

Chapter one

1-1 Introduction

Francis (1979) claims that English is the most important language in the world at the present time. In number of speakers it ranks second with approximately 275 million native speaking compared with 610 million native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Spanish comes next, with 210 million, followed by Russian with 130 million, followed by Hindu-Urdu and Arabic with 130 million each. Importance is not measured only by number. The worldwide use of English in diplomacy, commerce, and science is evidence of its importance in this regard. This phenomenon also serves to explain why many millions around the world find it desirable and sometimes necessary to learn it as a second or foreign language.

According to a recent research by the British Council, Barbara (2005) says English has official or special status in at least seventy-five countries with a total population of over two billion. English is spoken as a native language by around 375 million and as a second language by around 375 million speakers in the world. Speakers of English as a second language will soon outnumber those who speak it as a first language. Around 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language.

There is a tendency among many teachers of English abroad, especially in Europe and the British commonwealth, to assume that English

is studied chiefly as a means of becoming acquainted with the life, literature and institutions of the English speaking people. English is being taught as a tool for international understanding. English is a gateway to many countries such as Japan, India, The Arab World, and many other countries, as well as a gateway to Britain, America, Australia and the rest of the English speaking world (Abunniyaj, 1992).

Spoken by over 320,000,000 people, English is the most widely used of the spoken languages. In addition to its use in the United States and Great Britain, it has become increasingly important as a second language in other geopolitical areas. For example, English has become the language of instruction in the Philippines. It is taught by approximately 70,000 teachers of English in the secondary schools of Japan, it has been restored in the high school curriculum of the Dominican Republic, it has been increasingly the subject of study in African and Asian educational institutions. Now a principal argument for learning English as a second language is that there is a wealth of important publications in English not yet available in other languages. The importance of English as a second language is also attributable to high immigration quotas into the United States (Scot, 1971).

English is an important language and for its educational, instrumental and cultural values, English has been given the following status in the Palestinian curriculum.

1. English instruction begins in the first basic class.

2. English is allotted three 45 minute periods a week in the timetable of the first up to the fourth grades and four 45 minute periods a week in the high basic grades (5 - 10).
3. English is allotted five 45 minute periods a week in the timetable of the 11th and 12th scientific stream and six 45 minute periods to the 11th and 12th literary stream.
4. English is a compulsory subject required of all students in both basic and secondary grades and in public and private schools.

The responsibility for providing education and training lies with the Ministry of Education which has stated the principal aims of teaching English at the Secondary level as follows:

1. To develop the students ability to use current English for effective communication.
2. To widen the students knowledge of English through exposure to writing in English of various kinds (Palestinian curriculum center, 1996).

1-1-1 Role of Writing

Writing, as a productive skill, plays a significant role in facilitating learners acquisition of a second language. It helps to solidify the students grasp of vocabulary and structure (Chastain, 1977).

Zinkin (1988) said that few lucky people are blessed with such orderly minds that they know instinctively not only what they want to say,

but also how, and in what order, they want to say it. However, most people are not such clear thinkers. Even when they know what they want to say, they may have to decide how they want to say it. To be most effective they have to work things out first. Having decided on what to say it neatly, clearly, simply, coherently and consistently, presentation is very important. It makes reading faster and easier.

A realistic attitude about writing must be built on the idea that writing is a skill. It is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking and like any skill it can be learned (John Langan, 2000).

Richards (1990) states that the nature and significance of writing have often been underestimated in language teaching, and in FL teaching writing has often been synonymous with teaching grammar and sentence structure. The Audio-Lingual method of language teaching, where speaking is primary, leads to a product-based approach where writing is a means of reinforcing the appropriate grammatical and syntactic forms of spoken language. Techniques include providing more models and preventing student errors in composition. A process approach, on the other hand, focuses on the cognitive processes in writing rather than on the product. In the process approach there is a shift from language-focused activities to learner-centered tasks while students assume greater control over what they write and how they write. They evaluate their own writing. Richards points to the shift in rules for the teacher from evaluator to facilitator. He provides

a very useful list of instructional activities appropriate to each phase of writing:

- 1- Rehearsing.
- 2- Pre-writing.
- 3- Drafting.
- 4- Writing.
- 5- Revising.

1-1-2 Problems of Teaching Writing

Rodrigues (1989) reported that the difficulty of writing grew from the same coordination of hands, brain and eyes. Writing may help you discover and organize ideas, because it draws on your mental, physical, and emotional resources. The difficulty of writing is the reason that some publishers publish oversimplified text books and some colleges offer tightly controlled writing classes. As a writer, whenever you write, and no matter how far along you are in a writing project, you are involved in the process of writing: your eyes are observing what you have written, your mind is reflecting on the ideas, and your hand is actively producing more texts.

Bright and Mc Gregor (1977) point out that teachers who report from all over the world talk about first secondary pupils who cannot put three words together, cannot write the simplest sentence.

1-1-3 Writing Theory and Practice in the Second Language Classroom

The connection between writing and learning has been well documented. Researchers indicate that learning and writing are meaning - making processes that facilitate the learners ability to discover connections, describe

processes, express emerging understanding, raise questions and find answers (Mayher, Laster, and prادل, 1983).

Nunan (1991) said that there is a continuous tension in most aspects of language learning and teaching between languages as a process and writing as a product. Traditionally, in curriculum practice a distinction has been drawn between the activities of the syllabus designers which have been focused on product, and the activities of the methodologists, which have been focused on processes, however, in recent years this over simplistic division has become difficult to sustain. A product – oriented approach, focuses on the end result of the learning process – what it is that the learner is expected to be able to do as affluent and competent user of the language. Process approaches, on the other hand focus more on the various classroom activities which are believed to promote the development of skilled language.

Nunan (1991) presented that product oriented approaches to the development of writing favor classroom activities in which the learner is engaged in imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language. While in the process approach the focus is on the quantity rather than quality, and beginning writers are encouraged to get their ideas on paper in any shape or form without worrying too much about formal correctness. The approach also encourages collaborative group work between learners as away of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitude toward writing. In addition, and more controversially, attention to grammar is played down.

Shih (1986) claims that functional and process-centered approaches to writing do not adequately prepare students to function in a University. She advocates a Content-based approach that differs from traditional approaches in four major ways: writing from personal experience is de-emphasized, focus is on what is said more than how it is said, skills are integrated as in University course work, and extended study of a topic and some independent study precedes writing with more input from external sources. Instructional Approaches might include topic-centered modules or mini-courses with a subject-area specialist, or use of guest lectures.

Horowitz (1986) is critical of process-oriented approaches to teaching writing. He claims that writing multiple drafts will not lead to the ability to write in class examination essays quickly and fluently and that this approach does not teach a variety of types of formal writing necessary in an academic setting.

According to Horowitz (1986) the inductive approach of process writing is suitable only to some writers and for some purposes; some students are better motivated to write by external motivators such as grades than internal motivators. He suggests that a Process Oriented Approach gives students a false impression of their own abilities and how writing will actually be evaluated outside of the language classroom.

Haupt (1984) suggests ways to use classroom conversations as effective "pre-writing" activities. She advocates a three-step process to writing:

- 1- in-class conversations.
- 2- A written draft.
- 3- Student editing of her/his own draft.

Krashen (1984) discusses the research and theories on writing and their applications to pedagogy. He begins by summarizing the research on writing in several areas organized around the following questions:

- 1- Does reading help develop writing ability?
- 2- Does writing practice help develop writing ability?
- 3- Can writing be deliberately taught?
- 4- Do good writers go about the act of writing differently from poor writers?
- 5- Do good writers have different concerns in writing?

Krashen concludes that increasing the reading time can help improve writing even more than frequent writing. By analyzing these conclusions in relation to this discussion on language acquisition and learning, Krashen states that comprehensible input (reading) is an important part of writing acquisition. Krashen suggests that good writers who consider writing a process that have low affective filters, are aware of their audience and concentrate on content rather than accuracy. Krashen (1984) argues that

concerns for grammar should only appear at the final stage of the composing process-editing. Krashen also includes an appendix in which he discusses writing in the second language, but this section is brief and uninformative. He states that very little is known about writing in a second language, but that similarities are sure to exist between writing in the students native language and second language similar to composition courses taught in the native language.

Leki (1990) addresses the issue of how teachers should respond to student writing by first raising questions about why writing is taught to second language learners. Are the goals for second language students primarily grammatical accuracy or global understanding?

Do teachers expect students to take risks in order to express themselves or develop a sense of style, or do they stress linguistic control?

How instructors define these goals will determine, to a great extent, how they respond to student writing. Another factor is the teacher varied roles as audience (reader), coach, and evaluator current research indicates that teachers comments have depressingly little impact on student writing. It appears that what is most helpful is that the teacher comments on writing while it is in process, or during a sequence of assignments that are all related to an on-going project. Teachers often have difficulty when they attempt to respond to the content of student writing, not to seem as if they are appropriating the students text. Many teachers find it difficult to separate

their roles as evaluator from that of coach. Leki concludes that although we have some ideas of the types of responses that are helpful in improving student writing, more research needs to be done.

Osterholm (1986) discusses the influence of cognitive psychologists (Piaget, Vygotsky) on the theory of composition and the connection between writing and learning. She also provides a theoretical overview of writing as a process and discusses obstacles to the process. Osterholm maintains that the change of focus from the written product to the process of writing has necessitated a change in classroom dynamics. The popular lecture format of instruction is now being replaced by writing workshops, conferences, and peer groups. The instructor's role in this new setting is that of facilitator. Osterholm lists several strategies for facilitating the process of writing. These include invention strategies (pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, a clustering, free-writing, mapping), syntactic analysis and sentence combining, and computer-assisted instruction. In the final section of this article Osterholm provides a theoretical overview of evaluating a piece of writing, she summarizes the research on error analysis, teacher response to writing, self-evaluation, and peer response.

Pinnington (1993) discusses how computers might affect second language learners. Using computers in the composition process appears to affect the way people write, discuss, learn, and organize ideas, and the computer offers new resources and approaches to writing for the second

language teacher. Computer users tend to write more spontaneously and produce a greater quantity of material. Word processing encourages more revision. Using the computer allows for more individual attention and encourages students to show more initiative and take more risks in their writing. Computer use can also have a positive effect on the attitude of the second language learners. However, Pennington says that while word-processing shows great potential in teaching second language writing, that potential will not be realized without adequate basic instructions in computer use or if individual learning styles are ignored.

Terry (1989) argues that while most writing tasks in the second language classroom are designed as skill-getting activities, we need to and can practice more communicative writing skills-informing, relating, questioning, persuading. He claims that most students even at a beginning level, can write for communication if the tasks they are asked to carry out are realistic, meaningful, occasioned by need, and appropriate to their level of linguistic sophistication. He lists several kinds of writing tasks where appropriate activities can be designed for various levels of students and explains in detail six writing activities, which could be successfully adapted to other language classes.

1-1-4 Historical Background Of Error Analysis

The collection of errors made by second language learners is not new. Experienced classroom teachers have long used students errors to

guide their teaching emphasis and we all have our favorite anecdotes about student errors. Making errors can be regarded as a device that 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. Making errors then is a strategy employed by both those learning a second language (Khalil, 2000).

Dauids (1990) examines basic writing as a variety of writing with its own style and suggests that error in basic writing can only be understood as evidence of intention. Error analysis then can help teachers recognize stages of individual development.

Patsy and Nina (1995) reported a number of researches began to take a different approach to analyze learners errors. This approach, which developed during the 1970s, became known as "Error Analysis" and involved a detailed description and analysis of the kinds of errors second language learners make. This approach differed from Contrastive Analysis, is concern with comparing two or more languages for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences that hold between the languages compared as well as potential areas of learning problems, in that it did not set out to predict errors on the basic of interference from the mother tongue. Error Analysis was based on the assumption that the speech of second language learners is a system in its own right.

Researches have written on error analysis pointed out that errors made by 12 students from different countries attributed to many reasons. Some of

these errors are caused by interference from the learners first language (Butterworth and Hatch, 1984). Others are due to the difficulty of the target language (Wyatt, 1973, Duskova, 1976).

Corder (1967) proposes as a working hypothesis that a learners errors provide evidence of the target language system he is using at a particular point in the learning process that they reflect his transitional competence.

Wilkins (1975) suggests that many errors are due to overgeneralization of a pattern to interference between forms and functions of the language being learnt and to psychological causes, such as inadequate learning.

1-1-5 Importance of EA

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) believe that error analysis serves two major purposes:

1. It provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made.
2. It indicates to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract from a learners ability to communicate.

Lott, (1983) states the value of error analysis as twofold:

1. Teachers can begin to attribute a cause to an error with some degree of precision.

2. They can also build up a picture of the frequency of types of error, then they can find out whether mother tongue interference, or teaching techniques or inherent problems in the target language are the major cause of their students errors.

In view of the stated value of error analysis, this study employs it to find out the syntactic errors committed by southern Hebron eleventh grade students.

The problem of errors in writing was and still is one of the problems of language that students in our schools suffer from. Parents, teachers, supervisors complain and they are worried about the intensity of the problem among students of all school levels even at the university level (Khalil, 2000).

Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes. According to (Corder, 1967) the importance of studying errors can be summarized as follows:

1. Teachers will be able to identify what learners have achieved so far.
2. Researchers will be able to identify what strategies or procedures learners adopt to approach the target language.
3. Errors are inevitable, as such, they are used as a learning device.

The child learning his first language make countless mistakes from the point of view of adult grammatical language (Brown 1980).

Tomlinson (1990) also argues that students free writing is very useful to language learners instead of waiting until they have learned to write, they write to learn. Students writing provides useful feedback. As Hahn (1986) explains feedback in forms the teacher of the correct and incorrect information they have acquired, reveals where they are having difficulty with what has been presented in future lessons.

