence to distinguish between each pair of lexes, just overgeneralise the use of one lexis for the other. In (231), the learner transfers the Arabic term **ɣa:liat-un** (expensive) which can, in Arabic, collocate with **advice, clothes, friends** among several collocate expressions and thus these errors are interlingual where L1, i.e. Arabic interference plays a great role in their production. However, there are those errors which can be attributed to L2, i.e. English as in the case of (229), (230) and (232). In (229), for instance, had it been a transfer from Arabic, it would have been semantically correct because in Arabic specifically, MSA, there is an equivalent of the English **attracted** which is **jaðaba(t)** and thus such errors are intralingual where L2, i.e. English plays the main role because the learner may not have acquired such collocations yet. In addition, in (230), the learner tries to collocate the word, **killing** with **accident**. In fact, had it been a transfer from Arabic, this collocation would have been semantically correct as Arabic does not allow such a collocation and Arabic has the exact equivalent for **fatal** which is **mumi:t** in the Arabic collocation **ha:diθat-un mumi:tat-un** (exactly **fatal accident**). The same thing can be said

about (232) where the collocation ***produce our decision*** is not allowed in Arabic. Thus, such errors are intralingual.

5.4.1.2. Both Collocates Incorrect

The second type of ***collocate choice*** is ***both collocates*** are incorrect. What makes such collocates semantically deviant is the fact that both collocates cannot collocate with each other. For instance, ***contacted machines*** whose correct collocation is ***connected devices*** in the sentence **Internet cafés in Yemen use **contacted machines** to use internet* where one cannot say, for instance, ***contacted devices*** nor can one say ***connected machines***. The following is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(233) **Palestine is one of the **destroyed houses***. (broken homes)
(234) **Internet is used through computers which are **basic machines.*** (important devices)
(235) **Much use of internet **hurts the mind***. (harms the brain)
(236) ** Through internet, you can easily **connect persons***. (contact people)
(237) …**so we have to invite our relatives and also our **related people***. (close friends)
(238) ** In Yemen, there are **tall places***. (high mountains)

Thus, (233) through (239) exemplify the phenomenon of ***both collocates incorrect*** in collocation formation. In (233), for instance, the learner committing such an error has wrongly collocated ***destroyed*** with ***houses*** instead of ***broken*** with ***homes*** and thus resulting in ***destroyed houses*** instead of ***broken homes***. In (234) through (238), the incorrect collocations are ***basic machines, hurts the mind, connect persons, related people*** and ***tall places*** which have been used instead of ***important devices, harms the brain, contact people, close friends*** and ***high mountains*** respectively. As for what causes such errors, it should be noted that it is L1, i.e. Arabic interference *per se* that causes such errors. In (233), for instance, it is semantically correct in Arabic to use ***biu:t-un mudamarat-un*** (**destroyed houses**) for ***broken homes***. In (234), ***?a:la:t-un ra?isiat-un*** (basic machines) is used in Arabic for ***important devices***. In addition, in Arabic, ***yajraħ-u/yaḍur-u alʕaql-a*** (hurts the mind) can be used for ***harms the brain*** and the same thing can be said about the rest of the collocates in (236) through (238) where each of the collocations ***connect persons, tall places*** and ***related people*** is acceptable in Arabic. As such, such errors are interlingual.

Thus, since some ***collocate choice*** errors are interlingual and some others intralingual, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English. As stated above, the errors committed in this category are ***most serious*** due to the number of errors committed, i.e. 2206, i.e. 49.55% of the total errors committed, the number of learners committing them, viz. 102, i.e. all the subjects involved, the mean, i.e. 21.63 as per individual learner and the EG scored, i.e. 465.08 which is ***the second highest EG*** after that of ***assumed synonymy*** discussed so far. In fact, all these statistical factors make such errors ***most serious***. Thus, the high seriousness of such errors indicates that acquiring ***collocate choice*** is highly difficult for Arabic speakers learning English and needs a lot of efforts and much exposure to English culture to overcome such a difficulty because collocation formation is believed to be part of the culture of the language being learned (Xiao and Mcenery 2006).

5.4.2. Contextualisation

As shown in Table (42), ***contextulisation*** category includes 1319 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 98 learners, i.e. 96.08% of the total number of the subjects involved. The mean of such errors is 13.50 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 350.02 which indicates that these errors are ***serious***. Below is a sample of such errors.

(239) *My sister **brings a boy** this time.* (gives birth to a boy).
(240) *It is very bad to **lose dignity** before marriage.* (lose virginity)
(241) ***Women carrying their babies** should be careful.* (pregnant women)
(242) *I like Dr. Mahmoud because he is a very **educated person**.* (knowledgeable person)
(243) *Many innocent people die because of **Al-Qaida arrangement**.* (Al-Qaida organisation)
(244) *He has many **economical problems**.* (financial problems)

The examples (239) through (244) exemplify ***contextualisation*** errors. If one reexamines these collocations, they are in themselves linguistically correct but it is only the context in which they are used that makes them semantically deviant. For instance, in (239), the collocation ***brings a baby*** is grammatically correct but the context requires ***gives birth to a boy*** to be used. In addition, in (240), while the learner means ***lose virginity***, he/she wrongly uses ***lose dignity***. The same thing can be said of the other ***collocations*** errors (241) through (244) where ***women carrying their babies, educated person, Al-Qaida arrangement*** and ***economical problems*** have been used for ***pregnant women, knowledgeable person, Al-Qaida organisation*** and ***financial problems***. When examining the source of such errors,

there are, in fact, those which are caused by L1, i.e. Arabic interference as in the case of (240), (241) and (243) where *yafqid-u ?lkramat-a* (lose dignity), *?alnisa:-u   ?alhawa:mil-u* (women carrying their babies) and *tanđi:m-u   ?alqa:ʕidat-i* (Al-Qaida arrangement) in Arabic can be used to mean *lose virginity, pregnant women* and *Al-Qaida organisation* in English respectively. However, there are those errors whose source is L2, i.e. English as in the case of (239), (242) and (244). In (239) for instance, the learner committing such an error is just unable to distinguish between *brings a boy* and *gives birth to a boy*. Had it been a transfer from Arabic, the learner would have used *waladat walad-an* (beget a boy) which is a frequent expression used in Arabic to mean *gives birth to a boy*. Thus, the seriousness of such errors can be ascribed to both L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English. In addition, the errors committed in *contextualisation* are *serious* due to the statistical factors such as the number of errors committed, the number of the subjects involved, the mean and the EG scored as can be seen in Table (42) above.

5.4.3. Wrong Forms

As Table (42) above shows, this category includes 927 frequent *collocation* errors. These errors have been committed by 62 learners, i.e. 59.41% of the total number the subjects involved in the study. The mean of such errors is found to be 15.20 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the gravity of such errors is 231.59. As such, the errors committed in *wrong forms* are *less serious* compared to those committed in the other two categories discussed above. Now, consider the following sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(245)*It is difficult to **get marriage** because of high dowry in Yemen.* (get married)
(246) ….*so he cannot overcome his **familiar problems**.*(family problems)
(247) …*but many people have **finance problems**.*(financial problems)
(248)* This is a good **musician band**.*(musical band)
(249)*Dr. Mahmoud is **special person** in syntax.* (specialist person)
(250)* In the south of Yemen the **socialism party** was ruling before Unity.* (socialist party)

In (245) through (250), the errors exemplify the *wrong forms* category where the learners committing them fail to use the correct grammatical form of one collocate to come up with a well-formed collocation. For instance, in (245), the learner fails to use *get married* instead he/she uses *get marriage* where he/she uses the noun, i.e. *marriage* instead of the adjective, viz. *married*. In (246), the

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error lies in using ***familiar problems*** for ***family problems***. The same thing can be said of (247) through (250) where ***finance problems, musician band, special person*** and ***socialism party*** have been used instead of ***financial problems, musical band, specialist person*** and ***socialist party*** respectively and where the grammatical category of the first collocate of each is wrong. Now, while the errors in the previous categories have been ascribed either to L1, i.e. Arabic, L2, viz. English or both, these errors are, in fact, a result of L2, i.e. English influence *per se*. In fact, Arabic has nothing to do with committing such collocation errors because such collocations are not allowed in Arabic. These errors are the result of having ***false conceptions*** on the part of the learners while they are in the process of internalising the English collocation formation. Thus, such errors are intralingual and the seriousness scored can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English alone

The ***collocation*** errors committed here vary in seriousness depending on the category in which such errors are classified. That is, while the ***most serious*** are those committed in ***collocate choice***, errors committed in ***contextualisation*** are ***serious*** and those committed in ***wrong forms*** are ***less serious***. In fact, each category's scored EG is a result of several statistical factors such as the number of the errors committed, the mean and the number of the subjects committing them as can be clearly seen in Table (42) above. The seriousness of these errors illustrates obviously that acquiring English collocations presents a great difficulty to Arab learners. In that, McCarthy (1990:13-15) holds that "knowledge of collocational appropriacy is part of native speaker's competence [and] knowledge of collocation is based on years of experiences of masses of data...Statements about collocation, namely, typical patterns of co-occurrence of words, can never be absolute." This actually reveals that it is very difficult or in a sense even impossible to achieve full competence and proficiency in collocation among adult native speakers of English let alone ESL learners. In fact, it has widely been stated that one of the most problematic areas for SL learners is collocation acquisition as they find themselves unable to understand how collocations work in English in addition to hypothesising that there is one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2 James (1998:152-54). In this regard, Hill (1999:5) holds that "[s]tudents with good ideas often lose marks because they don't know the four or five most important collocations of a key word that is central to what they are writing about." As a result, they create longer, wordier ways of defining or discussing the issue, increasing the chance of further errors. He cites the example *His disability will continue until he dies* rather than *He has a permanent disability*.

This also hinders learners from being fluent in the language. As Lewis (1997:15) states, "fluency is based on the acquisition of a large store of fixed or semi-fixed prefabricated items, which are available as the foundation for any linguistic novelty or creativity." In addition, several researchers have argued that collocation formation is central to the culture of the language being learned.

Further, achieving collocation competence depends on several factors even for NSs themselves, let alone NNSs. McCarthy (1990:15) holds that it takes "years of exposure to the language for its native speakers to get the competence sufficient to acquire acceptable collocational knowledge, and that competence of collocational knowledge belongs to native speaker's intuition." Accordingly, it may be natural for L2 learners to have this area remain tricky and unmanageable for quite a long time. McCarthy (op.cit.) says that even very advanced learners often make inappropriate or unacceptable collocations. There is also a responsibility on the part of the teachers in the difficulty encountered by L2 learners when acquiring English collocational knowledge. In that, L2 learners lack exposure to L2 as they mostly live outside English-speaking countries and many of their teachers are also non-native English speakers who are not equipped with native-like competence. These views may suggest that non-native English teachers generally do not have sufficient competence in this area and consequently they are unable to teach it to their learners, hence, they even sometimes avoid tackling this matter at all. In short, the nature of collocation acquisition is much more complicated as there are several linguistic and nonlinguistic factors which influence such acquisition and thus L2 learners may find themselves unable to cope with all these factors which means that collocation acquisition remains a difficult area for them.

5.5. Classification of Errors in Lexico-grammatical Choice

A *lexico-grammatical choice* error can be simply defined as an error where a word of a particular grammatical category is used wrongly instead of another grammatical category as in *I like syntactic very much* where the word **syntactic**, an adjective, is used instead of **syntax,** a noun. As has been stated earlier, lexis choice is a very fundamental skill that requires learners to have a special ability to distinguish between what is a verb, noun, adjective, adverb etc. This choice of lexes also includes the ability to differentiate as to how, when and why to use a particular grammatical category rather than another in its proper position in a sentence. Obeidat (1986) holds that one feature of the

lexico-grammatical choice errors is that they involve lexical items which are related by derivational morphology and, therefore, of different syntactic categories. The importance of such errors has been made clear by Salem (2007:211) who holds that a *lexico-grammatical choice* error, among other types of errors, gets the teachers to realise the "students' language acquisition progress, enables us to reflect on our attitude to learner language, and provides 'raw material' for sharpening our linguistic awareness." She adds that such errors involve lexes choice depending on their syntactic categories and as such, she believes, there is some kind of a linguistic continuum which can be viewed through lexico-grammatical errors beginning with syntax and ending in semantics. In the course of this study, Arab learners of English, especially those with low competence, seem not to be able to distinguish between base grammatical categories and derived grammatical categories including adjectives, verbs, adverbs and nouns. In fact, the errors identified in this study have to do with the differences between verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Thus, as far as the serious errors committed in this study are concerned, it has been found that *lexico-grammatical choice* errors fall into three categories of substitution: (i) *nouns in place of adjectives,* (ii) *adjectives in place of nouns* and (iii) *adjectives in place of adverbs*. In fact, there have also been three categories identified, namely, *adverbs in place of adjectives*, *nouns in place of verbs* and *verbs in place of nouns* but the errors in these categories have been committed by less than 50% of the subjects involved and hence, excluded. Table (43) below presents these categories, the number of errors included in each and their percentage.

Table (43): Classification of Errors in Lexico-grammatical Choice

Category	No. of Errors	Percentage
Adjectives in place of nouns	1029	38.99%
Nouns in place of adjectives	953	36.11%
Adjectives in place of adverbs	657	24..90%
Total	2639	100%

Table (43) above shows that there are 2639 frequent errors committed in the three categories. The first category, namely, a*djectives in place of nouns* includes 1029 frequent errors, i.e. 38.99% of the total number of errors committed. The second category, viz. *nouns in place of adjectives* includes 953 frequent errors, i.e. 36.11% of the total number of the errors concerned. The third, viz. *adjectives in*

place of adverbs includes 657 frequent errors, i.e. 24.90% of the total errors committed in *lexico-grammatical choice* category

5.6. EG in Lexico-grammatical Choice: **Analysis and Interpretation**

Table (44) below statistically shows the categories in which errors in *lexico-grammatical choice* have been classified, the number of learners committing such errors, the mean and the EG of each among other things.

Table (44): EG in Lexico-grammatical Choice

Statistical Category	Error Category		
	Adjectives in place of nouns	**Nouns in place of adjectives**	**Adjectives in place of adverbs**
TNS	102	102	102
N	91	81	66
∑	1029	953	657
$\bar{x}$	11.30	11.77	9.95
P	89.25%	79.41%	64.71%
EG	300.02	272.44	204.12

5.6.1. Adjectives in Place of Nouns

As Table (44) above shows, the category, namely, *adjectives in place of nouns* includes 1029 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 91 learners, i.e. 89.25% of the total number of the subjects involved. The average of such errors is 11.30 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 300.02 which indicates that these errors are *most serious* among *lexico-grammatical choice* errors. Now, consider the following sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(251)*He doesn't like the **proud** in spite of his **intelligent** in the class.* (pride, intelligence)

(252)*There is no **different** between man and woman in Yemen.* (difference)

(253)*There is no **happy** in this life.* (happiness)

(254)*In spite of its **significant** and **necessary**, marriage also has its disadvantages.* (significance, necessity)

(255)…*but I walk a long **distant** to college.* (distance)

The examples (251) through (255) exemplify clearly how the learners committing such errors substitute the adjectives *proud*, *intelligent*, *different*, *happy*, *significant*, *necessary* and *distant* for the

nouns *pride, intelligence, difference, happiness, significance, necessity* and *distance* respectively. Now, considering the source of such errors, Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of such errors because Arabic does not allow such constructions. Consequently, these errors are intralingual caused by the lack of the sufficient knowledge that can enable the learners to differentiate between nouns and adjectives and how to use them properly. As such, the seriousness of these errors can be ascribed to L2, i.e. English *per se*. Such seriousness is a result of the statistical factors involved such as the number of errors committed, the number of the subjects committing them, the mean and the EG scored as can be seen in Table (44) above.

5.6.2. Nouns in Place of Adjectives

As Table (44) shows, **nouns in place of adjectives** category includes 953 frequent errors. These errors have been committed by 81 learners, i.e. 79.41% of the total number of the subjects involved. As per individual learner, the average has been found to be 11.77. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 272.44. This indicates that these errors are **serious**. A sample of such errors found in our corpus is presented here.

