

COMMON ERRORS OF SAUDI HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS' WRITTEN ENGLISH:
THEIR CAUSES AND REMEDIES

By

ABDULRASHEED H. HASHIM

"

Bachelor of Arts

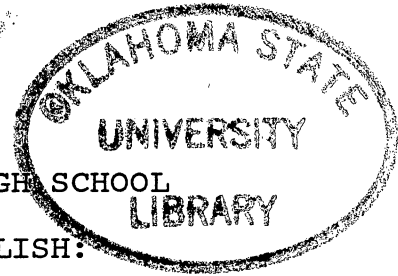
King Abdul Aziz University

Makkah, Saudi Arabia

1980

Submitted to the faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTERS OF ARTS
December 1987

Thesis
1987
H348c
Cop. 2



COMMON ERRORS OF SAUDI HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS' WRITTEN ENGLISH:
THEIR CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Thesis Approved:

Duce Southard

Thesis Adviser

Shy Southard

Ravi Shetty

Norman N. Durham

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my committee members. I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Bruce Southard for his valuable help and continued support. I would like to thank Dr. Ravi Sheory and Dr. Sherry Southard, and I appreciate their help and advise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
Studies on Student Errors.	2
Contrastive Analysis.	4
Error Analysis.	7
II. ENGLISH LEARNING SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA.	11
Statement of the Problem	11
Significance of Study.	12
Limitations of this Study.	13
Objectives	13
Teaching English in Saudi Public Schools	14
The Sociolinguistic Situation.	16
III. ERROR ANALYSIS.	19
Introduction	19
Method, Data, Collection, and Subjects	19
Tense Errors	21
Past for Present	21
Present for Past	22
Omission of Be	23
Redundant use of Be.	25
Modal + ing.	26
Infinitive Inflected for Past Tense.	27
Errors of Preposition.	27
Omission of Preposition	27
Addition of Preposition	28
Improper use of Prepositions.	29
Subject-Verb Agreement	30
Wrong Noun Plurals	31
Word Order	31
"Have" Deletion.	33
Deleted, Incorrect, and Redunant Subject	34
Main Verb Deletion	34
Wrong Choice of Words.	35
Conclusion	36
Frequency of Error Occurrence.	37
IV. THE EFL SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA AND SUGGESTED REVISIONS	40
Teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia.	41

Chapter	Page
The English Language Curriculum in the Public Schools of Saudi Arabia	45
Teaching English in Saudi Schools.	47
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	51
Conclusions.	51
Recommendations.	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
APPENDIX A - QUESTIONS	58
APPENDIX B - TEXTBOOK SUBJECT AND 4 STUDENT SAMPLES. .	59

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Summary of Errors	38

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

English, as a foreign language, is taught in Saudi public schools at the intermediate and the secondary levels. Teaching English in Saudi schools starts at the 7th grade level and continues until the 12th grade level with an average of about six hours per week. The rest of the weekly program (about 24 hours) is devoted to other disciplines such as history, geography, math, science, religion, physics, and chemistry, all of which are taught in Arabic. The Ministry of Education has outlined the goals of teaching English in public schools and designed the curriculum for each level. The teachers of English are mostly non-native speakers from Arab countries, such as Egypt and Sudan, as well as some national teachers who are graduates of local universities. High school graduates who study English for about six years are, in most cases, unable to communicate in English and their level of proficiency is far below the expected level.

This study of Saudi students' errors in the written form is an attempt to find the source of such errors and to discover the areas which cause difficulty in learning English for Saudi students.

The first chapter reviews literature on Saudi students' common errors along with a quick review of error analysis as well as contrastive analysis.

Studies on Student Errors

Willcott (1972) studied the written answers of 16 Arab students' history exams at the University of Texas at Austin to find out the syntactic problems native speakers of Arabic face while studying English. Willcott planned this study with the intention of developing appropriate teaching materials for Arab students. The results did not reveal enough information to develop the intended materials; however, Willcott concluded that the most problematic parts of English for Arabs are the concept of definiteness (the) and verb morphology.

In a cross-sectional study, Assobaiai (1974) analyzed the written composition of Saudi students from eight different levels. This study was conducted to investigate the developmental steps in learning syntax in a foreign language situation.

The focus of this study was on the tense, aspect, and verb forms of English. Assobaiai concluded that the students' interlanguage was characterized by the addition and deletion of be. Assobaiai stresses that teaching English in a foreign situation should incorporate the social dimension as well as linguistic factors.

Scott and Tucker (1974) studied the oral and the written errors of Arab students enrolled in an intensive English course before entering the American University of Beirut. The researchers administered one exam at the beginning of the course and another at the end. The results indicated that Arab students had difficulties with the use of verbs, prepositions, articles, and relative clauses. And the most frequent error occurred in the use of auxiliary and copula.

Kambal (1980) studied the syntactic errors of first year students at Khartoum University. The result of this study showed that the highest occurrences of errors were in the use of the verb, tenses, concord, articles, and prepositions. Most errors were explained as interlingual interference.

Sharma (1981) studied the written performance of ten Saudi students learning English at Indiana University. The students' written compositions were analyzed; the results indicated that the most difficult parts of English for Saudi students are the use of auxiliary, copula omission, and the third person singular. Sharma concluded that these problems can be attributed to simplification and generalization.

The above mentioned studies were conducted for some specific purposes and intended to achieve certain goals such as developing curricula or measuring syntactic growth. This study, however, intends to analyze students' errors

and investigate the situation that is related directly to the process of teaching English in Saudi Arabia. The studies by Kambal (1980) and Scott and Tucker (1974) are most similar to this one.

The difficulties that learners of English as a second language face while studying English have attracted researchers to investigate such difficulties. The advocates of CA and EA came up with both types of studies in an attempt to predict and find the cause of such difficulties.

Contrastive Analysis (CA), although it is not without pitfalls, is reviewed here because it is helpful in recognizing the differences between any two languages. Such information could be very helpful in designing appropriate course materials. Also, the teacher could be more comfortable in teaching English to non-native speakers if he or she has enough information about the learner's Native Language (NL). Error Analysis (EA), on the other hand, is being reviewed because it provides a rather systematic method to analyze and categorize errors according to their frequency and gravity. EA is also helpful in detecting the underlying source of errors.

Contrastive Analysis

Fries (1945) established contrastive analysis (CA) as a methodology of target language (TL) teaching. In his often quoted statement, Fries said that

. . . the most effective materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description with the native language of the learner (p. 9).

Lado (1957, p. 1) defined CA as "the comparison of any two languages and cultures to discover and describe the problems that the speaker of one language will have in learning the other." The rationale for CA comes from three sources: (a) practical experience of the foreign language teacher; (b) studies of language contact in bilingual situations; and (c) theory of learning (Sridhar, 1975). Lee (1968) stated that the strong version of CA is based on the following assumptions:

1. that the prime cause, and even the sole cause, of difficulty and error in foreign language learning is interference coming from the learner's native language;
2. that the difficulties are chiefly, or wholly, due to the differences between the two languages;
3. that the greater these differences are, the more acute the learning difficulties will be;
4. that the results of a comparison between the two languages are needed to predict the difficulties and errors which will occur in learning the foreign language; and
5. that what there is to teach can best be found by comparing the two languages and then subtracting what is common to them, so that what the student has to learn equals the sum of the differences established by the contrastive analysis.

The CA hypothesis claims that a systematic comparison between L_1 and L_2 will yield a prediction about the area of learning difficulties in L_2 for the speaker of L_1 (Fries, 1945). And the second claim by Fries states that the best teaching materials are those that emphasize the features of the target language that differ from the learner's native language.