1-1-6 Role Of Syntax:

Kiss (1999) defined syntax as language skeleton. Without it, language is meaningless. He said also that syntactic errors affect readers comprehension of what was written or said. Syntax also has been defined as the study of how words are combined to form sentences and the roles which govern the formation of sentences (Rajimawale ,1997)

Rajimawale (1997: 182) said "with syntax enter into a level of linguistic analysis that is higher than morphology, a level of structure between phonology and syntax". Morphology being the level that includes segmental morphemes and the way words are built out of them, and syntax being the level that includes the ways in which words and morphemic elements are arranged and organized into longer constructions. In transformational generative grammar, the syntactic component is one of the three main parts of grammar. This component contains the rules for forming syntactic structures and rules for changing these structures. A syntactic analysis of a language is a description of its sentences – grammar

and grammatical analysis include both morphology and syntax. Grammar may be divided into two portions: morphology and syntax. Syntax may be roughly defined as the principles of arrangement of the constructions formed by the process of derivation and inflection "words" into longer constructions of various kinds. Rajimawale (1997) concludes that the distinction between syntax and morphology is not sharp. The area of syntax is seeking to understand units larger than words, phrases and clauses.

Bloomfield (1996) says that grammar of most languages is discussed under two headings, syntax and morphology. The sentence types are placed under the former heading, and so are the types of substitution, but grammatical constructions are dealt with partly under the heading of morphology.

Syntactic Errors include: omission, substitution, and redundancy of such grammatical elements as pronoun, determiners, prepositions, auxiliary, and copula plus wrong usage of tenses, wrong order of words in sentences, and faulty formation of sentence structure.

1-2 Statement of the Problem

The problem of writing is one of the greatest problems that our students in Palestine face. English teachers (correcting in General certificate exam) complained from students poor level of writing.

University instructors, educators and school teachers recognize that there is a continuous deterioration of standards of English language proficiency at schools (Kharma, and Hajjaj 1989).

There is, therefore, need for continuous scientific and objective studies to pinpoint the particular areas of difficulty that students face in their acquisition of English.

1-3 Purposes of the Study

This study aims to investigate different types of syntactic errors and their causes. This study also aims to find if there are any significant differences in syntactic errors due to the student general ability in English and finally to give a general idea of the types of errors in writing committed by the eleventh grade students at Southern Hebron Directorate.

With regard to the stated importance and value of error analysis, the researcher employs error analysis in this study to find out the syntactic errors committed by the 11th grade students at southern Hebron.

The aim of this study is to investigate the syntactic errors in the written English of the eleventh grade students at southern Hebron.

The researcher tries to investigate the following types of syntactic errors and any other types which may emerge in the study.

1. Noun-Phrase Errors.
2. Verb-Phrase Errors.
3. Word order Errors.

4. Transformation Errors.

The Noun-Phase Errors include the following types:

- a. Determiners: Omission, substitution, and redundancy.
- b. Pronouns: Omission, substitution, and redundancy.
- c. Preposition: Omission, substitution, and redundancy.
- d. Number and Concord: Singular and plural errors.
- e. Incorrect use of noun formation, adjectives and adverbs.

The verb phrase includes the following types of errors:

- a. Deletion of the main verb.
- b. Auxiliary: Omission, substitution, and redundancy.
- c. Tense: Mixing the use of tenses "using the present instead of past and so on".
- d. Third-Person singular: Omission, substitution, and redundancy.
- e. Subject verb Agreement: wrong usage.

Word errors include faulty formation of a sentence for example, placing adjectives instead of an adverb or putting the adjectives before the noun, and any other incorrect order of words in a sentence.

The transformation section includes:

- a. Overgeneralization: For example placing "s" after the simple present verb without paying attention to the subject.

- b. Negative transformation: Multiple negation or forming the negation without using do. Example He not speak English. "He does not speak English".

1-4 Questions of the Study

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the degree of syntactic errors predominance in the written English compositions of the 11th grade students?
2. Which types of syntactic errors are predominant in the compositions of the eleventh grade students?
3. Are there any significant differences in the occurrences of each type of error due to:
 - a. The stream of the students.
 - b. Gender.
 - c. The student general ability in English.
 - d. The type of compositions.
4. What are the sources for the occurrences of these errors?

1-5 Study Hypotheses

1. There are no statistical differences at the point of $\alpha = 0.05$ in syntactic errors of the 11th grade due to the stream.
2. There are no statistical differences at the point of $\alpha = 0.05$ in syntactic errors of the 11th grade due to gender.

3. There are no statistical differences at the point of $\alpha = 0.05$ in syntactic errors of the 11th grade between excellent and poor student in term of type of error.
4. There are no statistical differences at the point of $\alpha = 0.05$ in syntactic errors of the 11th grade due to the general ability in English.
5. There are no significant correlation at the point of $\alpha = 0.05$ between students (GAE) in English and the degree of syntactic errors predominance in the written compositions of 11th grade.

1-6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study is in its attempt to answer the study questions. Besides, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the improvement of the teaching/learning process. This study will, hopefully, provide the various people concerned with English language learning and teachers with useful and needed insights into the learning of English syntax by Palestinian Secondary School Students.

The study, by investigating the types of syntactic errors that are more persistent than others among the secondary students, may guide Palestinian English language curriculum designers in evaluating and reviewing the aims and objectives of teaching composition at the secondary level. It may also help language teachers and their trainers modify their plans and methods with a view to minimize the occurrence of these errors.

Moreover, this study may be significant because it will contribute to the previous studies. First, a look at similar studies in the field indicates that the subjects were asked to write texts of only one type (e.g Al-Shatarat, 1990, Gyagenda, 1987). Whereas in this study the researcher has made use of two types of texts. The researcher believes that two types are better than one so as to avoid the possible effect of background knowledge. Second, in several previous studies the sample that participated involved University students or Community College Students enrolled in English language courses (Abunniaj, 1992, Shaheen, 1994). The sample participating in the present study consisted of 11th grade students in public schools at Southern Hebron Directorate in the Second Semester 2004/2005.

Another factor that might contribute to the importance of this study is that it's the first study conducted in Palestine that investigates the syntactic errors in the written compositions of the 11th grade students.

1-7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations of the study:

1. All subjects contributing to the study are 11th grade students at Southern Hebron Directorate in the Second Semester 2004/2005, so the findings of this study could be generalized only to similar groups.
2. This study consists of two types of compositions, each of which discusses different topic. If more various texts were used, more revealing findings could have been found.

1-8 Assumptions:

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Students general ability has an important role in writing compositions.
2. The two topics used are suitable for this research.
3. The sample involved in the study is representative.
4. The subjects will perform to the best of there ability on the two tests.
5. Two types of texts are enough to neutralize the effect of background Knowledge of learners.
6. The two text which were chosen for the test were suitable to the level of students.
7. Creative writing is a valid method of testing and analyzing students errors.
8. The method used to get students general ability in English is valid.

1-9 Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used in this study. They are defined as follows:

1. An error: Apart of composition that deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance (Dulay, Burt 1982).
2. Mistake: Is caused by lack of attention, carelessness or some aspects of performance.
3. Interlingual error: Interference error, this is one that reflects the learners first language structure.

4. Intralingual Error: Errors that result from the complexity of the foreign language itself.
5. Error Analysis: Listing and classification of the errors contained in a sample of learner's writing.
6. Frequency of Errors: The number of errors committed by the students regardless of their sources.
7. CA: (contrastive Analysis). CA is concerned with comparing two or more languages for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences that hold between the languages compared as well as potential areas of learning problems.
8. L1: Mother tongue of learner. "in this case Arabic".
9. Syntax: is a language skeleton, without it language is meaningless (Kiss, 1999). "when words are put together to form long units, up to the sentence is the area with which syntax concerned".
- 10.L2: Second Language of learner. "in this case English".
- 11.ESL: English as a second language.
- 12.Writing syntactic error: any written form that does not follow the normal rules of the formal language.
- 13.The learners general ability: is the average score of the learners grade in English he / she got in the 8th, 9th and 10th grades.
- 14.Overgeneralization: Extending L2 rules to wrong situations (Richards, 1971).

15.Focus group: A group of English teachers teaching at the secondary stage.

16.Poor students: Those students whose average in English is below 42 according to the school records.

17.Excellent students: Those students whose average in English is above 75 according to the school records.

18.GAE: General ability in English.

1-10 Summary

This chapter presented a general introduction to the reader about the whole thesis. It threw light on the importance of English, writing and Error analysis.

Then the researcher presented in this chapter the statement of problem, purpose of the study, questions, hypotheses, significance, limitation and definition of Terms.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2-1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents theoretical background of Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis Hypotheses, Discourse Analysis and some studies concerning error analysis.

2-2-1 Theoretical background of chapter two:

Error Analysis has increasingly become the preferred tool of studying L₂ analysis. Taylor (1986) says, it is much more encompassing than CA. EA may include CA to explain those errors which are traceable to the transfer of L₁ to L₂ that is L₁ interference.

Error Analysis, offered as an alternative to contrastive analysis, has its value in the classroom research. Whereas contrastive analysis may be least predictive at the syntactic level and at early stages of language learning (Brown, 1994). It allows for prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. Error Analysis emphasizing the significance of errors in learners inter language system Brown (1994). Error analysis may be carried out directly for pedagogical purposes Ellis (1995) and Richards (1993) in Brown (1994).

The term interlanguage, introduced by Selinker (1972) is conceptualized as a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages.

Farooq (1998) says that Brown (1994) and Ellis (1995) gave a detailed account of and exemplified a model for error analysis offered by Corder (1974). Ellis (1997) and Hubbard (1996) on the other hand, gave practical advice and provided clear examples of how to identify and analyze learners errors. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by the identification of errors by making a distinction between a mistake (caused by lack of attention, carelessness or some aspect of performance) and an error, the errors are, then classified as overt and covert errors Brown (1994).

The next step after giving a grammatical analysis of each error, demands an explanation of different types of errors that correspond to different processes. Farooq (1998) reported five such processes central to second language learning: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, and overgeneralization.

Farooq (1998) adds that the studies relating to the process of language transfer, and overgeneralization have received considerable attention for instance, Swan and Smith (1995) gave a detailed account of errors made by speakers of nineteen different L1 backgrounds in relation to their native language and on their associated difficulties. Work on overgeneralization errors, on the other hand, viewed as an excessive application of the generalization strategies within L2 by a learner in

producing his/her language, is reported by Richards (1975), Jain (1974) and Taylor (1975). Williams (1981) discusses the difficulty of defining grammatical/mechanical errors, and the wide variation in definitions and judgments about the seriousness of different errors. He defined categories of error, based on whether a rule was violated or not, and whether readers notice or respond to its violation or not.

2-2 Contrastive Analysis Hypotheses

In this part of the study the researcher tries to give an overview of the origin, concepts, objectives, procedures and applications of Contrastive Analysis (CA).

Khalil (1999) says contrastive linguistics is concerned with comparing two or more languages for the purpose of identifying similarities and differences that hold between the languages compared as well as potential areas of learning problems.

The interest in CA originated in the US during the second World War, when an urgent need arose for the teaching of foreign languages in an economical way. The pioneering of linguists such as Fries (1945) and Lado (1957) paved the way for a series of pedagogically motivated contrastive projects that involved a comparison of English and other languages in the world as Danish, Polish, Italian, German, Spanish (khalil, 1999).

Khalil (1999) adds that the early proponents of contrastive linguistics (Fries and Lado) make three major claims:

- 1- They claim that differences between the languages compared cause difficulties for the learner of L2.
- 2- Interference (negative transfer) from L1 to L2 is a major source of learning difficulties or errors. "L1 is the learners native language, and L2 is the target language".
- 3- The contrastive linguistic can predict areas of learning difficulties on the basis of contrasts that are identified in the process of comparing the two languages.

Abunniaj (1992) argues that the structuralists concentrated their efforts on describing the phonetic, morphological and syntactical systems of language. They believed that these systems differ markedly from one language to another. The closer these languages are to each other, the more these reflect similarities. For example, French, Spanish and Italian go back to a Latin origin; therefore, they show similarities in the above-mentioned systems. While Arabic, English and Chinese belong to different family languages; therefore, they differ strikingly from each other in terms of the three systems.

James (1981) says that the CA hypothesis has two versions; one is strong, the other is weak. Both share the phenomenon of interference. However, they differ in that the strong version claims a predictive power of the difficulties facing L2 learners. On the other hand, the weak version of the CA hypothesis claims the power of diagnostic errors that have been

committed by learners. He also says that the strong version is a priori while the weak version is ex post facto in its treatment of errors. This means that predictions are developed by an error analyst without first resorting to conducting a CA in order to decide which errors are attributable to L1 interference (a priori). After this, an error analyst can conduct a CA in order to explain the attested errors (ex post facto). In other words, the weak version comes out as a result of the coordination of the strong version of the CA concept and teaching experience, which is a better and more practical application of the hypothesis. James (1981) contends that a contrastivist should not place his predictions solely on his own knowledge of the CA. Instead, he should depend on his own experience as well as on experiences of other teachers.

Abunniyaj (1992: 240) says CA involves four different procedures:

- 1- Description: a linguist, using the tools of formal grammar, describes the two languages in question.
- 2- Selection: a contrastivist selects certain forms for contrast.
- 3- Contrast: a linguist tries to map out one linguistic system to the other, and a specification of the relationship of one system to another.
- 4- Prediction: a linguist predicts areas of difficulty through the formation of a hierarchy of difficulty.