(256) ...*but my brother is not **marriage** because he is **youth**. (married, young)
(257)*Ali was **absence** yesterday.(absent)
(258)*Many Yemenis are **divorce** because of family problems. (divorced)
(259) *She is very **pride** but she is not very **beauty**. (proud, beautiful)
(260)*After unification, many people feel happy and **pleasure**. (pleased)
(261)*Our grandparents are old but **wisdom**. (wise)

The examples (256) through (261) show how the learners committing them fail to use adjectives as required by the syntactic contexts in which they are used. The learners substitute the nouns **marriage, youth, absence, divorce, pride, beauty, pleasure** and **wisdom** for the adjectives **married, young, absent, divorced, proud, beautiful, pleased** and **wise** respectively. As far as the source of such errors is concerned, again, Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of such errors simply because Arabic, in fact, does not allow such semantically deviant structures. Therefore, these errors are intralingual made because of the confusion the learners get while being unable to distinguish between the forms of a word, viz. when it is a **noun** and when it is an **adjective** and how and where it can be used. These errors can also be argued to be developmental. They are committed while the learner tries

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to internalised the L2 linguistic system which may be overcome in later stages if they are not fossilised. Again, the seriousness of the errors committed here can be ascribed to English alone.

5.6.3. Adjectives in Place of Adverbs

As Table (44) above shows, there are 657 frequent errors included in *adjectives in place of adverbs* category. Such errors have been committed by 66 learners, i.e. 64.71% of the total number of the subjects involved in this study and thus the average of such errors is 9.95 as per individual learner. Accordingly, the EG of this category is 204.12. As such, the errors committed in this category are *less serious*. The following is a sample of such errors found in our corpus.

(262)*He runs **quick**. (quickly)
(263)*Only few students in our college speak English **fluent**. (fluently)
(264) … *and Dr. Muna talks very **polite**. (politely)
(265) …*but my final hope is the world lives **peaceful**. (peacefully)
(266)*I always think very **careful** before answering any question.(carefully)

In (262) through (266), the learners committing such errors fail to distinguish an adjective from an adverb. Thus, the adjectives *quick, fluent, polite, peaceful* and *careful* have been substituted for the adverbs *quickly, fluently, politely, peacefully* and *carefully* respectively. Regarding the source of such errors, here, too, Arabic has nothing to do with the committing of these errors because Arabic does not allow such structures. As such, these errors are intralingual which are committed perhaps because of the *false conceptions* the learners have about the use of adjectives and adverbs. They may be said to be developmental committed as the learners in this stage are still internalising the English linguistic system and may overcome them in later stages unless they are fossilised. Thus, the seriousness scored here can also be ascribed to English alone. In addition, the errors committed in this category are *less serious* because of the statistical factors which are less significant compared to those involved in the two categories discussed above as can be seen in Table (44).

As can be seen in Table (44) above, the errors in *lexico-grammatical choice* category vary in seriousness. That is, while those committed in *adjectives in place of nouns* are *most serious*, those committed in *nouns in place of adjectives* are *serious* and those committed in *adjectives in place of adverbs* are *less serious*. In fact, such a difference in seriousness is due to the statistical factors

involved in each. For instance, the errors committed in the first category are *most serious* due to the number of errors committed, i.e. 1029 frequent errors, the number of subjects committing them, i.e. 91 learners, i.e. 89.25% of the subjects involved and the mean, i.e. 11.30. In the second category, the errors are *serious* due to the statistical factors being less significant and such factors are the least significant in the third category as can be seen in Table (44) above. This also points out to the difference in the difficulty experienced by Arab learners of English while trying to overcome the ***lexico-grammatical choice*** errors. That is, while it is very high in the first category, it is less in the second and the least in the third.

5.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been dealt with the analysis and interpretation of the gravity of semantic errors found in our corpus. To express the seriousness of the semantic errors committed by the subjects of this study, first semantic errors have been classified into categories, subcategories and further subcategories. Thus, the semantic errors identified in this study have been classified into three major categories, viz. ***lexical, collocational*** and ***lexico-grammatical***. Each of these categories has been classified into further categories and subcategories. For instance, ***lexical errors*** have been classified into ***formal lexical*** errors and ***lexical choice*** errors. ***Formal errors*** category is subdivided into ***formal misselections***, ***formal misformations*** and ***distortion due to spelling***. By the same token, each and every category has been classified into further categories and subcategories depending on the errors identified in our corpus. After classifying such errors, the EG has been expressed statistically for each and every category and subcategory employing Palmer's (1980) statistical method. The EG has been expressed following a 3-point scale, viz. ***most serious, serious*** and ***less serious***. Thus, it has been found that the ***most serious*** semantic errors are those committed in ***lexical choice*** category and the ***less serious*** are those committed in ***formal misformations***. Between these two extremes, the EG of other categories and subcategories varies. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter six where we tackle the findings and conclusions of the study in general. In the course of expressing the gravity of semantic errors committed in this study, we have also discussed the issue of how much L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English have contributed to the committing of such errors so as to determine to what extent these sources contribute to the overall gravity of such errors.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Introduction

As has been stated so far, there has been no consensus among EG analysts as to which errors are more serious than others and how serious they are. Regarding the gravity of syntactic and semantic errors, some researchers (e.g. Vann et al.1984, Ensz 1982, Chastain 1981, Galloway 1980, Piazza 1980, Tomiyana, 1980, Santos 1987, 1988, Torre, 1996) have ascertained that syntactic errors are more serious than semantic errors. However, according to others (e.g. Khalil 1985, James 1977, 1994, 1998, Rifkin 1995, Rifkin and Robert 1995, Politzer 1978, Delisle 1982, Hughes and Lascaratou 1982, McCretton and Rider 1993, Sheorey 1986, Tong 2000, Lennon 1991, Sonaiya 1988), semantic errors are more serious than all other types of errors. As such, these EG studies lead to contradiction more than agreement. As we have argued in Chapter one that these studies, though interesting and valuable, are not adequate due to their contradictions because of which one cannot decide whether syntactic errors are more serious than semantic ones or it is otherwise. In fact, the conclusions ended up with by these studies have been based on subjective methods or procedures. These procedures lie in their subject evaluators' judgements who are either NSs, NNSs or both. Accordingly, one feels unable to generalise conclusions and facts on the basis of these studies because of their contradictions (cf. **section 1.13.3**). However, on the basis of the statistical methodology employed in this study, this chapter verifies whether the null hypotheses set forth for the study (see **section 1.11**) are accepted or rejected. In other words, it will be made clear whether syntactic errors are more serious than semantic ones or it is otherwise and how serious they are by means of statistical procedures based on ***error frequency***. In addition, based on the seriousness of both syntactic and semantic categories ended up with, statistical Error Hierarchies will be established. Further, based on these findings, error hierarchies and conclusions, this chapter also presents pedagogical implications to Arab and non-Arab applied linguists, syllabi/curricula designers, textbook developers and teachers alike so as to focus on and pay more attention to the problematic areas in the courses taught where Arab learners of English encounter difficulty in the language learning process and propose remedial materials and pedagogical techniques

and procedures to overcome such problematic areas. Besides, based on the seriousness of both syntactic and semantic errors concluded with, an error correction technique will be proposed.

6.2. Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the gravity of syntactic and semantic errors discussed in Chapters four and five, the study at hand has ended up with the following findings:

6.2.1. EG of Syntactic Categories

Regarding the seriousness of the syntactic errors which have been committed by more than 50% of the total subjects involved in this study and hence, considered serious, the following findings have been drawn:

6.2.1.1. EG in the Use of Prepositions

Errors in the *use of prepositions* have been classified into three categories, viz. *substitution, omission* and *addition*. The subjects of the study commit serious errors by substituting an incorrect preposition for a correct one. Thus, it has been found that errors in the *substitution* category are the *most serious* with an overall gravity of **401.99**. However, errors in *omission* having an overall gravity of **318.28** are *serious*. The *less serious* errors in the *use of prepositions* are found to have been committed in *addition* category whose gravity is **194.75**.

6.2.1.2. EG in VP Constructions

VP Construction errors are classified into three categories, viz. *verb formation, tense* and *voice*. Errors committed in the use of *verb formation* are found to be the *most serious* scoring an overall gravity of **352.04**. *Tense* errors are found to be *serious* scoring an overall gravity of **294.46** and errors committed in *voice* are found to be *less serious* with an overall gravity of **216.**

6.2.1.3. EG in the Use of Articles

Errors in the *use of articles* have been classified into three categories, viz. *substation, omission* and *addition*. It has been found that errors in *substitution* are the *most serious* scoring an overall gravity of **351.99**. Errors in *omission* have been found to be *serious* scoring an overall EG of **289.98**.

The *less serious* errors in *the use of articles* are those committed in *addition* with an overall gravity of **208.61**.

6.2.1.4. EG in the Use of Subject-Verb Agreement

Errors in this category have been classified into two categories, viz. *number agreement* and *person agreement*. The subjects of the study have committed more frequent errors in *number agreement* and hence, such errors are the *most serious* with an overall gravity of **317.79**. In addition, it has been found that errors in *person agreement* are *serious* whose gravity is **272.58**. However, this category does not include *less serious* errors.

6.2.1.5. EG in the Use of Yes/No Questions

The errors in *Yes/No questions* have been classified into two categories, namely, *auxiliaries* and *main verb*. Errors in *auxiliaries* have been found to be the *most serious* with an over gravity of **321.57** while errors in *main verbs* have been found to be *serious* having an overall gravity of **251.14**. *Yes/No questions* category does not also include *less serious* errors.

6.2.1.6. EG in the Use of Relative Clauses

Errors in the *use of relative clauses* have been classified into two categories, viz. *substation of relative pronouns* and *omission of relative pronouns*. Thus, it has been found that the *serious* errors in the *use of relative clauses* are those committed in *substitution of relative pronouns* scoring an overall gravity is **307. 57**. In addition, errors in *omission of relative pronouns* are *less serious* with an overall gravity of **204.17.** This category does not include *most serious* errors because the seriousness scored in both subcategories does not qualify such errors to be *most serious*.

6.2.1.7. EG in the Use of Negation

The seriousness of errors committed in *negation* varies according to the categories in which these errors have been classified. Thus, errors in *negation* have been classified into two categories, namely, *omission of auxiliary* and *double negatives*. Thus, it has been found that errors committed in *omission of auxiliary* and hence, using only *__not__* are *serious* scoring an overall gravity of **291.42**. Regarding the errors committed in *double negatives*, it has been found that such errors are *less serious*

scoring an overall gravity of **172.18**. *Negation* does not include *most serious* errors because no category has scored an EG that can make it *most serious*.

6.2.1.8. EG in the Use of Wh-Questions

Errors in *Wh-questions* category have been classified into two categories. These are *no subject-auxiliary inversion* and *omission of auxiliary*. Thus, it has been found that errors in *no subject-auxiliary inversion* are *serious* with an overall gravity of **272.74**. However, errors in *omission of auxiliary* are found to be *less serious* scoring an overall gravity of **178.** Like *negation*, this category of errors does not include *most serious* errors.

6.2.1.9. EG in the Use of Personal Pronouns

The errors committed in the *use of personal pronouns* have been classified into two categories, viz. *omission of personal pronouns* and *addition of personal pronouns*. Thus, it has been found that errors in *omission of personal pronouns* are *serious* scoring an overall gravity of **238.97**. However, errors committed in *addition of personal pronouns* are found to be *less serious* scoring an overall gravity of **158.20**. Thus, this category, too, does not include *most serious* errors.

6.2.1.10. EG in the Use of Word Order

Among syntactic errors, *word order* is the only category which includes one category of errors, namely, *misordering at phrase level*. This category includes only **512** frequent errors scoring an overall gravity of **177.48.** Thus, such errors have been found to be *less serious*. Thus, *word order* category includes neither *most serious* nor *serious* errors.

6.2.2. EG of Semantic Categories

Regarding the seriousness of semantic errors which have been committed by more than 50% of the total subjects involved and hence, considered serious the following findings have been drawn:

6.2.2.1. EG in Lexical Choice

As far as the serious errors identified in this study are concerned, errors in *Lexical choice* have been classified into three categories, viz. *assumed synonymy, paraphrase* and *homophony*. It has been

found that errors committed in *assumed synonymy* are the *most serious* scoring an overall gravity of **486.83.** It has also been found that the errors committed in *paraphrase* are *serious* scoring an overall gravity of **407.19**. However, the *less serious* errors in this category are those committed in *homophony* which scores an overall EG of **291.63**. In fact, it has been found that *lexical choice* errors are the *most serious* errors not only among semantic errors but also in the whole study.

6.2.2.2. EG in Distortion Due to Spelling

The serious errors in *distortion due to spelling* have been classified into three categories, namely, *omission, misordering* and *L1 based*. Thus, it has been found that the *most serious* errors are those committed in *omission* scoring an overall gravity of **457.71** *which is the third highest EG* among those so far discussed either in syntactic or semantic categories. In addition, it has been found that the *serious* errors are those committed in *misordering* scoring an overall gravity of **381.54** However, the *less serious* errors are those committed in *L1 based* category scoring an overall gravity of **217.84**.

6.2.2.3. EG in Collocation

Errors in *collocation* have been classified into three categories, namely, *collocate choice, contextualisation* and *wrong forms*. Regarding the seriousness of such errors, it has been found that the *most serious* errors are those committed under *collocate choice* category which scores an overall gravity of **465.08** *which is the second highest EG* among those so far discussed, be they syntactic or semantic categories. Errors committed in *contextualsation* have been found to be *serious* whose seriousness lies in scoring an overall gravity of **350.02** and the *less serious* errors are those committed in *wrong forms* scoring an overall EG of **231.59.**

6.2.2.4. EG in Lexico-grammatical Choice

The serious errors in *lexico-grammatical choice* have been classified into three categories, viz. *adjectives in place of nouns, nouns in place of adjectives* and *adjectives in place of adverbs*. Thus, it has been found that errors committed in *adjectives in place of nouns* are the *most serious* with an overall gravity of **300.02.** The *serious* errors are those committed in *nouns in place of adjectives* which score an overall gravity of **272.44**. *Adjectives in place of adverbs* errors have been found to be *less serious* scoring an overall gravity of **204.12.**

6.2.2.5. EG in Formal Misselections

There are two categories in which errors in *formal misselections* have been classified, namely, *prefix* and *suffix*. Thus, it has been found that errors committed in *suffix* are *serious* scoring an overall gravity of **238.88.** However, errors committed in *prefix* are found to be *less serious* scoring an overall gravity of **180.91**. Thus, this category does not include *most serious* errors.

6.2.2.6. EG in Formal Misformations

There is only one category in *formal misformations*, namely, *direct translation from L1* Thus, the errors committed in this category have been found to be *most serious* scoring an overall gravity of **417.29**. Thus, this category does not include *serious* and *less serious* errors.

6.3. Overall Gravity of Syntactic and Semantic Errors

As can be seen in Tables (45 & 46) below, there are a total number of 19494 frequent errors committed in syntactic categories and subcategories. There are also a total number of 20021 frequent errors committed in semantic categories and subcategories. In addition, it is obvious that the total number of syntactic errors has been committed by all the subjects of this study, viz. 102. The same thing can be said of the semantic errors. Hence, an overall EG can be calculated for both categories following the method we have employed. Table (45) presents the overall gravity of both syntactic and semantic categories.

Table (45): Overall Gravity of Syntactic and Semantic Errors

Statistical Category	Error Category	
	Syntactic	Semantic
TNS	102	102
N	102	102
$\sum$	19494	20021
$\bar{x}$	191.12	196.28
P	100%	100%
EG	**1382.46**	**1401.02**

As Table (45) shows, it is obvious that the *syntactic* errors have scored an overall gravity of **1382.46.** However, *semantic* errors have scored an overall gravity of **1401.02**. Thus, it can be concluded that *semantic errors are more serious than syntactic errors*.

6.4. Error Hierarchies of Syntactic and Semantic Categories Based on EG

Based on the EG concluded with, error hierarchies of the syntactic and semantic errors committed in this study can be established. The hierarchies established here will present the categories, be they syntactic or semantic, from top to bottom in a descending order.

