

University of Bahrain

College of Arts



**Department of English
Language and Literature**

**Second Language Acquisition of English
Articles by Bahraini Learners:
A Feature-based Analysis**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master Degree in Applied English Language Studies**

**Submitted by
Hasan Ali Hasan Salman
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**Supervised by
Dr. Ferid Chekili
Associate Professor
University of Bahrain**

**Kingdom of Bahrain
March 2018**

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Defense Committee's Approval Page

University of Bahrain
College of Arts
Department of English Language and Literature
M.A. Program in English Language Applied Studies

Student **Hasan Ali Hasan Salman**, ID number **19942467**, defended his thesis by which he fulfilled the requirement for the degree of M.A. in English Language Applied Studies, entitled (The Second Language Acquisition of English Articles by Bahraini Learners: A Feature-based Analysis) on this day of **24/6/2018.**

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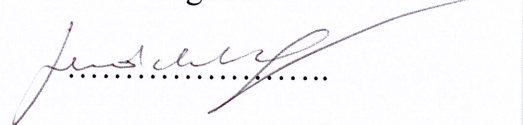
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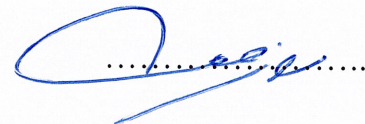
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ABSTRACT

Morphological variability in generative second language acquisition has been a controversial debate among researchers in recent years. This thesis investigates the reasons for morphological variability in relation to the acquisition of the English articles by Bahraini Arabic speakers. Following the Feature Reassembly Approach (Lardiere, 2005), it examines how the features associated with the English and Arabic articles can affect their acquisition. The feature re-assembly hypothesis claims that second language challenges result not from the simple metaphor of resetting parameters but from a failure in feature reassembly. It assumes that it is the reconfiguration of features from the way they are assembled in the native language into new formal configurations in the target language that causes variation among non-native speakers. It is well established in the related literature that the L2 acquisition of the English article system poses learnability difficulties for Arab learners due to the different functions of this area in both languages.

In this study, the researcher focuses on how the article system functions in English and Arabic, the similarities across the two languages and the possible sources of variability for Bahraini learners in using this linguistic aspect. This is achieved through collecting data using two of the most commonly used measures in formal models, i.e. two elicitation tasks which include a grammaticality judgement test and a translation test. The study includes three groups; a group of 26 freshman Bahraini learners of English from University of Bahrain, a group of 26 fourth-year Bahraini learners of English and a control group comprising 10 English native speakers. The researcher found the results to conform with the predictions of the FRH: the source of problems Bahraini L2 learners encounter is not so much acquiring new features as reconfiguring the existing features from their L1 into new different lexical items in the L2.

Keywords:

Arabic, article system, formal features, L2 acquisition of morphemes, reassembly hypothesis.

ملخص الدراسة:

يُعدُّ التباين الصرفي اللغوي بين المتعلمين في اكتساب لغة ثانية جدلاً قائماً بين الباحثين في الأعوام الأخيرة، لذا تبحث هذه الأطروحة أسباب هذا التباين لدى عدد من الطلاب البحرينيين العرب في اكتساب أدوات التعريف والتذكير في اللغة الانجليزية.

وتوظف الأطروحة نظرية الباحثة لاردير (Lardiere, 2005) التي تقول إن أسباب هذا التباين يعود إلى كيفية إعادة ترتيب السمات اللغوية من اللغة الأم إلى ترتيب لغوي جديد في اللغة المستهدفة، كما ترفض الباحثة النظرية السائدة أن التحديات التي تواجه تعلم لغة ثانية تعود إلى إعادة ضبط معايير معينة (من اللغة الأم إلى اللغة الثانية)، بل إن الصعوبة تكمن في الإخفاق في إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية وترتيبها بالصورة المطلوبة المناسبة. ومن هنا فإن هذه الدراسة تقوم على تقصي سمات أدوات التذكير والتعريف في اللغتين، وكيف لهذه السمات أن تؤثر في اكتسابها وتعيق إتقانها.

وقد ثبت في الأدبيات المتعلقة بهذا الشأن أن اكتساب أدوات التعريف والتذكير يطرح صعوبات للمتعلمين العرب بسبب اختلاف الوظائف لهذه الأدوات بين اللغتين العربية والانجليزية. ويركز الباحث في هذا الدراسة على وظائف الأدوات في اللغتين وأوجه التشابه بينهما، وكذلك المصادر الممكنة لهذا التباين في توظيف الأدوات من قبل طلبة بحرينيين عرب في جامعة البحرين. ولتحقيق ذلك تقوم الدراسة بإجراء اختبارين هما من أكثر المقاييس شيوعاً في هذا المجال، وهما اختبار (صح أو خطأ مع تصويب الخطأ) واختبار (الترجمة). وتشمل الدراسة ثلاث مجموعات: مجموعة مؤلفة من 26 طالباً وطالبة في السنة الأولى من جامعة البحرين والمجموعة الثانية تتألف أيضاً من 26 طالباً وطالبة في السنة الرابعة، أما المجموعة الثالثة فهي مجموعة ضابطة مكونة من عشرة مشاركين من الناطقين باللغة الانجليزية.

وقد وجد الباحث أن النتائج تتفق مع توقعات نظرية إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية (FRH): وهي أن مصدر الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطالب البحريني ليست اكتساب عناصر لغوية جديدة بقدر ما هي إعادة تجميع العناصر الموجودة في اللغة العربية وترتيبها بشكل جديد ومختلف في اللغة الانجليزية.

DEDICATION

To my beloved mother, who always prays for me and wishes me success, to my devoted wife, who supported me and took care of our children during my absence, and to my four children, without whom this thesis would have been completed one year earlier but whose presence have given my life purpose and meaning, I dedicate this thesis.

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Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my instructor and supervisor **Dr. Ferid Chekili** for his continuous support, guidance, and invaluable feedback on my thesis. I am indebted to him for introducing me to the study of generative (second) language acquisition. I should also thank him for being available throughout, despite the enormous commitments he has. Working with him has greatly enriched my knowledge of linguistics.

I also would like to express my thanks to the faculty and staff at the Department of English Language and Literature of the University of Bahrain (UOB) for their assistance and for providing access to previous research studies and valuable online resources. I also owe special thanks to **Dr. Dheya Aljalahma**, the head of the department for her permission to use participants from the department to conduct my study. I should also thank her for allowing me to use her students. I also wish to thank **Dr. Mervat Albufalasa** for her generosity and for allowing me to carry out the study tasks with her students too.

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Chapter One

Introduction

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Chapter one

Introduction

This chapter presents a general background of the study, a statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions and research hypothesis, significance of the study, limitations of the study and finally an overview of the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Following the development of the minimalist programme (MP) in 1990's, there have been many models put forward to account for the acquisition of a second language (L2) within the generative framework by focusing on the concept of linguistic features. Much of the work on first language (L1) was carried over into second language research. The Full Competence Hypothesis (Poeppel & Wexler, 1993) for example, assumes the existence of functional categories in the child's grammar from the beginning. It claims that a full phrase structure is present from the earliest stages of language development, while the Gradual Development Hypothesis (Deprez, 1994) insists that functional categories are unavailable and develop over time. In his Maturational Theory, Radford (1990, 1995), also assumes that children gradually build phrase structure. He proposes a structure building approach through which Verb Phrases (VPs) are followed by Inflectional Phrases (IPs) and IPs are followed by Complementizer Phrases (CPs).

These generative models and approaches were echoed in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in slightly different forms. The Minimal Tree Hypothesis (Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 1996) for example, assumes that only lexical categories are available during the early stages of linguistic development while functional categories are acquired gradually.

On the other hand, the Full Transfer Full Access (FTFA) hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) proposes that learning a second language is as flexible as learning the native language. Full transfer indicates that L2 learners begin with the parameter settings which are already selected in their L1, and full access refers to the full access of UG and thus presumes the possibility of resetting those parameters which are not selected and are different from the target language.

In the same vein, the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Prévost & White, 2000; Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997) claims that “L2 learners have unconscious knowledge of the functional projections and features underlying tense and agreement. However, learners sometimes have a problem with the realization of surface morphology, such that they resort to non-finite forms.” (p. 103). Another significant proposal for the current research investigation is the Failed Functional Feature Hypothesis (Hawkins & Chan, 1997) which claims that L2 learners have full access to the features of the functional categories such as Complementizer phrase (CP), Agreement phrase (AP), Determiner phrase (DP) only before the critical period.

The last decade saw an important development in linguistic theory and L1 acquisition within the minimalist program framework, (Chomsky, 1993, 1995). This has opened the door for more insights into generative SLA research. The issue

of the availability of functional categories in SLA began to shift and take a different path. The main focus turned towards formal features in place of functional categories and thus, formal features were considered the core of learnability theory (as cited in Chekili 2016, p. 33).

Recently Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004) has made a distinction between feature selection and feature assembly. He proposed that acquiring a language involves two equally relevant processes: feature selection and feature assembly (the assembly of features into particular lexical items). In line with this distinction, Lardiere (2005, 2008, 2009) has proposed her Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis (FRH). She has raised new issues about the acquisition of features and the learnability problems that L2 learners encounter. Specifically, she has argued that one of the most persistent challenges for language learners may not be the acquisition of new features, but rather the acquisition of features that are configured differently from the native language; those features which need to be reconfigured and reconditioned in completely novel settings in the target language.

In this research work, the researcher attempts to apply the reassembly approach to the analysis of English articles in the interlanguage of Bahraini Arabic learners. In addition, an attempt is made to find out whether variability in the use of English articles is compatible with the predictions of the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Arab L2 learners, and by extension Bahraini L2 learners have difficulty in acquiring the complex system of the English articles due to the different functions

of this linguistic aspect in both languages. Kharma (1981) reported that the article system is among the most difficult features of the English language for Arab learners to tackle. He stated that indefinite articles are more difficult than the definite article (*the*). Native speakers of Arabic tend to employ the definite articles even with proper nouns which is unacceptable in English.

DeKeyser (2005) quoted numerous studies investigating the difficulties in the second language acquisition of grammatical morphemes such as articles, classifiers, the realizations of grammatical gender and verbal aspect, the functions or meanings of which are found to be hard for learners whose native languages do not have them.