Contrastive Analysis lost its popularity and was criticized after the emergence of Chomsky's transformational generative grammar in 1957. Wardhaugh (1970) felt that CA failed either to predict the L_2 learners' errors or to prevent their occurrence. Duskova (1969) found that interference from NL is not the only cause for errors. Buteau (1970) agrees with Duskova and adds that interference from NL is not sufficient for all difficulties in L_2 learning. Assobaiai (1979) reported that

this apparent predictive inadequacy led Wardhaugh (1970) to make the distinction between strong and weak versions of CA and as proposed by Goodman (1974), for being purely descriptive and less evaluative. The a priori version simply claims to predict most of the errors while the a post-priori can account for a good number of the actual errors made by the learner (p. 20).

Nemser (1971) states that the "theoretical bases and the procedural practices of the field fell far short of the requisite levels both in predicting and explaining the behavior of language learners" (p. 12). However, CA is not completely rejected. Selinker (1971) states that in spite of "a serious crisis of confidence CA is still thriving, as evidenced by the number of conferences held in recent

years, by the number of Ph.D. dissertations in contrastive linguistics in the U.S.A., and, most interestingly, by the recent growth of large-scale contrastive projects in Europe" (p. 8).

Error Analysis

Error analysis (referred to as EA) was introduced as an alternative to the contrastive analysis that has some limitations. Contrastive analysis (CA) concentrates mainly on comparing the grammars of two languages to predict errors. Scholars of CA try to predict the errors of the target language (TL) from the learner's NL. Supporters of CA have concluded that the elements of the TL that are similar to those in the learner's NL are simple to learn. But, on the other hand, elements of the TL that are different and do not occur in the NL are difficult to acquire by the second language learner.

Instead of following the CA approach, Corder (1967) introduced studying the actual performance of the learner, including the steps of the language acquisition process and the learner's strategy of learning the TL. Those who support the EA approach suggest that only one-third of the errors are related to NL interference. George (1971) and Whitman and Jackson (1972) found that the same amount of errors can be attributed to the learner's NL interference. Richards (1971) arrived at the same result and stated that

Interference from mother tongue is clearly a major source of difficulty in second language learning, and contrastive analysis has proved valuable in locating areas of interlanguage interference (p. 108).

So Richards does not reject CA totally as do most critics of CA, but rather limits its area of practice to the part of NL interference. He also argued that second language learners have the same kind of errors regardless of the learners' different language backgrounds and called these errors interlingual and developmental errors. Richards (1971) believes that

Interlingual errors are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply. Developmental errors illustrate the learner's attempt to build up hypotheses about the English language from his or her limited experience and knowledge that are acquired from classroom instruction and textbook (p. 206).

So the interlingual errors appear in the learner's performance as a result of his or her strategy to come up with new rules by merely using the given data of the TL. In most cases, the learner may develop a rule that corresponds neither to the rules of the learner's NL nor to the rules of the TL.

This mixture of both the NL and the TL has been given different names by different scholars. The most common name is "interlingual" (Selinker, 1972). Nemser (1972) called it "approximative system". He suggested the idea that every learner has a unique language because the rules of the NL are particular to the learner.

Sridhar (1975) stated that

The goals of traditional EA were purely pragmatic. It was believed that EA, by identifying the areas of difficulty for the learner, could help in: (i) determining the sequence of presentation of target items in textbook and classroom, with the difficult items following the easier ones; (ii) deciding the relative degree of emphasis, explanation and practice required in putting across various items in TL; (iii) devising remedial lessons and exercises; and finally, (iv) selecting items for testing the learner's proficiency (P. 103).

He concluded that "the applied emphasis in this approach to error is obvious" (p. 103). According to Sridhar (1975), the method of EA consists of six steps:

1. collection of data (either from a "free" composition by students on a given theme or from examination answers);

2. identification of errors (labelling, with varying degrees of precision depending on the linguistic sophistication brought to bear on the task, with respect to the exact nature of the deviation, e.g., dangling preposition, anomalous sequence of tenses, etc.);

3. classification into error types (e.g., errors of agreement, articles, verb forms, etc.);

4. statement of relative frequency of error types;

5. identification of the areas of difficulty in the TL;

6. therapy (remedial drills, lessons, etc.) (p. 103).

Rossipal (1971) and Duskova (1969) added one or both of the following steps:

1. analysis of source of errors (e.g., mother tongue interferences, overgeneralization, inconsistencies in the spelling system of the TL, etc.);

2. determination of the degree of disturbance caused by the error (or the seriousness of the error in terms of communication, norm, etc.) (p. 103).

CHAPTER II

ENGLISH LEARNING SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

This chapter will discuss the general characteristics of learning English in Saudi Arabia and will include a statement of the problem, the significance of this study, the limitations of this study, the objectives, and the sociolinguistic situation in Saudi Arabia.

Statement of the Problem

Saudi students study English for six years before joining the university. When they start their undergraduate study at the university level, they study English for one or two semesters. At this stage Saudi students find it very difficult to finish the English courses successfully due to their inadequate preparation in English at the high school level. Saudi students' low achievement in learning English can be attributed to linguistic and non-linguistic factors that affect the teaching and learning of English in Saudi Arabia. Saudi students' deficient English is seen in their written performance and has been the target of many

researchers who tried to study this problem from different angles.

This study, however, will try to discuss most, if not all, of the factors that affect the process of teaching English in the intermediate and the high schools of Saudi Arabia.

Significance of Study

Educators as well as administrators are concerned with the identification and prevention of written and spoken errors made by Saudi students. Much research has been conducted to identify these errors and their sources. Other studies have been concerned with curricula adequacy and the methods used in teaching English. However, little effort has been made to provide practical remedial suggestions to prevent and correct errors of Saudi students. Some studies have provided brief recommendations to improve a specific area in teaching English.

This study will concentrate on all aspects that affect the teaching and learning of English in Saudi schools with some detailed discussion about each factor. It is the researcher's intention to review works in different areas that cover most, if not all, related and influential areas of English.

Limitations of this Study

This investigation is limited to the study and analysis of Saudi students' syntactic errors only in the written form. It is mainly concerned with the common types of errors and the most difficult parts of English for Saudi students to learn.

Objectives

This study has two main objectives. The first objective is to know the type of common syntactic errors of Saudi students. The errors will be analyzed to pin-point the problem areas of English for Saudi students. The second objective of this study is to provide remedial suggestions so as to help teachers as well as students overcome and correct such errors in the proper way. This objective will try to answer the following questions with direct relevance to the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia:

1. How good is the teacher of English in teaching EFL and what is the level of his preparation?
2. How does the learner view EFL and what does he think of his preparation in English?
3. What is the level of curricula adequacy?
4. What is the effect of the sociolinguistics of Saudi Arabia on learning English?
5. What are the methods of teaching EFL in Saudi schools and what is the best way to teach composition (writing) in high schools?

6. How can teachers deal with Saudi students' errors in their written performance?

Teaching English in Saudi Public Schools

The Ministry of Education has specific goals for teaching English in Saudi schools. The Ministry of Education has stated that:

The ultimate aim of teaching English is to enable the students to communicate orally and in writing, to understand foreign culture, to convey theirs to others, to keep pace with some of the latest scientific, literary, and technological findings and to help the pupil gain reasonable command of English in order to be in a better position to defend Islam against adverse criticism and to participate in the dissemination of Islamic culture. We feel that if teaching English is to be fruitful at all, it must be geared into these general aims (Ministry of Education, 1980, p.2)

The Ministry of Education mentioned in its 1980 manual 10 specific goals for teaching English in the high schools. These goals are:

1. To help the pupil use the language automatically through habit formation.
2. To help the learner gain a reasonable mastery of the basic English structures that are useful both in speech and writing.
3. To help the learner practice and observe words in action.
4. To enrich the learner's active vocabulary through observing the use of syntactical patterns and mastering them by forming original sentences on the same lines.