6.4.1. Error Hierarchy of Syntactic Categories Based on EG

As presented in Table (46), an error hierarchy of syntactic categories investigated in this study is established. The established error hierarchy is based on the EG each category has scored. In this hierarchy, *prepositions* category occupies the first rank in the hierarchy with a total EG of **915.02.** The *VP constructions* category scoring a total EG of **862.50** occupies the second rank in the hierarchy. The third rank is occupied by *articles* category which scores a total EG of **850.58**. The fourth is occupied by *subject-verb agreement* with a total gravity of **590.37**. *Yes/No questions* scoring a total EG of **572.71** comes fifth. The sixth rank is occupied by *relative clauses* with a total EG of **511.74.** The seventh rank is occupied by *negation* scoring a total EG of **463.60**. The eighth is occupied by *wh-questions* with a total EG of **450.92**. The ninth rank is occupied by *personal pronouns* category which scores a total EG of **397.17.** The tenth and final rank is occupied by *word order* scoring a total EG of **177.64** which is the lowest rank in the hierarchy. In addition, the error hierarchy established presents also which syntactic category is more serious than the other. For instance, *prepositions* category is more serious than *VP constructions* which is in turn more serious than *articles* and so on ending with the *least serious* category, namely, *word order*. A summary of such a hierarchy in terms of *rank/order, category, subcategory, number of errors, percentage, EG* and *total EG* is presented in Table (46) below.

Table (46): Error Hierarchy of Syntactic Categories Based on EG

R/ Order	Category		No. of errors	Percentage	EG
1st	Prepositions	Substitution	1648	8.45%	401.99
		Omission	1069	5.48%	318.28
		Addition	627	3.22%	194.75
					Total: 915.02
2nd	VP construction	V. formation	1277	6.55%	352.04
		Tense	1014	5.20%	294.46
		Voice	867	4.44%	216
					Total: 862.50
3rd	Articles	Substitution	1264	6.48%2	351.99
		Omission	1029	5.28%	289.98
		Addition	658	3.36%	208.61
					Total: 850.58
4th	Sub-Verb Agreement	No. Agreement	1072	5.27%	317.79
		Per. Agreement	932	4.78%	272.58
					Total: 590.37
5th	Yes/No Qus.	Auxiliaries	1132	5.81%	321.57
		Main verb	754	3.87%	251.14
					Total: 572.71
6th	Relative Clauses	Sub. of RL Pron.	1015	5.21%	307.57
		Om.RL Pron.	586	3.01%	204.17
					Total: 511.74
7th	Negation	Om. of Aux	911	4.67%	291.42
		Double negatives	508	2.61%	172.18
					Total: 463.6
8th	Wh-Qus.	No S-V Inv.	847	4.34%	272.23
		Om. of Aux	519	2.66%	178.69
					Total: 450.92
9th	Personal pronouns	Om. of Pron	752	3.86%	238.97
		Addition of Pron	501	2.57%	158.20
					Total: 397.17
10th	Word Order	Misording at Ph. Lvl	512	2.63%	177.48
					Total:177.48
Total	-------	-------	19494	100%	1382.46

6.4.2. Error Hierarchy of Semantic Categories Based on EG

Regarding semantic categories involved in this study, a similar hierarchy is established here based on the EG concluded with. As presented in Table (47) below, *lexical choice* occupies the first rank in the hierarchy due to scoring the highest total EG, viz. **1185.65**. The second rank is occupied by *distortion due to spelling* which scores a total EG of **1057.09**. The third rank is occupied by *collocations* due to scoring a total EG of **1046.69**. *Lexico-grammatical choice* with a total EG of

776.58 is placed in the fourth rank of the hierarchy. The fifth rank is occupied by *formal misselections* which scores a total EG of **419.79**. The sixth and final rank is occupied by *formal misformations* scoring a total EG of **417.29** which is the lowest EG in the hierarchy. The error hierarchy also presents in terms of seriousness which semantic category is more serious than the other. For instance, *lexical choice* category is more serious than *distortion due to spelling* which is in turn more serious than *collocations* and so on ending with the least serious category which is *formal misformations*. Table (47) summarises such a hierarchy in terms of *rank/order, category, subcategory, number of errors, percentage, EG* and *total EG*.

Table (47): Error Hierarchy of Semantic Categories Based on EG

R Order	Category		No. of errors	Percentage	EG
1st	Lexical Choice	Assumed synonymy	2417	12.07%	486.83
		Paraphrase	1725	8.61%	407.19
		Homophony	1079	5.39%	291.63
					Total: 1185.65
2nd	Distortion due to Spelling	Omission	2137	10.67%	457.71
		Misordering	1619	8.09%	381.54
		L1 based	807	4.03%	217. 84
					Total: 1057.09
3th	Collocations	Collocate choice	2206	11.02%	465.08
		Contextualisation	1319	6.59%	350.02
		Wrong forms	927	4.63%	231.59
					Total: 1046.69
4th	Lexico-grammatical Choice	Adj in place of N.	1029	5.13%	300.02
		Ns. in place of Adj	953	4.76%	272.44
		Adj in place of Adv.	657	3.28%	204.12
					Total: 776.58
5th	Formal Misselection	Suffix	813	4.06%	238.88
		Prefix	539	2.69%	180.91
					Total: 419.79
6th	Formal Misformations	Direct Translation from L1	1794	8.69 %	417.29
					Total: 417.29
Total	---------	----------	20021	100%	1401.02

As has been discussed so far (see **section 1.13.4**), there have been several studies which attempt to establish error hierarchies. However, the most notable error hierarchies are those tackled by James (1977), Hughes and Lascaratou (1982) and McCretton, and Rider (1993). However, what makes our error hierarchy different from those of such studies is that while such studies depend on the NSs and/or

NNSs' judgement, our study tackles error hierarchy from a statistical point of view. The three error hierarchies mentioned above can be summarised in Table (48) below.

Table (48): Comparison of Three Error Hierarchies

McCretton & Rider		James		Hughes & Lascar.	
EC	Rank order				
	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Agr	2	1	2	1	5	2
V. F	1	2	1	1	2	1
Preps	3	2	4	3	6	5
WO	4	4	5	5	4	4
Neg	5	5	3	4	--	--
Sp	6	5	--	--	3	6
Voc	7	7	6	6	1	3

Table (48) presents three error hierarchies based on NSs and NNSs' judgements. The error categories involved in these studies are ***Agr, V Forms, Prep, WO, Neg, Sp*** and ***Voc***. In fact, there are also other categories in each study but they are excluded as they are not shared by all studies. Thus, the categories involved here are only those shared by the three studies. The number digits, viz. 1,2,3,4, etc. indicate the seriousness of the categories involved. As can be seen, there is no consensus among the three hierarchies in terms of the error categories listed above. While, for instance, McCretton and Rider have concluded that ***Agr*** category is the ***most serious*** for NNSs, ***V Forms*** is the ***most serious*** for NSs and the ***least serious*** is ***Voc*** for both, James finds that ***V Forms*** is the ***most serious*** for both NNSs and NSs and ***Voc*** is the ***least serious***. In addition, Hughes and Lascaratou's hierarchy is completely different where ***Voc*** is the ***most serious*** for NSs and ***V Forms*** is the ***most serious*** for NNSs. In their hierarchy, the ***least serious*** category is ***Sp*** for NNSs and ***Preps*** is the ***least serious*** for NSs. Thus, each study has concluded with different results which has been ascribed by McCretton and Rider (1993:180) to the fact that NSs tend to be lenient with L2 learners' errors because of "their better knowledge of the target language as such and especially of the wide scope of its norms" while NNSs tend to mark severely. However, Hughes and Lascaratou have concluded that NNSs tend to mark for accuracy while NSs mark for intelligibility.

For why NNSs mark severely, McCretton and Rider (op.cit:181) think that "[it] may lie in the teachers' attitudes to completing the questionnaire: they may have felt that their own knowledge of the

language was being tested, and as a reaction to this, tended to mark more severely." They add that "hierarchies are merely the subjects' conditioned responses to well-established educational practices" (ibid:182). This supports our claim that in such studies, EG in general and error hierarchy in particular are highly influenced by the judges' subjectivity which makes such studies inadequate and their results cannot be gerneralised and applied to other languages. However, as can be seen in Tables (46 & 47) above, objectivity plays the main role in determining the EG and error hierarchy of the syntactic and semantic categories involved in our study due to the fact that our study is based on statistics where subjectivity has nothing to do and as such the findings ended up with by our study can be generalised and applied to other languages.

6.5. L1 and L2 Sources of EG

Throughout this study, it has been found that errors committed by Arab learners of English can be ascribed either to L1, i.e. Arabic interference and hence, called *interlingual* or to L2, i.e. English influence and hence, called *intralingual*. The former is represented by such categories as *personal pronouns* errors which are purely interlingual and the latter is represented by categories such as *lexico-grammatical choice* errors which are purely intralingual. These two categories are also found within the same category. For instance, within the category *distortion due to spelling*, *L2 based* errors are ascribed to Arabic while *misordering* errors are ascribed to English. In fact, interlingual and intralingual errors are also found within the same subcategory as in the case of *verb formation* among several others. In addition, there are also two other types of errors identified in our corpus, namely, *ambiguous errors* which are those whose source can be ascribed to both L1 and L2 and *unique errors* which are those whose source can neither be ascribed to L1 nor to L2 (see **sections 4.3.2 & 4.3.3**), for instance.

Apart from this, some categories are classified by L2 acquisition researchers as purely intralingual but it has been found that some categories of these seem to have interlingual errors in our study. James (1998), for instance, based on the L2s he has investigated whose script is Roman, has pointed out that all *distortion due to spelling* errors committed by ESL are purely intralingual but in our study, the *L1 Based* errors are purely interlingual where the nonexistence of the letters/sounds namely, /p/, /v/ and/ʒ/ in Arabic causes such errors (cf. **section 5.2.2.2.3**). This also confirms our claim

that classifications of errors are based on both L1, i.e. the MT of the learners and the L2, i.e. the language being learned.

Now, the question worth being addressed here is that is there any relation between the errors committed as a result of L1 interference or L2 influence and the total EG scored? Let us first consider Table (49) below which presents the source of errors, i.e. interlingual, intralingual, ambiguous and unique, their number and percentage.

Table (49): L1 and L2 Sources of EG

Source	Syntactic	Semantic	Total	Percentage
L1	6227	7459	13686	34.63%
L2	12341	11943	24284	61.46%
Amb.	718	521	1239	3.14%
Uniq.	208	98	306	0.77%
Total	19494	20021	39515	100%

As presented in Table (49) above, there are **6227** frequent syntactic errors committed as a result of L1, i.e. Arabic interference where the subjects of this study transfer their linguistic knowledge of Arabic into English and hence, committing such errors. In addition, there are **12341** frequent syntactic errors committed as a result of L2, i.e. English influence where the subjects having *false conceptions* about or *internalising* the English syntactic system commit such errors. In addition, there are **718** frequent syntactic errors which are *ambiguous* where the source of such errors can be L1 and L2 both. There are also **208** *unique* syntactic errors, i.e. those errors whose source cannot be identified.

Regarding semantic errors, as can be seen in Table (49) above, there are **7459** frequent semantic errors committed as a result of L1 where Arabic interference plays the main role of committing them. In addition, there are **11943** frequent semantic errors committed as a result of L2 influence. There are also **521** *ambiguous* semantic errors and **98** *unique* semantic errors.

As far as both categories are concerned, there are **13686** frequent errors, i.e. **34.63%** of the total number of both syntactic and semantic errors which are attributed to L1, i.e. Arabic and hence, interlingual. Further, there are **24284** frequent errors, i.e. **61.46%** of the total number of both syntactic and semantic errors committed which are attributed to L2 influence and hence, intralingual. However,

there are **1239** ambiguous errors, i.e. **3.14%** of the total number of syntactic and semantic errors committed throughout the whole study. Finally, there are **306** unique errors, i.e**. 0.77%** of the total number of both syntactic and semantic errors committed. By and large, Table (49) represents the corpus of our study (cf. **section 3.8**).

Now, as far as the main concern of this study is expressing EG in terms of frequency through statistically computed procedures, and coming back to the question raised above, viz. is it L1, i.e. Arabic *per se* which makes learners commit more errors or is it L2, i.e. English and hence, constituting such EG? Considering Table (49) above, we observe that intralingual errors are more in number than interlingual errors regardless of being syntactic or semantic. Intralingual errors include **24284**, i.e. **61.46%** of the total number of errors committed compared to **13686** interlingual errors, i.e. **34.63%** of the total number of errors committed in the whole study. Now, ignoring ambiguous and unique errors, it is L2, i.e. English due to which the subjects of this study commit more frequent errors. In fact, this conclusion comes in line with what has been concluded by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974a) and Dulay et al. (1982) that most of the errors committed by L2 learners are caused by L2 itself (see **section 2.9**), however the difference between our study and theirs. Further, while these researchers have concluded that about 80% of the learner errors are due to L2, i.e. English influence, ***we have concluded that 61.46% of the errors committed in our study are ascribed to L2, i.e. English.*** Thus, it can be concluded that ***it is L2, i.e. English that makes Arab learners commit more frequent errors than L1, i.e. Arabic does***. In other words, ***the total seriousness of both syntactic and semantic errors committed in this study can be ascribed to English more than Arabic*** and thus answering the question raised above.

6.6. Conclusions

As far as the first hypothesis set forth for this study, i.e. ***syntactic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than semantic errors***, is concerned, this hypothesis is ***rejected***. As far as the second hypothesis, i.e. ***semantic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than syntactic errors,*** is concerned, this hypothesis is ***accepted***. In fact, there is a very significant difference between syntactic and semantic errors in both the number of errors committed and the EG scored. As far as the number of the errors

committed is concerned, the subjects of the study have committed **19494** frequent syntactic errors and **20021** frequent semantic errors where semantic errors are more than syntactic ones. Regarding EG, while syntactic errors have scored an overall gravity of **1382.46**, semantic errors have scored an overall gravity of **1401.02.** Thus, looking at the total number of errors committed in both the syntactic and semantic categories and the gravity scored by both types, we can conclude that *semantic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than syntactic errors*.

However, it should be noted here that while syntactic errors identified in our corpus have been classified into *ten categories*, semantic errors have been classified into *six categories*. Thus, in spite of the significant difference between the number of syntactic categories and that of semantic categories involved in our study, *semantic errors are still more serious than syntactic errors*. Accordingly, *Arabic speaking learners of English tend to commit more frequent semantic errors than syntactic ones*. Thus, we can conclude that *acquiring semantics is more difficult for Arab learners of English at university level than acquiring syntax*.

As has been discussed so far and based on NSs and NNSs' judgement, some EG analysts point out that syntactic errors are more serious than semantic errors while others state that semantic errors are more serious than syntactic ones. However, the present study concludes that *semantic errors are more serious than syntactic errors by means of statistically computed procedures*. Thus, the difference between the present study and the existing EG studies lies in the fact that while the existing studies depend on subjective *responses made by NS and/or NNS judges* leading to more contradiction than consensus (see **sections 1.13.3 & 1.13.7**), the EG expressed in the present study is based on statistics and mathematically computed procedures which make its results reliable and satisfactory and can be applied to similar studies on different languages. This is due to the fact that studies which depend on statistics are more reliable and more standardised whose results are objective rather than subjective.

Regarding the third the hypothesis, i.e. *within each category, be it syntactic or semantic, which subcategory is more serious than the other*, syntactic categories will be examined first and then semantic ones. As Table (46) shows, it has been found that the *most serious* syntactic errors are those committed in the *prepositions* category which scores the highest EG, viz. **915.02**. This leads us to conclude that, *the most problematic syntactic area for Arab learners of English at university level is*

prepositions indicating that Arab learners face much difficulty while acquiring *prepositions*. However, this difficulty varies, i.e. while it is very high in *substitution*, it is less in *omission* and the least in *addition*.

In addition and as shown in Table (46), the second *most serious* syntactic category is *VP constructions* scoring a total EG of **862.5** which indicates that Arab learners also face a considerable difficulty when they acquire English *VP construction* system. Thus, it can be stated that acquiring *VP construction* constitutes *the second most difficult syntactic area for Arab learners of English at university level*. However, this difficulty also varies depending on the category of errors committed, i.e. while it is more in *verb formation* it is less in *tense* and the least in *voice*. The third serious errors are those committed in the use of *articles* which score a total gravity of **850.58** which indicates that the difficulty faced by Arab learners of English when acquiring English *articles* is also significant but not like that encountered when acquiring *prepositions* or *VP constructions*. Again, this difficulty varies depending on the EG of each subcategory in which errors in the use of *articles* have been classified as shown in Table (46) above. This actually goes on till reaching the bottom of the hierarchy where the *least serious* errors are those committed in *word order* category which scores a total EG of **177.48** as the lowest rank in the hierarchy and in the whole study. As the seriousness of the syntactic errors varies in the order or rank, the difficulty encountered by Arab learners varies accordingly.