Gyagenda (1987) says the theoretical justification for contrastive analysis was provided by the associationist or behaviorist view of learning prevalent in the 1950's and 1960's. According to this theory learning was basically a process, of forming automatic habits and errors should therefore, result from first language habits interfering with the learners attempts to learn new linguistic behaviors. It was thought that contrastive analysis of the learners two languages would predict the areas in the target language that would pose the most difficulty (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982).

2-2-1 Criticism to Contrastive Analysis

The first criticism to CA is that interference from L1 is not the sole source of L2 errors learning. In this regard even a teacher who has no knowledge of linguistics is conscious of more errors than CA. Furthermore, there are other sources of interference such as overgeneralization and false analysis. Many errors even are not linguistic in origin, but rather psychological and pedagogical (Abunniaj, 1992).

James (1971) refutes this claim by stating that CA never claimed that L1 interference is the sole source of error. As Lado (1964) puts it: These differences are the chief source of difficulty in learning a second language. The most important factor determining ease and difficulty in learning the patterns of language is their similarity to or difference from the native language (Lado, 1964).

James (1971) says "chief source" and "most important" implication is that L1 interference is not conceived to be the only source. He says that Error Analysis can only become fully explanatory if errors come from L1 interference are taken into account.

Another criticism of CA is that predictions of student errors in L2 made by CA are not reliable, and it fails to predict the non-linguistic errors. James (1971) says that this is easily refutable. CA has never claimed to be able to predict all the errors, nor it claimed linguistic omniscience about which choices speakers will make.

Another strong criticism of CA is the claim that interference has no benefit: ignorance is the real source of error (Abunniaj, 1992). Newmark and Reible (1968) insist that errors are caused by inadequate knowledge of the target language.

To sum up the discussions of the CA, it is said that CA offers a considerable help to teachers in choosing and preparing materials well suited to achieve this illusive goal (Ligget, 1983).

Ligget (1983) suggests that the CA can be useful to Arabic Speakers learning a second language in the following areas: accent, writing style, vocabulary building and verb system. He goes farther to show the practical application of the CA by comparing some linguistic structures in English with those in Arabic.

Because of the inability of CA to predict some of the errors made by L2 learners and the difficulties they face on the basis it claims, additionally, interference is no longer the sole source of errors, but there exist other Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic sources. Thus, as Brown (1980) claims the fact that learners errors are attributable to different possible sources makes the error analysis theory superior.

2-3 Error Analysis Hypotheses

An error has been defined as an unwanted form (George, 1972). If the unwanted form has appeared as an independent part of the learners experience there is no difficulty of explanation of its presence. Dulay, Burt (1982) define an error as part of composition that deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance.

The nature of Error Analysis is analytic or diagnostic. Its procedures are pointed out in Keating (1981) as follows.

- 1- Data collection.
- 2- Error Identification.
- 3- Error Classification.
- 4- Calculating the relative frequency of errors.
- 5- Explaining causes of errors.
- 6- Evaluating errors.

In this respect Abunniaj (1992: 110-116) added the following causes that have been reported to account for errors:

- 1- Interlingual errors which are ascribed to language transfer from the first language to the target language.
- 2- Intralingual errors are ascribed to complexity of the foreign language itself and categorized as:
 - a. Simplification: errors resulting from reduction (George, 1972, Richards, 1975).
 - b. Communication based errors: errors resulting from strategies of communication (Selinker, 1971).
 - c. Induced errors: errors induced by sequencing and presenting of target language elements. (Stenson, 1974).
 - d. Avoidance: avoiding to use certain types of target language structures or items because they are difficult or beyond language knowledge (Schachter, 1974).
 - e. Developmental errors: errors reflecting built-in strategies of linguistic development (Corder, 1967).
 - f. Overgeneralization: extending L2 elements/rule to wrong situations (Richards, 1971).

However, this approach has its problems due to lack of precise criteria for error assignment, classification, overlapping, multiple explanations and the limited power of such categories to account for all types of errors. (Mukattash, 1981, Taylor, 1986).

Interlanguage hypothesis means an intermediate stage of competence developed by second language learner on the way to the target language as a result of interaction between L1 and L2. (Selinker, 1971). Corder, (1981) proposed a similar term to interlanguage "transitional competence" which means the learners underlying "Knowledge of the language to data".

According to Corder (1967), the importance of studying errors can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Teachers will be able to identify what learners have achieved so far.
- 2- Researchers will be able to identify what strategies or procedures learners adopt to approach the target language.
- 3- Errors are inevitable, as such they are used as a learning device.

2-3-1 Error Analysis Procedures:

Corder, (1974) proposed a number of steps for the identification of L2 learner errors. This model will be partially modified in such a way to suit the nature of the 11th grade errors at Southern Hebron. So the data passed through the following stages of analysis:

2-3-2. Identification of Errors:

The compositions were corrected and syntactic errors were marked. The researcher did not count the spelling and punctuation errors. Sometimes in cases of ill-formed sentences in the compositions the researcher more often than not had to interpret what the student intended to say in Arabic, write the translation and compare this translation with what a

native speaker of English could have said in a similar situation. This method had been suggested by Corder (1967). In this case to place a plausible interpretation upon the superficially ill-formed erroneous sentence which he calls a "Reconstructed Sentence". This sentence is set against the original to work out the intended meaning as mentioned above. "It is a translation equivalent which is a possible indicator of native language interference as the source of error"(Brown, 1981:169).

The interpretation is attainable with reference to the mother-tongue of the learners if known. Then this sentence is translated literally to the SL as mentioned before. The researcher compare it with the original sentence, as a means of telling us what she/he intended to say. Corder (1967) wrote that this depends on the degree of knowledge of the dialect possessed by the learner.

2-3-3 Classification of Errors:

The second stage in EA is to classify errors. Here, we have two widely – acknowledged types, comprehensive approaches Norrish (1983). The first is to regularly set up ready-made categorical classifications of the erroneous structures harvested based on the previously-attained knowledge of the teacher of the types of errors his/her students usually tend to commit. This may run the danger of the errors being pre-judged and pre-determined by the investigator.

The other way depends on grouping the errors into areas of grammatical and semantic errors. This method allows the errors to determine the categories, rather than the other way round. This method is believed to be a better approach for the advantages it holds. Norrish (1983) says that this approach has the advantage of allowing the errors to determine the categories chosen, by process of sorting and re-sorting, the categories will eventually define themselves.

In traditional, old EA-based projects, errors were classified into four types Brown (1980). These are: errors of addition, omission, substitution and ordering. Errors of addition refer to the unnecessarily added element or item in a learner's utterances.

Errors of omission are those which refer to the absence of a particular linguistic item, without which the sentence is overtly erroneous.

Substitution errors, those items that are wrongly replaced by others.

Ordering errors are those where the word order of the sentence or structure is confused. For example "The teacher to school came". It is wrong in terms of English grammar therefore, it is an ordering error.

In this study errors were assigned to certain categories such as verb-phrase or noun-phrase and their subcategories. This study followed a traditional linguistic category taxonomy developed by Ferris (2002).

The errors were put into tables under their respective types. They were then counted. The data were then fed into the computer. SPSS

"Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" was used for statistical analyses.

2-3-4 Statement of Error Frequency:

Khalil (2000) said once errors have been identified, corrected, classified and described, the incidence of their occurrence is quantified. Frequency counts by type helps analyses to identify the most recurrent error types and help teachers to design remedial work that tackles these types.

The researcher corrected, classified described and stated the frequency of the errors types.

2-3-5 Determining the Source/Cause of Errors:

Khalil (2000) said (Determining the source(s) of errors involves delineating of these sources, which results in the formulation of hypotheses about these sources. James (1981: 9) refers to this stage of EA as diagnosis-based categories of errors. Two principles underlie this stage. First, a particular error may have more than one source. Second, the delineation of error source involves inferencing or guessing).

There are two major categories widely used in EA research, namely negative interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer.

Finally, after collecting the data, the researcher made a review so that the data would be computed. Each topic in each school was given a number

in order to make the statistical analysis easy and meaningful. All the topics "compositions" were divided into:

- a. Males and Females.
- b. Literary and scientific.

The data were analyzed by using several types of analysis:

1. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were calculated.
2. Paired samples test was used to investigate the relationship between the learners (GAE) and their performance in the two compositions.
3. t-test was used to investigate the difference between males and females in (GAE), the difference between the mean scores of the two compositions and to investigate the difference between excellent, and poor learners in their writing.

2-3-6 Criticism to EA

Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1983) list six points of weaknesses in EA theory; first, the analysis of errors in isolation; second, the proper classification of identified errors; third, statements of error frequency; fourth, the ascription of causes to systematic errors; fifth, the identification of points of difficulty; sixth, the biased nature of these weaknesses.

- 1- The most important criticism of EA is that after collecting the errors from a corpus, in many cases this corpus is excluded from further consideration as the investigator focuses on the task of organizing the

errors. Svartvik (1973), Corder (1974) and Hammarberg (1974) have argued similarly.

- 2- The next criticism of the EA is the improper classification of identified errors. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1983) say that errors are typically described with regard to the target language system. All investigators know that it is not always easy to decide, and even when this decision is possible, the question is asked: What structure is this an error in?.
- 3- The third criticism of EA is statements of error frequency. Schachter and Celce-Murcia, (1983) state that some EA-based projects make very informal statements of error frequency, merely pointing out that certain systematic errors are especially frequent in speech or writing of L2 speakers as Burt and Kiparsky (1972) did.

However, other EA-based studies were more sophisticated in that they have developed extensive numerical totals that enable the reader to see how frequently one kind of error occurs vis-a-vis another. What is meant by sophisticated studies is those which consider the number of times it would have been possible for the learners to make a given error as well as the number of times the error occurred (Abunniq, 1992).

- 4- The fourth counter-claim is that EA is unable to identify points of difficulty in the target language. It is not easy to decide that such errors are difficult to L2 learners. Kleinmann (1978) found out that students tend to avoid certain difficult structures in L2. Therefore,

depending on frequency lists of error types alone and their superficial classification is not enough. It is important to know what the learner would not do, and why, as it is to know what he will do, and why. The most comprehensive EA will only provide evidence on the latter, not the former.

5- Another criticism of EA is the anticipation of causes to systematic errors. Abunniaj (1992) said that researcher of EA tend to be not cautious in identifying the cause of any given error. They do it casually. To give an example, the copula is major problem for native speakers of Chinese, Arabic and other languages. Their speakers tend to omit it. This could be partly explained as interference because of structural differences between the target language and the second language.

6- Finally, there is the criticism of the biased nature of sampling procedures. Researches using EA data tend to overlook the fact that they may be working with a very limited and biased sampling.

Schachter and celce-Murcia (1983) conclude that the six potential weakness listed above will help teachers and students better judge the merits and limitations of the many EA projects that they read and hear about. They go on to say we would hope that researchers carrying out EA projects would attend to these pitfalls so that the overall quality of EA research might improve. Further, if substantial progress to be must guard

against the notion that EA should supplant materials or for discovering language acquisition strategies, they, finally, say that we owe it to ourselves and our students to maintain our perspective and to refuse to be swayed by over inflated claims made by proponents of any theory .

James (1981:1987) contends that: “We have no wish to vindicate CA at the expense of EA: each approach has its vital role to play in accounting for L2 learning each other rather than as competitors for some procedures of place. There seems to be little gain in adopting an exclusive approach, and the results of doing so can be positively debilitating”.

2-4 Discourse Analysis

Suresh (1992) said that Discourse analysis refers to the linguistic analysis of naturally occurring connected spoken or written speech. Discourse is highly organized speech activity. It is not random speech. Discourse analysis studies the actual mechanisms by which communication, understanding and interaction are maintained. It is concerned with ways in which information is selected, formulated and conveyed among communicators.

Jindal (1999) said that as soon as someone began to study meaning in language in relation to context, we find that it is situated within two kinds of context. One is the extra linguistic, i.e. the content of the external world. The other is the inre-linguistic, i.e. the linguistic context in which that piece of language occurs. So, for example, words occur within a

sentential context, sentences occur within a context consisting of other sentences. In the analysis of language at the level of discourse, we are concerned with this intra-linguistic context.

Discourse is a level higher than that of the sentence. It includes all the other linguistic levels-sound, lexis, syntax. All these continue to make up a discourse. But here we must distinguish between the grammatical aspect and the semantic aspect of discourse. The former creates a text and the latter creates a discourse. In the former, words continue to form sentences, sentences combine to form a text. Just as there are certain relations between sentences and rules by which they may be related. These rules of sentences connection create cohesion in the text. At the same time, these sentences are also utterances. Thus we may distinguish between text and discourse in that text is created by sentence-cohesion and discourse is created by coherence. A discourse may be defined as a stretch of language-use which is coherent in its meaning (Jindal, 1999).

The following is an example of discourse which is both cohesive and coherent:

A: can you go to AL-Quds University tomorrow?

B: Yes, I can.

Notice, the interchange is cohesive because the second sentence does not repeat the whole of the first sentence. Instead of the whole sentence: "I can go to Al-Quds University tomorrow", only: "I can", omitting the rest.

This indicates that the second sentence is linked to the first in sequential order. It is also coherent because B has given an appropriate response to A from A's request. However, in the following example:

A: can you go to AL-Quds University tomorrow?

B: There is a general strike.

The two sentences are not cohesive because the second sentence is not linked to the first sentence in a grammatical sense. There is no repetition or obvious connection between the two sentences. But they are coherent, because B replies to A's request in a sentence which gives some information implying that it is not possible to go to AL-Quds University. Thus this exchange is coherent but not cohesive.

However Jindal (1999) added in order to analyze discourse, it may be necessary to consider all aspects of language: the grammatical as well as the semantic and pragmatic not forgetting the role of intonation.