5. To give the learner active speech practice through responding to questions.
6. To teach spontaneous production of complete and correct sentences.
7. To promote intellectual growth through probing the depth of what is said and to encourage critical thinking.
8. To teach the learner the implications of tone and stress.
9. To teach the learner the expression of thoughts and to help him in written work.
10. To promote remedial work by revealing areas of difficulty hindering learner's comprehension (Ministry of Education, 1980, pp. 6-8).

The first goal seems to be supportive of the audio-lingual method that stresses learning the language through habit formation.

English is also taught in a traditional way that follows the general techniques of the grammar-translation method. The drilling practice advocated by the audio-lingual method is still used. The teacher plays a dominating role in class while students listen and remain passive. In some cases, the teacher reads aloud and the students repeat after him. Some students never learn to read this way and the teacher may never discover that his or her students are not reading with the group. Phonological mistakes and incorrect word utterances will not be detected in group

readings. The large number of students may force the teacher to follow this method of teaching students to read. Some teachers use Arabic while teaching English in explaining the meanings of some new words, and it is common for instructors to write the meaning of almost all unlearned words in Arabic. A close observation of English instruction will reveal pitfalls in the teaching and learning of English. This matter will be discussed in detail in the third chapter. The researcher believes the Ministry of Education was very optimistic when it planned to achieve these 10 goals but, unfortunately, the level of achievement might disappoint those who thought the English teaching program would be a success. These goals are not impossible if practical steps are taken to apply what many studies have proposed will improve the English teaching programs. This study will try to gather all necessary findings of similar research in an attempt to put the English program back on the right track.

The Sociolinguistic Situation

People in Saudi Arabia speak Arabic as the official language of the country. Arabic is used in all sections of the country as the sole means of communication. All students at every level of school are taught in Arabic except when there is a need to teach a subject in English at the university level. There is no mention of any language in the social life other than Arabic. People perform their

life only in Arabic. Even those who know English do not use it in their daily life to communicate with others. Also, students at the high school level who study English limit their English to classroom use. Once they are outside the classroom walls, Arabic dominates. In other words, students who learn English never practice the language in their community.

The method of studying English in Saudi Arabia is another factor that does not help the student achieve an adequate level of proficiency in understanding and communicating in English. The Ministry of Education requires the teachers to cover certain areas by the end of the academic year. Therefore, teachers try to finish the required materials as fast as they can; as a result, the students do not acquire or fully comprehend the presented materials. Consequently, neither the teacher nor the students are satisfied. The students' low level of achievement in learning English causes problem for both the teachers and the students as they gradually move to higher levels.

The large number of students in each class (30-35) does not allow enough time for all the students to participate in class activities. Teachers, in most cases, will try to finish their part of covering a given amount of work and this may reduce the chance of helping all students to understand and learn adequately.

These and other factors have created a stressful situation which is not appropriate for teaching or for learning English in Saudi public schools.

CHAPTER III

ERROR ANALYSIS

Introduction

As indicated earlier, the method identified by Sridhar will be followed in analyzing the errors. This chapter will discuss only the syntactic errors. The errors discussed in this chapter represent samples and not all identified errors. This chapter will include a brief description of data collection procedure as well as some information about the population of this study. A brief summary of error types and number of occurrence of each type will be discussed. The errors will be labelled and categorized according to each type. The frequency of error types and the area of difficulty in the TL will be discussed too.

Method, Data Collection, and Subjects

The method of error analysis identified by Sridhar will be followed in this study. Errors will be identified and classified into certain categories such as tense errors. Each error will be discussed to determine its source and nature. Remedial suggestions will be based on the findings of similar works.

The subjects of this research are high school students (10th and 11th grade). They study English for five to six years with an average of about six hours per week. Their age is about 16-18 years old.

The author planned to give the students a one-question essay and ask them to write a free composition on a chosen topic. However, students' responses were not encouraging. Some responded adequately, but most showed no interest in writing at all. A copy of the 1984 final exams on composition was obtained and 170 samples were randomly selected for the study. Only 75 samples were randomly chosen after the elimination of samples that were unreadable or completely without any syntactic errors. The students are asked to write an essay on a given topic. Some words are provided with the question so as to help the students to spell them correctly and to use them in their compositions. The time allowed is 30 minutes and the students are required to write about one page (Appendix A).

The total number of errors in this study is 588. Students deleted the main verb 116 times (19.72%) and the subject 74 times (12.58%). There were 113 tense errors (19.21%). The third category of frequent errors is in the use of prepositions. Students deleted the preposition 70 times (11.90%) and added prepositions 65 times (11.05%). Students also misused prepositions 22 times (3.74%).

The subject was deleted 74 times (12.58%) and it was added only 15 times (2.55%). Object deletion as well as verb addition occurred 15 times, also.

Tense Errors

Most tense errors occurred as a result of substituting one tense for another, or omitting the tense marker or the verb to be.

Past for Present

Examples:

1. But now they lived in big towns.
2. But now they used many telephones.
3. But now they lived small houses.
4. But now they traveled fast by car.
5. Everybody needs to stay healthy and lived comfortably.
6. But now it took them less days. . .
7. The journey is comfortable, safer, and did not take long time.

The source of these tense errors is not clear. One possible explanation is that the students did not learn the verb system very well. Scott and Tucker (1974) suggest that English learners acquire the verb system in a rather late stage. Sentence 5 seems to support this claim since the learner used the simple present tense and the simple

past tense in the same sentence. The same error appears in Sentence 7.

Present for Past

Examples:

1. People live in tents but now they live. . .
2. Once there are no hospitals.
3. People make every thing by hand.
4. In the past they travel by camel.
5. In the past pilgrims come in three ways.
6. The journey to MAKKAH was tiring, dangerous, and take along time.
7. At that time people do not have telephones.

It seems that the learners have not mastered the past tense yet. They substituted the present tense for the past. In the previous example they used the past tense instead of the present. This may mean that both tenses were introduced to the learners, but they did not master them well enough to use both tenses correctly. It is also possible that this error is a performance error where the students misspell the verbs and forget to put the tense marker at the end of the verb, as illustrated in the following four examples:

1. People use to live in small houses.
2. People live in tents in villages but now. . .
3. In the past people live in villages.
4. In the past they travel by camel.

Students deleted the past tense marker in these four sentences and in other sentences as well. They also, in other sentences, included the past tense marker and used it correctly. For example:

People lived (in) small villages.

A possible reason for such errors is redundancy. George (1972) states that redundancy is the cause of the omission of ed because it appears in some verbs and disappears in others. Also, it is possible that this error is an inter-language error. In Sentence 3, the learner may think that there is no need for the past tense marker since it is indicated at the beginning of the sentence that the action of living took place in the past.

Omission of Be

Examples:

1. Once there few telephones.
2. There good communication.
3. But now there good sole. . .
4. In the past there a shortage. . .
5. Once the roads not good.
6. There few telephones.
7. But today (the) journey more comfortable.
8. I thought it difficult to learn English.
9. In the past the journey to MAKKAH tiring.
10. The new covering for the Ka'ban made in Egypt.
11. The journey to MAKKAH long and tiring.