In addition, the *most serious* subcategory of syntactic errors is *substitution of prepositions* which includes **1648** frequent syntactic errors, i.e. **8.45%** of the total number of the whole syntactic errors committed and scoring the highest EG, viz. **401.99** among the syntactic subcategories. The *least serious* subcategory, however, is *addition of personal pronouns* comprising only **501** frequent errors, i.e. **2.57%** of the total number of the whole syntactic errors and scoring an overall EG of **158.20** , i.e. the lowest EG among the syntactic subcategories. Accordingly and as far as syntax is concerned, one can conclude that *selecting an appropriate preposition constitutes the highest difficulty for Arab learners of English* and *avoiding adding an unnecessary personal pronoun is the least difficult for them* to acquire. In short, the seriousness and the difficulty are in "direct proportion" relation, i.e. where the seriousness is high, the difficulty is high and vice versa.

Regarding the semantic categories, it has been found that the highest EG has been scored by the semantic category, namely, *lexical choice* scoring a total EG of **1185.65**. Therefore, it can be concluded that *lexical choice* constitutes *the most difficult area for Arab learners of English at university level*. As such, Arab learners encounter great difficulty in acquiring *lexical choice* but this difficulty varies according to the subcategories in which such errors have been classified. In other words, while the greatest difficulty faced by Arab learners is when learning the *synonymy*, the least difficulty is encountered when learning *homophony.*

In addition, the second *most serious* errors are those committed in *distortion due to spelling* category scoring a total EG of **1057.09** as the second highest EG after that scored by *lexical choice* as can be seen in Table (47) above. This also indicates that *distortion due to spelling* constitutes *the second most problematic semantic area for Arab learners of English at university level*. However, this difficulty, in fact, varies, i.e. while it is very high in *omission* of letters, it is less in *misordering* and the least in *L1 based* category. The third serious semantic category is *collocation* which scores a total EG of **1046.69**. Thus, *collocation category constitutes the third difficult semantic area for Arab learners of English at university level*. However, such a difficulty, in fact, varies depending of the subcategories in which *collocation* errors are classified. Thus, the seriousness of errors goes down till it reaches the bottom of the hierarchy which is occupied by *formal misformations* category scoring a total EG of **417.29**. Thus, the difficulty encountered by Arab learners in learning such semantic categories decreases accordingly. Again, the seriousness and the difficulty are in "direct proportion" relation, i.e. where the seriousness is high, the difficulty is high and vice versa.

From another perspective and within semantic errors, the *most serious* errors are those committed in *assumed synonymy* which is a subcategory of the *lexical choice* errors. This subcategory scores the highest EG, i.e. **486.83** and includes the highest number of errors committed, viz. **2417**, i.e. **12.07%** of the total number of the whole semantic errors committed. In fact, the EG scored and the number of errors committed in *assumed synonymy* are the highest not only among semantic errors but also in the whole study. However, the least serious errors are those committed in *prefix* which is a subcategory of *formal misselections* including only **539** frequent errors, i.e. **2.69%** of the total number of the whole semantic errors and scoring the lowest EG, viz. **180.91**. Thus, we can conclude that

selecting ***an appropriate lexis constitutes the greatest difficulty for Arab learners of English at university level*** and ***selecting the appropriate prefix constitutes the least difficult area for them*** to acquire.

6.7. Pedagogical Implications

The findings, error hierarchies and conclusions ended up with in this study provide significant insights on the ***most serious, serious*** and ***less serious*** syntactic and semantic errors Arabic speaking learners of English commit. Thus, based on these findings, error hierarchies and conclusions, the following pedagogical implications are suggested for the improvement of teaching English in Arab schools in general and Arab universities in particular. As has been concluded with, ***semantic errors are more serious than syntactic ones.*** Accordingly, recognised teaching, in general, should focus more on semantic units than syntactic ones. However, it does not mean that syntactic areas will be ignored but more attention should be paid to semantics than syntax. Within each category, the following pedagogical implications will be suggested, first regarding semantics and then syntax followed by a proposed technique to error correction based on EG.

6.7.1. Semantics

SLA researchers (e.g. Engber 1995) believe that the more L2 learners master the semantics of L2, especially lexes, the more their writing sounds like native or near-native. Thus, regarding semantic errors, the error hierarchy based on the EG of semantic categories concluded with provides valuable pedagogical insights that could be considered by Arab teachers, applied linguists, researchers, textbook developers and syllabi/curricula designers etc. to make the English language learning-teaching process in Arab countries more effective. Since semantic errors have been found to be more serious than syntactic ones, it is highly recommended that much more attention should be paid to semantic units than that paid to syntactic ones. For instance, ***lexical choice*** errors are found to be the ***most serious*** not only among the semantic errors but also in the whole study. Therefore, ***assumed synonymy, paraphrase*** and ***homophony*** should be paid much more attention to by syllabi/curricula designers and textbook developers and teachers, too. They should extensively involve such semantic units in the courses to be taught to overcome the difficulty encountered. In that, synonyms should be taught

focusing not only on their meaning but also on their use and contexts. In addition, *words* should never be taught in isolation. In that, teaching *words* should be *contextualised*. *Contextualisation* of words and phrases could be carried out through class work; both pair work and group work. It is highly recommended that synonyms should be presented to students in pairs along with their differences in meaning and use. For instance, the synonyms *sound* and *voice* could be presented to students in such a way as *sound* can be made by anything while *voice* is made only by humans. So it is semantically deviant to say *Your sound is very good like that of a singer* but *Your voice is very good like that of a singer* and so on. Such ways should be consolidated by extensive follow-up writing assignments, class/homework and get them corrected immediately before getting fossilised as they are *most serious*.

Errors in *distortion due to spelling* are the second most serious semantic errors. Within this category, *omission* of letters errors are the *most serious*. ESL learners in general and Arab learners of English in particular encounter great difficulty in spelling. This phenomenon is not only confined to undergraduate but also postgraduate students (Mohanty 2006). Therefore, it is highly recommended that this phenomenon should be taken seriously by both textbook/curriculum developers and teachers alike. In the case of teachers, regular spelling tests should be set for students including the different types of spelling errors students are always to commit (cf. **section 5.2.3.2.1**). On the basis of these tests, teachers would be able to formulate remedial materials even out of the courses prescribed. The students should get familiar with these tests in all school grades and in the University levels, too. Perhaps the best strategy for improving spelling is to encourage students to read more stories and critically focus on how words are spelt. Simply having the words in front of them and absorbing them as a story is unfolding from the pages. This will instil an instinct in them that is bound to improving spelling skills. In the case of textbook/curriculum developers, it is highly recommended that each lesson/class should involve spelling exercises so as to eliminate errors or at least reduce their occurrence in the students' writing as much as possible. In addition, Arab learners of English should learn how to distinguish between /v/ and /f/, /ʒ/ and /š/ and /p/ and /b/ because the first sound in each pair does not exist in Arabic. This actually affects their spelling and hence, such errors as *bark* for *park*, *measher* for *measure* and *safe* for *save* occur in their writing. Accordingly, pronunciation remedial materials which involve such differences are strongly recommended to be included in English textbook/curriculum designed for Arab learners in both school and university levels. In addition, dictation can also be made

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use of. In that, it is recommended that each reading/writing lesson/class should include a dictation exercise at least 3-5 sentences especially in level one.

Collocations errors are also considerably more serious specially, *collocate choice* errors. Here, it is highly recommended that Arab learners of English should be given lists of the common lexical collocates and asked to form sentences/short paragraphs using these collocates. It is also recommended that students should be given some key collocates and asked to write paragraphs about such collocates in a coherent way. It is also recommended that the common used collocates should be given to students in the form of lists and ask them to read them daily before coming to class. This list could also include fixed expressions like verbal phrases and idioms to make students familiar with such expressions and not to get confused when they encounter them for the first time. In *formal misformation* errors, *direct translation from L1* errors are also highly significant. What makes Arab students commit such errors is the fact that their English repertoire does not possess as much lexes/phrases as needed to express themselves proficiently in different situations. They, therefore, rely on their L1, i.e. Arabic formulate the sentences in Arabic, literally translate and then transfer them into English causing them to commit serious errors. What curricula designers and textbook developers can do here is involve lots of English short stories, parts of novels, etc. in the courses prescribed in such a way that enables them to be familiar with English expressive power and to study English in its own right. Teachers here are advised to encourage Arab students to get more exposed to English through listening to English broadcastings, watching English movies, etc. to equip themselves with sufficient repertoire in terms of words, phrases and utterances. Teachers can also exploit this by providing students with long conversations in class under their monitoring. It is also highly recommended that the use of Arabic in classrooms should be minimised in schools. However, at the university level, Arabic should not be used at all. This makes students study English in its own right.

Lexico-grammatical choice errors and their categories should also be taken into consideration. Therefore, attention should be paid to such areas. To avoid such errors and once such errors are L2 based, it is recommended that textbooks/curricula should include exercises where differences between lexico-grammatical categories, viz. nouns, adjectives and/or adverbs are emphasised. Providing list of 10-15 words of different lexico-grammatical categories and asking students to write about in each

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lesson/class could be utilised. In addition, *formal misselections* and their subcategories including *suffix* and *prefix* errors are less serious. However, differences between commonly used prefixes and suffixes should be emphasised. It is also recommended that syllabi designers and textbooks developers should include some of the commonly used prefixes and suffixes, for instance, negating prefixes and adjectival suffixes, in each lesson separately in the form of exercises. This is recommended in reading classes. Teachers should also use extensive exercises and ask students to do in and out of class.

6.7.2. Syntax

Regarding syntactic errors committed in this study, the findings, error hierarchy and conclusions provide applied linguists, curricula/syllabi designers, textbooks developers, the university and even school teachers with significant insights and pedagogical implications about where recognised teaching is greatest and where more time and effort should be spent. The categories and subcategories of syntactic errors which have been statistically the most serious should get priority over those which are found to be less serious. Thus, it has been found that the most difficult area for Arab learners of English is *prepositions* and hence, teaching should focus more on prepositions and how to distinguish between prepositions of time, place, etc. Where prepositions are used and where not should also be emphasised. Students should be trained to have a selective skill which enables them to choose a particular preposition rather than another. Since language is not rule-memorisation but rather rule-formulation, students should be taught inductively so as to elicit rules rather than memorising such rules. In fact, *substitution* errors have been found to be more serious than *omission* and *addition* errors. Therefore, extensive teaching should focus on how to make students able to select the right syntactic elements whether an *article, preposition, auxiliary, verb form, pronoun* etc. This can only be achieved by communicative tasks during the classroom by means of role-playing and group work under the teacher's monitoring. This is actually due to the fact that a particular preposition, for instance, *at*, or *in* can be used in and for different and several purposes. To overcome *omission* and *addition* difficulties, students should be given lists of the common syntactic elements with and without which prepositions, articles etc. are used. For instance, students should be given a list of the commonly used prepositions and idiomatic prepositional phrases (James 1998) where the use of such phrases is fixed with or without a particular preposition. Regarding *articles* use, for instance, students should be taught much more

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inductively where they will actively elicit the rules of such a use. Ellis (1994) emphasises implicit learning for its high value in making the students elicit rules after comprehending the structures. In fact, Ellis prefers this kind of teaching because it enables students to induce the rules themselves. Students may also be given a list of the common words which are always used with and without the definite *the*, for instance. It is also recommended that students should be given a list of the words which begin with silent consonant letters such as ***hour, honour, heir*** etc. They should also be given a list of the words where the sound and not the letter should be considered such as ***university, union, unit*** etc.

VP construction errors have been found to be the second most serious errors and hence, students should get qualified in how to form VPs according to the English syntactic rules. In ***verb formation***, for instance, Arab students need to learn how different kinds of VPs are formed and how to differentiate between simple and complex VPs. Arab learners also need to realise that VP formation in English is greatly different from that of Arabic so that they could learn English on its own right. Arab learners are ultimately in need for knowing how Arabic verb formation is different from that of English. This is due to the fact that certain elements such as ***auxiliaries*** do not exist in Arabic and hence, Arab learners of English should be taught how to form VPs including such ***auxiliaries***. This can be best delivered to them by mentioning the Arabic counterparts of English syntactic structures while presenting such English structures in the class, and giving them extensive follow-up writing assignments will help them learn how to distinguish between ***verb formation*** in both languages. However, Zughoul (1979) cautions teachers that linguistic distinctions that students do not need to know should not be taught and similarities between English and the native language should be highlighted. However, it should be noted here that using the MT in the classroom should be minimised. In addition, it is strongly recommended that teachers should teach VPs inductively where the students work out the rules and discover them. This kind of teaching makes the teaching process more successful and learning more stable and last longer.

To conclude, and as far as syntax is concerned, some researchers (e.g. Celce-Murcia and Hilles 1988, Harmer 1987) have pointed out to the way such units are to be presented and practiced. For instance, Harmer (1987:10) has suggested that "…[teachers] must teach not only the form, but also one of its functions, and not only *meaning* but also *use*" (emphasis in the original). He also adds that the

presentation of the grammar lesson should be clear, efficient, interesting and productive. In addition, Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) have proposed a technique in which "discovery" has to play the main role. In that, they have provided four steps in which such a technique is applied: (i) presentation, (ii) focused practice, (iii) communicative practice, incorporating information-gap, choice and feedback, and (iv) teacher feedback and correction which will be discussed in the next section. It goes without saying that applying such techniques in the classroom will to some extent compensate the students' lack of exposure to English. Thus, *prepositions, articles, verb formation, tense, voice, auxiliaries, number agreement,* among others should be involved extensively. However, *person agreement, verb form, personal pronouns, negation* and *word order* should be less emphasised compared to the syntactic categories just mentioned. Subsequently, syllabi/curricula designers, course developers and university teachers should pay much more attention and include the more serious syntactic units in enriching the English curricula taught in Arab Universities in general and in Yemeni Universities in particular to remedy and overcome the weaknesses the students come with from school. However, a point to be emphasised is that the teaching required here should be communicative for its valuable results and long-lasting learning and comprehension.

6.7.3. Error Correction

Now, the question worth being addressed here is that should all errors committed by the subjects of this study be corrected or only those *most serious* and *serious* ones have to have priority in correction? And if so, what about those *less serious*? There have, in fact, been several techniques and methods to error correction suggested in the literature (see **section 2.9.5.5**). However, what concerns us here is how to deal with error correction from an EG point of view. In fact, there have been several attempts to determine error correction from a seriousness point of view. Researchers (e.g. Hendrickson 1980, McCretton and Rider 1993, Khlil 1985, James 1977, 1998) have proposed a criterion for error correction. This criterion considers the seriousness of an error or a group of errors. McCretton and Rider (1993), for instance, suggest a hierarchy of errors based on seriousness to help teachers decide which errors should be corrected. They state that errors that significantly occur frequently, errors that reflect misunderstanding or incomplete acquisition of the current classroom focus, and errors that have a highly stigmatising effect on the listeners should be dealt with immediately. Further, researchers (e.g.

Hendrickson 1980, James 1977, 1998, Palmer 1980, Khalil 1985) propose that error correction should be directed to those errors which have high frequency and hence, high EG. However, this view does not mean that deviations with low EG should be left unchecked but that not each and every deviation should be corrected. In this regard, Khalil (1985:346) states that "teachers can and must be selective in their correction of errors." What Khalil means by this is that, especially in recent years when attention has been paid much to communicative approach as the most appropriate method to L2 teaching and learning, not each and every error should be corrected. Only those errors which constitute more difficulty for L2 learners should be corrected.

Thus, taking the EG as a criterion to error correction, those errors with high gravity should be corrected. Many researchers (e.g. Burt 1975, James 1977, 1998, Palmer 1980) have ascertained that when an error persists in the L2 learner's writing/speaking and repeatedly occurs, such an error should be taken into consideration for many reasons the important of which is that it provides teachers with insights about the problematic areas where L2 learners find themselves unable to understand. Hence, such teachers could formulate certain remedial materials to overcome these areas. Another reason is that if such errors are left unchecked, they may get fossilised and then they cannot be overcome (see **section 2.13**). In addition, such studies ascertain that correcting errors is necessary when the number of errors exceeds a particular limit and this goes in line with our results which are statistically expressed. In that, only those errors which are large in number seem to score high gravity and hence, become ***most serious*** and ***serious***. As such, only those ***most serious*** and ***serious*** errors should get priority in correction in order not to get fossilised. However, it does not mean that ***less serious*** errors should be neglected because they could be fossilised as well; at least ***less serious*** errors could be delayed to a later stage.