In their study, Chamonikolasova and Staskova (2005) detected five major error types in the writing of 30 Czech and Slovak learners of L2 English: grammatical, lexical, lexico-grammatical, text-coherence, and formal errors. Among these errors, the article system was reported to have the highest frequency.

It is well established in the literature that Arab L2 learners do encounter consistent problems in the acquisition of English inflectional morphemes in general, and the acquisition of articles in particular, (See also Sarko, 2008; Zdorenko and Paradis, 2012; Alruwaili, 2014; Shalaby, 2014; Abudalbuh, 2016).

1.3 Aims of the Study

The aims of the study can be summed up in the following points:

1. To seek explanations for the observed patterns of English articles use by Bahraini learners.

2. To find out if the features of the English article system operate in the same way in Arabic.
3. To identify the difficulties and the errors that adult Bahraini learners display in the use of the English Article system, and thus, to seek an explanation for the Bahraini learners' failure to achieve native-like fluency in their use of the system.
4. To see whether the results conform with the predictions of the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis.

1.4 Research Questions

The study attempts to address the following questions:

1. Are Bahraini learners eventually able to reassemble the features related to the use of English articles?
2. Is there any order of L2 acquisition with regard to the features related to English articles?
3. Does the level of English proficiency of Bahraini L2 learners affect the use of English articles?
4. Is the Bahraini learners' choice of L2 English articles influenced by their use of Arabic L1?
5. Is variability in the use of English articles compatible with the predictions of the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis?

The hypothesis of the study assumes that the acquisition of English articles by Bahraini L2 learners involves a process of reassembling the relevant features from

the way they are configured and the way they are organized and realized in their L1 Arabic to that of the L2 English.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Due to their complexity and numerous features, which include definiteness, specificity, genericity, and countability, English articles came to be of much significance in testing hypotheses about L2 acquisition.

The study undertakes its investigation within one of the most recent SLA theories, namely the Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis. The study can also be considered a step towards investigating why the English article system is difficult for Adult Bahraini L2 learners and thus it may pave the way to pedagogical instruction.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Even though the grammaticality judgement (GJ) test is the most frequently used elicitation task in formal models, it has been reported to have some methodological shortcomings. (e.g. Birdsong, 1989; Schiitze, 1996). It is usually thought that a GJ test does not necessarily reflect the learners' competence. Therefore, the current study did not rely on a single elicitation task. A translation test was used to support and confirm the results of the GJ test.

Also, a computer-based design would have been more accurate than the pencil and paper test used in this research. While the first can ensure that all participants are exposed to the same stimuli and treated in the same way (Hulstijn, 1997), the latter

cannot. It was a difficult to provide the 62 participants in the study with valid computers in different time and space.

Rather than selecting whole groups, as in this research, it would have been more accurate to rely on a proficiency measure. However, this has not been possible owing to time constraints and the difficulty of finding UOB participants who were free and willing to do the study's tests. It goes without saying that different proficiency levels of English do exist in one single class.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. In chapter 2, I outline the historical background necessary for a better understanding of how development in linguistic theory - mainly Chomsky's views - is carried out into second language acquisition. After a review of the latest generative SLA theories, I introduce the claims of Lardiere's proposal in her feature reassembly hypothesis. I then describe the linguistic aspects i.e. the article systems in English and Arabic. I compare both systems in each language and suggest how the FRH predicts the learning problems Bahraini L2 learners may encounter. In chapter 3, I introduce the 62 participants and present the rationale and design for this research study. In addition, I discuss some reasons for using two types of elicitation tasks to validate the results. This chapter also discusses data collection, procedures and data analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results and findings of the study followed by discussion and conclusion. This chapter concludes with recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

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Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces a brief historical background of the study, a review of generative second language theories, then a review on how the language-acquisition related terms, i.e. functional categories, parameters and features have developed throughout the past few years since their first inception. Next, a glance at the feature re-assembly hypothesis and its main claims is presented. Last, some light is shed on the properties of the article system in English and Arabic.

2.2 A Brief Historical Background

In reaction to the behaviorist approach, Chomsky in 1959 rightly claimed that language learning cannot be a habit formation process. He argued that language is a complex and remarkable property of human beings and a simple stimulus-response relationship cannot provide an explanation to how native speakers can produce, comprehend and judge an infinite number of sentences they have never heard before and for which they have not received reinforcement. He maintained that a logical explanation can only be reached through a study of the linguistic system in the human mind (as cited in Cook and Newson 2007).

For Chomsky, a stimulus response model cannot explain how children acquire complex linguistic systems in a limited amount of time with speed and ease despite the fact that their input is limited and encompasses ungrammatical utterances due

to some kind of fatigue and performance pressure; an argument which has often been referred to as the ‘poverty of the stimulus’ or the logical problem of language acquisition.

In such environment, children would not be able to distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical utterances. Hence, the input alone does not supply children with all the information they need to discover the rules of their native language. Therefore, Chomsky pointed out that children must be equipped with innate knowledge and hardwired language capacity which enable them to overcome the deficiencies of their input. This has led Chomsky to conclude that babies are born with hard-wired Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to account for their competence in mastering language. The LAD, which is a set of language learning tools, is claimed to possess the fundamentals of language and grammar which are innate rather than acquired through learning. Chomsky clearly stated that because of the LAD, children can derive rules of a language through hypothesis testing which are then transformed into basic grammar. As a result, the LAD has been considered a reasonable explanation that can account for children’s innate ability to acquire a language and it explains the insignificant need of explicit teaching for a child to acquire a language.

Hence, Chomsky (1976) introduced the concept of Universal Grammar (UG) which he defines as “The system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages...the essence of human language” (p. 29). It refers to the inherent knowledge of universal principles that humans employ when learning language, and the parameters that distinguish one language from another. It involves a profound examination of each individual language to

recognize the principles of language grammar which underlie and govern specific language rules.

Along similar lines, Pinker (1991) concluded that human beings must have a system that is more sophisticated than what they are being exposed to. Pullum and Scholz (2002) also identified four properties of a child's environment: positivity, degeneracy, incompleteness and idiosyncrasy. They stressed that children are only exposed to positive linguistic data. Negative data which is supposed to help children recognise ungrammaticality is essentially unavailable. They claimed that children are incapable of acquiring their native language with positive evidence alone. Degeneracy which includes speech slips, ungrammatical and incomplete utterances, is also frequently observed in adult speech. Yet, this did not appear to present a problem in child language acquisition. Idiosyncrasy and novel linguistic data is also observed in the language input children are exposed to. Nevertheless, children are normally able to produce, understand and judge grammaticality of their native language. Creatures other than human beings, on the other hand, have not ever been proved to be able to acquire language and communicate as well even if they are placed in the same input.

For Chomsky, this posited a paradox. On the one hand, all humans seem to have the same genetic capacity, which may virtually be considered a uniform capacity. On the other hand, it seems that each particular language has a highly intricate and complex computational system and they are different from one another.

Since 1980s, there have been efforts to deal with and overcome this paradox. A major step was taken and a new view on Universal Grammar has come to exist. It is often referred to as the principles and parameters theory (PPT). The PPT

proposed that all humans have a set of limited rules for grammar that are universal to all natural human languages. According to Chomsky (1965, 1981, 1986, 1995, as cited in Eisenbeiss 2009), the class of grammars for human languages is constrained by Universal Grammar. UG contains both formal universals, i.e., formal constraints for all human languages, and substantive universals, e.g., the categories N and V that can be part of all human languages.

Later, in the late eighties implications from the theory of first language acquisition have been drawn to second language acquisition. Gregg (1989) proclaimed that for a theory of second language acquisition (L2 A) to be adequate, it must rely on an adequate theory of language acquisition. Thus far, Chomsky's Theory of Universal Grammar constitutes the most powerful theory of grammar currently available due to its descriptive and explanatory adequacy (as cited in Ellis 1994).

As the explanatory power of UG was realized, second language researchers have started to consider the application of the theory to second language acquisition. Investigation of how adults and children acquire second languages has considerably increased. The main problem for generative linguists has been whether UG is available to the adult second language learners to guide acquisition in the same manner as it is to the first language learners. Extensive research has been conducted in different language areas which included syntax, phonology, morphology, phonetics and semantics.

There have been various and sometimes contradictory views on the role of UG in L2 acquisition which reveal that there is no consensus agreement and it is debatable whether native speaker competence is attainable. However, some facts

are unquestionable in the field of generative second language acquisition. As Eisenbeiss (2009) has written:

It is undisputable that even untutored L2 learners with limited access to negative evidence go beyond the input and produce, comprehend and judge sentences they have never encountered before. Moreover, they do not make random errors that suggest unconstrained hypothesis testing (p. 294).

She noted that “although early L2 researchers such as Clahsen and Muysken, 1986; Schachter, 1988; and Bley-Vroman, 1990 discussed the possibility that UG was inaccessible, most current views believe in UG-access and turn their focus on the role of functional categories and mother tongue transfer” (p. 294). Consequently, several theories and hypotheses have emerged. In the following, a brief outline is presented on the most common proposals and hypotheses and a review on how the concept of the Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis on which the study is based has come to exist.

2.3 A Review of Generative SLA Theories

This part of the study introduces some of the main and most current theories in the late SLA research but excludes Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis as it will be discussed in detail in part 2.5. I start with the Minimal Trees Hypothesis, then the Full-Access Hypothesis followed by the Fluctuation Hypothesis and then the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis. Next is the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis and finally the Failed Functional Feature Hypothesis.

To start with, in their Minimal Trees Hypothesis, Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994) argued that only lexical categories, which project Noun Phrase (NP) and Verb Phrase (VP) are initially available in L2 acquisition, and that functional categories, which project Determiner Phrase, Inflectional Phrase (IP) and Complementizer Phrase are developed in succession. In essence, the input is needed to elicit functional categories and gradually over time the L2 learner proceeds to the full access path (as cited in Eisenbeiss, 2009). On the other hand, Schwartz and Sprouse (1996); Epstein et al. (1996) and Grondin and White (1996) argued that L2 learners have full access to all categories of the L2. This has come to be known as the Full-Access Hypothesis.