12. The journey to MAKKAH very easy and comfortable.
13. But now many modern telephones.
14. But now people used to travel by planes.
15. But now a days people used to travel by plane.

The verb to be is used in some places and omitted in others. This ungrammatical use of the verb be could be attributed to more than one reason. For example, the adjectives in Sentences 1, 2, and 8 may cause some confusion which makes the student uncertain about the use of the verb be. In Sentence 10 the verb to be is omitted because it is in the passive. Tadros (1966) states the cause for such errors is the absence of a syntactic equivalent in Arabic. In Arabic the passive is only one word and this may be the cause for deleting the be verb. Kambal (1980, p. 109) says that students substitute the active form of the verb because "the passive is scarcely used." He further continues to say that "the subject is either deleted or pronominalized" (p. 109). Sentences 11 and 12 seem to be similar to Sentences 1-9. In Sentence 13, the student deleted the verb be as well as there. This could be a performance error since there was used many times. It is also possible that the student is not fully aware of the rules regarding the use of there and be. Saying that this is caused by the student's carelessness or by a performance error is another possibility. In Sentence 14 and 15 are is deleted before used to. In Sentence 14 the student wants

to say that people are used to traveling by plane in the present time, as it is indicated in Sentence 15. The deletion of be in Sentences 14 and 15 is due to NL interference. There is no equivalent to the verb be in such sentences in Arabic.

Redundant Use of Be

Example:

1. But now they are live in a big towns.
2. Once people were live in small houses.
3. The government is built hospitals.
4. People is live in small villages.
5. People used was make very thing by hand.
6. People was used to make every thing. . .
7. But now they were grow a lot of fruit.
8. In the past the journey to MAKKAH was long time.

In these eight sentences be was used redundantly or as a substitution for the main verb. The use of be in these sentences is ungrammatical and unnecessary. If we remove be from Sentence 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7, the syntactic errors will be removed and the sentences will be grammatically correct. The addition of be in these sentences (1, 3, 4, 6, 7) might be seen as performance errors. However, it is more likely that students commit such errors because they did not master the rules of their usage. In other words, these sentences could be interlanguage errors since the

students are creating false rules regarding the use of the redundant be in each of these sentences. In Sentence 2 the student wants to say:

Once people lived in small houses.

The student inserted were before the main verb and deleted the d of the verb lived. In Sentence 5, the learner has substituted was for to. And in Sentence 8, the learner substituted was for took. The syntactic errors in Sentences 5 and 8 can be solved by putting to instead of was in Sentence 5 and took for was in Sentence 8.

Modal + ing

1. Today we have eating chicken.
2. We should taking care of our bodies.
3. We must brushing twice a day.
4. But now they have using many many telephones.

Native Language interference is a possible source for this type of error. In Arabic the continuity for an action is indicated although the action is not done all day. One may say that he takes care of his body these days. The verb take care is said in the continuous form, not to imply the continuity of the action at the same time, but to indicate that he or she takes care of his or her body regularly. It is also clear from these examples that the learners did not learn how to use the ing form yet.

Infinitive Inflected for Past Tense

Examples:

1. People used to made every thing by hand.
2. People used to travelled by camel.
3. We have to lived in big towns.
4. We have to travelled by cars.
5. It is easy to travelled.
6. Arabs used to travelled by camel.

Two possible reasons might have caused this type of error. It is possible that the students did not master the rules of the infinitive and the verbs that follow it. It is also possible that this error is a performance error which can be related to carelessness or misspelling.

Preposition Errors

Omission of Preposition

Examples:

1. People live low houses.
2. _____ 1926 when King Abdulazin. . .
3. _____ the past people did not. . .
4. People lived small villages.
5. they live big houses.
6. But now they grow alot of fruit.
7. People used to make everything hand.
8. People made everything hand.
9. We can fly Riyadh to Jeddah.

10. But today pilgrims muslim countries all over the world come the holy places perform their hajj.

11. But now they travel car.

Learners omitted prepositions that are used in Arabic. In all eleven sentences the use of the preposition is necessary. In Sentence 10, the learner omitted three prepositions that are very essential to convey the message clearly. This could be a developmental or performance error. Richard (1971) states that the students did not use such prepositions because they do not know how to apply them. He continues that the learner is trying to "build up hypothesis about the English language from his limited experience of it in the classroom or text book" (p. 216). The most frequent prepositions omitted in this study are "in", "by", and "from." All these prepositions have equivalents in Arabic and they are necessary to convey the message.

Addition of Preposition

Examples:

1. People travelled in slowly by camel.
2. People used to few telephones.
3. But now they travel in fast by car.
4. In today pilgrims travel by planes.
5. The journey is comfortable, safer, and did not take long time.

6. Pilgrims travelled by camel, by ship and by on boat.

7. The journey in the past to was long on than now.

8. Pilgrims from muslim countries all over the world.

9. In the past pilgrims came to holy places to perform in the hajj.

10. We should read in good light and to hold books at arm's length.

Learners added some unnecessary prepositions whenever there was a corresponding preposition in Arabic. In Sentence 1 the Arabic translation indicates that there is a preposition which is equivalent to in. In Sentence 2, the learner might have been confused by the verb "used" and added the preposition to. Sentence 3 is similar to Sentence 1. It seems that most of the additions are due to NL interference. In Sentences 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10, the prepositions are used redundantly. There seems to be no relation with NL in these sentences.

Improper Use of Prepositions

Examples:

1. people lived in tents on small villages.
2. And once (they) travelled in camels.
3. people on the past
4. Now they live on big towns
5. people. . .used to make everything to hand.

6. pilgrims came in planes.

7. But today pilgrims to muslim countries all over the world came. . .

8. But today it is made of the Kingdom.

Prepositions are used improperly in these 8 sentences. NL and English interference is possible. Some prepositions were used due to NL interference as in Sentence 6. The proper preposition is by and the learner used the proposition in instead. By is the proper equivalent proposition. in Arabic.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Examples

1. They lives in big towns.
2. The roads was not good.
3. in the past pilgrims was. . .
4. But today pilgrims is comfortable.
5. But now they travels. . .
6. And camels caravans was carry them to MAKKAH.

The subject verb agreement error occurred where the verb be is used in Sentences 2, 3, and 4. This type of error seems to be a performance error. In Arabic the equivalent of was in Sentence 2 and 3 is were and not was. The third person singular marker s in Sentence 1 and 5 does not have an equivalent in Arabic and therefore is a performance error. The s in camels in Sentence 6 is unnecessary. If the plural maker s is not deleted from camels, the Ara-

bic translation of the whole sentence would be grammatically correct.

Wrong Noun Plurals

Examples:

1. People make every things by hand.
2. Today we have a good telephones systems.
3. They make many thing by hand.

Native Language interference is clear in Sentence 1. In Arabic, Sentence 1 is correct and does not need any change.

The formation of wrong noun plurals in Sentences 2 and 3 seems to be a performance error. And if we add s to thing in Sentence 3, the Arabic translation of the new sentence will be grammatically correct.

Word Order

Examples:

1. but now they car by travel
2. but now live they...buildings.
3. but now they more grow...
4. in the past used to most people travel by camel.
5. But now they many used telephones.
6. They built have many in modern hospitals.
7. but today travel pilgrims by planes.
8. and would camel caravans carry it to MAKKAH.
9. exercise different help us to not became fat.