Suresh (1992) said that grammatical forms which are used to link sentences and create cohesion can be of several kinds: logical connectors such as 'and', 'but', conjuncts such as 'also', one; ellipses, where some parts of a sentence are deleted; lexis, where one item points forward or backwards to what is being said or what has been said before. Deictic elements such as 'here' there, also indicate other references and are thus important in creating cohesion as well as discourse meaning.

Recently, unlike Descriptive and Transformational Generative Grammar linguists whose main focus was on forms of language rather than on meaning and interdisciplinary aspects, discourse analysts have adopted a holistic approach to language that is, they took into consideration all aspects that may affect receiving and producing the language. This approach was adopted because of their constant belief that language does not work in a vacuum and grammar is not the only component of language.

AL-Shatarat (1990) pointed to a situation in which little attention is paid to the way sentences are grouped or combined together to form discourse. This is due to the priority given to teaching grammatical elements in self contained sentences and because teachers still hold Chomsky's principles of what constitutes a language. These principles maintain that a knowledge of the grammatical rules of a language and the transformational relations between sentences form the basis for actual use of language. As soon as learners possess this knowledge, they will automatically use language. To invalidate this assumption, AL-Shatarat (1990) gave an example of learners who were learning English for six years or more, but they still have difficulty with actual communicative use of language.

Hymes (1979) indicates that teaching materials should be derived from a discourse description and shift from grammatical competence or knowledge of language to communicative competence or language in use.

He says: "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1979: 14 - 15).

2-5 Review of Related Studies

A considerable number of studies have revealed the importance of EA within the writing process in the second language. In a number of these studies researchers attempted to investigate the influence of gender and place of living, on students writing.

Taylor (1986) remarked that Error Analysis became the preferred tool of studying L2 analysis. He said it is much more encompassing than CA. In this section the researcher presents studies which were conducted in error analysis that helps in carrying out this study.

Richards (1970) investigated English errors committed by Burmese, Chinese, Czech, French, Japanese, Maltese, Maori, Polish, and Tagalong speakers. He came up with a set of errors not due to interference from L1 but due to what he called overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and the building of false systems and concepts. He calls these errors intralingual and developmental errors.

Tadros (1990) analyzed the syntactic and lexical errors in the compositions and semi-objective tests of 236 secondary school students in Sudan who had completed seven years of English instruction. She found that:

- 1- Most errors occurred in the verb usage-including tense, form, voice, concord, sentence-structure, word order, prepositions, and articles.
- 2- 50% of the syntactic errors in the compositions were due to Arabic interference, while 4% in the semi-objectives, summary and grammar tests were attributed to the same cause.

Al-Abd Al Haq (1982) investigated the Syntactic Errors of 96 Jordanian male and female, rural and urban students from four randomly chosen secondary schools from Irbid area, Jordan. They were assigned a topic and their errors were identified, classified counted, and analyzed. He found that:

- 1- The same types of error were committed by the three grades (first, second, and third). There were no significant differences among the three grades regarding the total number of syntactic errors.
- 2- Significant differences among the grades were found with respect to preposition particles and tense. These errors seemed to increase with grades. No differences were found in the following types: the definite and indefinite articles, word order, sentence-structure, noun formation, objectives, adverbs, number, determiners, pronouns, auxiliaries, copula, 3rd person singular subject verb agreement, verb form, and omission of the main verb.

3- Errors committed were attributable to the following sources: Mother tongue interference, performance overgeneralization, ignorance of rules, and developmental errors.

Taki AL-Din (1985) carried out a study to decide the effectiveness of sentence-combining practice, integrated in the overall writing quality and syntactic performance of EFL Arab students at the United Arab Emirates University during a period of fifteen weeks. The study comprised an experimental group of sixty-three subjects and a control one of sixty-seven subjects. Both treatment groups had the same composition curriculum but in the control group the emphasis was on correcting common grammatical errors; and in the experimental group emphasis was on additional sentence combining exercises instead of correcting erroneous common grammatical production. Statistical analysis clearly indicated that the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group on the post-test on quality of writing. There was also a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental groups post-test on most syntactic competence. The general conclusion of this study was: sentence combining practice would promote the overall writing quality and the written syntactic competence of EFL Arab students.

Connors and Lunsford (1988) presented their analysis of 3000 marked essays in order to discover the most common patterns of student errors and which errors are marked most consistently by American

instructors. Major findings include the observation that teachers disagree on what constitutes a remarkable error, and tend to mark errors related to how serious or annoying the error is perceived for both student and teacher, although the difficulty in explaining the nature of the error also factors into the process. Finally, and more refreshing, the study suggests that college students at the end of the century do not make more errors than they did earlier in the century.

Wall and Hull (1989), however, conducted a study using 55 English teachers, including elementary, secondary and University teachers. The results indicate that teachers do not share a common assumption of what constitutes error.

According to Barnett (1989) both students and teachers are commonly frustrated over the number of errors and the lack of improvement in student writing. In this article, she looks at how teachers traditionally assign and react to student writing. She claims that students may become more involved in editing their own work if the teacher does less correcting. She suggests that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, including prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Less attention to correction of grammatical errors, together with real attention to content, leads ultimately to better student compositions. Barnett claims that the advantages to both students and teachers of process writing and writing for

communication include greater quantity, higher student motivation, and more efficient use of grading time.

Meziani (1994) analyzed English composition errors of 50 Moroccan pre-University students from three Lycees "French secondary school" in Rabat. He aimed at obtaining a general idea of the problematic areas facing Moroccan learners of English at the pre University level. A corpus of 50 essays were randomly chosen from a pack of 200 essays were analyzed. Students wrote on one of three given topics. All the topics required the students to use the past tense. He made a typology of linguistic categories of the errors and found that errors occurred in the following order of frequency (highest to lowest): tense, prepositions, form, concord, pronouns, singular, plural, possessives, word order, voice, adjectives, miscellaneous. The high incidence of tense errors (39.20%) was partly due to the nature of the topics which required narration in the past.

Weaver (1996) advocated teaching grammar within the context of writing. She argued that a behaviorist view that drill alone will result in accurate applications of rules is faulty because it assumes that concepts students learn in isolation will be transferred to other contexts. She proposed that a constructivist model encourages students to grapple with both the meaning of the conventions and their useful applications, that errors are likely to occur during the learning process because students actually try to incorporate their new conceptualizations into their writing.

Weaver suggested that teachers use incidental lessons to introduce concepts and inductive lessons to guide students in an awareness of grammatical patterns and to provide opportunities for students to arrive at their own generalization about use.

Shaheen (1994) analyzed a typology of certain recurrent errors made by adult Arab students of English literature from Jordan university. He had gathered the error over a seven to eight year periods. The errors had been produced spontaneously in free writing, and not through mechanical drills, or isolated occurrences of sentences. He concludes that the preposition, article, and stylistic errors committed by the Arab students are mainly due to the influence of L1.

Manzo (1999) reported that the improvement of writing is a target goal of many school districts. State and national standardized assessments indicate that our students fall short in producing quality writing. According to a recent issue of 'education week' more American students have mastered basic skills in writing than in reading but few can write precise engaging, and coherent prose appropriate to their grade levels. It would seem that improving the quality of writing would be an easy task. However there are multiple perspectives on what it means to write and write well

Atawneh (2001) said that aspect marking in English is indicated by the – ing morpheme for the progressive while there is no mark for the simple whether it is past or non-past. However, in Arabic the marking is

only obvious in the past with the modal auxiliary (Kaana) followed by the present form of the verb. But in the present or past forms of Arabic verbs, the mark for aspect to show progressive or simple is made by the adverbial L?aan (now). These observations for teachers, the areas of disagreement should be brought to the attention of students through materials relevant to developing their abilities in producing correct structure and meanings. For translators, attention should be given to such areas of disagreement which cause problems in translation where aspect marks exist in different ways in both languages.

Mehdi (2003) explores the main characteristics of body part words in Arabic and English with a view to bringing into focus the main aspects of similarity and difference between the two languages in this area.

2-6 Conclusion

It can be concluded from the previous studies the following points:

- 1- Error analysis is a useful method in learning a new language.
- 2- Error analysis is more effective than contrastive analysis in presenting the difficulties of the target language.
- 3- Writing is the easiest when the topic is familiar to the student, and it is the most difficult when it is unfamiliar.
- 4- Errors are a natural part of learning a language because they arise from learners active strategies, as overgeneralization, ignorance of rule-restrictions, incomplete rule application.

5- The use of error analysis in classroom teaching leads to further insight about learners ability and language difficulties.

2-7 Summary:

In this chapter the researcher presented an overview of the origin, concepts, objectives, procedures and applications of CA, EA and Discourse Analysis . A review of related studies was presented too.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Procedures

3-1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the population and the sample of the study. The research design for the study is clarified as well. It also presents the two compositions chosen for the study, the instrument, validity and reliability procedures and data analysis.

3-2 Population and Sample:

The population from which the subjects for this study were drawn consisted of the 11th grade students at Southern Hebron Directorate for the academic year (2004/2005). The population of this study comprised all 11th grade male and female public secondary students in the literary and scientific branches only. There are 37 public Secondary Schools in Southern Hebron area. 19 public secondary schools have the literary branch and 15 schools contain literary and scientific branches. One school contains scientific stream only and the other two are Co-educational. These have the literary branch only. The total number of the population is 3479 students, these students have finished at least six years of studying English as a foreign language at schools.

The two Co-educational schools were excluded from the sample of the study because they have literary stream only and the number of students in the two schools is only 27 students (Alsara'ah school contains 5 female

students and 10 male students. Alramadeen school contains 4 female and 8 male students).

3-3 Sample:

The subjects of the study were 153 11th grade students studying at 4 different schools in the second semester of the academic year 2005. The needed number from the whole population was selected randomly by numbering slips, mixing them in a box and then taking out a slip from the box. As a result of that I have four schools, two are for males and the other two are for female students as it appears below:

2. Two public schools for girls, one is in Yatta, and the other is in Alsamo'. This selection was to ensure a fair representation of all types of students in terms of their general ability in English and their place of residence.
3. The one hundred and fifty three subjects, spread over four classes in four schools, were asked to sit for two tests "to write two composition in two different sessions".
4. Two public schools for boys, one is from Yatta, and the other is from Dura.

Tables below present the sample of the study and the variables:

Table (1)

Sample distribution by Gender

Gender	N	Percent
Male	150	49.0
Female	156	51.0
Total	306	100

Table (2)

Sample distribution by Stream

Stream	N	Percent
Scientific	150	49.0
Literary	156	51.0
Total	306	100

Table (3)

Sample distribution by Topic

Type	N	Percent
A	153	50.0
B	153	50.0
Total	306	100

Table (4)

Sample distribution by General Ability in English

GAE	N	Percent
Poor	60	19.6
Good	190	62.1
Excellent	56	18.3
Total	306	100

3-4 Research Design and Instrumentation:

This study is an analysis of two compositions written by Southern Hebron 11th grade students in the Academic year 2004/2005. It aims at identifying the Syntactic Errors in the compositions under the following two titles:

1. Winter.
2. The importance of computer.

The students were asked to write a free composition in the first day under the title "winter", and in the next day they were asked to write a free composition about "the importance of computer".

3-5 Variables of the Study

The study included one dependent variable and four independent variables.

3-5-1 Dependent Variable

The syntactic errors found in the written compositions of the 11th grade students.

3-5-2 Independent Variables

The independent variables investigated are gender, branch (literary/scientific), type of topic, and the learners general ability in English "GAE".

The learners general ability is the average score of the learners grade in English she/he got in the 8th, 9th and 10th grades. For the sake of this

study, the subjects were divided into two groups, excellent learners whose GAE is above 75 (their percentage is 18.3%), poor learners whose GAE is below 42(their percentage is 19.6%). The mean average of all learners is 58.5 and the standard deviation is 16.5 so by adding the standard deviation to the mean average we will have the lowest mark of the excellent students. For the poor learner the researcher subtracts the standard deviation from the mean average.

3-6 Instrumentation:

The instrument that was employed to answer the research questions consisted of two compositions. The first one is a composition about "winter". This topic was selected because it is interesting and familiar to students. Students can write about it easily because they learned something about seasons, weather, hours of daylight in previous years.

The second one is about "the importance of computer". The selection of this topic wasn't arbitrary. In other words the researcher chose this topic because students till the moment studied at least three units about computer. Moreover, with the arise of modern technology and the wide use of computer in many places as schools, banks, hospitals, ... homes, this device became familiar, interesting and motivating to most students.

The two topics were approved by a number of teachers. The appropriateness of the two topics took into account the students ability, students background knowledge of computer in the sense students took

three units about computer one was in the 10th grade and the other two were in the 9th grade.

3-7 Validation of the Tool:

To assure the validity of the two compositions, the researcher submitted the two topics to six EFL teachers. Two of them are teaching English at Yatta Boys Secondary School, one is teaching at Al Muthanna Secondary School, two supervisors at Southern Hebron Directorate and the sixth was a teacher at Hebron University.

The teachers were asked to evaluate the topics in terms of clarity, appropriateness of the topic, suitability of ideas and vocabulary, the time given to the students, motivation, and level of students.

The teachers agreed that the topics are suitable for the research purpose and for the study population.

Pearson Correlation was also used to examine the internal validity of the test as it appears in table (5).

Table (5)

Results of Pearson Correlation

Question	R-Value	Sig.
Preposition	0.69	0.000
Verb Tense	0.73	0.000
Subject Verb Agreement	0.72	0.000
Articles/Determiners	0.75	0.000
Noun-Singular/Plural	0.70	0.000
Word choice	0.62	0.000
Part of speech	0.77	0.000
Word Order	0.73	0.000
Missing words	0.76	0.000
Sentence Fragments	0.71	0.000
Auxiliary	0.73	0.000

Table (5) shows that there is significant correlation between the paragraphs and the whole degree of the exam which means that there is internal harmony between the paragraphs.