According to our findings and conclusions, those errors with high frequency and hence, high EG constitute the difficulty for Arab learners. In other words, errors that are repeated constantly are problematic for Arab learners of English because they find themselves unable to get rid of them. This study has concluded that there are categories and subcategories of errors which score high EG and there are categories and subcategories which score quite and low EG. Thus, as far as syntactic errors are concerned, ***prepositions, VP construction, articles*** errors should be paid much attention to and hence,

corrected because such errors are of high seriousness. Regarding semantic errors, *lexical choice,*

distortion due to spelling, collocation errors should be paid much more attention to and hence,

corrected immediately before getting fossilised.

Again, it does not mean that *less serious* errors as in the case of *formal misselections* or *word*

order, for instance, should be left unchecked but the attention paid to them should be less than that paid

to errors with high EG. Such *less serious* errors could even be delayed to later stages if they still

persist. However, as far as the students are concerned, it is highly recommended that while correcting

errors, their "ego" should not be hurt. It is also advised that students should not be embarrassed while

correcting or evaluating their errors. Thus, teachers here are advised to be cautious during error

correction and evaluation and try to avoid such phenomena for their bad and reverse effects on L2

learners.

Future Research

As has been suggested earlier, syntactic and semantic categories should be taught

communicatively. Pragmatics as an important component of communicative competence should not be

ignored. This is due to the fact that L2 acquisition is not merely acquiring syntactic and semantic

structures but also how to use the knowledge acquired in perception and production appropriately in

real life situations. Thus, the study at hand has investigated the EG of syntactic and semantic categories

involving only word, phrase and sentence levels. However, a comprehensive EG study, the present

researcher believes, should involve discourse and pragmatic levels so as to determine the linguistic and

nonlinguistic factors which contribute to the committing of errors, on the one hand, and what causes

high frequency and hence, high gravity of such errors, on the other hand. Hence, there is an ultimate

need for studying L2 learners' errors and hence, their seriousness in pragmatic and discourse levels

which will be the main concern of the present researcher in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I   **Informed Consent Form**

Dear participant,

My name is Mohammed Qassem Al-Shormani. I am a Ph. D. scholar in the Center for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies, Hyderabad University, India. I am currently doing a research to complete my Ph.D. degree in Applied Linguistics. In this study, I have committed myself to a very fundamental aspect of L2 Acquisition, viz. English acquisition by Arab students. The study I am planning to conduct requires field responses from Arab students studying English in the University level so as to examine the "Error Gravity" in the syntactic and semantic levels of their linguistic production.

You will be asked to do a threefold task: first, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding your overall contact with English language; second, you will be asked to answer some syntactic questions involving several syntactic levels and sublevels and third, you will be asked to answer the semantic questions, translation and composition. All these questions have been prepared by the researcher himself and agreed upon by the dissertation Supervisor. All your responses will be confidential and anonymous. Please note that your participation in this survey is VOLUNTARY. The people who will have access to the data will be myself, the Researcher, and my Dissertation Supervisor, Prof. Panchanan Mohanty. After the study will have been completed, the raw data sheets will be destroyed. All possible and necessary steps will be taken to protect your identity.

For additional information, you can contact me, Mohammed Qassem Al-Shormani, the Researcher, email: moshormani@gmail.com or Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, Dissertation Supervisor, email: panchanan_mohanty@yahoo.com

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

1.   Name (**optional**) :
2.   Gender: Male/ Female
3.   Place of birth :
             Province :
             Town   :
             Village   :
4. Faculty :   University:

Please, read the following questions and answer them by taking (✓) in the boxes provided against each question. Please note that (A=Always, S= Sometimes, R=Rarely and N= Never)

A	S	R	N

1. Did you get high marks in your
     Secondary School English exam?

2. Do you speak English at home?

3.   Do you read English literature?

4. Do you listen to English music?

5. Do you comprehend English songs?

6. Do watch / listen to CNN/BBC?

7. Do you watch English movies?

8. Do you make errors/mistakes while
       speaking English?

9. Do you make errors/mistakes while
     writing English?

10. Have you tried to compose English
     Poems, short stories essays etc?

11. Does any member of your family speak
     English at home?

12. Do you speak English with ytour friends?

13. Have you studied English in any institute
     before joining college?

14. Have you travelled or lived abroad? | | | | |

Thank you

5.   Name (**optional**) :
6.   Gender: Male/ Female
7.   Place of birth :
          Province :
          Town   :
          Village :
8. Faculty :   University:

Please, read the following questions and answer them by taking (✓) in the boxes provided against each question. Please note that (A=Always, S= Sometimes, R=Rarely and N= Never)

	A	S	R	N
1. Did you get high marks in your Secondary School English exam?	34	56	12	
2. Do you speak English at home?	21	14	19	48
3. Do you read English literature?	2	28	10	62
4. Do you listen to English music?	14	31	42	15
5. Do you comprehend English songs?	11	33	9	49
6. Do you watch / listen to CNN/BBC?	4	13	37	48
7. Do you watch English movies?	64	27	29	
8. Do you make errors/mistakes while speaking English?	51	29	22	
9. Do you make errors/mistakes while writing English?	60	34	5	3
10. Have you tried to compose English poems, short stories essays etc?	7	19	11	75
11. Does any member of your family speak English at home?	16	23	17	46
12. Do you speak English with your friends?	28	29	2	43
13. Have you studied English in any institute before joining college?	17	12	28	45
14. Have you travelled or lived abroad?	1	9	13	79

The Respondents' Personal Information

The personal information obtained from the students' Overall Contact Questionnaire will be presented in the following Table.

*Gender		Place of Birth		Faculty		University	
Male	Female	Town	village	Arts	Education	Ibb	Taiz
59	34	21	81	48	54	48	54

* 9 respondents do not mention their gender.

Each of the following sentences involves _one_ syntactic error, please; try to identify and correct it as shown in the example:

Example: This is man who came yesterday. ➜ This is **the** man who came yesterday.

1. University student always comes to class on time.

2. Sun always rises in east and sets in the west.

3. I saw an one-eyed person in the shop.

4. Nile is located in Egypt.

5. The life is very nice.

6. Man came to meet you.

7. A cat has tail.

8. A cat chased rat.

9. You are man of his word.

10. I have seen a apple on that tree.

11. They have established an united association.

12. Can you give me a books?

13. I had a amazing experience last week.

14. It has been hour since he came.

15. An earth is round.

16. Ali and Fatma comes so early.

17. There comes our teachers.

18. Salem is a student, isn't it?

19. Who study well does well in the exam.

20. There is many students in our class.

21. I going to school with my friends.

22. Neither Ali or Amena is my close friend.

23. I has cooked a delicious meal.

24. I bought the book which I liked it.

25. My father he will come.

26. Abdu is taller than I.

27. Gold is expensive than silver .

28. Sameera went to home.

29. She is enough good.

30. I have twelve years old.

31. They have visiting us.

32. The books has been bought.

33. They can to write their lessons well.

34. The man who wrote the books are my friend.

35. The cars are drove fast.

36. Do Ali play chess?

37. Is your parents here?

38. A lot of sheep is gazing.

39. Sara cannot singing.

40. I bought these book from Sana'a

41. This question is disclear to me.

42. Aziza was afraid from the teacher so she did not come to class.

43. He is interested with me.

44. I am fond by reading.

45. I usually go to school by foot.

46. I met him in college a week ago.

47. We will have our meeting at Thursday.

48. You were born on 1989.

49. I may visit you in 5.30 p.m.

50. The Yemeni unification has been achieved on 1990.

51. My father was waiting to me.

52. She got married with Ali.

53. Her father is working in office.

54. This application should be submitted in June 16, 2009.

55. Amatu arrived in Ibb last Monday.

56. In Aden, we cannot swim on summer.

57. We live at Al'udain Street.

58. The number of people speaking English are large.

59. I have been writing for this morning.

60. This job is more sweet to me.

61. One of the books are broken.

62. This tree is more taller than that one.

63. Muntaha has to look about her old grandmother.

64. It is raining outside, she should has brought her raincoat.

65. When we are out, she looks from the children.

66. I was not successful in find that book.

67. She makes him to go home.

68. Nabeel allowed me go early.

69. Ammar makes me understanding the point.

70. In Yemen, schools remain closed on winter.

71. If I am here, you saw me.

72. I have bought this book by 1000 Rials.

73. She waited for me to 5 o'clock.

74. I like so much English.

75. Did you know when is Ali coming?

76. They have given a book me.

77. I saw a boy good.

78. Our teacher is enough intelligent.

79. When you are coming?

80. I am nonhappy in my life.

Appendix III- B   Multiple Choice Test

Please, underline the word that best completes the sentence in each of the following as shown in the example:

Example: All his------------ such as chairs, tables and armchairs was ruined.

  (a) garniture   (b) <u>furniture</u>   (c) books   (d) tables

1. Ali becomes --------- German.
(a) partially   (b) half   (c) middle   (d) quarter

2. Sausan's mother died in ------------.
(a) infancy   (b) youth   (c) childhood   (d) boyhood

3. Nabeel's father visited many countries in the --------.
(a) Yemen   (b) India   (c) word   (d) world

4. Scientific ------------- has to be experimented.
(a) work   (b) different   (c) job   (d) hypothesis.

5. The teacher --------- us Spoken English.
(a) learns   (b) teaches   (c) informs   (d) studies

6. I --------- at your way of teaching.
(a) surprised   (b) shocked   (c) got surprised   (d) puzzled.

7. Some students will not --------- the writing class.
(a) bring   (b) offer   (c) attend   (d)sit

8. I felt -------- when I saw you in the party.
(a) unnice   (b) pretty   (c) nonhandsome   (d) pleased

9. When I miss your class, I feel I lose something very----------.
(a) expensive   (b) dear   (c) valuable   (d) beautiful

10. I will ----------- you via email.
(a) contact   (b) communicate   (c) touch   (d) phone.

11. Every student has to have an-------- to the internet.
(a) introduction   (b) excess   (c) access   (d) door

12. Salwa--------- her father to support her ideas.
(a) requires   (b) needs   (c) demands   (d) necessitates

13. Manal will ---------- her assignment next week.
(a) deliver   (b) submit   (c) give   (d) offer

14. He got high marks in his exams so he is----------.
(a) happy   (b) sadly   (c) angrily   (d) worried

15. Ammar was -------- so many students yesterday.
(a) between   (b) in   (c) among   (d) out

16. I have been ------------- so much work that I cannot do alone.
(a) signed   (b) assigned   (c) worked   (d) done

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17. You ---------- sad.

(a) feel   (b) be   (c) give   (d) look

18. I ----------- happy.

(a) feel   (b) be   (c) give   (d) look

19. I always------------ English music.

(a) speak   (b) listen to   (c) hear   (d) write

20. Our college----------both boys and girls.

(a) includes   (b) contains   (c) has   (d) involves

21. This car------------ my attention.

(a) took   (b) attracted   (c) called   (d) inspired

22. My father has bought me---------to be aware of time.

(a) a pen   (b) a book   (c) an hour   (d) a watch

23. My daughter is very --------.

(a) handsome   (b) beautiful   (c) cheap   (d) expensive

24. I love my ----------- brother so much.

(a) smaller   (b) younger   (c) less   (d) fewer

25. Salma --------- you her best regards.

(a) sends   (b) conveys   (c) gives   (d) hands

26. You are --------- friendly, Sir.

(a) too   (b) so   (c) very   (d) very very

27. Has the teacher---------- the difficult question?

    (a) answer   (b) answering   (c) was answering (d) answered

28. Could you please -------------- this to me, Sir?

    (a) explain (b) write (c) view (d) learn

29. Where have you ------- for five days?

    (a) be   (b) was (c) been (d) being

30. ------ Ali go home?

    (a) Do   (b) Does   (c) Goes (d) Done

31. Where----------- buy this book?

    (a) do you   (b) you   (c) you do   (d) do

32. -------- your problem solved?

    (a) Is (b) Does (c) Has (d) Can

33. You said you -----------tired.

    (a) Not (b) are (c) not are (d) are not

34. I bought the book------- I like.

(a) who   (b) which (c) whose   (d) where

35. I want you ------ come early.

   (a) to (b) for (c) from (d) in

36. I do not know--------is going on here.

   (a) that   (b) when (c) what (d) which

37. She asks --------- a difficult question.

   (a) to us   (b) us   (c) to   (d) us to

38. The teacher will punish us-------- we work hard.

   (a) unless (b) if (c) unless not (d) if not

39. We should ………….our minds and not to marry young.

   (a) dislarge (b) inlarge (c) enlarge (d) nonlarge

40. They came late yesterday and-------- directly to cinema.

   (a) went (b) have gone (c) go   (d) going

Thank you

Appendix III-C   **Error Correction Test**

The underlined words/phrases are mistakenly used in the following sentences. Please, try to correct them as shown in the example:

Example: Salwa got <u>married from</u> Ali. ➔ Salwa got married to Ali.

1. She is <u>afraid from</u> the teacher.

2. He <u>laughed on</u> her.

3. Ali <u>peaces on</u> Ahmed.

4. Our teacher is so much <u>interested of</u> reading.

5. <u>By this way</u>, we can solve the problem.

6. Salma <u>realizes of</u> her dreams.

7. You have to <u>seek for</u> the book.

8. Nurses <u>look on</u> their patients in hospitals.

9. She used to go to work <u>by foot</u>.

10. I am <u>waiting to</u> her here.

11. Ahmed is <u>awaiting to</u> his results.

12. She <u>makes her homework</u> immediately after class.

13. He has got a <u>killing accident</u>.

14. The teacher gave us an <u>expensive advice</u>.

15. We must <u>produce</u> our decision regarding our participation.

16. She cannot <u>transfer</u> her feelings.

17. You can buy fruits from the <u>adjust</u> shop.

18. She has been affected <u>properly</u> in this situation.

19. I have come <u>strictly</u> now.

20. The police are better <u>skilled</u> in doing their duties.

21. Teachers should be fully <u>experimented</u>.

22. He is <u>strong</u> smoker.

23. Today, there are <u>enlarge</u> winds.

24. He tries to pull my <u>hand</u> when he spoke to me.

25. Dentists used to make <u>wrong</u> teeth.

26. The enemy's <u>thorn was crushed</u>.

27. Our President is <u>helpable</u> to his people.

28. Sunrays are <u>broken</u> in water.

29. The teacher asked us to meet him when he is <u>empty</u>.

30. He left this town to get a <u>career</u>.

31. There are not many <u>occupations</u> in the village.

32. When her father comes back from his <u>job</u> she seems happy.

33. There are many <u>works</u> in the city.

34. He offered his <u>aids </u>to me.

35. I have <u>leisure</u> for 3 hours.

36. In winter, it is full of white and nice ice.

37. Yemeni TV <u>contains</u> a lot of educational programs.

38. Ali is a <u>long thin</u> man.

39. Nowadays, many <u>works</u> require English.

40. Your <u>sound</u> is nice like that of singers.

41. I used to buy bread from the <u>woven</u> next to us.

42. There are many <u>registered </u>cassettes in this shop.

43. One has to <u>mend</u> one's mistakes.

44. He has passed through <u>difficult envelops</u>.

45. In Yemen, coeducation is <u>refused</u>.

46. Our teacher has a very good <u>adjective</u>.

47. I <u>travel</u> to the university by bus.

48. Saltah is the national <u>cook</u> in Jordan.

49. I <u>call</u> everyone to visit Yemen.

50. English is my <u>lovely</u> class.

51. He introduces <u>seldom</u> braveness in the battle.(collocation)

52. Life is <u>sweet</u> in the city.

53. Weather is so <u>kind</u> in Yemen.

54. Ibb has <u>striking</u> places.

55. When I went to my village, I <u>smelled</u> the new life and felt free.

56. I can not earn <u>efficient</u> money.

57. I can not <u>desolve</u> your problem.

58. Good students get up early to <u>repeat</u> their lessons.

59. She <u>hears</u> music in her free time.

60. You have to return the books you <u>lent</u> from the library by on time.

61. I saw him <u>last hour</u>.

62. Go ahead and take a break. I'll keep <u>an arm</u> on children.

63. We <u>made</u> our best but no way.

64. I went to see him <u>tomorrow</u>.

65. He <u>watches</u> TV now.

66. I <u>except</u> your invitation.

67. My <u>noun</u> is Ali.

68. He is my <u>great</u> enemy.

69. I am going <u>house.</u>

70. There is no <u>different</u> between them.

71. He <u>gave</u> attention to the new idea.

72. Can you give me that book? Yes, <u>from my eyes.</u>

73. The teacher speaks English <u>fluent</u>.

74. She is <u>ignorance</u> to him.

75. She is <u>beauty</u>.

76. He is <u>quickly</u>.

77. The teacher's <u>absent</u> makes me sad.

78. But I am <u>nonhappy</u> in my study

79. This question is <u>disclear</u> to me.

80. I am an <u>ambitionable</u> in my life.

Thank you

Please, translate the following Arabic passage into English:

الا نترنت عبارة عن مجموعة من الحاسبات الالكترونية الخاصة و العامة مرتبطة ببعضها البعض عن طريق التوصيل بهذه الشبكة عبر العالم و ذلك لغرض نبيل و هو تبادل المعلومات و المشاركة فيها, و يقدر عدد المشتركين والحاسبات في هذه الشبكة بما يزيد عن ثلاثة ملايين حاسب و مشترك. في السبعينات من القرن العشرين, بدأت الشركات و الجامعات و المؤسسات الحكومية باستخدام شبكات الحاسب الالكتروني على نطاق واسع و بدأت الانترنت بالظهور و كان ذلك نتيجة ربط هذه الشبكات ببعضها البعض.