In these nine examples words were used at random or for a certain reason. Sentence 1, if it is rewritten, will look like this:

but now they travel by car.

The right sequence of the words creates a complete and meaningful sentence.

In Sentences 2 and 3 the verbs precede the pronoun "they". Also, in Sentence 4 the words seem to be used at random. However, it seems that NL is the cause for these errors. In Sentence 2, the student literally put the corresponding words for a correct and complete sentence in Arabic. So it is a direct transfer from the NL. In Arabic, the verb precedes the subject and the subject may precede the verb as well. This could be the reason for putting the verb before the subject in Sentence 2. Sentence 5 seems to be a developmental error since it does not show any sign of transfer from NL. If the words are rearranged after deleting the extra d of "used", it will produce a complete sentence that is acceptable in English. One possible reason for such random use of these words to create a sentence could be the list of words that are provided at the beginning of each question. As explained in the first chapter, a group of words is given to help the students in writing them correctly and to use them in their compositions (Appendix A). When students find these words in front of them and they do not know the rules or how to apply them, they try to make a guess and end up with such

sentences. Sentence 6 seems to be of the same nature with an additional preposition. Sentence 7 is another literal translation of the Arabic version. It is similar to sentence 4. In Sentence 8, the modal would is used before the subject and apart from the verb. This could be an interlingual error where the student is not sure about the right place of the modal would. Sentence 9's words are used in a wrong sequence due to NL interference, since it is literally translated except for the last two words of this sentence.

"Have" Deletion

Examples:

1. in the past people did not hospitals.
2. people did not telephones.
3. Today people modern cars.
4. but now they good communication.
5. but now they many modern hospitals.
6. but now they cars.

Sentences 1 and 6 were taken from one sample. The learner did not use have throughout the whole composition. It is possible that the learner did not know this verb or its exact function. This error occurred frequently and this repeated occurrence seems to support the claim that the learners did not learn how to use have before writing this composition.

Deleted, Incorrect, and Redundant Subject

Examples:

1. Today live in high buildings.
2. in the past did not have hospitals.
3. but now build many modern hospitals.
4. but today travel by car.
5. In the past they people did not have...
6. but now people they live in big towns.
7. Nowadays the journey it is very easy.

In the first four sentences, the subject was deleted. In Sentences 5, 6, and 7 the repeated subject is always a pronoun. Scott and Tucker (1974) relate the subject redundancy to NL interference. The reason for deleting the subject is not clear. It could be a result of forgetfulness, but this reason seems weak since the occurrence of this deletion is reasonably high. Subject deletion could be attributed to performance since some of the learners delete the subject in one place, and use it in another place in the same essay.

Main Verb Deletion

Examples:

1. But now they in high buildings.
2. But now they fast by cars.
3. they fast by cars or planes.
4. people small villages.
5. they many modern hospitals.

6. But today they from muslin countries.
7. in the past pilgrims to holy places.
8. and does not long time to reach MAKKAH.
9. and caravans would them to MAKKAH.

In these sentences, the main verb was deleted. After going back to the passages from which the sentences were taken, I discovered the reason for this deletion. In Sentence 1, the verb was deleted because the verb live was written in the previous sentence. The learner is writing about people's lives both in the past and in the present time. The learner wrote:

People lived in low small houses, But now they in high buildings.

This could be a developmental error where the learner assumes that it is enough to have the verb in the first sentence of this pair. However, some sentences were not written in the same way as Sentence 1. The verb of Sentence 4 was deleted although it was the first sentence in one of the samples. This type of error was repeated twice by the same learner. At the same time, the verb was present in the rest of the essay which was written by the same learner who wrote Sentence 4.

Wrong Choice of Words

Examples:

1. But now they agriculture many vegetables.

2. pilgrims...come to the holy places to perform their pilgrims.
3. but now we make industries.
4. but now they live in hight.
5. people made every thing by hand but now they have agriculture.

Learners try to come up with any word that looks like or can be substituted for the right word. In Sentence 1, the learner may not know the verb grow and comes up with "agriculture". It seems that whenever a word or a verb is not clearly understood by the learner, then whatever he knows will be provided. In Sentence 2 pilgrims was substituted for pilgrimage.

Conclusion

The results of this analysis show that Saudi students' errors were committed due to many factors. Native language interference was shown in the students' frequent errors of tense, prepositions, and omission. In some cases, students literally translated what they wanted to say in English. Tenses were substituted for one another frequently. Students' preposition errors were due to NL and English interference. The types of these errors were substitution, omission, and redundant errors. The omission problem was visible in deleting the be verb and the subject. Main verbs were omitted, also.

The results of this study seem to be similar to other studies. Scott and Tucker (1974) studied the oral and the written errors of some Arab students in Lebanon. The majority of errors were in the use of verbs and prepositions. Kambal (1980) studied the written performance of 50 students from Sudan. Errors were explained mainly on the basis of interlingual interference. The highest occurrence of errors was in verbs, tense, and prepositions. Kambal's (1980) work seems to be similar to this present study with regard to the frequency of error in tense and prepositions. However, some of the samples examined in this study were very similar. It is possible that students memorize some lessons and write what is memorized in their answer paper.

Errors in such answers cannot be explained as an interlingual or NL interference since the answer is memorized and does not reveal the students' actual level of proficiency. To make this clear to the reader, the original textbook subject and 4 samples are provided in Appendix B.

Frequency of Error Occurrence

Table 1 summarizes all types of errors. Most errors occurred as a result of addition or deletion of parts of the language. Tense errors occurred mainly as the students substituted one tense for another.

TABLE I
SUMMARY OF ERRORS

Error Type	Number of Occurrence	% of Total Errors	
Verb Deletion	116	19.73	1
Tense Errors	113	19.21	2
Subject Deletion	74	12.58	3
Preposition Deletion	70	11.90	4
Preposition Addition	65	11.05	5
"Have" deletion	33	5.61	6
Wrong Preposition	22	3.74	7
Article Addition	20	3.40	8
Verb Addition	15	2.55	9
Subject Addition	15	2.55	10
Object Deletion	15	2.55	11
Wrong Noun Plurals	10	1.70	12
"To" Deletion	5	0.85	13
Wrong Verb	5	0.85	14
Wrong Choice of Word	3	0.51	15
Article Deletion	3	0.51	16
Modal Addition	2	0.34	17
Modal Deletion	2	0.34	18
	<u>588</u>		

The problem of deletion of important parts of the sentence was serious. Students deleted verbs, subjects, prepositions, "have," objects, "to," articles, and modals. The total of deletion errors was 318 (54.07%). As mentioned earlier, such errors occurred as a result of not knowing the rules of using these parts of the language. Another possible reason for deleting these parts is the students' carelessness or because of the NL interference.

Errors of adding unnecessary parts of the language occurred 117 times (19.89%). In some cases students added some parts of the language because they tried to create their own rules about the TL. Some of these errors were explained as performance errors.

Tense errors occurred 113 times (19.21%). Tense errors occurred as a result of omitting the tense marker such as "ed" and in some cases, students substituted one tense for another. NL interference was clear in tense errors when students were faced with some parts of the TL that have no equivalent in the NL.

The most difficult parts of English for Saudi students seems to be English tenses. However, deleting or adding certain parts of the language indicate that there is a problem in such areas. Further studies of students' interlanguage and the development aspects should be examined carefully to form a theory that may explain such errors conclusively.