3-8 Reliability of the Test:

To examine the test reliability by using split-half method Spearman Brown Correlation was used to investigate the reliability of the test in the two compositions. Spearman Brown value in composition A (winter) is 0.75 while the reliability value in composition B (the importance of computer) is 0.88. This sum is reasonable and suits the purpose of the study.

3-9 Pilot Study:

Before the administration of the tests to the target group, a pilot study was administered three weeks before the main study. Sixty subjects

participated in the pilot study (one literary class at Yatta Secondary School for boys and another scientific one from Yatta Secondary School for girls).

The pilot study aimed to achieve the following goals:

1. To see whether the two topics were suitable for the level of the subjects.
2. To shed light on the written instructions and ideas in order to see whether they were clearly written or not.
3. To give the researcher a clear idea about the time needed for the test.
4. To identify any problem and revise the experience accordingly.
5. To see whether the two topics can motivate the subjects or not.
6. To indicate the needed modification.

Each subject was given a paper and he/she was asked to read the instructions "which were written in Arabic" carefully then he/she had to write two compositions in two different sessions. On the first day 30 girls from the scientific branch "from Yatta Secondary School for girls "and another 30 male students from the literary branch "from Yatta Secondary School for boys" sat for the test to write a composition about winter. On the second day the same subjects males and females were asked to write a composition about the importance of computer. The compositions were corrected. After two weeks the same experiments "tests" were carried out at another time. It was noticed that the given ideas "words, phrases, topic sentences.....which were given to the students in order to help them write

these ideas (see appendixes A and B) were not enough, so the researcher decided to give more ideas for the main test. Some subjects didn't read the instructions carefully even they were written in Arabic, the students mother tongue. The English language teachers at the respective schools administered the test and followed instructions provided by the researcher.

These instructions which were written in Arabic included:

1. The purpose of this study is to investigate the syntactic errors in the written compositions of the 11th grade students.
2. The collected data will be used for scientific research only.
3. The time of the test is forty minutes.
4. You have to write a topic about winter to be read by Smith in Canada and the importance of computer to be read by the Palestenian Minister of Education using the given ideas which are given in appendixes A and B.
5. Try to do your best to give a neat and meaningful writing.
6. Try to avoid scratching.

3-10 Procedures:

The two tests were held in two different sessions. On the first day, the subjects were told that they were going to write a composition about "winter". In order to motivate the subjects to write about this season, they were asked to write a composition to be read by Smith in Canada (a person who wants to have a Palestinian friend). The researcher believes that when

students hear that someone is going to read for them they will produce a reasonable work. Students also feel proud which may let them think deeply in order to write a meaningful composition. The other topic was about "the importance of computer". On the next day the subjects sat to write the second composition. The subjects wrote an essay about the importance of the computer to the Minister of Education to persuade him to supply each school in Palestine with a computer lab. The researcher considers this as a facilitator to the students and it can provide them with the needed ideas and vocabulary which motivate them to write.

Since the beginning of 1990s computers have also found their way into basic and secondary schools in most parts of Palestine. Teachers, parents and computer programmers noticed that students enjoy using computer so the researcher considers this as a motivator to students.

Dhaif (1989) says using computers as facilitators for the teaching and learning of other languages is a motivating, profiting and interesting experience for both teachers and students. He adds the 1980s have witnessed the spread of computers both in educational instructions and in people homes.

The instructions were given to the participants in the native language "Arabic".

The subjects received the following instructions and explanations:

1. The purpose of this study is to identify the syntactic errors

of the 11th grade students at Southern Hebron Directorate.

2. The title of the topic was provided.
3. The time of the test is 45 minutes.
4. Try to avoid scratching, otherwise the paper will be rejected.

Each student received a test paper, two white sheets and a pen.

3-11 Scoring of the Test:

The researcher didn't limit the length of the two compositions. He gave the choice to the students to write freely without paying attention to the number of words or lines. The researcher believes that if he limits the length of compositions to a certain number of words students will start counting the words and phrases. Hence a good quality of writing will not be produced and students will commit more errors instead. (spelling, ideas, handwriting and organization of the topics were excluded by the researcher. The focus was paid to the syntactic errors).

3-12 Summary:

In this chapter, the researcher presented the variables of the study. Also the researcher provided the population, the sample, instrumentation validity, reliability, procedures and administration of the study. Statistical analysis was discussed too.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

4-1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the statistical analysis and to discuss them in the light of the research questions of this study, hypotheses and questions which were presented in chapter one.

Four types of statistical analysis were used in this study. Descriptive Analysis, t-test, Pearson Correlation Analysis and paired samples test .

The results of the study are presented according to the same order of the research questions.

4-2 Results of the Study:

Question (1): What is the frequency of errors in the written English composition of the 11th grade students?

To answer the first question numbers, means and standard deviations for the frequency of errors in the writing of the 11th grade were presented in table (6).

Table (6)

Numbers, means and standard deviation for the predominance of syntactic errors in the written English compositions of the 11th grade students.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Errors predominance Degree	306	25.13	11.04

Table (6) shows that the mean of the subjects syntactic errors in the written compositions is 25.13 which means that there is a predominance of syntactic errors in their writing.

Question (2): Which types of syntactic errors are frequent in the written composition of the 11th grade students?

To answer question number (2) mean score and standard deviation for the most predominant errors were calculated. Errors ran from the most frequent (No.1) to the least frequent error types (No.11) as it appeared in table (7).

Table (7)

Mean scores and standard deviation for the most frequent errors in the written English compositions of the 11th grade arranged according to the importance.

NO	Types of Errors	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Verb Tense	3.62	1.46
2	Subject verb agreement	2.52	1.27
3	Part of speech	2.50	1.46
4	Article	2.48	1.52
5	Auxiliary	2.39	1.50
6	Word order	2.20	1.40
7	Word choice	2.08	1.47
8	Sentence fragment	2.05	1.34
9	Missing or unnecessary words	1.96	1.33
10	Prepositions	1.86	1.17
11	Noun ending "Singular/Plural"	1.42	1.27

Errors in the table above ran from the most frequent (No.1) to the least frequent error types (No.11). See figure (1) for more details.

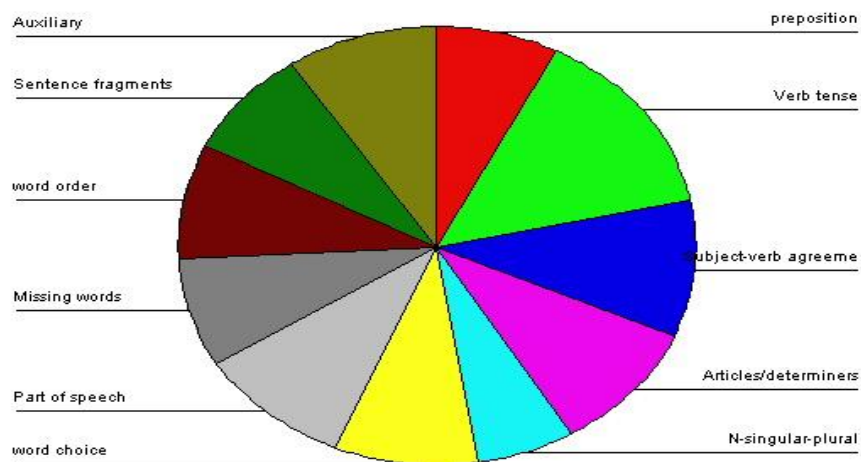


Figure (1): Mean of errors

According to the above results the most predominant error types among students writing for both male and female in the two streams literary and scientific were verb tense, subject-verb agreement and part of speech. The least frequent errors were noun ending "singular, plural" prepositions and missing or unnecessary words.

Hypothesis (1): There are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the occurrence of each type of errors due to gender.

t-test was used to test the first hypothesis differences in the predominance degree of the syntactic errors of the 11th grade written composition due to gender as it appears clearly in table (8).

Table (8)

Results of t-test for the differences in the degree of syntactic errors frequency in the written English compositions in the 11th grade due to gender.

Kind	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	t-value	Sig.
Preposition	Male	150	2.06	1.34	304	2.892	0.004
	Female	156	1.67	0.95			
Verb tense	Male	150	4.10	1.43	304	5.883	0.000
	Female	156	3.16	1.34			
Subject verb agreement	Male	150	2.74	1.29	304	2.956	0.003
	Female	156	2.31	1.22			
Articles-Determiners	Male	150	2.50	1.60	304	0.259	0.796
	Female	156	2.46	1.45			
Noun Singular/Plural	Male	150	1.38	1.24	304	-0.558	0.577
	Female	156	1.46	1.30			
Word choice	Male	150	2.36	1.57	304	1.839	0.067
	Female	156	2.06	1.21			
Part of speech	Male	150	2.61	1.60	304	1.249	0.213
	Female	156	2.40	1.30			
Missing words	Male	150	1.92	1.46	304	-0.437	0.662
	Female	156	1.99	1.19			
Word order	Male	150	2.11	1.76	304	0.328	0.744
	Female	156	2.05	1.12			
Sentence fragments	Male	150	1.95	1.43	304	-1.342	0.181
	Female	156	2.16	1.24			
Auxiliary	Male	150	2.32	1.37	304	-0.826	0.410
	Female	156	2.46	1.61			
Total degree	Male	150	26.08	11.61	304	1.473	0.142
	Female	156	24.22	10.41			

Table (8) shows that there is a significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the predominance degree of syntactic errors in the 11th grade written English compositions due to gender. The differences were in the use of prepositions, verb tense and subject verb agreement. It can be noticed that

male students committed more syntactic errors than female as it appears from the mean score in the table above. For the other kinds of errors table (8) and figure (2) show that there is no significant difference between males and females.

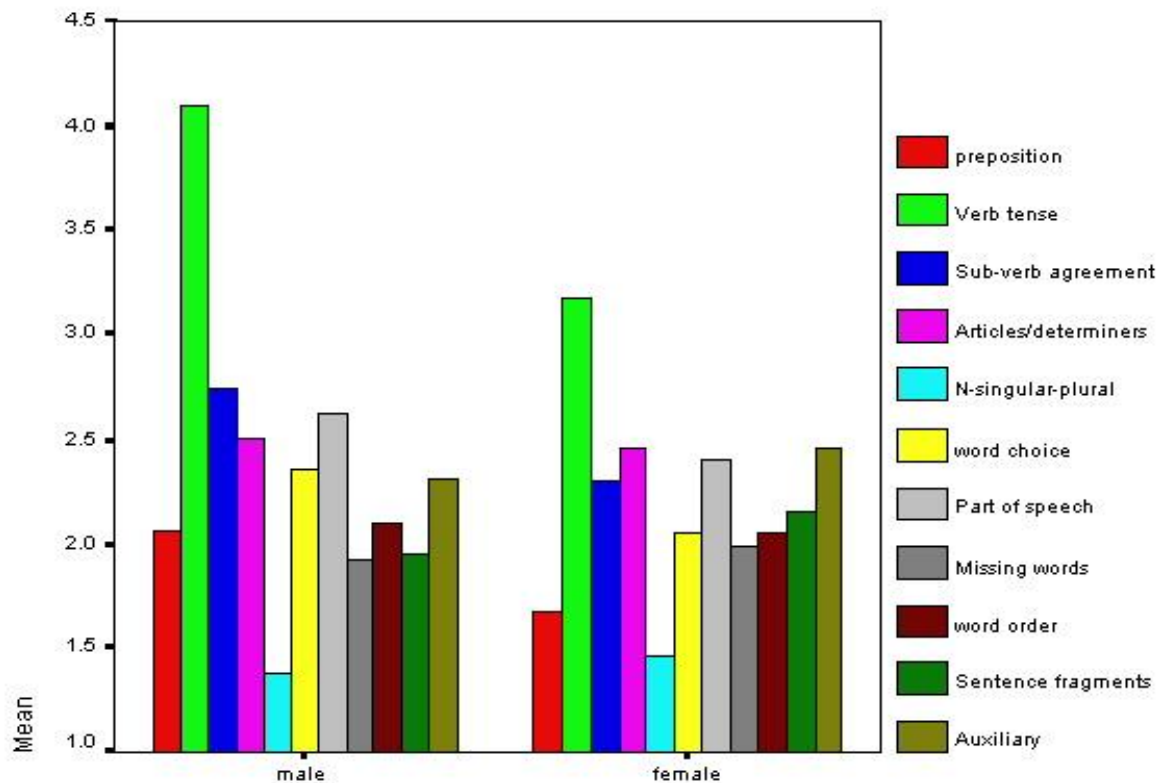


Figure (2): Gender

Hypothesis (2): there are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the occurrence of each type of errors due to the stream.

t-test was used to test the degree of differences in the syntactic errors predominance among the 11th grade students in the written compositions due to the stream "scientific-literary" as it appears in table (9).

Table (9)

Results of t-test in the degree of the differences in the syntactic errors predominance among the 11th grade students in the written compositions due to the stream.