لقد كانت البداية الحقيقية و الفعلية لظهور الانترنت في الولايات المتحدة الامريكية و خصوصاً في وزارة الدفاع (البنتاغون) لأغراض حربية وسياسية. اما عن كيفية استخدام الانترنت فتقوم الشركات و المنضمات و حتى الافراد بوضع المعلومات على شبكة الانترنت بحيث يمكن الاطلاع عليها من اي حاسب يتم توصيله بالانترنت. و هذه المعلومات تأخذ اشكالاً متنوعة منها المقروء و المرئي و المسموع (و هذه المعلومات قد لا تكون بالضرورة صحيحة.)

و للأنترنت اهمية كبيرة في حياة الطالب على وجه الخصوص حيث يمكن للطالب الاستفادة من الانترنت بالبحث و استخراج المعلومات و البحوث و الاستفادة من خبرات الاخرين كلا في مجال تخصصه.

Thank you

Please, write a paragraph in not more than 150 words on any <u>one</u> of the following topics:

6. Your first day at college.

7. Your ambition in life.

8. What English means to you…

9. A memorable event in your life.

10. The Reunification of Yemen.

Thank you

Dear friend,

I am a Ph.D scholar doing my thesis in **L2 Acquisition in the Context of Arab Learners' Syntactic and Semantic Production**. My main concern is to find out which errors committed by such learners are serious and how serious they are. Kindly, do as required in I and II below:

I Personal information

Name:

Age:

Sex(M/F):

Place of birth:

Area of interest:

II The following is a list of some sentences taken from the study corpus. Please, state whether each of the following sentences is erroneous and how serious the error is. *Please, read the following instructions:*

1.Use (E) for erroneous and (N) for not erroneous.

2.Use (A) for less serious, (B) for serious and (C) for very serious.

3.Circle the choice you think appropriate.

1. An earth is round.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
2. She is enough good.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
3. I met him in college a week ago.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
4. I have bought this book by 1000 Rials.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
5. Ali becomes half German.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
6. I surprised at your way of teaching.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
7. You feel sad.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
8. You are too friendly, Sir.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
9. I call everyone to visit Yemen.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
10. Life is sweet in the city.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
11. He is my great enemy.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)

12. The teachers are the builders of minds. I like

The teachers who give us much homework.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
13. There comes student.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
14. The water is used for washing.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
15. It is the honor that makes people respect us.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
16. I don't know that is going on here.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)

17. Last year, I visited Ba'daan which I liked

it very much.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
18. When you are coming?	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
19. You will come, when?	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
20. What you want to drink?	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
21. So many students in my class study					
hard but they failed in the exam.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
22. Noone has not received his ticket.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
23. My ambition in life is to save a good					
living for my family.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
24. I looked happy yesterday.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
25. But I have to return the books I lent					
from the library.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
26. …and they (women) should go to doctors to					
make check on their bodies.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
27. Two rooms in our house are for sleeping.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
28. When I went abroad, I took my big bag	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
of clothes.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
29. After every lecture, I used to make my					
homework.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
30. He got a killing accident.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
31. Internet is used through computers which					
Are basic machines.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
32. Through internet, you can easily					
connect persons.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
33. I like Dr. Mahmoud because he is a very					
educated person.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
34. He has many economical problems.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
35. I didn't see someone on the way to your house.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
36. I don't think I have ever red this book.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
37. I never have been to see that film at cinema.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
38. The life is very nice.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
39. You are man of his word.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
40. I bought the book which I liked it.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
41. In Yemen, schools remain closed on winter.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
42. This application should be submitted					
in June 16, 2009.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
43. Ammar was between so many students yesterday.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)
44. She looked sad yesterday.	(E)	(N)	(A)	(B)	(C)

45. My daughter is very handsome.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

46. Salma sends her best regards to you.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

47. You have to seek for the book.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

48. She makes her homework immediately

    after class.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
49. She cannot transfer her feelings.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

50. She has been affected properly in this situation.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

51. I have come strictly now.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

52. The life is very nice.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

53. There are many people speak English.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

54. My ambition which I'm proud of it will

    lead me to success.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
55. Has she a book?   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

56. Why Aziza has gone to Sana'a?   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

57. When the class begins, the students were

    excited and go asleep.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
58. It is my hope to become a translator but

    my problem was that I didn't have so much words. (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
59. My father bought me a good watch

    and it is still with me.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
60. But when Oil exported, all Yemeni

    people are happy.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
61. I didn't see nobody in the lecture today.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

62. Our President is helpable to his people. I like him. (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

63. Your sound is nice like that of singers.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

64. In Yemen, there is no white and nice ice.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

65. Yemeni TV contains a lot of educational programs. (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

66. In my opinion, English is easy to educate

    it in Yemen.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
67. Every day I come to school on foot.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

68. . …and these consist my typical day.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

69. This car took my attention.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

70. . Excessive use of internet hurts the mind.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

71. Tonight, I am going to stay at home with myself. (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

72. It is sure that one day Samia will pass

    her examinations.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

73. I had amazing experience last week.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

74. Salem is a student, isn't it? (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

75. Neither Ali or Amena is my close friend. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

76. A lot of sheep is grazing. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

77. Her father is working in office. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

78. She waited for me to 5 o'clock. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

79. Sausan's mother died in infancy. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

80. A scientific work has to be experimented. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

81. Salwa requires her father to support her ideas. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

82. I will communicate with you via email. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

83. I look happy. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

84.   By this way, we can solve the problem. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

85.   He is a strong smoker. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

86.   He left this town to get a career. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

87.   There are not many occupations in the village. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

88. I travel to the university by bus. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

89. Yemeni people enjoy the democracy. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

90. He denied to help me. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

91. This is the teacher who I like. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

92. Is it possible come now? (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

93. What you bought? (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

94. You will come when? (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

95. You did what yesterday? (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

96. My brother has left smoking. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

97. They came late yesterday and go

directly to cinema. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

98. The marriage in Yemen is good because girls

got married very young. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

99. He didn't come up to now. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

100. Ali and Mariam asked about our journey. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

101. Our Union Students helps us a lot. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

102. You must keep this rule by heart. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

103. I am an ambitionable person in my life. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

104. After Reunification, many Yemenis go to

cities to get better careers. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

105. Tomorrow, I have a party of my day I was born. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

106. When I get up I change my clothes. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

107. We must produce our decision. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

108. I think it is a spend of money to buy cigarettes. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

109. Is it this person you have spoken about whom. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

110. Ali went to home early. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

111. The number of people speaking

   English are large. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

112. A lot of sheep is gazing. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

113. I bought these book from Sana'a. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

114. Neither Ali or Amena is my close friend. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

115. Who study well does well in the exam. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

116. She works hard but she fail in the exam. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

117. Studying in Yemen is without systematicity. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

118. In Fridays people visit us. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

119. When I sit to watch TV, my mother scolded me. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

120. We find our students here are more polite. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

121. Our ideas were refused. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

122. These principles are based on Islamic standards. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

123. This man is doubtful. He always lies. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

124. I have a suspect about her. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

125. My ambition is become a doctor. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

126. When I visit my family, I look happy. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

127. Internet is a collection of computers….. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

128. He will not let me to see his notes. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

129. I study today at home with myself. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

130. There are many ways to protecting people. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

131. Internet makes the world to become small village. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

132. The internet contacts people together. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

133. How many are there people in the world. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

134. My hobby is to listen to records. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

135. I haven't seen someone here. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

136. In the city there are many careers. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

137. Mixed education in Yemen is refused. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

138. The computer is a useful machine. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

139. I hope to see you in my future. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

140. It is sure that one day Aziza will be a professor. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

141. She rejected to come with me. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

142. You must explain this, Sir. (E) (N) (A) (B) (C)

143. Is Sir is there?   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
144. All students finish their job in school.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
145. Internet was established in U.S.A.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
146. This idea is more clear.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
147. The purpose of internet is to exchange
     information between countries.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
148. My information about this book is not mush.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
149. You can communicate with me by email.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
150. Up to now is studied English.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
151. I never have gone to the cinema.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
152. Teaching English not is good in Yemen.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
153. Yemen depends on oil exportation in its expenses.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
154. The city is better than village in works.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
155. Dr. Mahmoud is very expert in syntax.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
156. Today we will discuss about speech sounds.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
157. Aziza likes very much English.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
158. I am seeing him. He is walking there.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
159. I am finished now.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
160. …and it is our great enemy.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
161. He prefers Spoken class that grammar class.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
162. Spoken class is my best class.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
163. This problem is not dissolved yet.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
164. What you said not good.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
165. …and after that I decided to back home.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
166. The teacher gave us many homeworks to do.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
167. One has to do his work.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
168. Manal is working very hardly.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
169. No one can't play chess.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
170. Internet is a group of computers linked to each
     other.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
171. It is better to live in Ibb than to leave
     for Sana'a.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
172. This tree is very tall.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
173. The meeting starts 3.30 pm.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)
174. …but the internet is very weak in Yemen.   (E)   (N)   (A)   (B)   (C)

Thank you so much!

Each of the following sentences involves _one_ syntactic error, please; try to indentify and correct it as shown in the example:

Example: This is man who came yesterday. ➔ This is **the** man who came yesterday.

Answer keys: the students are supposed to

1. (**A**) University student always comes to class on time.
2. (**The**) Sun always rises in (**the**) east and sets in the west.
3. I saw an (**a**) one-eyed person in the shop.

4. (**The**) Nile is located in Egypt.

5. The(**--**) life is very nice.

6. (**A**) Man came to meet you.

7. A cat has (**a**) tail.

8. A cat chased (**a**) rat.

9. You are (**a**) man of his word.

10. I have seen a (**an**) apple on that tree.

11. They have established an (**a**) united association.

12. Can you give me a (**--**) books?

13. I had a (**an**) amazing experience last week.

14. It has been (**an**) hour since he came.

15. An (**--**) earth is round.

16. Ali and Fatma comes (**come**) so early.

17. There comes (**come**) our teachers.

18. Salem is a student, isn't it (**he**)?

19. Who study (**studies**) well does well in the exam.

20. There is (**are**) many students in our class.

21. I(**am**) going to school with my friends.

22. Neither Ali or (**nor**) Amena is my close friend.

23. I has (**have**)cooked a delicious meal.

24. I bought the book which I liked (**--**) it.

25. My father he (**--**) will come.

26. Abdu is taller than I (**me**).

27. Gold is (*more*)expensive than silver.

28. Sameera went to (--)home.

29. She is enough good. (*good enough*)

30. I have (*am*) twelve years old.

31. They have visiting (*visited*) us.

32. The books has (*have*) been bought.

33. They can to (--) write their lessons well.

34. The man who wrote the books are (*is*) my friend.

35. The cars are drove (*driven*) fast.

36. Do (*does*)Ali play chess?

37. Is (*Are*) your parents here?

38. A lot of sheep is (*are*)gazing.

39. Sara cannot singing (*sing*).

40. I bought these book (*books*)from Sana'a

41. He is good in (*at*) writing.

42. Aziza was afraid from (*of*) the teacher so she did not come to class.

43. He is interested with(*in*) me.

44. I am fond by (*of*)reading.

45. I usually go to school by (*on*) foot.

46. I met him in (*at*) college a week ago.

47. We will have our meeting at (*on*) Thursday.

48. You were born on (*in*) 1989.

49. I may visit you in (*at*)5.30 p.m.

50. The Yemeni unification has been achieved on (*in*) 1990.

51. My father was waiting to (*for*) me.

52. She got married with (*to*)Ali.

53. Her father is working in (*at*) office.

54. This application should be submitted in (*on*) June 16, 2009.

55. Amatu arrived in (*at*) Ibb last Monday.

56. In Aden, we cannot swim on (*in*) summer.

57. We live at (*in*) Al'udain Street.

58. The number of people speaking English are (*is*) large.

59. I have been writing for this morning.

60. This job is more sweet (*sweeter*) to me.

61. One of the books are (*is*)broken.

62. This tree is more taller (*taller*) than that one.

63. Muntaha has to look about (*after*) her old grandmother.

64. It is raining outside, she should has (*have*) brought her raincoat.

65. When we are out, she looks from (*after*) the children.

66. I was not successful in find (*finding*) that book.

67. She makes him to go (*go*)home.

68. Nabeel allowed me (*to*)go early.

69. Ammar makes me understanding (*understand*) the point.

70. In Yemen, schools remain closed on (*in*)winter.

71. If I am here, you saw (*will see*) me.

72. I have bought this book by 1000 Rials.

73. She waited for me to 5 o'clock.

74. I like so much English.

75. Did you know when is Ali (*Ali is*)coming?

76. They have given a book me (*me a book*).

77. I saw a boy good (*good boy*).

78. Our teacher is enough intelligent (*intelligent enough*).

79. When you are (*are you*) coming?

80. I am nonhappy (*unhappy*) in my life.

Appendix V-B   **Answer keys of Multiple Choice Test**

The answers to Multiple Choice Test which were expected from the respondents of the study are presented below.

01➜a	21➜b
02➜ b	22➜d
03➜d	23➜b
04➜d	24➜b
05➜b	25➜b
06➜c	26➜b
07➜c	27➜d
08➜d	28➜a
09➜c	29➜c
10➜a	30➜b
11➜c	31➜a
12➜b	32➜a
13➜b	33➜d
14➜a	34➜b
15➜c	35➜a
16➜b	36➜c
17➜d	37➜b
18➜a	38➜a
19➜b	39➜c
20➜c	40➜a

Answer keys of Error Correction Test

The answers to Correction Test the respondents of the study were supposed to provide are listed below.

1. *afraid of*	38. *tall*	75. *beautiful*
2. *laughed at*	39. *jobs*	76. *quick*
3. *greets*	40. *voice*	77. *absence*
4. *interested in*	41. *oven*	78. *unhappy*
5. *in this way*	42. *recorded*	79. *unclear*
6. *realizes*	43. *correct*	80. *ambiguous*
7. *look for*	44. *difficult circumstances*	
8. *look after*	45. *rejected*	
9. *on foot*	46. *quality*	
10. *waiting for*	47. *go*	
11. *awaiting*	48. *dish*	
12. *does her homework*	49. *invite*	
13. *fatal*	50. *favorite*	
14. *valuable advice*	51. *rare*	
15. *make*	52. *nice*	
16. *express*	53. *nice*	
17. *nearby*	54. *beautiful*	
18. *deeply*	55. *felt*	
19. *right*	56. *enough*	
20. *trained*	57. *solve*	
21. *trained*	58. *revise*	
22. *heavy*	59. *listens to*	
23. *strong*	60. *borrowed*	
24. *leg*	61. *an hour ago*	
25. *false*	62. *an aye*	
26. *defeated*	63. *did*	
27. *defeated*	64. *yesterday*	

28. reverberated

29. free

30. job

31. jobs

32. work

33. chances

34. help

35. free time

36. snow

37. offers

65. watching

66. accept

67. name

68. worse

69. home

70. difference

71. paid

72. with my pleasure

73. fluently

74. ignorant

Translate the following Arabic passage into English.