CHAPTER IV

THE EFL SITUATION IN SAUDI ARABIA AND SUGGESTED REVISIONS

Many studies have been conducted to study the process of teaching and learning EFL in Saudi Arabia. Most of these studies have been concerned with one specific issue of the realized problems in the field of EFL in Saudi public schools. These studies, combined together, seem to have contributed positively in improving the program of EFL in Saudi Arabia. In fact, most of these studies were conducted with the hope of improving the English program in general. Some of the studies involved error analyses, strategies of learning EFL, the English curricula in Saudi high schools, the training of English teachers, and the phonetics of the English language.

It is the intention of this researcher to review some related studies done by Saudi and non-Saudi researchers that are concerned with the teaching and learning of EFL in Saudi Arabia. Some remedial suggestions will be provided in an attempt to improve the EFL program in general. This chapter will deal with the following elements believed to be important in the EFL program of Saudi Arabia:

1. Teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia.
2. The English curricula in the secondary schools of Saudi Arabia.
3. Teaching English in Saudi Arabia and the learners' views about their preparation in EFL.

Teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia

The colleges of education in the Saudi universities are in charge of training English language teachers in the cities of Riyadh, Makkah, Medina, Taif, and Abha. Teachers of the English language start teaching immediately after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Al-Saadat (1985), in describing the English language programs, said that

Prospective EFL teachers in all EFL teacher preparation programs in Saudi Arabia are generally required to take 21 semester hours of compulsory course work as prescribed by the university and the college of education, 32 semester hours as educational preparation course work, and 60 semester hours of course work as prescribed by the department of English. In this latter department, courses in the first and second levels focus on reading, oral practice, composition, and introductory courses in English Literature. Courses in the third and fourth levels focus on advanced translation, advanced conversation, advanced grammar, English literature (poetry, novel, drama, literacy criticism, and history of English literature), linguistics (comparative linguistics, applied linguistics, semantics, and stylistics), and teaching methods. Before graduation, students should complete a full semester of student teaching experiences (p. 18).

The level of those graduates who complete their B. A. in English and Education is unsatisfactory and deficient.

Al-Saddat pointed out that some teacher trainees are deficient in language proficiency especially in the area of speech. In other words, teachers who are not qualified to teach EFL in Saudi high and intermediate schools are, in fact, one of the main factors that contribute to the low level of achievement among Saudi students. The quality of the trained English teacher is not up to the English department's required level (Al-Gaeed, 1983). The inadequacy of teacher training is proven by the low level of achievement of the students.

Saudi teachers are not the only ones who teach English at the high through intermediate levels. The majority of EFL teachers come from Arab neighboring countries such as Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and other non-Arab countries such as India, Pakistan, United Kingdom, and the U.S.A. Teachers from the last four countries are very small in number. This diversity in origin and background is another factor that creates some problems in the field of teaching EFL. Saggsaf (1981) mentioned that

These teachers are not familiar with the kind of life the Saudis have; it takes them time to get adjusted to the new way of life they are experiencing. As a result, their productivity might be less than was expected. In such a case, the knowledge the student can gain would not give him/her the skills toward which the institutes are aiming (p. 66).

Since teachers of EFL are the most important factor in developing the English program and since the present level of these teachers is not up to a level of proficiency, the researcher believes that action must be taken to solve this

problem. One of the possible solutions to improve the proficiency level of English language teachers is to modify the present program of training such teachers. Course work should include four main topics that every teacher of the English language needs. The first topic should be related to the language itself. Every trainee should pass a level of proficiency and acquire a certain amount of knowledge in the English language in general. The second topic is related to first and second language acquisition theories. It is the belief of the researcher that the study of such theories is essential in the process of teaching and evaluating the errors of the learners. The third part should be aimed at the methods of teaching EFL. The present traditional and old methods have proven to be inadequate and inapplicable in most, if not all, cases. So, teaching EFL should undergo some changes and new methods should be used. The teacher should be prepared to use the appropriate methods based on his or her own judgment. The fourth part is related to the needs of the students and their attitudes. Saudi teachers should understand the needs of their students and try to motivate and encourage them by meeting their demands and by creating the right atmosphere in which to learn. As for the non-Saudi teachers, they should be aware of the Saudi culture and the nature of the program and its objective. In other words, non-Saudi teachers should become familiar with everything related to the field of EFL in order to avoid

any problems that might slow or affect the process of teaching EFL in a negative manner. This familiarization could be done through an orientation session that may last for one or two meetings or even a one week session before they are sent to the classrooms.

The above four topics are not all that is needed for teaching EFL in Saudi schools. The rest will be covered in the next part of this chapter; however, these four may be required from the teachers to start with, and should be dealt with before graduating. Also, teachers should be in constant touch with training throughout their teaching careers. Al-Saadat (1985) conducted a study to assess the inservice needs of teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia. He reported there is a great demand for inservice training and mentions that Rivers (1975) maintains that it is time that the ESL/EFL profession as a whole realize that with all the demands which will be made on future teachers, a preservice training period alone will not be enough no matter how well organized. In any planning, primacy should be given to the continuing development and consequent emotional security of classroom teachers, who will remain the key figures in any projected advance for the profession. Rivers (1975) mentions that

There is a continuing need for inservice workshops, institutes, and training sessions for the maintenance and development of language skills, and for practical training in materials development and in pedagogical techniques to enable them to implement a variety of approaches and courses from the types of students in their groups (p. 27).

Although such a program does not exist in Saudi Arabia at the present time, the researcher strongly agrees with Al-Saadat that there is an urgent need for inservice training of teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia.

The English Language Curriculum in the Public Schools of Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Education is solely responsible for designing the curriculum for the English language. Some foreign experts were asked to help in designing the English language curriculum and the result was that some of the materials included in the textbooks were not suitable or not relevant to life in Saudi Arabia. Teachers do not participate in designing the curriculum but they are required to teach it. The Ministry of Education specifies the amount of material to be covered within one academic year and the teacher must comply with this requirement. While teaching the assigned materials, the teacher is equipped with a small number of visual aids which are not sufficient for a successful English program. Dhafar (1986) states that:

The school teachers of English are generally equipped with a few wall charts and flash cards and a few enthusiastic teachers have built their own. No English teaching films are available. Very few schools have a tape or cassette recorder, and consequently, there has been no local attempt to produce materials. Few schools are equipped with English language labs (p. 38).

Al-Itirgy (1983) indicates that supervisors and teachers should participate in developing their own curriculum. It

is also important to listen to the teacher and consult him/her since teaching English is not complete unless there is active participation in teaching and in preparing the materials to be taught. Dhafar (1986, p. 9) conducted a study to learn the opinion of supervisors of the English language teachers about the adequacy of the English curriculum and "to identify the extent to which the English curriculum is meeting the needs of the secondary schools." Teachers' responses to such questions indicated that the stories in reading books are not realistic and contradict each other; some passages are boring; historical events are not clear; and the materials are more than what they can cover. Regarding the materials, teachers say that there should be exercise books with the original text; some materials are dull and do not motivate students; the syllabus should meet the need of the students. Regarding labs and visual aids, teachers as well as supervisors agree that there is a shortage and that they are very essential for the EFL classroom. Teachers felt that both Arabic and non-Arabic cultures should be included and that the teacher must be given a chance to know the student's cultures as well as the TL's culture. As an answer for a question about the materials taught, teachers suggest that material should match the student's age and level, be suitable and interesting, and of many kinds. In order for the teachers to help explain their lessons properly, materials should be

well selected, handy, acceptable and fully exploited, and should be renewable and updated.