Another Hypothesis proposed by Ionin (2003) and Ionin, Ko and Wexler (2004) claimed that Adult L2 learners have UG constrained grammar and have full access to principles and multiple UG parameter settings. Language transfer is not considered and does not play a role. This hypothesis came to be known as the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) and proposed that:

- 1) L2-learners have full access to UG principles and parameter settings.
- 2) L2-learners fluctuate between different parameter settings until the input leads them to set the parameter to the appropriate value (Ionin 2003, p.23).

FH predicts that L2 learners of languages without articles such as Russian and Korean may initially assume that articles are either definite or specific. With the process of time the input leads them to set the Article Choice Parameter to the appropriate setting for the target language.

Goad and White (2004) proposed a new account for morphological variability within L2 learners of English, known as the Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis (PTH). They claimed that variability may occur in oral production when the prosodic structure of the target language differs from the native language structure. Thus, PTH anticipates that if L2 learners omit articles for example in oral production, this could be due to transfer of the L1 prosodic structure.

Another proposal for learners' variability is the Missing Inflection Hypothesis which was initially proposed by Haznedar and Schwartz (1997), and revised later to the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (MSIH) by Prevost and White (2000). MSIH proposed that "L2 learners have unconscious knowledge of the functional projections and features underlying tense and agreement. However, learners sometimes have a problem with realization of surface morphology, such that they resort to non-finite forms" (p.103).

Lardiere (1998a), pointed out that the variability in the L2 learners' interlanguage grammars in using inflectional morphology in spontaneous production is a result of morphological mapping. She concluded that the course of development for inflectional morphology is independent from the development of the syntactic representation of functional categories, projections and features.

In his thesis, Snape (2006) pointed out that the MSIH might predict that all L2 learners are successful in resetting the Nominal Mapping Parameter to English and setting the Article Choice Parameter for definiteness but still omit articles in oral production. The problem for L2 learners is mapping function to form. The MSIH predicts "that if L2 learners omit articles and plural -s marking in an oral production task, it is due to performance pressure with a failure to 're-map'

features to forms, but they are expected to perform better on a written production task (as cited in Snape, 2006, p. 82).

Another significant proposal for learners' variability is the Failed Functional Feature Hypothesis (FFFH) by Tsimpili and Smith (1991) and later by Hawkins and Chan (1997) which claimed that the critical period plays a key role in L2 acquisition. It argued that L2 learners have full access to the unspecified features of functional categories before the critical period. After the critical period, L2 learners have access only to features encoded in lexical entries. It predicts that fossilization may result from an inability to acquire parametrized uninterpretable formal features which are selected in the first language but not selected in the target language (as cited in Eisenbeiss, 2009).

Hawkins and Chan (1997) claimed that some parts of UG are inaccessible but some other parts are fully available. It is only the features of the functional categories such as Complementizer phrase, Agreement phrase, Determiner phrase which are subject to a critical period. They proposed that where functional feature specifications are similar in both L1 and L2, second language acquisition will come more closely to native-like acquisition.

From the above generative SLA theories, I may conclude that none of them can solely account for all learnability issues in second language acquisition. This may imply the need for more than one SLA theory at a time or the need for a new theory that is explanatorily adequate and which can account for the problem of variability in L2 Acquisition.

2.4 Functional Categories, Parameters and Features

The purpose of this part is to take a closer look at some significant terminology in generative second language acquisition. Namely; functional categories, parameters and features. I review these terms just before introducing the feature re-assembly hypothesis so that we are able to better understand its claims. I investigate how these terms have been developed and applied in second language acquisition. Examples are illustrated for each specific term for the sake of clarification. I start out with functional categories followed by parameters and compare both with the concept of features.

2.4.1 Functional Categories and Features

In general terms, functional categories (FCs) are typically of three main types. The first FC is the CP in which a complementizer is the head of a sentence or a clause complement. Instances of complementizers are (if, whether, that, for). The second FC is the IP in which an inflector is the head of a predicate. Examples of inflectors are (tense, agreement etc). The third type of FCs is the DP in which a determiner is the head of a noun phrase complement and it is the sole content of an utterance. Examples of determiners are (the, a, some etc.). These functional categories constitute the structural skeleton of sentences, and permit some fundamental syntactic operations in the computation of language such as movement and agreement (e.g., Chomsky, 1995; 2000; Cinque, 1999).

As for the concept of features, it is not considered to be new in syntactic theory. As a matter of fact, Chomsky (1970) used the two combined features [-+N] and [-

+V] to define the syntactic categories N, V, P and A. In Chomsky (1986), features are taken to project functional categories.

As far as language acquisition is concerned, it has been assumed that the acquisition of an inflectional element is related to a particular functional category. For example, the IP category which comprises tense, negation, agreement, aspect etc., can only be considered to have been acquired by learners if they show evidence of learning these inflectional elements.

Along similar lines, L2 acquisition researchers have used the concept of feature in their interlanguage descriptions as it is perceived in the Extended Standard theory. (e.g. Flynn, 1983; Liceras, 1983; Mazurkevich, 1984; White, 1985). In the recent minimalist framework of Chomsky, syntactic formal features have come to be seen as the basic building units of linguistic structure. They have been viewed as the ‘atoms’ of language (Baker, 2001; Adger, 2003). Hence, features have become, for many researchers, the “center of learnability theory” (Liceras, 2010; p. 250, as cited in Chekili 2016).

2.4.2 Parameters and Features

According to the Principles and Parameter Theory (Chomsky, 1986), L1 acquisition involves a process of setting the appropriate value of the parameter on the basis of the linguistic experience that a child is exposed to. So, for example Radford (2004) assumed children have to learn whether their mother tongue is a null subject or not, whether it is a wh-movement language or not, and whether it is a head-first language or not and so on. This process of children’s learning occurs

along with building their lexical items and learning vocabulary meaning and word forms.

Parameters can be related to either syntactic, phonological, lexical, or morphological differences between languages. Fukui (1986,1988) followed by Chomsky (1989) proposed that parameters may be limited to functional categories. Lightfoot (1997) also pointed out that the notion of parameter had been reduced to “superficial differences” among languages (as cited in Ayoun, 2005 p. 9).

Roeper (1991) suggested that the parameter setting approach should be perceived as a promising research programme. Radford (1995) also stated that the child learning task will be more simplified if the values of parameters turn out to be of binary options or two choices only. In the words of Ayoun (2005), a parameter is traditionally assumed to be binary which signals that it has to have two values or settings. This is mainly for simplifying the complex task of language acquisition and for explaining cross-linguistic variation. In short, language acquisition is viewed as a matter of two simple tasks; lexical learning and parameter setting.

However, the notion of parameters in the process of second language learning has certain differences from first language acquisition. An essential consideration which has to be accounted for is the fact that parameters have already been set to their first language value and this might constitute an obstacle in L2 acquisition. White (1985,1990) confirmed that the discrepancy between L1 and L2 is that parameters have already been set by L1, and this what causes language interference and transfer error. In other words, when parametric values between L1 and L2 differ, transfer errors are likely to occur. This is consistent with the original idea of Lado (1957), in his ‘Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis’ through which he claimed

that “those elements which are similar to [the learner's] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult” (p. 2).

In generative SLA, the concept of a parameter has been used to imply that whenever language learners are able to reset those parameters of their L1 values to the L2 values, this will be evidence of their successful L2 acquisition (cf. e.g. Haegeman, 1988).

Tsimpli and Roussou (1991) proposed that differences between L2 and L1 in terms of parametric values will lead to transfer errors at least at the early stages of L2 learning. They also add that “the mature state of the L2 grammar is rarely equivalent to the mature state of a first language” (p. 1).

Later development in generative SLA has led some researchers to suggest that the set of parameters should not be binary or restricted. Kayne (2005), for instance, argues that all cross-linguistic syntactic differences can be viewed as possible parameters. He freely uses the term “parameter” to refer to all and any particular crosslinguistic syntactic differences. Therefore, parametric variation has now turned out to be more related to the morphological properties of functional categories, which are perceived as functional features. For example, movement may occur in order for the feature of a particular morpheme (such as person, number, case...) to be checked (Chomsky 1995, as cited in Chekili 2016).

This resulted in a drastic shift in generative SLA in viewing L2 successful acquisition not on acquiring the relevant functional features but rather on selecting the appropriate features from the universal inventory of features (cf. Chomsky,

1998). As we shall see in the coming section on the feature re-assembly hypothesis, parameters have been found to be associated with functional features and parameter setting has become the selection and assembly of features into lexical items.

2.5 Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis

As mentioned earlier, Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004) pointed out that L1 acquisition is viewed as involving two equally processes: the first is the feature selection process during which the acquirer selects the accessible features (F) (formal, phonological and semantics) from a universal inventory which is made available by UG. The second is the feature assembly process during which the learner combines features of L1 into particular lexical items. These two operations are triggered by exposure to the primary linguistic data . The implication of this is that parametric differences between languages can be assumed to be the result of the differences in the features selected and the way they are assembled onto functional categories and lexical items.

In SLA, questions arise as to what happens after the features of an L1 have been selected? And whether the L2 learner is still able to select features in the target language that are not instantiated in his L1? In the last two decades, many feature-based models have been put forward to essentially answer these kinds of questions and to account for the development of L2 acquisition by using the notion of linguistic formal features.

Until recently, there have been two main models on the L2 acquisition of formal features. The Failed Functional Features Hypothesis or Representational Deficit

Hypothesis (RDH) (Smith and Tsimpili, 1995; Hawkins and Chan, 1997), states that adult L2 learners cannot select new features because the Universal Grammar inventory is no longer accessible to them. The RDH claims that parameterized features which are not selected in L1 subsequently become unacquirable and unavailable in later language development. The main argument is that L2 learners lack the syntactic representation of features which are not present in the L1 and consequently they are unable to realize or produce associated morphosyntactic forms and structures accurately (Hawkins and Hattori, 2006). The RDH also claims that problems will occur only in comprehending and producing uninterpretable features; that is, those features which are related to grammatical aspects such as agreement, plural markings, etc (Hawkins & Casillas, 2008). Hence, this proposal has been recently known as the Interpretability Hypothesis (IH), (Tsimpili & Dimitrakopoulou, 2007).