الانترنت عبارة عن مجموعة من الحاسبات الالكترونية الخاصة و العامة مرتبطة ببعضها البعض عن طريق التوصيل بهذه الشبكة عبر العالم و ذلك لغرض نبيل و هو تبادل المعلومات و المشاركة فيها, و يقدر عدد المشتركين والحاسبات في هذه الشبكة بما يزيد عن ثلاثة ملايين حاسب و مشترك. في السبعينات من القرن العشرين, بدأت الشركات و الجامعات و المؤسسات الحكومية باستخدام شبكات الحاسب الالكتروني على نطاق واسع و بدأت الانترنت بالظهور و كان ذلك نتيجة ربط هذه الشبكات ببعضها البعض.

لقد كانت البداية الحقيقية و الفعلية لظهور الانترنت في الولايات المتحدة الامريكية و خصوصاً في وزارة الدفاع (البنتاغون) لأغراض حربية وسياسية. اما عن كيفية استخدام الانترنت فتقوم الشركات و المنضمات و حتى الافراد بوضع المعلومات على شبكة الانترنت بحيث يمكن الاطلاع عليها من اي حاسب يتم توصيله بالانترنت. و هذه المعلومات تأ خذ اشكالاً متنوعة منها المقروء و المرئي و المسموع (و هذه المعلومات قد لا تكون بالضرورة صحيحة.)

و للأنترنت اهمية كبيرة في حياة الطالب على وجه الخصوص حيث يمكن للطالب الاستفادة من الانترنت بالبحث و استخراج المعلومات و البحوث و الاستفادة من خبرات الاخرين كلا في مجال تخصصه.

The Expected Translation

Internet works through personal and public computers connected to each other on the one hand and connecting them to the web worldwide, on the other hand, for a noble purpose which is sharing and exchanging information. It has been estimated that the number of subscribers and computers in the web is about three millions. Since the seventies of the 20th century, the real beginning of internet, companies, universities and governmental organizations have started using online web by means of connecting these networks together worldwide.

The real and actual beginning of the use of internet has been in the United States especially in the Ministry of Defence (Pentagon) for military and political purposes. As for how the internet is used, it simply happens when such organizations, companies and even individuals upload and information on the web so that you can access them from any computer connected to the internet. This information has several and different types including readable, audible and visual (and this information may not be necessarily true.)

In fact, internet becomes of great importance for all people in general and students in particular because students, as researchers, could make use of the advantages and facilities the internet has in searching for information and get benefits from the experiences of others each in his/her field of specialization.

The following are two samples of the Translation Test.

Sample 1

Internet is group of general and partilcur elcronic computers relat together be connecting in this web with the world. And for noble purpos is to exchangeing the informations and partispates in it.valuation the nuber of computers and partispants in this wed more than 3 millons computer and partispant. In the sevnties from 20th century companys, universties and institutions of government starts to use to use web of elcronic computer web in wild field then internt starts to appear and this as a result of connect this web together. The real and effecteve begining for appear Internet in u.s.a. specially in (BentGon) in minsity of defence for military and political targets. About the using of internet companys, organizations even the person works to put the informations in the web of intnet. So

this informations take a varity shaps. It's heard, visionary, Alos you cand read it this information haven't been necesary right.

Intrnet has a big importance in the student live in Recpct way that student can make benfit from the intnet by research and ixtract the information, reserches and make the befit from others experences in every spesaliztion they have.

Sample 2

The internet it is a group of the especial and general Computers which conect with aech other by the sue in this Net in the whole world for agood porpose which is exchange the informations and partnership or partaking in it. It could be the number of the participants and the computer in the government of companies by the use of computer internet wide within. The internet started to appare, therfero join or link this Net with each ather. The real and actual apparence of Net in U.S.A.; and especially in the ministery of definse or protction for political and war porposes. What abuot how sue the Net ot internet, the companes and organization even the poeple or members are put the informations on the internet and that Could to know about it from any computer that conect it with internet. This informations take various shaps such as: readable, visibale and hearing. This informations it could be not truth in the necssarly. it is very importance for internet in the life of student at the especial case. The student has useful form infromations and the useful from ather experiense; both in his aspect of department.

Appendix V-E   Samples of the Students' Free Composition Test

The respondents of the study were asked to write on any one of the following topics in not more than 150 words. The following are the topics along with a sample for each.

1) **Your first day at college   (145 words)**

My frist day in collge not happyness day for me because the building very big. I saw many students whch not know. I surpresid how other mnay studnts in classroom. I was not use to the change form school to collge. In the school the period only 45 minutes but in collge the lecture 3 hours. So I am very tired form the long of lecture and the doctr speking English without Arbic words. Then I realize of the big different between the school and the collge. When the lecture ended we go to the bofia to eat sandwish and meet freinds a lot from the sections of English and history and geography and Arabic and Islamics. Even after finish we the lecture, enter other lecture. Smoetimes, we took tow lectures and the teachr deosn't chnge the teacher learns us grammar and spoken one techer. In fainally I go to home very tird but it is vry good study in collge which bset than school.

2) **Your ambition in life. (137 words)**

My ambtian in the lfe it is to be a doctr in universty Ibb since childlhood. my dreem achieved it in my ambtin because when I speaking English good I will lern my students good and explian them all things and qustions. becuase my conrty need a lot profsors in univestys to learn our students. specilly doctors englsh who will buld our minds in language englsh. becuase I'm poor I went becom doctor in the univesty to help my fathr who sick from work and him will happy when he saw me in univesty. alos we need spek englsh for our futur contry wich englsh is not teaching very good. so when I becom doctor I will happy and my fathr he will happy when hlep him from my mony and he will do duaa for me.

3) **What English means to you… (113 words)**

English is men a lot because of many raesons. English is everywhere the U.S.A…… English talked by a lot person in an earth. All students studying E in schools. English literature is read in E. in the net all word in English so I have speak it. Engilsh words mnay and mnay than any langauge in the world.

English torists speak E so it is importans learn it. I am love English so I feel learn it soon. In radio. All speaking are in E so I have lern it to know saying it. English is in trade to buy new things and travel outsid. I thing that I have to speake E.

4) **The Reunification of Yemen (132 words)**

The unifcation is good becuase the reasons, Reason one that it is help in education. For example building school and college. The tow reason enconomics. it is has a lot of hospitls and places for sick. it also increaze poeple so you can find jobs fastly.

The unity of yeman has help many persons to have employ. For example, I be employmet because of unity. The unifcation making yamen strong after weak in Imam period. The unity has has connected the people to go every where south or east. The unifcation not just an object but also a dream for a long time. The news achievement can't counted.

The unifcation has problems at 1990 some bad gus wanted to heve thier lands agian. They defeated by north people so it was safely.

5) **A memorable event in your life**

(no respondent has written on this topic)

Coursebook/workbook Four (1st secondary)

Unit One

1. Revision

Unit Two

1. Description: people, places and things
2. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
3. Grammar
   a. Relative clauses with *who, which, where etc.*
   b. Using linking words such as *and, but, because , so , therefore, whereas etc*

Unit Three

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension about airport
   b. Writing a letter
2. Grammar
   a. Expressing reasons and purposes with *so, because, therefore*
3. Use
   a. Request making for people
   b. Invitation making

Unit Four

1. Use
   a. Offer making
   b. Request making for things
2. Grammar
   a. Reported speech
   b. Tag question

Unit Five

1. Use
   a. Introducing people to each other
2. Grammar
   a. Conditional sentences
   b. Modals such as *can, could, will, would, may might, must, should etc*
   c. Simple present tense

Unit Six

1. Use
   a. Describing places (question asking and answering)
2. Completing information tables and tree diagrams

Unit Seven

1. Use
   a. Offer making
2. Grammar
   a. Present perfect tense
   b. Construction: you forgot to mention…..
   c. Reported speech

3. Skills
   a. Application letters writing
   b. Form filling'

Unit Eight

1. Use
   a. More about describing places
   b. Describing courses
2. Grammar
   a. Expressing results using *so, therefore etc.*

Unit Nine

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing: vocabulary learning through composition
2. Grammar
   a. Different forms of pronouns
   b. Expressing contrast with *although*

Unit Ten

1. Revision

Unit Eleven

1. skills
   a. Reading comprehension and practice
   b. Learning vocabulary
2. Grammar
   a. Passive voice

Unit Twelve

1. Use
   a. Interview: role playing
2. Grammar
   a. Comparison: *-er,-est, more*
   b. Present continues and its passive voice construction
3. Skills
   a. Writing: completing paragraphs
   b. Reading comprehension

Unit Thirteen

1. Use
   a. Expressing contrasts
   b. Giving advice
   c. Giving opinions
   d. Following instructions

Unit Fourteen

1. Skills
   a. Writing articles
   b. Dialogue practicing
2. Use
   a. Following instruction

Unit Fifteen

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension: visiting a factory
   b. Describing a process

Unit Sixteen

1. Skills
   a. Writing
      1) Completing a passage
      2) Notetaking
2. Reading comprehension and vocabulary practice
3. Describing a process and completing tree diagrams

Unit Seventeen

1. Revision

Unit Eighteen

1. Revision

The English Course for Yemen

Couirsebook/workbook five: Scientific Section

Unit One

1. Revision

Unit Two

1. Skills
    a. Expressing mathematical signs
    b. Practicing measurement
2. Grammar
    a. If-conditionals
    b. Linking words: *so, because, while, therefore, however*
    c. Forming adverbs

Unit Three

1. Use
    a. Polite request making with *Could I……….*
    b. Expressing advice about the past with *should (not)have ………*
2. Description of things in terms of *size, colour, weight material, lines*
3. Reading: self study

Unit Four

1. Skills
    a. Writing a paragraph to describe a chart
    b. Reading comprehension
2. Grammar
    a. *Can't have, must have*
    b. Prepositions
    c. Using the expression: *what's it used for*
3. Self study

Unit Five

1. Revision

Unit Six

1. Revision

Unit Seven

1. Revision
2. Expressing fraction
3. Skills
    a. writing a business letter
4. Self study
    a. Reading (from the Reader)

Unit Eight

1. Grammar
    a. Conditional sentences with *Unless, if not*
2. Self study:

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a. Reading (from the Rader)

Unit Nine

1. Grammar
   a. Conditional sentences: Type 2
   b. Action and results
2. Carrying out a simple scientific experiment

Unit Ten

1. Describing geometrical shapes: *a rectangular, number signs*
2. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Learning vocabulary
   c. Understanding and completing graphs
3. Degree of certainty (*definitely, probably, possibly don't know*)
4. Describing a process

Unit Eleven

1. Revision
   a. Grammar (tenses, relative clauses, adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, conditionals prepositions etc.
2. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing: completing (paragraphs)
3. Science items
4. Degree of certainty
5. Self study: The Reader

Unit One

1. Revision

Unit Two

1. Grammar
   a. Conditionals: *if-sentences*
   b. Joining sentences
   c. Adjectives and adverbs
2. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing compositions

Unit Three

1. Use
   a. Polite request making with *could I possibly………………?*
   b. Advice about the past with *should (not) have…………*
2. Describing things in terms of *size, colour, weight, material*
3. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing: filling in forms
4. Self study (the Reader)

Unit Four

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Comparing and contrasting information elicited from graphs
2. Use
   a. Giving opinions with *I think …………….*
   b. Using *can't have/ must have…….*
3. Grammar: conditionals

Unit Five

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Understanding and completing graphs
2. Use
   a. Introducing oneself
   b. Request making
3. Grammar
   a. Conditionals with *unless*
   b. Joining sentences

Unit Six

1. Skills
   a. Mechanics (Spelling, punctuation, dictation, handwriting)
   b. Writing composition describing graphs, completing a paragraph
   c. Reading comprehension and Vocabulary
   d. Process practice: ordering the steps of a process

2. Asking and answering comprehension questions
3. Grammar
   a. Conditionals, adverb and adjective formation
   b. Must have, can't have should have
4. Use
   a. Request making

Unit Seven

1. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing a paragraph
2. Grammar: Conditionals, 1, 2 and negation
3. Understanding information tables

Unit Eight

1. Grammar
   a. Conditionals: *If……if not…..*
   b. Passive voice
   c. Joining words with *so…………..that*
2. Skills
   a. Writing: writing letters
   b. Reading comprehension

Unit Nine

1. Grammar:
   a. forming *Yes/no* and *Wh- question*
   b. Indirect speech
2. Skills
   a. Writing personal letters
   b. Reading dialogues
   c. Addressing envelopes

Unit Ten

1. Telephone conversation
2. Completing information tables
3. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension

Unit One

1. Revision

Unit Two

1. Grammar
   a. Verb phrase
   b. Passive in writing a report
2. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Learning new words
3. Self study (the Reader)

Unit Three

1. Grammar
   a. If& when sentences
2. Definitions (scientific terms)
3. Skills
   a. Writing (completing a paragraph)
4. Self study (The Reader)

Unit Four

1. Labeling and classification
2. Describing a scientific process
3. Grammar
   a. Conditionals: if1 & if2

Unit Five

1. Grammar
   a. Modals
   b. Using so……….that…………..such
   c. BE and HAVE in Scientific issues
2. Self study (The Reader)

Unit Six

1. Revision

Unit Seven

1. Description
2. Classification of objects
3. Skills
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing a paragraph (scientific content)

Unit Eight

1. New scientific words
2. The properties of a substance
3. Selfstudy (The Reader)

Unit Nine

1. Chemical symbols
2. Skills
    a. How to use a dictionary
    b. Reading comprehension about rocks
3. Grammar
    a. Passive in scientific contents

Unit Ten

1. Revision

Unit One

1. Revision

Unit Two

1. Using a dictionary and understanding words in contexts
2. Skills
   a. Writing a paragraph
3. Grammar
   a. Question formation: Yes/no questions
   b. Using *as a result*, *used to*

Unit Three

1. Conversation (speaking on the phone)
2. Asking and giving directions
3. Having something done and doing it oneself
4. Comparisons: revision
5. How to write a cheque in English
6. How to process a cheque

Unit Four

1. Skills
   a. Reading texts about rocks
   b. Reading comprehension
   c. Practicing using a dictionary
2. Grammar
   a. Comparison and superlative degree
   b. Passive in processes
   c. Conditionals
3. Information tables

Unit Five

1. Expressing preference
2. Dictionary practice
3. Playing roles in conversation

4. Skills
   a. Writing a text based on another text
   b. Dictation practice
5. Grammar: conditional (the unreal past)

Unit Six

1. Revision

Unit Seven

1. Use.
   a. Giving opinions and reasons
   b. Expressing agreement and disagreement

2. Skills
    a. Writing a paragraph

Unit Eight

1. Skills
    a. Reading: passages about food and the balanced diet
2. Classification
3. Vocabulary practicing
4. Conversation practicing
5. Grammar
    a. Tenses
    b. Passives
    c. Conditionals
6. Skills
    a. Writing parallel paragraphs
    b. Writing essays

Unit Nine

1. Literary forms: similes with ***like, as…***
2. Describing people (revision)
3. Grammar
    a. Joining sentences using different linking words
    b. Conditionals, passives, tenses etc.
4. Vocabulary and structure building
5. Writing essays and paragraphs

Unit Ten

1. Revision

Appendix V-G   English Department Curriculum

	No.	Name of course		No	Name of course	
Freshmen	1.	Grammar I			Grammar II	
	2.	Reading I			Reading II	
	3.	Writing I			Writing II	
	4.	Spoken E. I			Spoken E. II	
	5.	Arabic I			Arabic II	
	6.	Computer App.I			Introduction to Ling	
	7.	Islamic Culture				

Reading I

Objectives

1. To train learners to skim, scan and read in details.
2. To develop learners vocabulary.

Contents

Reading for pleasure

1. Fiction
2. Nonfiction
3. Reading speed
4. How to improve your reading
5. Prediction
6. Previewing
7. Guessing the meaning from context
8. Scanning
9. Finding the topic
10. Using synonyms
11. Using pronouns

Reading II

Objectives

1. To train the learners to skim, scan and read in detail.
2. To develop the learners' vocabulary.
3. To train learners to develop the mental reading skills such as inferring, comparing, classifying and ordering.