In a way, teachers are hoping for materials that have a description that helps teachers to teach students, and at the same time, helps students to learn them. The conclusion of this study states that the present textbooks, although they are thought to be "good", need to be revised and made more realistic. In other words, the present curriculum is not completely rejected, but a modification seems to be necessary. One of the most important things said about the curriculum other than the above mentioned description is that it should be reduced. The quantity seems to be a big problem that affects both the teacher and the learner. Teachers do their jobs and try to comply with the rules of the Ministry of Education to finish the assigned curriculum. So the emphasis shifts from a concentration on making the student understand and learn the language to the completion of the syllabus within a given time regardless of the outcome. Students, on the other hand, become frustrated and seem to be lost. They graduate from high school with very little knowledge of English.

Teaching English in Saudi Schools

The Ministry of Education decided to teach English in the public schools as one of the required subjects. Goals were stated clearly and everybody in the Ministry of

Education seemed to be optimistic about the success of the English program. However, the experience of teaching EFL at the intermediate and high school levels was full of setbacks and frustrations. Sheshsha (1982) describes the process of teaching EFL as a troubled program. Sheshsha states that "difficult working conditions. . .overcrowded classrooms, shortage of materials and supplies, overloaded teaching schedules, and poor textbooks...are increasing" (p. 14). In addition, for most students the objective of learning English is merely to achieve high scores on the writing tests given four times a year. Memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules is still considered a popular method of learning English regardless of the use of the language. Furthermore, the traditional testing system does not require oral proficiency. Consequently, the student is likely to take about 1100 hours of English in public schools and still not be able to utter even a few correct sentences. The opportunity to practice is limited to those students who have dealings with non-Arabic speaking foreigners, who are mainly found in large cities. This statement seems to be a very good summary of the English teaching experience in Saudi Arabia. Some of the points, which were not discussed before, will be discussed briefly to clear up any misunderstanding about them.

The "overcrowded" classrooms usually contain about 30-35 students. This large number of students affects the students and the teacher in a negative way. In a class

period, there is no chance for every student to participate in the classroom activities. The teachers are never able to deal with the problems of all the students. Another problem is caused by the overloaded teaching schedule. The large number of students and the load of materials to be covered will put the teacher in a very difficult and tense situation which may lead to poor results. The old traditional methods are still being used in memorizing vocabulary and grammatical rules. Some teachers seem to be unwilling to change these outdated methods and apply suitable methods that are proven to be good. The students' practice of the English language is limited to the classroom and the homework assignment. It seems that under such circumstances, students will never learn. Some students rate their level of achievement as very poor. Altwajri (1982) studied the adequacy of students' preparation in EFL in Saudi schools. He asked the students about their views on four areas: the materials, method of teaching English, student's role and attitude, and recommendation for improvement. The conclusion of this study was that materials are unclear, and "lacked adequate balance in terms of the presentation and application of language skills in the teaching situation; they also lacked essential instructional aids" (Altwajri, 1982, p. 37). Students also said that the focus was on teaching grammatical rules, that the schools did not have laboratories, that the supervision was minimal, and that

the method of teaching English failed to motivate students to get involved in the classroom activities. Many students stated that teachers were concerned with completing their part of the work, that there was a shortage in the audiovisual aids, and that the facilities were inadequate.

The problem here seems to be related to the methodology of teaching the language, inadequate curriculum, and the lack of necessary materials. Such problems will definitely result in poor achievement. Therefore, this situation needs to be changed. Some remedial suggestions were provided earlier in this chapter and there is no need to report them here again.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study was conducted to study the written performance of Saudi high school students. The objectives of this study were to examine Saudi students' errors and to provide some remedial suggestions in an attempt to create a better situation of teaching EFL in Saudi high schools.

The third chapter discusses the common syntactic errors of Saudi students' written performance. The main conclusions of this chapter indicate that Saudi students' level of achievement is lower than what is expected. The most frequent errors occurred as a result of addition, deletion, and misuse of some parts of the English language. Students deleted the main verbs 116 times and the subject 74 times. Tense errors were 113. The preposition was deleted 70 times, added 65 times, and misused 22 times. The subject, and the object, were added 15 times. And the main verb was added 15 times. These results indicate that most errors occurred as a result of the addition or deletion of some parts of the sentence. This type of error was classified as a performance error since students do not know the rules of the language, as indicated by the many

samples which were suspected of being memorized because of their similarity (Appendix B).

The fourth chapter reviews the EFL situation in Saudi Arabia and provides some suggested revisions. This chapter discusses three elements believed to be important in teaching EFL. These elements include some studies on the teacher of EFL in Saudi schools, the English curriculum and the process of teaching EFL, and the learners' views about their preparation in English.

Recommendations

This study as well as the previous studies done on errors of Saudi students indicate that the process of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia is not adequately managed. The source of the problem seems to be caused by more than one factor. This study reviewed some of these factors that hinder the process of teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia and the following recommendations are provided here with the hope that they might lead to a better situation for teaching EFL in general and for teaching composition in particular.

Teaching English is a gradual process that can be achieved step-by-step. Therefore, teachers should not teach a specific book in each level if the students did not master the book in a previous level. The Ministry of Education designs a book for each level and the students have to study it whether they fully learn what is in each book or not. And in each level, teachers teach each book with

the assumption that students can study the current level's book since they passed the previous one, where in fact they did not fully master it. Most of the problems that are seen in this study occur when the students are taught what is beyond their level of understanding.

One possible way of solving this problem could be in the use of the placement test. Students' levels can be determined if they take a test at the beginning of each academic year and based on the results of such tests, the teacher should decide what is to be taught in a given level.

It is recommended that specific parts of the language such as present tense or third person singular be taught at each level. The teacher should use the provided books to teach the students certain parts using his or her own materials along with what can be used from the assigned books. This procedure gives the teacher some degree of freedom to choose the most appropriate materials to achieve a certain goal. And the inspectors should look for the achievement of the students in the assigned parts of the language rather than the completion of a book.

Teachers, as well as students, should not be pressured to complete a book in each level. This kind of requirement creates a tense situation which makes teachers rush to finish the book without being able to give each lesson the needed time and effort. And most of the studies done on errors indicate that the load is beyond the students'

abilities to comprehend and beyond the teachers' abilities to cover within a certain period of time.

New methods of teaching EFL should be used in Saudi schools. It seems that teachers should be more enthusiastic about teaching English. This can be achieved through specific programs designed especially to improve teachers' abilities to teach English and to update their knowledge in the field of teaching English.

Teaching writing should be dealt with as an independent subject and it should be done in a more creative way. Students should be able to write about subjects that are not in their books. This study showed that students memorize some lessons from the text book and then write it down in the answer paper. By doing so, the students do not learn how to create sentences with all the necessary elements that make the sentence grammatically accepted.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-Gaeed, Ibrahim H. 1983. An evaluative study of the English as a foreign language teacher preparation programs of Saudi Arabia as perceived by program students and graduates. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Indiana.
- Al-Itirgy, A. 1983. The role of supervision in developing the English curriculum in Aikkah Zone. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia.
- Al-Saadat, A. E. 1985. Assessing the inservice needs of teachers of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. The Pennsylvania State University.
- Altwaijri, A. O. 1982. The adequacy of students' preparation in English as a foreign language in Saudi schools. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oregon, Oregon.
- Assubaiaai, Saud H. 1979. Empirical bases for the interlanguage of Arab students learning English. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
- Buteau, Magdelhayne F. 1970. Students' errors and the learning of French as a second language: A pilot study. IRAL 8(2):133-145.
- Corder, S. P. 1967. The significance of learners' errors. IRAL 5(4):161-170.
- Dhafar, Talad O. 1986. A survey of the English language supervisors' and teachers' perceptions of the English language curriculum in the secondary school of Saudi Arabia. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Duskova, Libuse. 1969. On sources of errors in foreign language learning. IRAL 7(1):11-31.