The second hypothesis is the Full Transfer Full Access hypothesis (FTFA) (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996) which assumes that L2 acquisition of features is possible but it is constrained by prior language knowledge and L1 interference particularly at early stages of L2 acquisition. L2 learners get into the trap of bringing morphosyntactic features from their native language to the target language which eventually leads to language impairment. The FTFA is compatible with the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Haznedar & Schwartz, 1997; Prévost & White, 2000), which assumes the L2 learners can ultimately acquire new features and that language errors are caused by performance pressure and interference from the mother tongue.

These proposals reveal inconsistent findings in accounting for variability in L2 acquisition which may suggest the need for a more adequate explanatory model.

Lardiere (2005, 2008, 2009) has presented an alternative approach to examining the source of persistent difficulty for second language speakers, namely the Feature Re-assembly Hypothesis on which this study is based.

Lardiere (2005) has argued that the notion of “parameter-resetting is the wrong metaphor for explaining variability in the production of morphological inflection in second language acquisition” and it is too “simplistic” (p. 179). She illustrated new ways of conceiving learning problems an adult native speaker faces when learning the grammatical features of another language. She has argued that “such learning involves figuring out how to reconfigure features into new or different formal configurations in the L2. The locus of persistent problems in L2 acquisition is taken to be at the level of mapping of syntactic knowledge onto morphology and phonology (Lardiere, 1998a; 1998b; 2000; Prevost & White, 2000). Lardiere added that parameter-resetting – once considered a promising idea of coping with the issue of L1 influence in L2A- has never dealt well with the issue of variable performance (p. 178).

Choi and Lardiere (2006) assumed that in order for L2 acquisition to be successful, a process of reassembling L2 features which already exist in the L1 into new functional categories and lexical items should be involved. Lardiere (2008) explained this point, saying:

“...acquiring an L2 grammar is not just a matter of learners determining whether features are still available for selection from a universal inventory and are, in fact, selected. In particular, we need to consider how they are assembled or bundled together into lexical items (or functional categories), and then we must further consider the particular language-specific conditions under which they are phonologically realized” (p. 235).

It is obvious that Lardiere pays more attention to feature reassembly rather than to feature selection. The first involves configuring L1 features into a different way for the L2, while the latter involves merely selecting new features from a Universal Grammar lexicon. Hence, Lardiere's proposal is based on the assumption that L2 acquisition involves two steps:

1. Mapping process: mapping L2 lexical items onto L1 lexical items.
2. Feature reassembly: reorganizing and redistributing the sets of features that occur in the native language into feature sets appropriate to the second language. Progressively, features can be added or deleted.

Upon the exposure to L2, the learner creates a mapping process between L2 to L1. Via contrastive language analysis, some possible mappings might be found: one-to-one, many-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many. In cases of difference in feature sets, the learner's task is to reassemble features appropriate to L2.

To elaborate on this, the researcher adapts the visual idea of Dominguez, Arche, and Myles (2011) to illustrate the process of feature reassembly as shown in this figure.

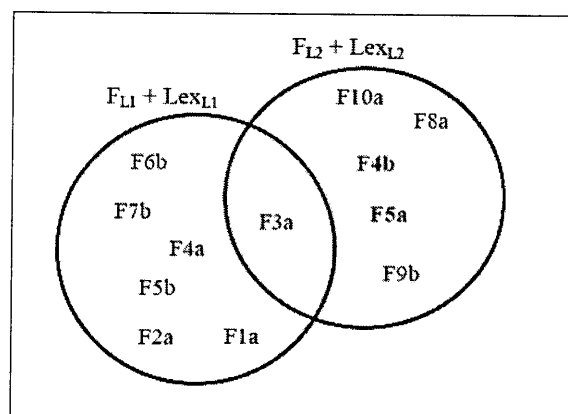


Figure (1)

Distribution of assembled features in two languages

“Features F1 and F2 are not problematic because they are not selected in the L2. Features F8, F9 and F10, which only exist in the L2 are also not problematic because they do not need reassembling. The interesting features are those which exist in both languages but not necessarily with the same configuration (F3, F4, F5). Feature F3 exists in both languages with the same configuration so no reassembling is needed and it will be successfully acquired. In contrast, although features F4 and F5 exist in both languages they are configured differently and will need to be reassembled. These are the features which may be the source of variability and divergence even at the endstate” (p. 6).

As an illustration, Lardiere (2008) uses the selected feature [+past] in English, Irish, and Somali. As far as parameter resetting is concerned, English speakers are expected to learn past tense in Irish or Somali without any problem as their L1 and L2 select the same feature. Nevertheless, this is not true at all as this feature is assembled differently in these languages. For instance:

- a. The cow *jumped* over the moon.
- b. If I only *had* a brain ...

As can be seen from these examples, and despite the feature [+past] being selected in the three languages, in English, but not in Irish or Somali, the formal feature [past] encodes not only past events but also perfective aspects as in (a), and irrealis mood in conditionals as in (b).

Lardiere provided more instances of learning problems posed by the language-specific assembly of features by referring to the description of the number marking systems by Hale (1996) which she cited in Epstein et al (1996):

1. Add the suffix *-sh* to animate nouns to form the dual and plural, add the same suffix to inanimates to form the singular and dual. [Jemez]
2. In cardinality DPs, with numerals from 3 through 10, use the feminine [gender] for a masculine noun, and vice versa, and use the plural form of the noun; with numerals from 11 through 19, use the singular accusative for the noun, and for the teen subpart of the nominal use masculine for a masculine noun and feminine for a feminine [noun], and for the unit part of the numeral use feminine for a masculine [noun] and vice versa [Arabic] (2008, p. 729).

Lardiere pointed out that both Jemez and Arabic languages select the feature [$\pm$ plural]. However, speakers of English learning these languages still have persistent problems in marking number in either Jemez or Arabic despite the fact that English language also selects [$\pm$ plural].

In this thesis, the researcher attempts to investigate the reasons for such morphological variability in relation to the acquisition of the English articles by Bahraini Arabic speakers within the feature reassembly framework and hence confirms its predictability power. But before this, the properties of articles features in Arabic and English are reviewed and briefly presented.

2.6 Properties of the Article System in English and Arabic

In the following, articles in English are identified and the rationale for selecting the article system is briefed. The features of articles are presented with some examples. Some previous studies on articles in both languages are reviewed. The types of errors committed by L2 learners of English are introduced. After this, the article system in Arabic is identified and compared to the article system in English. Predictions are made as to the performance of Bahraini L2 learners of English.

To start with, the English article system comprises two types of articles: indefinite articles (i.e., *a*, *an*) and definite article (*the*). Despite being “among the ten most frequent words of English discourse” (Hewson 1972, p. 131), English articles have been argued to be one of the most difficult features of the English language, especially for those L2 learners whose mother tongues lack articles such as Chinese and Korean (Master, 1997; Mizuno, 1999; Ionin and Wexler, 2004; Avery 2007; Zdorenko and Paradis, 2007 and 2008; White, 2008; Zdorenko and Paradis, 2012; among several others). It has been reported that the English article system is so complicated that L2 learners may never achieve a native-like proficiency level (Jiang, 2011).

Looking at the following examples from Ko, Ionin, and Wexler (2009), it is clear that the English article *the* is used to encode definiteness but not specificity.

- a) I want to talk to *the winner* of this race – she is my best friend.
- b) I want to talk to *the winner* of this race – whoever that is.

The use of *the* is used in both cases to mark the [+definite] feature because both satisfy the conditions on definiteness and refer to one single unique winner. However, example (a) refers to a specific individual and thus satisfies the conditions [+definite, +specific] while (b) satisfies only one condition [+definite].

Master (2002) also reported three main reasons for the difficulty of acquiring English articles: first, they are considered the most frequent function words occurring in discourse. Second, articles are unstressed in speech and thus they are hard to recognize in conversation. And lastly, L2 learners have to consider various factors before selecting the right article which include definiteness, countability, and number. There are two main error patterns which are commonly reported: article overuse and article omission in obligatory contexts (Huebner, 1983; Myers, 1992; Master, 1997; Trenkic, 2002; Ionin, 2004; Trenkic, 2009).

Along similar lines, White (2008) reported three types of errors with the acquisition of articles: L2 learners of English drop articles in obligatory contexts, they incorrectly substitute one article for the other, especially *the* for *a*, and they oversupply articles in indefinite plural contexts, where a zero-article (i.e., bare noun) is required. White attributed these errors to problems with certain linguistic representations, reporting syntactic, phonological, and semantic accounts.

Whereas English has indefinite and definite articles, Arabic has only one definite article (i.e. *al*) and there is no indefinite article. Kharma (1981) reported that the article system is among the most difficult features of the English language for Arab learners to tackle. Kharma states that indefinite articles are more difficult than the definite article (*the*). Native speakers of Arabic tend to employ the definite articles

even with proper nouns which is unacceptable in English. This is clearly due to mother tongue interference.

In the words of Watson (2002), definiteness is marked morphologically in both Arabic and English. In Arabic, the definite article *al-* is prefixed to common singular or plural nouns and mass nouns to mark definiteness. The following are some examples from Abudalbuh (2016):

1. al-baytu kabiir-un
the-house big
'the house is big'
2. al-baytu al-kabiir
the-house the-big.
'the big house'

It is true that Arabic does not have a morpheme for the indefinite article, (Deprez et al., 2011) indefiniteness in Classical Arabic but not in vernaculars is marked phonologically at the end of the indefinite noun. The morphological marker "n" which is known as Nunation (Tanwin) is employed. The following example sentences from Abudalbuh (2016) show how indefiniteness is encoded in Standard Arabic:

3. bayt-un kabiir-un
a house-indef big
'a big house'
4. yaskunu fi baytin kabiirin
lives in house-indef big
'he lives in a big house'

In the following lines, we shall have a look at some different learning models that have attempted to account for the reason of variability in the acquisition of the English article system and in particular those languages without articles. Each model claims that their hypotheses are well attested and can account for the persistent learnability problems that L2 learners encounter.

The Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis, which is essentially used to account for the L2 acquisition of verb functional categories has been applied by White (2003) to account for article omission during the L2 acquisition. She proposed that article omission is a result of inability to retrieve the right form. Based on this proposal, Arabic learners are expected to miss the relevant article due to communication pressure while French learners are expected to perform just like English native speakers due to similarity in the article systems.