Contents

1. Finding the topic of the paragraph
2. Identifying the topic sentence
3. Types of paragraphs.

(Note: the topics for Reading I&II are chosen from **Reading Power)**

Grammar I

Objectives

The principal aim of this course is to consolidate what the students are supposed to have learned at the secondary level. The course will also ensure that all the students attain a minimal level of competence in English.

Contents

Word-classes under which the following items are taught

1. Semantic and formal features of nouns and pronouns
2. Verbs: use of auxiliary and main verbs; conjunction of verbs; finite and no-finite verbs; function of the *to*- infinitive, *-ing* form and the past participle form; transitive and intransitive verbs
3. Adjectives: kind of adjectives and their uses
4. Adverbs: kind of adverbs and their uses
5. Prepositions: preposition of time, date, place, travel, movement and instrument; co-occurrence restrictions between prepositions and some word-classes
6. Conjunctions: conjunctions and their sues
7. Articles: articles and their different uses.

Grammar II

Objectives

The main objective of this course is to consolidate and further the knowledge of transformation.

Contents

Transformations:

1. Direct and indirect speech.
2. Active and passive voice.
3. Declarative sentences into interrogative sentences.
4. Affirmative to negative sentences and vice versa.
5. Question tag.
6. Exclamatory sentences into declarative sentences and vice versa.
7. Interchange of degree of comparison without changing the meaning.

Writing I

Objectives

This course is intended to enable the students to: write paragraphs, use mechanical devices in writing; write notes and messages; write personal and official letters; write descriptions; and develop an outline readable text.

Contents

1. Writing as a process
2. Writing a paragraph
3. The stages of the writing process

Prewriting
1. Getting the ideas to write about by note taking
2. The format of writing a paragraph
3. Brainstorming
4. Organizing the ideas
5. Writing the fist draft
6. Editing the first draft
7. Wring the final copy

The English sentence
1. The simple sentence structure
2. The subject of the Simple sentence
3. The verb of the simple sentence

Writing a paragraph outline

Rules of Capitalization
 Punctuations
1. Comma rules

The organization of the paragraph
1. Time order paragraph (Instructions)
2. Space order paragraph (d description)
3. The compound sentences
4. Sentences combining

Writing II

Objectives

This course is intended to enable the students to: write paragraphs in a variety of topics; formal and informal letters; applications; short compositions; and readable story from a given outline.

Contents

1. Getting ideas by clustering
2. Describing a place
3. Paragraph Organization
4. The topic sentence

The three parts of the paragraph
1. The listing order paragraph
2. The concluding paragraph
3. The detailed out line for a paragraph

Stating reasons
1. Using reason and examples
2. Sentence structure
3. Independent and dependent clauses
4. The complex sentence
5. Four comma rules
6. Capitalizations: two more rules

Letter writing
1. Personal letter form
2. Business letter

Expressing Opinions
1. Facts and opinions
3. Punctuating adjectives

Spoken I

Objectives

To develop the learners' oral and aural skills through practicing English language in intensive manners.

Contents

1. Recognize and produce sounds of English using phonetic symbols
2. Greeting and introducing people
3. Listen and respond to recorded text (e.g. dialogue)
4.Shopping
5.Hobbies

Note: recorded materials (e.g. dialogues, listening passages and exercises are given from time to time.

Spoken II

Objectives

1. To develop the learners' oral and aural skills through practicing English language in a range of functional areas.
2. To develop effective and confident communication in English.

Contents

1. Description: people and place.
2. Accommodation: location, ….rooms, furniture and facilities
3. Events
4. Description: opinions and facts
5. Instructions and advice
6. Head and the body
7. Jobs: qualities and skills
8. Discussions and arguments

Note: recorded materials related to the topics mentioned above can be given to the learners from time to time.

Introduction to Linguistics

It is usually taken for granted that this course discusses the different modules of language, viz. syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics in addition to some other related areas such as language origins, language-brain relationship, sound, word, syntactic, meaning and social systems, communication with all its contexts, discourse analysis and its approaches, language learning and teaching aspects.

Note: the items included in this course depend heavily on the teacher who teaches it. Different teachers select different items but they are in one way or another related to what has been mentioned above.

The above courses are prescribed in level one, departments of English, be they Arts or Education in almost all Arab and Yemeni Universities in addition to some requirement courses such as **Arabic I &II Computer App. I** and **Islamic Culture** in the Faculties of Arts and some educational courses in the Faculties of Education as requirement courses, too.

Source: Department of English Curriculum, Faculty of Arts, Ibb University.

The Arab World

SYNOPSIS

L2 ACQUISITION AND SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ERROR GRAVITY IN UNIVERSITY LEARNERS' ENGLISH OF THE ARAB WORLD

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

APPLIED LINGUISTICS

by

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The present study entitled *"L2 Acquisition and Syntactic and Semantic Error Gravity in University Learners' English of the Arab World"* is an attempt made to examine how English is acquired by Arab learners at the University level through examining the serious syntactic and semantic errors and how serious they are by means of statistically computed procedures. This effort has been made at the juncture of time when there is an ultimate concern about how to make English language learning far better and meet the expected goals set forth by language policy and planning experts. In fact, for about 50 years or so, there has been a growing need to teaching English to generations all over the globe for the value English language has in all aspects of life. Though Arab countries have been teaching English for a long time, they are still in deplorable conditions due to the failure of this process and thus there is an urgent need for conducting studies that can provide solutions to this dilemma. In fact, researchers (e.g. Ellis 1997, Gass and Selinker 2008, White 2003, Saville-Troike 2006, Dulay et. al 1982, James 1998, Cook 2003, Chomsky 1968, Tomasello 2007) believe that acquiring English as a second language (ESL) is a complicated phenomenon. Therefore, such researchers and applied linguists have conducted a great deal of studies in the field, cross-sectional or longitudinal, with children or adults, on normal or impaired subjects.

In fact, such researchers try to find answers to many and varied questions such as how second language acquisition (SLA) takes place, what is the best method to be used, why some learners succeed while others not, why only a few learners achieve native or near-native competence/proficiency while others get fossilised at a particular stage, what strategies learners employ in their learning, is there any effect of the mother tongue (MT/L1) of the learners affecting their success, if so how can it be accounted for and hence, avoided, are children better acquirers than adults or it is otherwise? among many others. Consequently, several language acquisition theories have been constructed including *behaviourism*, *menatalism*, *cognitivism*, *interactionism*, *acculturationism* and several issues related to the field have been emerged. Further, such researchers also seek answers to questions such as why do learners commit errors, how can such errors be studied, accounted for, where, when should these errors be corrected and who will correct which error (Lee 1990) among other related questions. Accordingly, several theories concerned with the study of errors such as Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA), Interlanguage

(IL), Performance Analysis (PA), Discourse Analysis (DA), etc. have been constructed and several issues related to the study of errors have been emerged.

As far as the study of errors is concerned, teachers expect their students to speak errorless English (Burt 1975), however, errors keep recurring and thus, different and diverse views and attitudes towards errors have been held. As early as the 50s and well into the 60s of the 20th Century, committing of errors was viewed as something sinful on the part of SL learners which have to be eradicated (Brooks 1960 cited in Hendrickson 1978). However, there are now a considerable number of researchers (Corder 1967, 1973, 1981, Selinker 1972, 1992, 1993, Richards 1972, 1974, Burt 1975, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974a, Dulay et al. 1982, Hendrickson 1978, 1980, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974, James, 1977, 1998, Han 2000, 2004, Gass and Selinker 2008) among many others who believe that SL learners' errors are to be taken seriously due to what they imply. These researchers are interested in errors because they are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that language learners employ to acquire a language (Richards 1974, Taylor 1975b, Dulay and Burt 1974a). However, a question came to the surface concerning the issue of whether all errors are to be taken equally or there are some which require prior attention to others.

To determine this, researchers begin to look at what is called "Error Gravity" (EG). By definition, error gravity verifies which errors are serious and how serious they are. Thus, EG studies have been paid much importance to for their value in SLA (Salem 2007). In fact, Nickel (1971, 1973), Johansson (1973) and Olsson (1972, 1973, 1974) were the pioneers of such studies in their seminal papers on EG. Consequently, several criteria for judging the gravity of an error or a group of errors have been emerged. These criteria include ***comprehensibility, intelligibility, irritation*** and/or ***grammaticality***. However, a considerable number of researchers (e.g. Dresdner 1973, Allwright 1975, Olsson 1972, 1973, 1974, Davis 1982, James 1977, 1998, Lennon 1991, Awasthi 1995, Tong 2000, Palmer 1980, Schachter 1974, Sheorey 1986, Hughes and Lascaratou 1982) have opined the inadequacy of involving Native Speakers (NSs) and/or Nonnative Speakers (NNSs) according to whose judgments, errors are to be judged as their subjectivity plays the main role in such judgments. Thus, such researchers ascertain that the appropriate criterion must be standardised as the results of which will be generalised and applied to similar studies on

different languages. They, therefore, have proposed and emphasised *error frequency* as a criterion. According to many researchers (e.g. Schachter 1974, James 1977, 1998, Palmer 1980), it is the repeatedly occurring errors which constitute the real gravity and hence, difficulty for L2 learners. James (1977:124), for instance, states: "[f]requency is an *essential ingredient when we assess the relative gravities of errors*. If a certain grammatical category is *employed three times more frequently* in natural English than some other category, then it presents learners with *three times the opportunity for error-making*—as well as *three times the opportunity for learning*" (emphasis mine).

Based on these views, Palmer (1980) proposes a statistical method for evaluating errors in the learners' linguistic production and the study at hand has employed this method, characterising and expressing the seriousness of errors in the syntactic and semantic production of Arabic speakers learning English at the University level and trying accordingly to establish a universal hierarchy of error categories based on the EG concluded with. However, only those errors committed by more than 50% of the subjects involved have been considered, classified and hence, regarded as serious. Those errors committed by less than 50% of the subjects have been considered *not serious* and hence, excluded. The seriousness of both types has been expressed in terms of a 3-point scale, viz. *most serious*, *serious* and *less serious*. In the course of expressing such seriousness, the issue of how much L1, i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English contribute to the committing of such errors has also been examined so as to determine to what extent these sources contribute to the overall gravity scored by both types of errors.

Thus, this dissertation is divided into six Chapters. Chapter one deals with a general introduction to the study. It begins with a brief overview of the Arab World, the social strata of the Arab people, the Educational System in general and English language teaching in particular in the Arab World both at school and university levels. It also examines and discusses methods, syllabi and curricula followed in teaching English language in the English Departments in the Arab universities taking Ibb University, Ibb, Yemen as an example. It also presents the statement of the problem, limitations of the study, hypotheses of the study and review of the literature. As far as the review of the literature is concerned, the important literature in the EG studies up to date has been reviewed. Our review to such EG studies has been done in

terms of ***authenticity vs. inauthenticity, subjective vs. objective assessment, serious error categories, error hierarchy or error gravity, nonlinguistic variables, communicative context, error gravity criteria, EG and language teaching*** and ***error frequency as a criterion***. In fact, these points have been discussed thoroughly where different and several views regarding each have been critically tackled pinpointing the different views held by different researchers and incorporating our own.

Chapter two incorporates the theoretical foundations underlying the present study. In this chapter, different SLA theories including ***behaviorism, mentalism, cognitivism, interactionism*** and ***acculturationism*** have been briefly discussed. Three SLA models, viz. *Spolsky's (1989), Ellis's (1993)* and *Krashen's (1980)* have been briefly examined. Some concepts related to SLA such as *linguistic competence and performance, communicative competence, strategic competence, SLA strategies including learning strategies (LSs) and communication strategies (CSs)* have been discussed. Several theories related to the study of errors including CA, CAH, EA, IL, PA and DA have been examined. Several fields related and necessary to the study of error including *fossilisation, plateau effect, transfer both negative and positive, the significance of the learners' errors, attitudes towards errors, types of errors, sources of errors, error correction* among others have been discussed. Such different theories, models and other issues and areas related to the study of SLA in general and to the study of errors in particular have been discussed.

Chapter three presents the methodology employed in this study. It presents and discusses the subjects of the study, viz. 102 Arab students majoring in English, level one. It also presents and discusses the questionnaires administered to Arab students and those distributed to Native Speakers of English, viz. 8 Americans, students in ***Study in Indian Program*** (SIIP), University of Hyderabad. It also presents the types of tests both objective tests including *Error Identification Test, Error Correction Test* and *Multiple Choice Test*, and subjective tests including *Translation Test* and *Free Composition Test*, the campuses where these tests were administered, namely, Ibb University Campus and Taiz University Campus. In this Chapter, an account of how errors are classified and tabulated is presented. Finally, it presents the corpus of the study and the EG method employed in the study, namely, Palmer's (1980).

Chapter four deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data: syntactic errors and their gravity. This Chapter provides an account of the syntactic errors obtained from our corpus and their seriousness. Such syntactic errors have been first classified into ten major categories, namely, ***prepositions, VP constructions, articles, subject-verb agreement, Yes/No question, negation, wh-questions, relative pronouns, personal pronouns*** and ***word order***. These categories have, in turn, been classified into further categories and subcategories depending on the errors identified in our corpus. The EG of each and every category and subcategory has been statistically computed and expressed.

Chapter five presents the analysis and interpretation of the data: semantic errors and their gravity. This Chapter presents an account of the semantic errors obtained from our corpus and their seriousness. The semantic errors obtained from our corpus have first been classified into six major categories, namely, ***lexical choice, distortion due to spelling, collocations, lexico-grammatical, formal misselections*** and ***formal misformations***. Such major categories have, in turn, been classified into further categories and subcategories depending on the errors indentified in our corpus. The EG of each and every category and subcategory has been statistically computed and expressed.

Chapter six accentuates the findings, conclusions and pedagogical implications of the study. Regarding the syntactic errors, it has been found that the ***most serious*** errors are those committed in the ***use of prepositions*** including **3344** frequent errors with a total gravity of **915.02** and the ***least serious*** errors are those committed in ***word order*** containing only **512** frequent errors with a total gravity of **177.48.** Between these two extremes lie the eight other categories which vary in their seriousness according to the EG scored by each category. Within the syntactic subcategories, it has been found that the ***most serious*** subcategory is ***substitution of prepositions*** including **1648** frequent syntactic errors, i.e. **8.45%** of the total syntactic errors committed in the whole study and scoring an overall EG of **401.99**. The ***least serious*** subcategory, however, is ***addition of personal pronouns*** including **501** frequent syntactic errors, i.e. **2.57%** of the total syntactic errors and scoring the lowest EG in the whole study, i.e. **158.20.**

Regarding the semantic errors, it has been found that the ***most serious*** category is ***lexical choice*** which scores **5221** frequent errors having a total EG of **1185.65.** The ***least serious*** category, however, is

formal misformations which includes **1794** frequent semantic errors and scoring a total EG of **417.29.** Between these two extremes lie the four other categories. Within the semantic subcategories, it has been found that the *most serious* subcategory is *assumed synonymy,* which belongs to *lexical choice*, including **2417** frequent semantic errors, i.e. **12.07%** of the total semantic errors committed in the whole study and scoring the highest EG, i.e. **486.83,** not only among semantic categories but in the whole study. The *least serious* subcategory is *prefix*, which belongs to *formal misselection*, including **539** frequent semantic errors, i.e. **2.69%** of the total semantic errors committed in the whole study and scoring an overall EG of **180.91**. These findings are summarised in the error hierarchies established for both syntactic and semantic categories and subcategories based on the EG concluded with (see Tables (46 & 47)).

Regarding the conclusions of the study, on the basis of the hypotheses set forth for this study, it has been concluded that *semantic errors committed by Arab learners of English at the university level are more serious than syntactic errors* and hence, the first hypothesis is *rejected* and the second is *accepted*. It has also been concluded that L2, i.e. English causes the Arab learners to commit more errors, be they syntactic or semantic, than L1, i.e. Arabic does and hence, the overall EG concluded with is ascribed to English. It has also been concluded that *semantics is more difficult for Arab learners of English to acquire than syntax*. Finally, based on the findings, error hierarchies established and the conclusions of this study, some pedagogical implications have been provided to applied linguists, syllabi and curricula designers, textbook developers and teachers to better English language learning/teaching process in the Arab schools in general and Arab Universities in particular. Based on the error seriousness concluded with, a technique for error correction has also been proposed.

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