Kind	Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	t-value	Sig.
Preposition	scientific	150	1.29	0.83	304	-9.618	0.000
	literary	156	2.42	1.19			
Verb tense	scientific	150	3.02	1.08	304	-7.797	0.000
	literary	156	4.20	1.54			
Subject verb agreement	scientific	150	1.88	0.84	304	-10.014	0.000
	literary	156	3.14	1.31			
Articles-Determiners	scientific	150	1.58	1.11	304	-12.538	0.000
	literary	156	3.35	1.35			
Noun Singular/Plural	scientific	150	0.68	0.93	304	-12.121	0.000
	literary	156	2.13	1.14			
Word choice	scientific	150	1.35	0.97	304	-13.009	0.000
	literary	156	3.03	1.26			
Part of speech	scientific	150	1.74	0.99	304	-10.543	0.000
	literary	156	3.24	1.46			
Missing words	scientific	150	1.26	0.89	304	-10.462	0.000
	literary	156	2.62	1.34			
Word order	scientific	150	1.52	0.98	304	-7.196	0.000
	literary	156	2.62	1.64			
Sentence fragments	scientific	150	1.47	1.10	304	-8.236	0.000
	literary	156	2.62	1.32			
Auxiliary	scientific	150	1.70	1.18	304	-8.843	0.000
	literary	156	3.05	1.48			
Total degree	scientific	150	17.50	6.62	304	-16.210	0.000
	literary	156	32.46	9.34			

Table (9) shows that there are significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the frequency of syntactic errors in the writing compositions of the 11th grade students due to stream. The differences between the two streams revealed that there were significant differences between the literary stream

and scientific stream. This means that students in the literary stream committed more syntactic errors than their counterparts in the scientific stream students as it appeared in table (9) and figure (3) bellow.

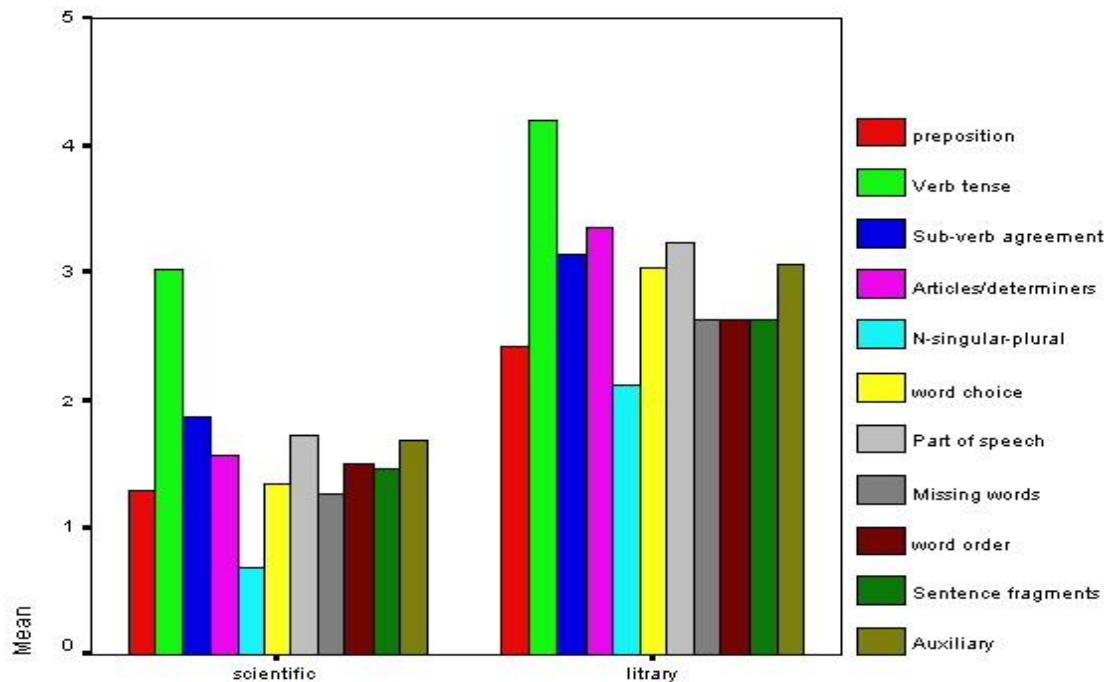


Figure (3): Stream

Hypothesis (3): There are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the occurrence of each type of errors due to topic.

Paired samples test was used to test the degree of differences in the syntactic errors frequency among the 11th grade students in the written composition due to the type of composition as it is clear in table (10).

Table (10)

Results of paired samples test in the degree of the differences in the syntactic errors predominance among the 11th grade students in the written compositions due to the topic.

Kind	Topic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	T-value	Sig.
Preposition	A	153	1.92	1.35	152	-0.829	0.028
	B	153	1.81	0.97			
Verb tense	A	153	3.81	1.64	152	-2.127	0.035
	B	153	3.43	1.22			
Subject verb agreement	A	153	2.56	1.37	152	-0.587	0.558
	B	153	2.47	1.17			
Articles-Determiners	A	153	2.55	1.45	152	0.898	0.008
	B	153	2.41	1.58			
Noun Singular/Plural	A	153	1.60	1.19	152	2.751	0.007
	B	153	1.24	1.32			
Word choice	A	153	2.34	1.51	152	-1.741	0.044
	B	153	2.07	1.27			
Part of speech	A	153	2.47	1.32	152	-0.383	0.702
	B	153	2.53	1.58			
Missing words	A	153	2.00	1.25	152	0.636	0.042
	B	153	1.91	1.40			
Word order	A	153	2.10	1.13	152	0.250	0.013
	B	153	2.05	1.74			
Sentence fragments	A	153	2.22	1.20	152	2.499	0.014
	B	153	1.88	1.45			
Auxiliary	A	153	2.62	1.49	152	2.853	0.005
	B	153	2.16	1.47			
Total degree	A	153	26.19	9.98	152	0.398	0.044
	B	153	23.96	12.03			

Table (10) shows that there were significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the frequency degree of the syntactic errors in the topic of the 11th grade students due to the type of composition. The differences are in favor of topic (A, winter) which means that the frequency of syntactic errors in

composition (A) are more than those errors in composition (B, the importance of computer) as it appears from the mean score of the students errors in composition (A) which is higher than the mean score of the syntactic errors of students in composition (B) as it appears in the table above and for more clarification see figure (4).

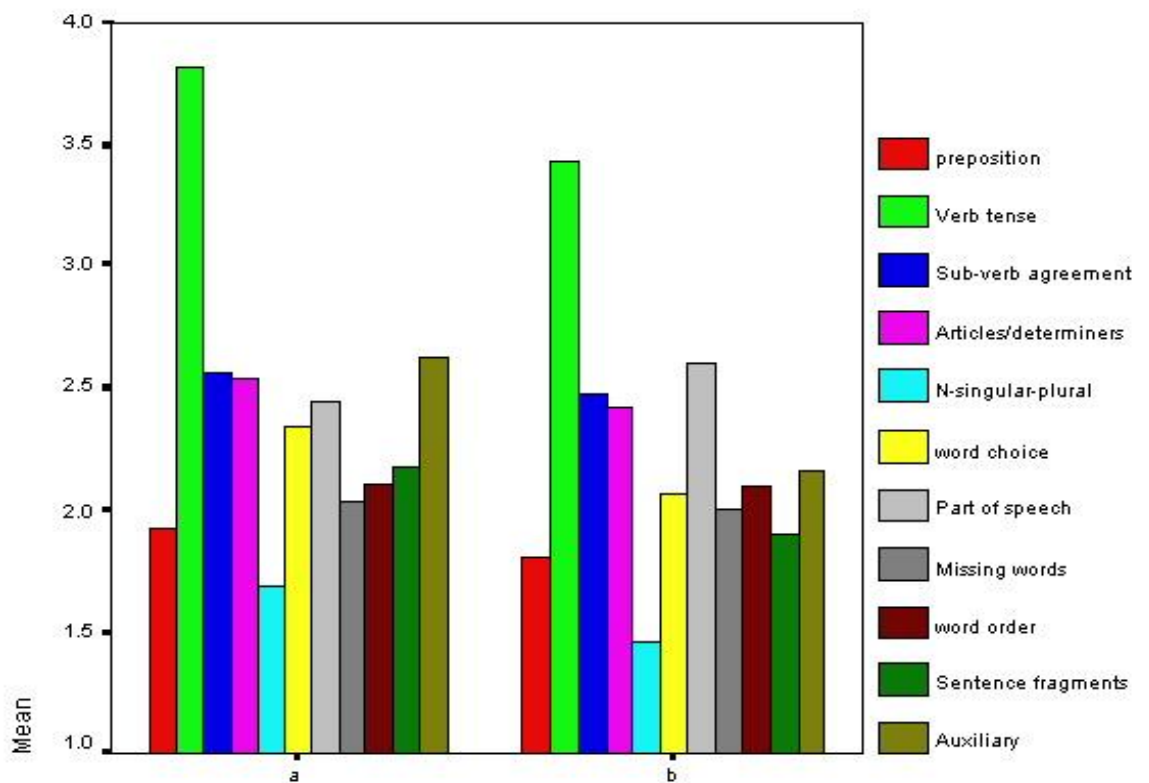


Figure (4): Type

Hypothesis (4): there are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the occurrence of each type of errors due to the students general ability in English (GAE).

t-test was used to test the degree of differences in the syntactic errors predominance among the 11th grade students in the written compositions due to the (GAE) as it appears in table (11).

Table (11)

Results of t-test in the degree of the differences in the syntactic errors frequency among the 11th grade students in the written composition due to the (GAE) .

Kind	GAE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	DF	t-value	Sig.
Preposition	Poor	60	2.83	1.20	114	9.559	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.08	0.69			
Verb tense	Poor	60	5.45	1.28	114	12.028	0.000
	Excellent	56	2.08	1.08			
Subject verb agreement	Poor	60	3.63	1.31	114	10.613	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.58	0.68			
Articles- Determiners	Poor	60	3.75	1.21	114	13.164	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.01	0.99			
Noun Singular/Plural	Poor	60	2.18	1.06	114	8.832	0.000
	Excellent	56	0.53	0.93			
Word choice	Poor	60	3.06	1.31	114	8.534	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.19	1.01			
Part of speech	Poor	60	4.15	1.33	114	13.977	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.32	0.78			
Missing words	Poor	60	3.36	1.22	114	12.390	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.05	0.74			
Word order	Poor	60	3.61	1.72	114	8.757	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.39	0.90			
Sentence fragments	Poor	60	3.11	1.34	114	10.059	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.00	0.89			
Auxiliary	Poor	60	3.76	1.35	114	12.811	0.000
	Excellent	56	1.07	0.87			
Total degree	Poor	60	38.93	7.58	114	21.027	0.000
	Excellent	56	14.07	4.95			

Table (11) shows that there are significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the predominance degree of the syntactic errors in the writing compositions of the 11th grade students due to the students (GAE). All the differences are due to the poor students whose mean score in the syntactic errors was higher than the excellent students as it appeared in the table above and figure (5).

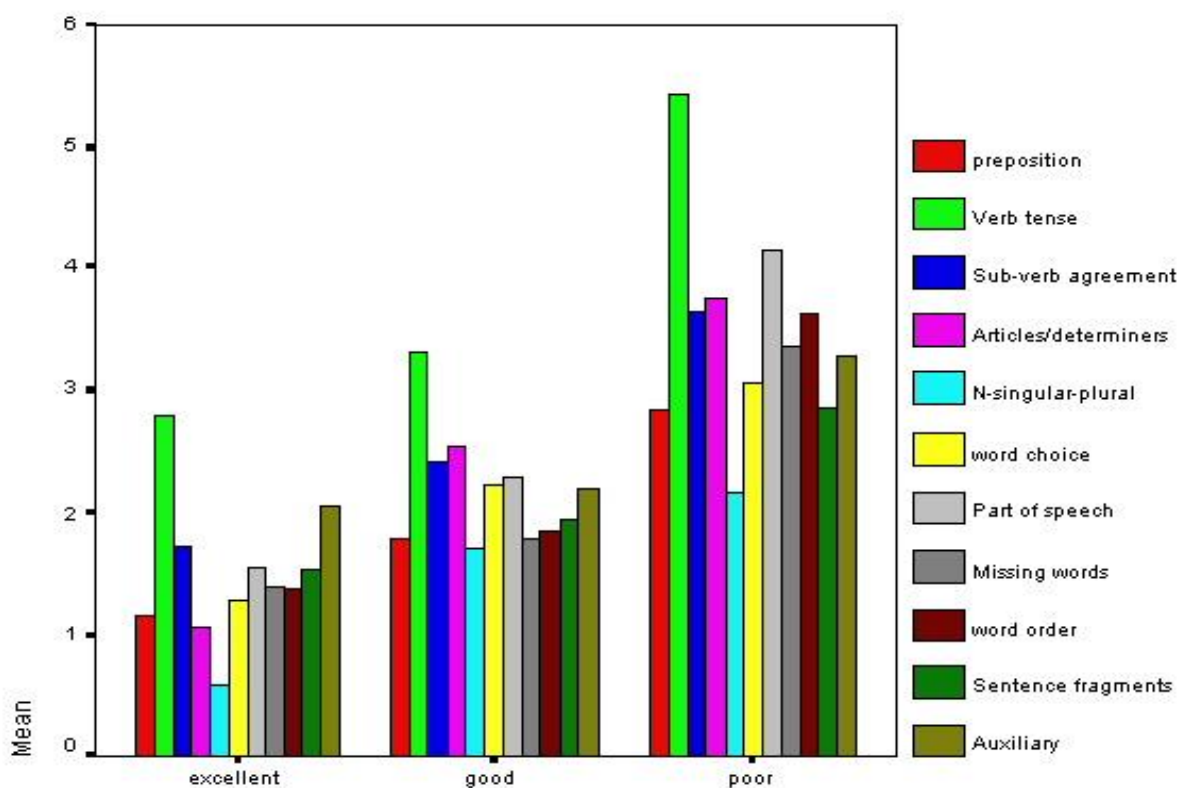


Figure (5): GAE

Hypothesis (5): There is no significant Correlation at $\alpha = 0.05$ between students (GAE) in English and the degree of syntactic errors frequency in the written composition of 11th grade students.