From the view point of the Full Access Full Transfer hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994; 1996), it is assumed that there is full access to UG during the L2 acquisition and thus L2 article acquisition is UG-constrained. And Full Transfer which refers to L1 transfer will have an influence on the initial state of L2 acquisition. Therefore, Jiang (2011) claimed that the L2 article acquisition within the framework of FAFT hypothesis can be accounted for and that the persistent problems of L2 article acquisition can be fully addressed.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, two studies have proposed that the Fluctuation Hypothesis can address error patterns such as article overuse and article omission in L2 article acquisition by Arab learners. Sarko (2008) and Abudalbuh (2016) claimed that Arab learners of L2 English fluctuate between definite and indefinite in the context of [+definite, -specific] and [-definite,

+specific]. Contrary to this view, Jiang (2011) argued that this hypothesis is confirmed by L2 learners with no article systems in their native languages. He concluded that the “Fluctuation Hypothesis cannot account for the errors of article choice observed in L2 learners with article systems in their native languages” (p. 33).

These different views and somehow conflicting findings reveal that there is no consensus on what can account for variability in L2 article acquisition and suggest the need for a different and further explanation.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

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Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Participants of the Study

The total number of participants in this study was 62. The study involved three groups; the first group consisted of 26 freshman (first year) Bahraini learners of English in the Department of English Language and Literature at University of Bahrain. The second group comprised another 26 fourth-year Bahraini learners of English. These 52 participants were native speakers of Bahraini Arabic. They had been exposed to English from age seven in Bahrain government schools. The amount of exposure to English ranges between twelve to fifteen years. Personal details taken from each participant included date of birth, place of birth, length of formal English teaching, and length of residence in an English-speaking country. The researcher made sure that none of the participants stayed in an English-speaking country for more than three months. It is worth mentioning that wider gaps (First-year students and fourth-year students) were considered between the two groups to make sure that they belonged to different levels of grammatical knowledge. This enabled the researcher to judge whether proficiency levels play a role. The third group was the control group which had 10 native speakers of English. The control group helped to observe the extent to which the L2 learners can achieve native-like performance.

3.2 Materials and Procedures

The present study based its data elicitation on a grammaticality judgement (GJ) test and a translation (T) test. The following is a description of each test. The general procedures for each test are briefly described and some of the examples are given.

3.2.1 The Grammaticality Judgement Test:

The research study attempted to elicit the participants' knowledge of English articles using a grammaticality judgement test to tap the participants' understanding of grammaticality / ungrammaticality of the forms associated with the English article system. The GJ test which was originally developed and used by Kang, (2002) was adapted for the study. The number of the total items in the test was fifty, ten of which were distractors or fillers that helped to avoid the participants being aware of the formal features under investigation. The test included four types of categories: specific definite - *the*, specific indefinite - *a*, non-specific indefinite - *a*, and mass / count nouns. There were ten items for each category. To make sure the participants had acquired the target formal features being tested, the test included both grammatical and ungrammatical items. The advantage of having a GJ test is that it enables the researcher to draw valid conclusions on whether the learners have knowledge of English articles or not based on what they consider as acceptable English sentences and on what they consider as unacceptable (see Mackey & Gass, 2005). Therefore, the test encompassed five grammatical items and five ungrammatical items equally distributed along the four categories.

There were one or two sentences for each item. The examinee should read and decide whether the underlined parts of each sentence were grammatical or ungrammatical and if he/she found incorrect parts, they should be corrected. These are some examples from Kang (2002):

Type 1: Specific definite - *the*

Ungrammatical: Chris went to see a doctor this morning for his headache. Doctor wrote a prescription for him to get medications.

Grammatical: Toni just bought two new pieces of furniture, a desk and a sofa. She likes sitting on the sofa.

Type 2: Specific indefinite - *a*

Ungrammatical: I usually buy a lot of frozen food when I do grocery shopping, as I have the freezer at home that I put frozen food into.

Grammatical: A young woman and a tall man were talking outside my house. I think the young woman was Chinese and the tall man was Japanese (for more examples, see appendix 1).

3.2.2 The Translation Test

Whereas the GJ test taps learners' knowledge of the structures, a translation test reflects the productive side of the experiment. The translation test had 12 items and included different categories targeting the different forms of English articles. The items of the test involved some cases which exist in Arabic but not in English. The purpose was to spot possible L1 transfer and its effects on how Bahraini Arabic learners use the article system in English. The different features of articles were tested to enable the researcher to detect the main learnability problems encountered

by Bahraini L2 learners. The translation test could also be used to verify the results obtained through the GJ test.

Since the aim was to test formal features as opposed to fully translated sentences, the focus was only on the noun phrases, i.e. the locus of the articles. The researcher made sure to use common vocabulary to simplify translation. The following are samples from the participants' essays in Shalaby (2014) that show how Arabic learners use English articles. They were adapted as test items:

1. al-jariima tdammir al-mujtamaa
[The crimes damage the society]
Crimes damages society.
2. al-naas tHib tijmaa al-amwaal
[The people like collecting the money]
People love collecting money.

3.3 Coding and Data Analysis

Before collecting data, the researcher carried out a pilot study with ten L2 learners in order to assess the feasibility of the materials and methods used. The aim was to check whether there were any problems or inconsistencies in the proposed elicitation tasks and the procedures in general. The pilot study allowed the researcher to make the necessary revisions and to set an appropriate time for each task. The researcher had the two elicitation tasks checked and scrutinized by two experts and thus ascertained the validity of the content of each one before they were used in the study.

In regards to scoring, Messick (1995) defined it as “any coding or summarization of observed consistencies or performance regularities on a test, questionnaire, observation procedure, or other assessment devices” (p. 741). Thus, the data from the GJ test was coded as a dichotomous choice, either correct or incorrect. The correct answer was awarded 1 score while the incorrect one was awarded zero.

The translation test aimed at examining how the participants used the features of the English articles and detecting any language transfer. Therefore, the focus mainly was on the noun phrases regardless of whether the whole sentence was accurately translated.

The FRH argues that the most persist problems in L2 acquisition are related to the differences in feature combinations between L1 and L2. And for successful acquisition to occur, L2 learners have to reassemble existing L1 features into new functional categories or lexical items in L2. Thus, with regard to the features of the article system, it is predicted that:

- Bahraini L2 learners will have difficulty in reassembling the article features into the lexical items *the/a* due to the massive differences between L1 and L2.
- Bahraini L2 learners’ choice of articles will be influenced by their Arabic L1.
- Different performance between the language L2 groups depending on proficiency level will be noticeable.
- Native-like performance is eventually acquirable if evidence is frequently observed and available in the input (Lardiere 2012).

Chapter Four

Results, Discussion and Recommendations

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Chapter Four

Results, Discussion and Recommendations

In this chapter, empirical results of statistical analyses, which were carried out to answer the research questions in chapter 1 are presented. Two tasks (Grammaticality Judgement Task and Translation Task) were used to investigate whether adult Bahraini Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English were eventually able to reassemble the features of articles. It was anticipated that different performance between the groups depending on their proficiency level would be noticeable, and that native-like attainment would be possible.

4.1 Results

The researcher first reports the results of the overall groups of participants across all proficiency levels. After this, the results are considered by proficiency level and grammatical categories. For each task, the researcher presents descriptive statistics (means, ranges and standard deviations), and a separate one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) for group comparison is reported. Group results using ANOVAs with post hoc analyses are displayed to find out where between-group differences lie. Individual results are also presented, as looking only at overall group results might conceal some learners' scores that show target-like achievements.

4.1.1 Overall Group Results

Overall, the results on the grammaticality judgement (GJ) test revealed that the participants were accurate in 74% of the cases (1851 out of 2480). In other words, the participants committed errors in about 26% of the cases (= 629 incorrect answers). Specifically, the first year group was accurate in 64% of the cases (668 out 1040), the fourth year group was accurate in 75% of the cases (787 out 1040), while the native speakers were accurate in 99% of the cases (396 out 400).

For the GJ test, descriptive statistics of the results are shown in Table 1. It shows the means of participants' percentage of correct answers out of the total test items, as well as the ranges and standard deviations per each proficiency level. The data in the table indicate a clear developmental pattern: the fourth year learners outperformed the first year.

Table (1)					
Descriptive Statistics on the GJ Test					
Groups	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
First year	26	64.2	10.5	45	85
Fourth year	26	75.6	8.9	57.5	97.5
Native control	10	99.00	1.7	95	100
Total	62	79.6	4.7	45	100

4.1.2 Individual Results

The group results showed that the learners groups failed to reassemble the article

features. In other words, they were not successful in achieving native-like performance in the GJ test. However, these results may conceal some individual learners who performed in a native-like way. To examine this issue more closely, an individual analysis was carried out. Given that the minimum score in the control group was 95%, the participants who performed with 95% accuracy or above were considered native-like. Table 2 summarizes the individual responses of each group.

Table (2)					
Individual Scores Analysis					
First year		Fourth year		Natives	
Scores	Frequency	Scores	Frequency	Scores	Frequency
45	2	57.5	1	95	1
50	1	60.0	1	97.5	2
52.5	2	62.5	1	100	7
55	1	65.0	2		
57.5	3	70.0	3		
60	2	72.5	1		
62.5	1	75.0	2		
65	1	77.5	5		
67.5	2	80.0	4		
70	3	82.5	3		
72.5	4	85.0	1		
75	2	87.5	1		
80	1	97.5	1		
85	1				
Total	26		26		10

Table 2 shows that only one learner in the fourth year group performed with 97.5% accuracy. This evidence nevertheless, along with the fact that the fourth year group performed better than the first year group points out that the successful acquisition of articles should be possible.

4.1.3 Analysis of Grammatical Categories

The first research question asked if the Bahraini L2 learners were eventually able to reassemble the features of English articles. The results are presented here feature by feature so that a comparison between group performances can be carried out. Table 3 specifically detects performance among the three groups on the specific definite feature on the GJ test.

Table (3)			
Mean Accuracy Scores (%) for Specific Definite Feature on GJ Test			
Groups	Specific Definite		Total
	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean Accuracy Scores
First year	65.4	95.4	80
Fourth year	80.8	98.5	89.6
Native control	100	100	100

For the sake of comparison, a one-way between groups ANOVA was performed. It showed that the groups' performance on this grammatical category was significantly different from each other (Table 4).