- Fries, Charles C. 1945. Teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- George, H. V. 1971. English for Asian learners: Are we on the right road? ELT 25(3):270-277.
- Kambal, M. Osman. 1980. An analysis of Khartoum University students' composition errors with implications for remedial English in the context of Arabicization. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Lado, Robert. 1957. Linguistics across cultures. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- Lee, W. R. 1968. Thoughts on contrastive linguistics in the context of language teaching. Round Table, 185-194.
- Nemser, W. J. 1971. Recent center activities in contrastive linguistics, in Zegreb conference on English contrastive projects, ed. Rudolf Filipovic (Zegreb: University of Zegreb).
- Nemser, W. J. 1971a. Approximative systems of foreign language learners. IRAL 9:115-124.
- Richards, Jack C. 1971. A non-contrastive approach to error analysis. ELT 25(3):204-219.
- Rivers, Wilga M. 1968. Teaching foreign language skills. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Rivers, Wilga M. 1975. Students, teachers, and the future. Foreign Language Annals 8(1):22-32.
- Saggaft, Ahmad A. 1981. An investigation of the English program at the Department of English, College of Education, King Abdul-Aziz University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia.
- Scott, Margaret Sue and Tucker, G. Richard. 1974. Error analysis and English language strategies of Arab students. Language Learning 24:169-179.
- Selinker, Larry. 1971. A brief reappraisal of contrastive linguistics. Working Papers in Linguistics, 3(4):1-10.
- Selinker, Larry. 1972. Interlanguage. IRAL, 10(3):209-231.

- Sheshsha, Jamal A. 1982. The qualifications of competent teacher of English in Saudi Arabia as perceived by EFL teachers and selected TESOL specialists. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana.
- Sridhar, S. N. 1975. Contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage: three phases of one goal. Studies in Language Learning, 1(1):60-94.
- Tadros, Angede. 1966. An analysis of the interference errors in the written English of Sudanese students. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Khartoum.
- The Macmillan Press Limited. 1981. Saudi Arabian schools's English: secondary second grade pupil's book. Hong Kong.
- Wardhaugh, Ronald. 1970. The contrastive analysis hypothesis. Tesol Quarterly 4(2):123-130.
- Willcott, Paul J. 1972. An analysis of the written English of native speakers of Arabic as found in American history final examinations given at the University of Texas at Austin. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.
- Whitman, Randal L. and K. L. Jackson. 1972. The unpredictability of contrastive analysis. Language Learning 22(1):29-41.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS

Q 1. Write a paragraph of about 12 lines on one of the following subjects:

Compare the journeys of the pilgrims now with the journeys which the pilgrims once made.

(Holy Places. perform. Cairo. Baghdad. Istanbul. Muslim countries. tiring. dangerous. comfortable. safer. camel. on foot. covering. Egypt. Kingdom)

Q 2. Write about 90 lines on the following subject.

Describe the changes that happened in the Kingdom.

(live. villages. towns. houses. buildings. travel. make. hand industries. telephones. postal services. hospitals. agriculture. only. dates. vegetables. fruits. frozen-fresh meat-chicken. seafood.

APPENDIX B

TEXTBOOK SUBJECT AND 4

STUDENT SAMPLES

1. Lesson 18. Travelling to Mecca

Nowadays, most pilgrims come to the Kingdom by plane. But, before planes were invented, the journey to Mecca was long and tiring. People used to travel in three ways: by camel, by ship and on foot.

Many Arabs travelled by camel. There used to be three important routes. One caravan would leave from Cairo; one would leave from Istanbul; and one would leave from Baghdad. These caravans were organized very well. They were protected by soldiers, and were led by an Emir. The Egyptian caravan would carry the new covering for the Ka'bah, which nowadays is made in the Kingdom. It took about thirty-five days to travel from Egypt to Mecca by camel; and about fifty days to travel from Istanbul.

The second way to reach Mecca was by ship. Some pilgrims would travel from East Africa, India and the Far East on large ships; others would come in small boats. For some, the journey would only take two days; others would spend weeks living on board their ship. Today, thousands of pilgrims still arrive at Jeddah by sea.

The third way to reach Mecca was the most difficult. Many poor pilgrims would travel to Mecca on foot. They would walk for thousands of kilometres, through jungles, deserts and marshes. They would stop when they had no money left, and would spend a few months working. Then they would go on again when they had enough money.

It took many of these pilgrims years to travel to Mecca. One man was single when he set out, but he arrived at Mecca with a wife and seven children. Another man started out as a child and reached Mecca as a man of seventy.

2. Students' Written Samples

Sample 1:

In the past pilgrims come in their ways from Cairo, Baghdad and Istanbul. But today they from Muslim countries all over the world come to Holy places to perform their Hajj. In the past journey to Makkah was tiring, dangerous and take a long time, but today journey is more comfortable, safer and does not take long time to reach Makkah. In the past pilgrims travelled by camel, by ship and on foot, but today they travel by planes, by ships and car or buses. In the past new covering made in Egypt and camels caravans would then to Makkah but today it made in the Kingdom.

Sample 2.

The past pilgrims come in three ways, from Cairo, Baghdad and Istanbul. But today pilgrims from Muslim countries all over the world come to the Holy places to perform their Hajj. In the past, the journey to Makkah was tiring, dangerous and would take a long time. The journey is now more comfortable, safer and does not take a long time to reach Makkah. In the past, pilgrims travelled by camel, by ship and on foot. Today pilgrims travel by planes, by ship and by cars. In the past, the new covering for the Kaaba was made in Egypt and camel caravans would carry them to Makkah. Today it is made in the kingdom.

Sample 3.

In the past, pilgrims come there by three ways from Cairo, Baghdad and Istanbul, but today pilgrims from Muslim countries all over the world come to the Holy places to perform their Hajj. In the past, the journey to Makkah was tiring, dangerous and would take a long time, but today the journey is more comfortable, safer and does not take a long time to reach Makkah. In the past, pilgrims travelled by camels, ship and on foot. Today pilgrims travel by planes, ships and by buses or cars. In the past, the new covering for Kaaba was made in Egypt and camel caravans would carry them to Makkah. Today it is made in the kingdom.

Sample 4.

In the past pilgrims come to three ways of the from Cairo, Baghdad and Istanbul, But today pilgrims from muslims countries all over the would come the Holy places to perform their Hajj dangerous and would took a long time But today pilgrims is comfortable by safer and doesn't took a long time to reach Makkah In the past pilgrim travellers by camel by ship and on foot. Today pilgrims travel by places by ship and by buses and on cars. In the ast a jorny the pas mas is Egypt and was made in Egypt and camel erring to Makkah today it is made kingdom.

2
VITA

Abdulrasheed H. Hashim

Candidate for the degree of
Master of Arts

Thesis: COMMON ERRORS OF SAUDI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS'
WRITTEN ENGLISH: THEIR CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Major Field: English

Personal Data: Born in Taif, Saudi Arabia, February 5,
1958, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hamid Hashim.

Education: Graduated from Thakeif Secondary School, Taif,
Saudi Arabia, in June 1976; received Bachelor of Arts
degree in English and Education at King Abdul Aziz
University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia in June, 1980;
completed the requirements for Master of Arts degree
at Oklahoma State University in December, 1987.