Pearson correlation was used to test this hypothesis about the relation between student (GAE) in English and the degree of syntactic errors

frequency in the written English composition of the 11th grade students as it appeared in table (12).

Table (12)

Results of Pearson Correlation for the relation between (GAE) and the syntactic errors frequency in the written composition of the 11th grade .

Type of error	N	R-value	Sig.
Preposition	306	-0.48	0.000
Verb Tense	306	-0.55	0.000
Subject verb agreement	306	-0.56	0.000
Article	306	-0.59	0.000
Noun ending "Singular/Plural"	306	-0.42	0.000
Word choice	306	-0.48	0.000
Part of speech	306	-0.60	0.000
Missing or unnecessary words	306	-0.53	0.000
Word order	306	-0.45	0.000
Sentence fragment	306	-0.52	0.000
Auxiliary	306	-0.56	0.000
Total	306	-0.73	0.000

Table (12) shows that there is an inverse relation at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the students (GAE) and the degree of syntactic errors predominance in the written English compositions of the 11th grade. This indicates that when the (GAE) increases the number of syntactic errors decreases and visa versa.

4-3 Summary:

In this chapter, the researcher presented the results and discussion of the statistical analysis of the study. Four types of statistical analyses were used in this study, descriptive analysis, Paired samples tests, t-test and Pearson correlation analysis. To answer the study questions errors were divided into eleven types. The most frequent error types among students writing were verb tense, subject – verb agreement and part of speech and the least frequent errors were noun endings, prepositions and missing or unnecessary words.

Chapter five

Discussion, Conclusion, A sample of Learners Error and Recommendations

5-1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher highlighted the results and discussed them. For the sake of this study, the results will be discussed in the same order of presentation of research questions and hypotheses. Recommendations derived from the results of the study are also presented.

5-2 Discussion:

Question (1): What is the degree of syntactic errors frequency in the written English composition of the 11th grade students?

The finding of this question shows that the mean score of the students syntactic errors in the written compositions was (25.13) which means that there is a frequency of syntactic errors in the students writing. This finding could be attributed to the students unfamiliarity or non previous knowledge about the topics which students were asked to write about. Also this result could show that teachers in the basic stage didn't pay much attention to the writing skill and composition writing in particular because writing holds 20% from the total marks of English.

Question (2): Which types of syntactic errors are frequent in the written composition of the 11th grade students?

According to the hierarchies of errors types, the most predominant errors among male and female students in both branches were verb tense, subject-verb agreement and part of speech. The least predominant were prepositions and noun singular and plural.

The researcher believes that the verb tense is the most predominant syntactic errors in the students writing because this type (verb tense) includes more than one aspect or kind "simple present, present continuous present perfect tense form and voice")....etc.

Errors which were committed by students can be attributed to the students mother tongue interference and ignorance of rule restriction. The following examples shed light on this idea.

- Winter the best season in the year.

In the above example and the like Palestinian students as well as Arab students tend to omit the copula (is – in this case) (Khalil, 2000). This type of errors results because Arabic language has no copula. So this type of error occurs because of the mother tongue interference of rule restrictions:

- If it rain, the sea level will rise.

We notice from the above example that students didn't master the idea of subject verb agreement. This error could be because of the ignorance of rule restrictions (any language has a unique grammatical rules that govern it). As we notice some students didn't differentiate between third person singular and first person.

In conclusion, the hierarchical typology of syntactic errors shows that the frequency of verb tense agrees with Mezianis (1994) finding among Moroccan students learning English as a foreign language. Also the findings in this study tie with Gyagenda (1987) among Kampal – Entebbe students learning English as a second language which were discussed in chapter (2).

Question (3): Are there any significant differences in the occurrence of each type of errors due to gender, stream, topic and students general ability?

Five hypotheses resulted from the above question.

Hypothesis (1): There are no statistical differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the syntactic errors of the 11th grade due to gender.

For the gender main effect, it was found that there were significant differences between male and female students in the use of preposition, verb tense and subject verb agreement. There were also no significant differences between male and female students with regard to each of the errors analyzed in the study, namely: Articles, determiners, Noun singular and plural, parts of speech, sentence fragments, auxiliary verb, missing words and word order.

The researcher believes that these results may be traced to the following reasons:

1. Both male and female students live under the same conditions.

2. Both male and female students study the same syllabus and receive the same instructions at schools.
3. All male and female teachers receive almost the same training at the directorate of education even at the Universities and Colleges.
4. Both male and female students have the same number of English classes per -week.

The findings of non significant differences between male and female students tie with AL abd AL Hag (1982) who found non significant differences between male and female Jordanian students.

Hypothesis (2): There are no statistical differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in syntactic errors of the 11th grade due to the stream.

Results showed that there were significant differences between scientific stream students and literary stream students with regard to the predominance of syntactic errors in their compositions. Table (9) showed that the scientific stream errors mean score was (17.50) while the mean score of the literary stream students was (32.46) in both topics. This means that students in literary stream committed more syntactic errors than their counterparts in the scientific stream. In other words it can be noted that the subjects performance in the scientific stream is much better than that of the literary stream.

The researcher could trace these differences between the scientific and the literary stream students in the occurrences of the syntactic errors to

the students general ability in English and their background knowledge which is almost better in the scientific stream than that of the literary stream as it appears in the result of general certificate exam every year. Also the researcher asks a focus group "teachers in the secondary schools" about this result and what is their reaction to it. All of the focus group (three teachers in secondary schools) agree with the result. Their comments are as follow:

1. All of the best students in the 10th grade prefer to join the scientific stream.
2. Students in the scientific stream have an ability to elicit, deduct, analyze, infer and connect the incidents more logically than the literary stream students.
3. Students in the scientific stream are more disciplined than those in the literary stream.
4. Students in the scientific stream work harder than those in the literary stream. This improves their background knowledge.
5. Scientific stream students have more motivation and competition than those of the literary stream.

Hypothesis (3): There are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the occurrences of each type of error due to the topic, (A, winter) and (B, the importance of computer).

Results showed that there were significant differences in the occurrences of each error type due to the type of the composition.

Table (10) showed that the total degree of the students mean score in the syntactic errors in composition A (winter) was (26.19) while the total mean score of the students syntactic errors in composition B (the importance of computer) was (23.96).

It can be noted that the subjects performance in composition B is much better than that in composition A which means that the students do well in the composition about the importance of computer. The researcher believes that this result can be attributed to the students familiarity with the topic in the sense they study three units about computer in the 9th grade and 10th grade. Moreover students have background knowledge about computer in addition to their interest in using computers.

Students became familiar with terms and phrases that are connected with computer as (screen, hard disc, keyboard, mouse, file, CD's). Also students became familiar with names of programs as windows, excel,.... Internet...Also the purpose of this topic is realistic and motivating to the students

According to the results in text A, the researcher could attribute the reason for the occurrences of the syntactic errors to the students unfamiliarity of terms as humidity, wind, frost, ice, temperature.....etc which the researcher could consider them important in writing a

composition about winter. The researcher believes that the purpose of this topic is not realistic and not motivating to the students as topic B (the importance of computer).

Hypothesis (4): There are no significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the syntactic error of the 11th grade students due to the students general ability in English.

Results showed that there were significant differences between the syntactic errors and the students general ability as they appeared in table (11). Significant differences were found between syntactic errors of subjects whose GAE is excellent and those whose GAE is poor on the writing composition in favor of poor learners. One can argue that excellent students are always anxious to know, read, write and develop their knowledge in English as well as other subjects which affect their results. In other words the students background knowledge about the topic and their interest were crucial for the students output in the written composition.

Hypothesis (5): There are no significant Correlation at $\alpha = 0.05$ between students GAE and the degree of syntactic errors frequency in the written composition of the 11th grade students.

Table (12) showed that there was an inverse relation at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the students GAE and the degree of syntactic errors frequency in the written English composition in the 11th grade. This indicates when the

general ability increases the number of syntactic errors decreases and visa versa.

Question (4): What are the sources for the occurrence of the syntactic errors?

The findings of this study show that most of the errors could be traced to Interlingual or Intralingual errors.

Kharma and Hajaj (1989) summarized causes of writing problems as the following:

Nature of the teaching process, idealization of the teaching material, lack of motivation, limited exposure to authentic English, inadequate command of the foreign language, teachers tolerance of students discourse mistakes, and finally differences between English and Arabic rhetoric's.

Gyagenda (1987) said, attributing a learners error to a particular source or cause is perhaps the most difficult and certainly the most controversial part, of error analysis.

However Khalil (2000) claims that the majority of errors result from the learners attempt to translate literally from Arabic, both standard and colloquial. If the listener/reader is unfamiliar with Arabic, he/she will have difficulty interpreting the meaning intended by the speaker/writer. In other words collocation errors can be very serious and may lead to miscommunication. He adds that subject personal pronoun retention errors might be attributed to interference from colloquial Arabic.

The investigation of the syntactic errors committed by southern Hebron 11th grade male and female students in both branches "literary scientific" leads to the following sources: interlingual and intralingual errors.

5-3 Interlingual and Intralingual Errors:

As mentioned earlier in this research Khalil (2000) says that interlingual transfer may result from over-literal or word-for- word translation. Transfer may result from the use of learning strategies such as overgeneralization (e.g. childs). In other word interlingual transfer refers to negative transfer from the learners L1, whereas the latter refers to the structure of the L2 itself.

To explain this issue, below are some examples which were chosen from the students composition.

1. The winter is a beautiful season.

In this regard students make a lot of errors in the definite article. They wrongly add the definite article where no article is needed.

2. We enjoy play in the snow.

In this example and the like we can notice that students sometimes translate word for word from Arabic so they confuse the reader. In this particular example and the like the researcher noticed that students did not know that some English verbs must be followed by gerund "enjoy playing". This kind of error can be traced to intralingual errors.

3. Computer a very important device nowadays.

Copula omission shows the highest percentage out of the whole percentages of verb phrase. These errors can be attributed to the interference from Arabic since Arabic has no equivalent of the English present form of the copula "is".

4. The computer it is an effective device.

This error and the like are due to the literal translation from Arabic. As it appears in the previous example the students wrongly added the personal pronoun.

5. Tall nights in winter.

We can see clearly in this wrong sentence the effect of the Arabic language on learning or acquiring English. So the above utterances are literal translation from Arabic. The correct sentence could be "long nights in winter".

6. The year consists from four seasons.

This error and the like are attributable to literal translation from Arabic "interlingual error" the correct sentence could be (The year consists of four seasons).

Khalil (2000) says there is little correspondence between English and Arabic prepositions. He added that each preposition has several uses, some of which are fixed or idiomatic.

5-4 Ignorance of Grammatical Rule Restrictions

After the investigation and analysis of the syntactic errors in the students compositions, the researcher noticed that some of the errors result from learners ignorance of grammatical rule restrictions. Below are some examples chosen from the writing of male and female students in the two branches to point out this issue.

1. Learners are ignorant of the restriction that stipulate that a modal verb is always followed by the base form of the main verb. So in this case they wrongly produce utterances as "A computer programmer can did all of his work in the office". Or "winter will supplies us with water".
2. Some students wrongly produced utterances that show that they didn't master the idea of comparative and superlative adjectives. In this regard the researcher noticed that students tell the moment "11th grade" couldn't differentiate between long and short adjectives. The following examples show this phenomenon.
 - a. Winter is the most cold season in the year.
 - b. Computer makes our jobs more easier than that in the past.
3. In the following sentences the learners omit the progressive tense-ing suffix or the copula be. The following examples clarify this idea.
 - a. Water which coming from the mountains causes soil erosion.
"be omission".

- b. We are look for green Palestine in the future. The previous errors may be attributed to incomplete rule application.

The researcher believes that such errors could be solved by more practice and further reading in order to solidify students background in English.

5-5 Overgeneralization:

Generalization means that students use previously available strategies in new situations in second language learning. As a result of the incomplete rule application the students use the rule of one item or kind of structure to another kind, other students apply this strategy to learn the target language. The following examples will point out the idea of overgeneralization.

1. Students add the copula wrongly in the following situations which were chosen randomly from the students compositions.

- a. I am face difficulty in winter.
- b. Computer is helping device.

We notice that the students in example "a" add the copula "am" in the since it is not needed. The researcher believes that students could say (Computer is helpful device).

In the second example the learners over-generalize the use of the –ing even though it is not needed.

2. It will rains heavily in the morning.

We notice in the above example that the learner over-generalizes the use of "s".

3. The amount of waters increases in winter.

In the previous example we can simply say that the learner over-generalize the use of the plural "s". Also this error could be traced to ignorance of rule restrictions or intralingual errors which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

5-6 Conclusion:

1. The results showed that there was a predominance of the syntactic errors in the written compositions of the 11th grade students. The mean score of the syntactic errors was (25.13).
2. According to the hierarchies of error types, the most predominant errors among male and female students in both branches were verb tense, subject verb agreement. The least predominant error types were prepositions and noun-singular/plural.
3. The results showed that there were no significant differences between male and female students with respect to most of the error types.
4. There were significant differences between scientific and literary students with regard to the predominance of syntactic errors in the written compositions in favor of students in the literary stream.

5. Results showed that there significant differences in the occurrences of syntactic errors due to the type of the composition in favor of composition A (winter).
6. the results showed that there were significant differences between students whose GAE is excellent and those whose GAE is poor in the occurrences of the syntactic errors in the written compositions (A and B) in favor of poor learners.
7. Results showed that there was a controversial relation between GAE and the predominance of the syntactic errors.
8. The result of the last question showed that all of the syntactic errors in the written compositions could be traced to inter and intralingual errors.