Table (4)					
ANOVA Results for Specific Definite Feature (GJ Test)					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4441.935	2	2220.968	14.166	.000
Within Groups	9250.000	59	156.780		
Total	13691.935	61			

At the $p < 0.05$ level, the three groups' performance on the GJ test was significantly different from each other on the specific definite items ($F = 14.166$, $p < 0.001$).

Generally, ANOVA provides information on whether two or more groups differ, but it offers no information about the location or source of difference. To determine the location of difference when the F value is significant, a post-hoc analysis can be used. Thus, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted and revealed the source of difference between the groups. Table 5 provides information as to the location and source of difference between the groups.

Table (5)		
Tukey Post-Hoc Test on Specific Definite Feature		
Test	p-value (sig.)	Outcome of Result
First year vs. Fourth year	0.02	s
First year vs. Natives	0.00	s
Fourth year vs. Natives	0.75	ns

Table 5 summarizes groups' performance on specific definite items. It shows a significant difference between the first year and fourth year group ($p = 0.02$) and a significant difference between the first year and native group ($p < 0.001$). However, there was no considerable performance gap between the fourth year and native groups ($p = 0.75$).

The second feature involved in article selection was specific indefinite. Table 6 summarizes the groups' performance on specific indefinite items.

Table (6) Mean Accuracy Scores (%) for Specific Indefinite Feature on the GJ Test			
Groups	Specific Indefinite		Total
	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean Accuracy Scores
First year	52.3	74.6	64.6
Fourth year	57.7	86.2	71.9
Native Control	94	98	96

Performance in the specific indefinite feature was not as good as that in specific definite feature for all proficiency groups which showed that the participants had some doubts about using *a* for specific indefinite nouns. A one-way ANOVA between groups was conducted to detect how significant was the difference (Table 7).

Table (7) ANOVA Results for Specific Indefinite Feature on the GJ Test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11038.164	2	5519.082	26.355	.000
Within Groups	12355.385	59	209.413		
Total	23393.548	61			

At $p < 0.05$, there was a statistically significant difference among the groups in their performance in the specific indefinite feature ($p > 0.001$). Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey test (Table 8) indicates that the first year and fourth year groups performed significantly different from each other ($p = 0.02$) and they were both significantly different from the native speakers too ($p > 0.001$).

Table (8) Tukey Post-Hoc Test on Specific Indefinite Feature		
Test	p-value (sig.)	Outcome of Result
First year vs. Fourth year	0.02	s
First year vs. Natives	0.00	s
Fourth year vs. Natives	0.00	s

The next feature to be examined is non-specific indefinite NPs. Performance on this feature is summarized in Table 9.

Table (9)			
Mean Accuracy Scores (%) for Non-specific Indefinite Feature on the GJ Test			
Groups	Non-specific Indefinite		Total
	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean Accuracy Scores
First year	50.8	79.2	65
Fourth year	67.7	85.4	76.5
Native control	100	100	100

In order to observe whether the differences in performance on non-specific indefinite feature were meaningful, a one-way between groups ANOVA was used. The results of Table 10 shows significant differences between the groups.

Table (10)					
ANOVA Results for Non-Specific Indefinite Feature on the GJ Test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8897.022	2	4448.511	16.783	.000
Within Groups	15638.462	59	265.059		
Total	24535.484	61			

A post-hoc Tukey test (Table 11) reveals that none of the learner groups matched the native speaker accuracy, as there was a significant difference detected ($p < 0.001$) for both learner groups.

Table (11) Tukey Post-Hoc Test on Non-Specific Indefinite Feature		
Test	p-value (sig.)	Outcome of Result
First year vs. Fourth year	0.035	<i>s</i>
First year vs. Natives	0.00	<i>s</i>
Fourth year vs. Natives	0.001	<i>s</i>

The last feature to be checked is mass vs. countable nouns. Groups' performance is presented in Table 12.

Table (12) Mean Accuracy Scores (%) for Mass / Countable Feature on the GJ Test			
Groups	Mass / Countable		Total
	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean Accuracy Scores
First year	30.8	65.4	48.1
Fourth year	50	79.2	64.6
Native control	100	100	100

The differences in performance among the three groups were calculated by a one-way between groups ANOVA which detected significant gaps (Table 13).

Table (13)					
ANOVA Results for Mass Vs Countable NPs on the GJ Test					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19538.710	2	9769.355	35.039	.000
Within Groups	16450.000	59	278.814		
Total	35988.710	61			

According to the one-way between groups ANOVA, the three groups were significantly different from each other in using the correct articles for both mass / countable NPs ($F = 35.039$, $p < 0.001$,). Again, the results of a post-hoc Tukey test (Table 14) uncovered that the two learner groups were significantly different from each other ($p = 0.02$) and both were different from the native controls in performance on mass and countable NPs ($p < 0.001$).

Table (14)		
Tukey Post-Hoc Test on Mass Vs Countable Feature		
Test	p-value (sig.)	Outcome of Result
First year vs. Fourth year	0.02	<i>s</i>
First year vs. Natives	0.00	<i>s</i>
Fourth year vs. Natives	0.00	<i>s</i>

Based on the results presented so far, it is clear that, although the participants in this study could not be claimed to have been able to reassemble all the features

related to article use, the improvement in the use of articles, as demonstrated by the comparison, suggests that feature reassembly has taken place.

To arrive at an answer to the second research question concerning the order of acquisition of the article features, performance of the participants in the fourth year group was further analyzed to compare their degree of mastery over the four article features. Based on the results which showed significant difference within the participants (Table 1 and 2), only the best ten scores were selected in order to reach a valid conclusion. The findings on the GJ test are presented in Table 15.

Table (15) Order of Acquisition for the Fourth year Group Based on the GJ Test											
Participant No.	2	3	9	10	11	13	21	22	23	26	Total (%)
Specific definite	90	90	90	100	90	80	90	90	100	100	92
Specific indefinite	70	90	70	90	80	100	90	80	100	80	85
Non-specific indefinite	90	80	90	90	90	90	80	70	90	90	86
Mass/Countable	70	70	70	70	70	70	60	80	100	60	72
Total (%)	80	82.5	80	87.5	82.5	85	80	80	97.5	82.5	

Despite the fact that the participants could not be deemed to have acquired the article use, the observation the researcher made was that the fourth year participants were 92% accurate in the article use for the feature of specific definite

feature, 85 % accurate in the specific indefinite feature, 86 % accurate in the non-specific indefinite feature and 72% accurate in the countable / mass feature. Therefore, the answer to the second research question regarding the order of acquisition is specific definite > non-specific indefinite > specific indefinite > countable/mass.

The third research question was articulated to examine if the level of English proficiency of Bahraini L2 learners affects the use of English articles. This could be answered by observing the mean percentage scores for the overall group results. The group differences based on percentage scores are displayed graphically in Figure 2, which shows a gradual development according to the learners' proficiency levels and thus could be considered an answer to the third question.

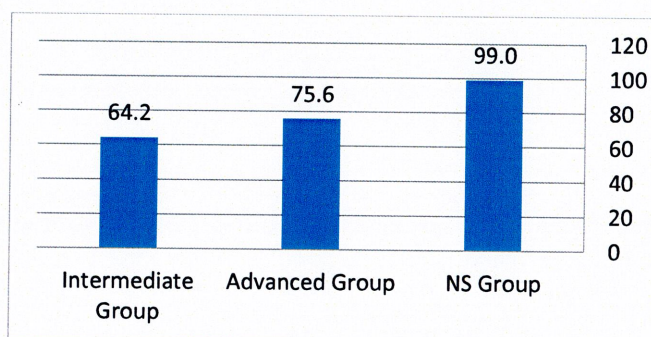


Figure (2)
Mean Percentage Scores for Overall Group Results

The last research question was formed to investigate whether Bahraini L2 learners' choice of L2 English articles is influenced by their Arabic L1. Results on the translation test can help arrive at an answer to the question. The following are

some frequent instances and the percentage of their occurrence from the participants' translation test that clearly show article errors, which may essentially exemplify the influence of L1 Arabic influence.

1. Al-radjaal al-shayib fiih shaar abyadh

[The old man has a white hair] (21 out of 52 – 40.3 %)

The old man has white hair.

2. al-naas tHib tijmaa al-amwaaal

[The people like collecting the money] (15 out of 52 – 28.8 %)

People love collecting money.

3. aHtaaj banTaluun jadiid

[I need a new trousers] (22 out of 52 – 42.3 %)

I need new trousers.

4. al-qiTaT Hayawanaat thadiya

[The cats are mammals] (21 out of 52 – 40.3 %)

Cats are mammals.

5. al-jariima tdammir al-mujtamaa

[The crimes damage the society] (23 out of 52 – 44.2 %)

Crimes damages society.

6. kaan yiskin fi qaryati Tabiib Tayyib

[Good doctor live in my village] (18 out of 52 – 34.6 %)

There was a very kind doctor in my village.

7. al'nimr maarradh li khaTar al-inqiraadh

[Tiger is in danger of extinct] (22 out of 52 – 42.3 %)

The tiger is / tigers are in danger of extinct.

8. al-kilaab tHib taakil al-luHuum

[The dogs love eating the meat] (20 out of 52 – 48.4 %)

Dogs like to eat meat.

9. ... Fakkir fi shiraa? sayyaara Saghiira . al-sayyaara al-Saghiira itkallif aqall

[...think of buying a small car. The small car costs less] (29 out of 52 – 55.7 %)

If you want to buy a new car, consider buying a small one. A small car costs less.

4.2 Discussion

In this section, an interpretation of the results is made. The researcher refers to each specific research question raised at the beginning of the study and provides a more detailed discussion of those research questions. Where possible, explanations for the results are provided. In addition, a comparison of the findings of the present study with the results found in the previous studies of L2 acquisition of articles is presented.

The first research question asked whether Bahraini L2 learners were eventually able to reassemble the features of English articles. As stated earlier, the performance of the fourth year learners in comparison with the first year ones, together with the native-like performance of one participant, suggests the beginning of feature reassembly. Comparisons between the learner groups and the native group revealed, however, that Bahraini L2 learners were significantly different from the native control group in their article use, a difference that was observed for almost all the features that affect article use. Taking into account both tests (GJ & Translation), the study revealed that Bahraini L2 learners were non-native-like in their article use for $\pm$ definite, $\pm$ specific, $\pm$ singular, $\pm$ generic, and $\pm$ count NPs.

These results were not in line with the ones reported by Sarko (2008). He reported that his results on definite contexts suggested that both language groups (L1 Syrian Arab and L1 French learners of L2 English) selected the definite article in an almost native-like way with singular nouns. The results do not seem compatible either with Abudalbuh (2016), who found that Jordanian Arabic L2 English

learners tend to fluctuate between definiteness and specificity and thus supported the Fluctuation Hypothesis.

The researcher of the current study claims that these differences are due to the scope and methodology of those studies and the present one. Both, Sarko (2008) and Abudalbuh (2016), considered only two features of definiteness and specificity whereas the current study examined a combination of formal features of English article use and how their assembly in L1 Arabic differs or resembles that in L2 English. In addition, the main source of their data was only one forced-choice elicitation test. Besides, Abudalbuh had no group of native speakers. This could be an obstacle to make detailed comparisons and conduct an in depth analyses.

In addition, the present study used a translation task to support the results of the elicitation task and to obtain results that are more consistent. A control group of 10 native speakers was also involved. In fact, considering these differences, both studies cannot be deemed to provide counter evidence to this study.

The results of the present study showed different performance of L2 learners from that of native speakers due to morphological variability, which appeared to be a consistent learnability issue. The source of this issue could be morphological feature combination and conditioning as suggested by Lardiere (2005), who proposed that L2 learners “initially seek the morphological equivalents from already assembled lexical items in the L1 to analyze L2 conditioning environment” (2009, p. 213).

The participants of the present study seemed to have a blurring picture of how to reassemble and reorganise the article features as they are bundled differently into

different lexical items in English and Arabic. Consequently, they had persistent difficulties in all article features especially the count / non-count nouns even at fourth year level.

Despite the fact that the article system does exist in both languages, and that both languages share definite and indefinite features, as well as zero article NPs, the use of the article morphemes is still too complex to grasp as it involves different features such as *definitiveness*, *specificity*, *countability*, and *genericity* used differently in both languages. Similarities do exist in both languages, yet the performance of the participating learners was significantly different from the native speaker group. Evidently, the first year and fourth year groups had difficulties in using English articles, which may suggest that the difference between the two languages is of a morphological nature as the features that have a role in article use are bundled differently and into different lexical items in English and Arabic.

Previous studies (Jaensch & Sarko, 2009; Kaku, 2006) proposed that problems occur when one or both of English articles are not selected in learners' L1s. The indefinite article in Arabic is not overtly realized, and thus this morphological different nature could be presented as a proof of challenge for Arabic-speaking learners.

The findings of the study indicated that neither first year nor fourth year groups mastered the use of English articles in all grammatical categories of articles, and it was the same situation with Momenzade and Youhanaee (2015). They reported that the source of such failure in article use was unsuccessful reconfiguration of the features from the way they were bundled in Persian into English. In the same vein, Dominguez, Archi and Myles (2011) proposed that feature reassembly is a

necessary process during the course of acquiring a second language.

The data of the present study were consistent with those findings and supported Lardiere's claim (2008) that "persistent L2 variable morphological production is attributable to differences in the 'conditioning environment' for the assembly of features into lexical items between L1 and L2" (p. 114). Therefore, the feature reassembly hypothesis can provide reasonable explanations for English articles variability such as the ones in the present study. The feature-based approach has a prediction power for differences as well as for seemingly and superficial similarities across Arabic and English.

The second question, which has important pedagogical implications, concerned the order of acquisition of English article features. The performance of the participants in the fourth year group exhibited different performance on the four article features. The acquisition was in following order; specific definite (92%), followed by specific indefinite (85 %), then non-specific indefinite (86 %) and finally the countable/mass NPs (72%).

The participants had more difficulty in dealing with the feature $\pm$ count NPs. The reasons for the observed behaviour can be attributed to how the two languages realize each feature. As mentioned above, Arabic and English have means to show definiteness and specificity on nouns but the realization of (in)definiteness is different especially on non-count nouns. Countable and uncountable nouns have no distinctions in terms of article use in Arabic, while this is not the case in English. This is due to cross-linguistic differences and language-specific conditions.

The situation is similar to the case in Persian language (Momenzade and

Youhanaee, 2015) where difficulty in article use as they proposed arise in “situations where either the means were different in the two languages or they were absent in one language and present in the other” (p. 58). Thus, the researcher could claim that reassembly of article features would be more difficult and it is the source of challenges for Arabic-speaking learners which result from the absence of direct mapping and requires feature reassembly.

The third question was designed to find out if the pattern of articles acquisition was of developmental nature. The observation of the percentage scores for the overall group results revealed a gradual development according to the learners’ proficiency levels. This was illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 detects a correlation between English proficiency and article accuracy: the higher the proficiency, the higher the accuracy in terms of article use. As mentioned earlier, the fourth year learners were more accurate than the first year learners with 75% and 64% accuracy respectively. As shown in table 2, one fourth year learner performed in a native-like way with 97.5% accuracy. This developmental pattern was compatible with Abudalbuh’s results (2016) confirming the current research study predictions.

The findings of the present study have proved that the patterns of article acquisition were developmental in nature, which is similar to the patterns reported in previous studies of L1 acquisition of English (see Zdorenko and Paradis, 2012).

Furthermore, the order of accuracy within the current study’s groups was the same for the first year learners and fourth year learners: specific definite > non-specific

indefinite > specific indefinite > countable/mass. Generally, all of the participating learners across all proficiency levels were more accurate in the specific definite NPs (92 %) and had more problems with uncountable NPs (72 %). This may equally provides didactic implications for classroom teaching.

I now turn to the last research question. The issue of L1 transfer was the main concern of the question. As we have seen, as English and Arabic are different in article behaviour, I predicted difficulty mapping the L2 articles and consequently, the possibility of L1 transfer. In order to achieve learning, feature reassembly is required. As stated earlier, Arabic is rich in the (al) and as expected the learners overused *the* instead of *a* / or *zero article* in generic expressions (The Tigers). This goes in line with Shalaby's results (2014), where he attributed most overuses of *the* for *a* to L1 Arabic interference. A point which has been observed in the translation task in this study.

In their study, Zdorenko and Paradis (2012) argued that it was very unlikely that any differences between their participants (Arabic speakers and Spanish learners) were due to L1 influence. They asserted that omissions of *a* for Arab learners cannot be attributed to the absence of an indefinite article in Arabic. The evidence they provided is the fact that the Spanish group had almost the same low rate of omissions and the Spanish language has both an indefinite and a definite article. They concluded that "what is transferred appears to be merely the knowledge of the functional projection D, but not the particular mappings of feature clusters onto morphological forms" (p. 20).

On the other hand, Abudalbuh (2016) pointed out that the high rates of article omissions by his Arabic-speaking learners might be attributed to the lack of a

morphological marker of indefinite nouns in Arabic and that article omission errors in indefinite contexts suggests an L1 transfer. He explained that his learners transfer the absence of a morphological marker from their L1 Arabic into their L2 English. He cited Ionin et al.'s (2004) that L1 transfer overrode fluctuation.

In terms of L1 transfer, the results might suggest consistencies with Abudalbuh's (2016). At the same time, they did not contradict the results of Zdorenko and Paradis (2011). In fact, for the FRH, the amount of feature reassembly required depends on what the features are and how they are organized in L1 and L2.

4.3 Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the present study was to provide some insights into SLA of the English article system by adult Arabic-speaking learners. Specifically, to find out whether Bahraini Arabic-speaking learners of L2 English were eventually able to reassemble the features of English articles and use them in a native-like way. Additionally, the study examined the role of L1 Arabic transfer and its effects on article acquisition. The theoretical framework of the study was the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis (FRH), fourth year by Lardiere (2005). She attributes the source of learnability problems to a failure to reconfigure the features from the way they are bundled in L1 (Arabic) into L2 (English). Data were collected through two formal elicitation measures. Below is summery of the main findings.

Generally, the analysis of data showed that the participants of the present study had not mastered article use in English. The results revealed different performance of L2 learners from that of native speakers due to morphological variability, which

appeared to be a consistent learnability issue. The results were compatible with Lardiere's (2008) claim that "persistent L2 variable morphological production is attributable to differences in the 'conditioning environment' for the assembly of features into lexical items between L1 and L2" (p. 114). The participants of the present study seemed to have a blurring picture of how to reassemble and reorganise the article features as they are bundled differently into different lexical items in English and Arabic. Consequently, they had persistent difficulties in all article features especially the count / non-count nouns even at fourth year level.

Indeed, the participants had more difficulty in dealing with the feature $\pm$ count NPs. A behaviour which was attributed to how the two languages realize this feature. Both Arabic and English have means to show definiteness and specificity on nouns but the realization of (in)definiteness is different especially on non-count nouns. Countable and uncountable nouns have no distinctions in terms of article use in Arabic, while this is not the case in English.

The study revealed that Bahraini L2 learners were non-native-like in their article use for $\pm$ definite, $\pm$ specific, $\pm$ singular, $\pm$ generic, and $\pm$ count NPs. However, the hypothesis assumes that native-like performance is eventually obtainable. This could be explained by referring to the participant from the fourth year group who was as accurate as the native control group as well as the fact that the fourth year group outperformed the first year group.

Sarko (2008) and Abudalbuh (2016) reported different results. Sarko found that Syrian learners selected the definite article in an almost native-like way with singular nouns, whereas Abudalbuh concluded that Jordanian learners tend to

fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. This was justified by the differences in the scope and methodology of those studies and the present one.

Upon these findings, the researcher proposed that the feature reassembly hypothesis could provide a reasonable explanation for the variability in English article use. The feature-based approach has a predictive power for differences as well as for seemingly and superficial similarities across Arabic and English.

Another observation made by the researcher was that percentage scores for the overall group results showed a gradual developmental model. The higher the proficiency, the higher the accuracy in terms of article usage. Similar results in English article use were reported in previous studies of L2 acquisition, (see Momenzade and Youhanaee, 2015 & Abudalbuh, 2016).

The researcher asserted that the results uncovered a possible influence of L1 Arabic resulting from absence of direct mapping which in turn, calls for feature reassembly. Based on the evidence available and the scope of methodology used, the researcher is able to confirm the predictions of feature reassembly hypothesis by stressing that constant acquisition difficulties are due to a potential L1 Arabic transfer and therefore erroneous mapping tasks and reassembly problems.