5-7 A sample of Learners Errors

The researcher selected some errors randomly from the students compositions and presented them below under their respective syntactic categories.

5-7-1 Noun-phrase Errors

Five types of noun phrase errors were found in corpus, namely Articles "addition, omission and substitution. "Determiners" addition, omission and substitution. "prepositions" addition, omission and substitution. "noun endings" singular, plural, possessive. "Pronouns" subject object pronoun confusion. The following examples explain the noun-phrase errors:

1. Importance of computer in our life...."omission of article".
2. Computer affects life. "omission of determiner".
3. We wear coats on winter. "preposition substitution".
4. Winter is the best seasons. "plural noun instead of singular one".
5. My computer helps we at home. "confusion of subject object pronoun".

5-7-2 Verb-phrase Errors

In this section Four major types were found in the corpus, namely verb tense, subject verb agreement, auxiliary and Copula omission. Examples below will clarify this point.

1. Computer can did many things, storing....."use past tense instead of present".
2. Computers invented in the early 1960s. "omission of the auxiliary".
3. Computer help us in carrying out our homework's. "subject verb agreement omission".
4. Classroom cold in winter. "Copula omission".

5-7-3 Sentence Structure Errors

Under this title two types of errors were found "sentence fragments and word choice".

1. Students walk in the rain and snow. "in complete sentence".
2. Tall nights in winter. "word choice".

5-7-4 Word Order

Under this title the researcher also found two types of errors namely. "word order and parts of speech".

1. Comes winter after autumn. "word order".
2. We observe heavily snow in winter. "using an adverb instead of an adjective".

5-8 Recommendations

Before closing this chapter the researcher would like to recommend the following suggestions for students, EFL teachers, syllabus designers and researchers for further research.

First, the researcher suggests the following points to be taken into consideration by students during their learning English as a second language.

Students should improve their writing by further studies in different fields of knowledge which of no doubt improve students background and illuminate the way in front of them.

Students shouldn't pay attention to mistakes at this stage because we all learn from our mistakes. Since people ways of communicating information are very varied, there is no single way of writing correct English. It is therefore important for students to read as widely as possible in order to become familiar with different varieties of written English which may help students to decrease the number of errors.

Second, the researcher thinks that EFL teachers should consider the following when teaching writing:

1. The first and most important step a teacher must take is to determine the objective of an activity. If the objective is to develop accuracy, then of course correction is necessary. In this case the best approach is to allow the students to self correct first. If that doesn't work allow for peer correction. If no one seems to know, then the teacher can give the correction or answer. Although this can seem time consuming it helps to focus students attention and to reduce reliance on the teacher.
2. Teachers should activate the students knowledge when introducing new topics or exercises: subject knowledge "students previous knowledge of the subject".
3. Teachers main task is to teach functional writing rather than creative self-expression.
4. The teacher must make the topic "the writing exercise" functional, fulfilling a specific purpose and suiting a specific subject matter because they have never seen or read. It is hoped that teachers will supplement the work in each exercise or topic by bringing into the classroom as much sample material or written English as they can get hold of, magazine advertisements, official forms and leaflets, posters,.....in addition to traditional compositions and stories.

The researcher suggests the following points to be taken into consideration by syllabus designers:

1. Syllabus designers need to better understand the acquisition process of English by Arab learners.
2. To pay more attention to writing by adding more exercises that tackle all aspects of life.
3. To develop the syllabus every five years or so in order to accommodate with the acceleration of the modern life.
4. To develop a syllabus that takes individual differences into account and not to develop the syllabus for intermediate and excellent students.
5. Including instructions in teachers books that help teachers develop their ability in teaching.

Finally, the researcher would like to suggest the following issues for further research:

1. The investigation of Palestinian English school teachers errors while teaching writing.
2. Sources of errors in the writing of the secondary school students.
3. A further research must investigate the strategies used by teachers in evaluating the out put of students and their feedback.
4. It may also be of value to find out if the types of schools in Palestine "public and private, male and female, and co-educational schools"

significantly affect the type and frequency of syntactic errors in the written work of basic students.

5.9 Summary:

In this chapter the researcher highlighted the results of the study and discussed them in the same order of the research questions and hypotheses. Most of the syntactic errors could be traced either to intralingual or interlingual errors.

Appendix A

Student's Number..... Branch..... Sex.....

School..... Class Place.....

Time: 45 Minutes

Directorate: Southern Hebron

Composition -1-

Dear: Student write a composition about winter "الشتاء" in Palestine.

Note this topic will be read by Smith in Canada.

These questions and ideas may help you:

When does winter begin? When does it end? What don't you like about winter? "cold classrooms, short days, cold, rainy and windy mornings, wet and muddy roads, catching cold.

What do you like about winter? Playing in the snow, making snowman, throwing snowballs, observing heavy rain and strong wind".

Make a conclusion about the ideal winter in your imagination.

Instructions

التعليمات

١. تهدف هذه الدراسة للكشف عن الأخطاء النحوية التي يقع فيها طلاب الصف الحادي عشر في مادة اللغة الانجليزية في مديرية جنوب الخليل.
٢. الفئة المستهدفة: طلاب وطالبات الصف الحادي عشر بفرعيه العلمي والأدبي.
٣. عزيزي/ تي الطالب/ة أرجو أن تكتب/ي موضوع إنشاء عن فصل الشتاء.
٤. زمن الاختبار أربعون دقيقة "حصّة دراسية".
٥. أرجو أن تكون/ي جدي في الكتابة.
٦. حاول/ي أن تتجنب/ي الشطب.
٧. ستبقى البيانات المجموعة سراً ولن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي التي سيستخدمها الباحث في دراسته بعنوان " Syntactic Errors in the Written Compositions of "the 11th grade at Southern Hebron Schools من أجل الحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية تخصص أساليب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة القدس.

المحقق: وجيه العذرة

Appendix B

Student's Number..... Branch..... Sex.....
School..... Class Place.....
Time: 45 Minutes Directorate: Southern Hebron

Composition -2-

Dear student: Write a Composition about the Importance of the Computer.

أنت طالب فلسطيني في الصف الحادي عشر اكتب موضوع إنشاء عن أهمية الحاسوب وأرسله إلى معالي وزير التربية والتعليم من أجل الأخذ بتوصياتك وتزويد مدرستك بمختبر حاسوب.

The following ideas may help you to write about the importance of computer.

"we live in the age of technology, CDs, banks, storing and calculating information, shops, airports, communication, entertain ourselves..... spend a lot of time reading and searching about new Knowledge. Finish work in A short time. Neat and clean work. Students can produce new programs. Computer motivates students. Sit our minds thinking. Teachers carry out experiments.

Instructions

التعليمات

1. تهدف هذه الدراسة للكشف عن الأخطاء النحوية التي يقع فيها طلاب الصف الحادي عشر في مادة اللغة الانجليزية في مديرية جنوب الخليل.
2. الفئة المستهدفة: طلاب وطالبات الصف الحادي عشر بفرعيه العلمي والأدبي.
3. عزيزي/ تي الطالب/ة أرجو أن تكتب/ي موضوع إنشاء عن فصل الشتاء.
4. زمن الاختبار أربعون دقيقة "حصّة دراسية".
5. أرجو أن تكون/ي جدي في الكتابة.
6. حاول/ي أن تتجنب/ي الشطب.
7. ستبقى البيانات المجموعة سراً ولن تستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث العلمي التي سيستخدمها الباحث في دراسته بعنوان " Syntactic Errors in the Written Compositions of the 11th grade at Southern Hebron Schools من أجل الحصول على درجة الماجستير في التربية تخصص أساليب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة القدس.

الهامك: وجيه العذرة

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ملخص الدراسة:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الأخطاء النحوية عند طلبة الصف الحادي عشر في

مديرية جنوب الخليل، فلسطين. وقد تناولت هذه الدراسة بشكل خاص ما يلي:

١. تحديد الأخطاء النحوية المختلفة في كتابات الطلبة سواء كان ذلك على مستوى الاسم

والفعل والتركيب والتحويلات المختلفة.

٢. هل هناك دلالة واضحة بين نوعية الأخطاء النحوية والجنس؟

٣. هل هناك دلالة واضحة بين نوعية الأخطاء النحوية ومقدرة الطالب العامة في اللغة

الإنجليزية؟

٤. إعطاء فكرة عامة عن نوعية الأخطاء النحوية التي يرتكبها طلاب الصف الحادي عشر.

تألف مجتمع الدراسة من جميع طلاب وطالبات الصف الحادي عشر العلمي والأدبي في

مديرية جنوب الخليل من العام الدراسي 2005/2004. وقد بلغ عدد أفراد هذا المجتمع 3479

طالباً وقد تم اختيار عينة عشوائية بلغ عددها 153 طالباً من أربع مدارس اثنتان للذكور واثنتان

للإناث.

إن المتغيرات المستقلة في هذه الدراسة هي جنس الطالب "ذكر، أنثى"، والفرع "علمي،

أدبي"، نوع الاختبار، المقدرة العامة في اللغة الإنجليزية وهي معدل علامات الطالب في الصفوف

الثامن والتاسع والعاشر، ومتغير تابع واحد وهو الأخطاء النحوية التي وجدت في مواضيع الإنشاء.

وقد أجريت هذه الدراسة للإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة التالية:

١. ما هي درجة شيوع الأخطاء النحوية في التعبير الكتابي عند طلبة الصف الحادي عشر؟

٢. أي نوع من الأخطاء النحوية هو الأكثر شيوعاً في التعبير الكتابي لدى طلبة الصف الحادي

عشر؟

٣. هل هناك دلالة واضحة على وجود كل من أنواع الأخطاء النحوية نتيجة لتأثير كل من:-

- الجنس.

- الفرع.

- نوع الموضوع.

- المقدرة في اللغة الإنجليزية.

٤. ما هي مصادر هذه الأخطاء؟

وللإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة قام الباحث بتصميم اختبارين هما عبارة عن موضوعين في

التعبير الكتابي. فقد كان الموضوع الأول عن فصل الشتاء في فلسطين حيث زود الباحث الطلاب

ببعض الكلمات والمصطلحات والأفكار التي اعتقد الباحث بأنها ستساعد الطلاب في عملية

الكتابة. وفي اليوم الثاني جلست نفس العينة من الطلاب لكتابة موضوع تعبير آخر تحت عنوان "أهمية الحاسوب".

بالنسبة لصدق الأداة وثباتها فقد عرضت مواضيع التعبير على مجموعة من المدرسين المختصين في هذا المجال من أجل الحصول على صدق المحكمين. أيضاً استخدم معامل الارتباط بيرسون لقياس درجة الاتساق الداخلي بين فقرات الاختبار. أما بالنسبة لثبات الاختبار فقد بلغ معامل الثبات في موضوع الشتاء (0.75) أما موضوع أهمية الحاسوب فقد بلغ معامل الثبات (0.88).

أما المعالجة الإحصائية فقد تمت باستخدام برنامج الرزم الإحصائية SPSS حيث تم حساب المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية والتكرارات ومعامل ارتباط بيرسون وقد تمخضت الدراسة عن النتائج التالية:

١. بلغ المتوسط الحسابي للأخطاء النحوية في التعبير الكتابي (25.13) مما يشير إلى شيوع

الأخطاء عند طلاب الصف الحادي عشر.

٢. أظهرت النتائج بأن أكثر الأخطاء النحوية شيوعاً عند طلاب الصف الحادي عشر هي

الأخطاء المتعلقة بالأفعال وتصريفاتها وأقل الأخطاء النحوية شيوعاً هي الأخطاء المتعلقة

بأحرف الجر وأسماء المفرد والجمع.

٣. أظهرت النتائج بأنه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى $\alpha = 0.05$ في درجة

شيوخ الأخطاء النحوية بين الذكور والإناث.

٤. توجد هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى $\alpha = 0.05$ في درجة شيوخ الأخطاء

النحوية في التعبير الكتابي، في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة الصف الحادي عشر تعزى

لمتغير الفرع (علمي - أدبي) وقد كانت الفروق في جميع أبعاد الدراسة لصالح طلبة الفرع

الأدبي الذين كان متوسط أخطائهم في هذه المجالات أعلى منه لدى الطلبة في الفرع

العلمي.

٥. أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى $\alpha = 0.05$ في درجة شيوخ

الأخطاء النحوية في التعبير الكتابي، في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة الصف الحادي عشر

تعزى لمتغير نوع الاختبار (A,B) فقد كانت الفروق لصالح الطلبة، اختبار A، الذين كان

متوسط أخطائهم في هذه المجالات أعلى منه لدى الطلبة في اختبار B.

٦. توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى $\alpha = 0.05$ في درجة شيوخ الأخطاء

النحوية تعزى لمتغير مستوى القدرة في اللغة الإنجليزية وقد كانت الفروق في جميع أبعاد

الدراسة لصالح الطلبة ذوي المستوى الضعيف في اللغة الإنجليزية.

٧. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة عكسية ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى $\alpha = 0.05$ بين

متغير مستوى القدرة في اللغة الإنجليزية ودرجة شيوخ الأخطاء النحوية بحيث كلما زادت

قدرة الطالب في اللغة الإنجليزية قلت الأخطاء النحوية في التعبير الكتابي للغة الإنجليزية

والعكس صحيح.

٨. تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن معظم الأخطاء النحوية يمكن أن تعزى إلى المصادر التالية:

أ. صعوبة اللغة الإنجليزية وعدم إدراك قواعدها.

ب. تأثير اللغة الأم (العربية) على اللغة المتعلمة (الإنجليزية).