4.4 Recommendations

In this section, an attempt is made to highlight some pedagogical implications for classroom instruction in view of the findings of the current study.

Slabakova (2007) stated that “It is fairly common to assert that the generative approach to L2 acquisition does not really have any predictions to make about teaching a language” (p. 280). Thus, she encourages generative SLA researchers to integrate instructional practices with generative SLA research to obtain some valuable and practical implications. Therefore, this section is an attempt to outline some pedagogical implications in light of the results of the study.

To start with, it has been obvious that learning English articles by Arabic L1 speakers is a challenging task. The difficulty was attributed to the fact that the article systems in English and Arabic function differently in many instances. The study has shown that English articles have many features (definiteness, specificity, genericity, and countability) that affect the way they are used. The learner’s most problematic task lies in reassembling and reconfiguring these features from the way they are bundled in their L1 Arabic into their L2 English. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the learnability issue can be summarized in mapping features and reassembly problems.

Also, when addressing the order of acquisition of English article features, it has been shown that all the participants had more difficulty in dealing with the feature $\pm$ count NPs, which was argued to be due to the different means of showing (in)definiteness on $\pm$ count NPs in English and Arabic.

The pedagogical implications of these results point to the importance of incorporating all article features and providing more instances of the most unfamiliar features in English language teaching curricula, especially for early

learners. This may suggest that classroom input and practices should offer L2 learners with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981). Classroom instruction is also supposed to offer learners with sufficient input about the differences and apparently similarities between L1 Arabic and L2 English in the use of articles and to pay more attention to uncountable NPs.

In conclusion, language teachers should be aware of such findings and thus be equipped with the necessary material to assist them in teaching, assessing and observing the language development of their learners. Language teachers should be knowledgeable of the article features that are more problematic and thus understand why certain article features are acquired with ease while others need more effort. In practical terms, early distinctions between countable and non-countable NPs must be considered, and generic expressions for count NPs with plural and zero article (cats are mammals) should be taught as early as possible.

4.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the research questions stated in section 1.4 and the limitations in section 1.6 as well as the findings of the present study, the researcher can suggest the following future areas of research.

1. Along with the elicitation tasks used in the study (GJ and T tests), an oral production task might be included in future studies to ensure a reflection of the learners competence and possibly more accurate results.
2. Designing computer-based elicitation tasks is another aspect of the methodology to be considered in future research, which might be more accurate than a pencil and paper test to guarantee all participants are exposed to the same stimuli and treated in the same way.
3. The current study relied on the selection of whole groups regardless of the individual language proficiency levels, which can be a limitation of the present study that might be improved for future research to elicit more reliable results. A proper placement test could be an appropriate solution.
4. As mentioned earlier, gender and age were variables that had not been considered. A point that may lead to more accurate results and more reliable conclusions when taken into account.

5. The involvement of three Arabic-speaking groups instead of only two will elicit more rigorous findings, especially, in regards to whether the acquisition pattern is truly of developmental nature.
6. Another limitation of the present study to be improved for future research is to include other L1 groups (preferably –article languages). This inclusion will provide cross-linguistic evidence and ensure the effect of L 1 transfer.
7. Finally, research on other aspects of Arabic grammar could be more informative about the predictive power of the FRH hypothesis.

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List of Appendices

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Appendix (1)

Grammaticality Judgement Test

Reader Version

Direction: Please use your intuition to evaluate the following sentences. Read each sentence and decide whether the underlined parts of each sentence are grammatical or ungrammatical. Correct all incorrect, ungrammatical parts. If you find correct, grammatical parts, circle them. (All words are spelled correctly.)

Example:

I have brother. – (X) a brother

I have a younger sister. (✓)

Type 1 Specific definite - *the*

Ungrammatical

1. Chris went to see a doctor this morning for his headache. Doctor wrote a prescription for him to get medications.
2. I saw a very interesting movie last night. The name of a movie is "The Mexican."
3. When you turn onto Pine Avenue, you will see two houses, a blue one and a yellow one. I live in a blue house.
4. Steve has three animals at home, a dog, a cat, and a tortoise. A dog guards the house for him.
5. Holly bought two things yesterday in Eaton Center, an evening gown and a sports jacket. She is going to a party tonight and will put a long evening gown on.

Grammatical

6. Lesley has had very bad luck recently. She bought a computer and a VCR not long ago but last week both of them broke. Her essay is due next week and she barely has time to get the computer repaired.
7. Toni just bought two new pieces of furniture, a desk and a sofa. She likes sitting on the sofa.
8. Ed and Carol went to a French restaurant in Montreal. The restaurant is famous for its seafood.
9. Russell bought two Christmas gifts the other day, a ring and a watch. He is going to give the ring to his girlfriend.
10. This morning I read a magazine and a newspaper, but now I don't know where the newspaper is.

Type 2 Specific indefinite - *a*

Ungrammatical:

1. This is the picture of an amoeba, and notice that the picture is magnified thousand times so that we can see the amoeba's structure.
2. My hair is wrapped in the towel, because I'd just washed it when you called.
3. I usually buy a lot of frozen food when I do grocery shopping, as I have the freezer at home that I put frozen food into.
4. There was the very kind doctor in my hometown for whom everyone showed great respect in the town.
5. Ben is the junior assistant attending in emergency medicine at the Montreal Central Hospital.

Grammatical:

6. A young woman and a tall man were talking outside my house. I think the young woman was Chinese and the tall man was Japanese.
7. Yesterday when I walked down on the street, I saw a police officer chasing your dog.
8. There used to be an oak tree on the corner of the street but now it is gone.
9. A dining table in a dining room is a place for a family to spend most of their quality time together, having meals together, doing kids' homework, etc.
10. The actress revealed in an interview with CNN's Larry King that she is battling breast cancer.

Type 3 Non-specific indefinite – a

Ungrammatical

1. Ally is going to the pond. She wants to catch some fish. She will need to buy the fishing rod on the way there.
2. If you want to buy a new car, consider buying a small one. The small car costs less.
3. Vicky was in the examination room but all of a sudden she found out that she had forgotten to bring her pencil case. So she had to ask the invigilator if she could borrow the pen.
4. Sora is the better learner of Japanese than Min since she loves Japanese food and is very interested in Japanese culture.
5. Sophie has ordered a beefsteak but the waiter forgot to bring her the knife. She cannot cut the steak without it.

Grammatical

6. Ellen has just xeroxed a large pile of notes in the photocopy store. But, she couldn't find a stapler to staple them together.

7. Ron just found a large bottle of seven-up in the fridge. But he couldn't find a glass to drink some of it.
8. Junko was planning to watch a musical this weekend but forgot to buy a ticket in advance. When she went to the theatre, she found out that all tickets were sold out.
9. There may be a more direct route to the top of the mountain.
10. There is a Korean student in trouble in the department.

Type 4 Mass/Countable Noun:

Ungrammatical:

1. To make a pancake batter, you have to mix milk, eggs, and a pinch of baking soda along with flour.
2. The newlywed just bought a basic kitchen equipment.
3. The girl reading a newspaper in the cafe has a long blonde hair.
4. Molly realized that applying for the grant involves red tapes and almost gave it up.
5. Dogs need a balanced diet, not just meats.

Grammatical:

6. In a large saucepan over medium-high, heat oil and sauté onion and garlic until golden. Stir in curry powder and tomato paste, cook 2 to 3 minutes.
7. I usually have cream in my tea.
8. The whole city was covered with white snow on Christmas Day this year.
9. Defrost your fridge regularly to avoid a build-up of ice.
10. The eggs were packed in straw.

Distracters

Ungrammatical

1. Sooner or later, most people is plagued by arthritis, a disease that decreases the mobility of joints and inflames the lining around them.
2. At the end of the 1920s, world economies begin a downward spiral caused by a decade-long depression in the United States.
3. Courts maintains complete transcripts of judicial proceedings.
4. Ice Hockey is the professional sport that have been the most popular with Canadians over the past several decades.
5. Archeological remains prove that bands of Vikings explore parts of North America around 1100.

Grammatical

6. Agricultural science, which focuses on the development of edible seeds and plants, has benefited remarkably from recent advances in technology.
7. Most students are aware that mastodons formerly lived in what, is now the Northeastern United States.
8. Alcoholic beverages are usually consumed in the evening or late at night.
9. The era when early man mastered stone tools is known as the Stone Age.
10. Jewelry is often fashioned from fourteen carat gold, a substance composed of roughly fifty percent pure gold.

Appendix (2)

Translation Test Reader Version

Translate the following from Arabic into English.

1. شفنا البارحة فيلم عجيب. اسم الفيلم "الحاسوب".

We watched a very interesting movie last night. The name of the movie is "The Computer."

2. قرئت مجلة وجريدة، وما اعرف وين خليت الجريدة.

I read a magazine and a newspaper, but now I don't know where the newspaper is.

3. كان يسكن في قريتي طبيب طيب.

There was a very kind doctor in my village.

4. وأنا أمشي في الطريق أمس شفت شرطي يلاحق صديقك.

Yesterday when I walked down on the street, I saw a police officer chasing your friend.

5. إذا كنت تبي تشتري سيارة جديدة، فكر في شراء سيارة صغيرة. السيارة الصغيرة تكلف أقل.

If you want to buy a new car, consider buying a small one. A small car costs less.

6. في (يوجد) طالب ذكي في الصف.

There is a smart student in the class.

7. الكلاب تحب أكل اللحوم

Dogs like to eat meat.

8. الرجل العجوز فيه شعر أبيض

The old man has white hair.

9. الناس تحب جمع الأموال

People love collecting money.

10. القطط حيوانات ثديية

Cats are mammals.

11. الجرائم تدمر المجتمع

Crimes damage society.

12. النمر معرض لخطر الانقراض

The tiger is in danger of becoming extinct.

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إكتساب أدوات التعريف في اللغة الإنجليزية من قبل متعلمين بحرينيين: تحليل السمات اللغوية

بحث تكميلي مقدم لقسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها لنيل درجة الماجستير في
الدراسات التطبيقية في اللغة الإنجليزية

إعداد

حسن علي حسن سلمان

١٩٩٤٢٤٦٧

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(أستاذ مشارك)

جامعة البحرين

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