

University of Bahrain

College of Arts

**Department of English
Language & Literature**



The Acquisition Order of English Grammatical Morphemes of Saudi Grade One L2 Learners: A Feature Based Approach

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MA
in Applied English Language Studies.**

Prepared by:

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University of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain

May 2019

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Defense Committee's Approval

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Student **Rehab Maki Juma Haider**, ID number **20140054**, defended her thesis by which she fulfilled the requirements for the degree of M.A in English Language Applied Studies, entitled (The Acquisition Order of English Grammatical Morphemes of Saudi Grade One L2 Learners: A Feature Based Approach) on this day of .13. /...6...../..2019..

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the L2 acquisition order of five English Grammatical morphemes, Articles *a* and *the*, Past *-ed*, Plural *-s*, Progressive *-ing*, by Saudi female grade one learners. The investigation is conducted within the feature-reassembly approach, which claims that difficulties in acquiring a second language result from the failure to reassemble the features from the way they are assembled in L1 into new organizations in the L2. The main goal of the study is to shed light on the similarities and differences in the feature composition of the L2 morphemes and their L1 equivalents, and to explore the possibility that the order of acquisition of the L2 morphemes may be caused by the ease/difficulty of the reassembly task.

The study includes 50 first graders who study English as a second language in Rowad AlKhaleej International School in Dammam. Two data collection methods, namely, a grammaticality judgment test and a sentence completion test are used. The results of the tests are then analyzed statistically and shown to conform with the predictions of the Feature Reassembly Approach.

Keywords:

Arabic (Saudi); Articles; English; Features; Order of acquisition; Past *-ed*; Plural *-s*; Progressive *-ing*; Reassembly.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introductory Note

This chapter presents a general overview of the study, its problem, its questions, objectives, significance, context and terminology.

1.1 First Language Transfer

A first language (L1) is the native language of a speaker. (L1) transfer refers to the influence of the first language on the acquisition of a second language (L2). There are many terms to describe this influence like “transfer, “cross-linguistic influence”, interference”. In fact, (L1) transfer has been a crucial area of debate in the field of second language acquisition, applied linguistics and pedagogy for many years. I started this section with a definition of L1 transfer for its important influence on acquiring (L2). Many studies (e.g Larsen-Freeman, 1975) ascribed the systematic errors of the L2 learners to the effect of the first language. However, some studies focused on the properties of the second language itself to be the cause of these errors (e.g Gold Schneider & Dekeyser, 2001). The following paragraph will discuss the development of the acquisition theory from Behaviourism to Innatism.

Behaviorists viewed language as a skill. They considered language acquisition to be the skill of transferring L1 habits to learning a second language exactly like when a person transfers the skill of playing a game when learning a new similar game. This behaviorist view was handled by Lado’s (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. He claimed that L2 learners face difficulties because of the differences between the first and second language. If the first language habits are constructed

similarly to the second language, they will be transferred correctly. On the contrary, if the first language is not similar to the second language, the learner will have to be instructed to learn the new habits and change the behavior.

In the 1950s some researchers hypothesized a language internal mechanism. It was observed that children not only imitate what they hear, rather they construct a system of rules. These rules adhere to the general rules of natural languages, and do not have to follow the rules of native speakers. Therefore, the errors of second language learners were considered to be the result of this rule-based system which is called interlanguage (Chomsky, 1959). Further, Berko (1958) concluded that children use the rules they find in utterances to build their own sentences, rather than imitating what they hear. This was first developed by Chomsky and it was called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), and later Universal Grammar (UG) (Corporan & Ingleses, 2015).

In my study I will discuss first language transfer based on the feature reassembly approach FRA, which proposed by Lardiere (2005; 2008; 2009). This approach is framed within the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995). It indicates that difficulties in acquiring a second language are a result of the process of reconfiguring features from the way they are arranged in the first language into new configurations which may be selected in completely different lexical items in the second language. I will consider the possibility of using the feature based approach in order to account for the order of acquisition of five morphemes, namely, the articles *a* and *the*, past simple *-ed*, plural *-s*, and present progressive *-ing*. The reason why I chose to examine this research problem is that I believe that L1 transfer is what determines the order of acquisition of these morphemes.

1.2 Research Problem

As will be demonstrated below, the features of the morphemes are used differently in English and Arabic. Due to this cross-linguistic variation, L2 learners may encounter difficulty in the process of acquiring English grammatical morphemes. In particular, they will have to rearrange the feature bundles of L1 lexical items into those of L2 in different contexts which will cause difficulty. This study, as mentioned earlier, will investigate the order of acquiring five grammatical morphemes. More specifically, it will be argued that order depends on the amount of reassembly required.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study explores the grammatical morphemes acquisition order of Saudi females grade one learners. This will be done by investigating features impairment. It will be argued that it is precisely the ease/difficulty of the reassembly task that accounts for the observed order of acquisition.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the features of the L2 morphemes of the study?
2. What are the features of the corresponding L1 Arabic morphemes?
3. What are the mapping tasks?
4. What does reorganizing the features involve?
5. What is the acquisition order of the morphemes of the study?

1.5 Research Significance of the Study:

This study is significant because morpheme order studies have been crucial in broadening the understanding of the language acquisition process. Moreover, it also helps teachers to develop effective teaching methods and/or better approaches to understanding and dealing with L2 learner's errors. Further, this cross linguistic study is significant because with the help of the feature-based approach, it will give an indication of the complexity of the learning task, and at the same time suggest an explanation for the observed order.

1.6 Research Context

This research will address the first language transfer effect by discussing the problems or difficulties of acquiring five English grammatical morphemes, articles *a* and *the*, past simple –ed, plural –s, and present progressive –ing, by Saudi Arabian female grade one learners who are studying English as second language/ foreign language ¹in Rowad AlKhaleej International School.

1.7 Research Terminology

L1 (First Language)

L2 (Second Language)

UG (Universal Grammar)

FRA (Feature Reassembly Approach)

FTFA (Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis)

¹ Generative based SLA does not distinguish between foreign and second language.

ESL (English as a Second Language)

EFL (English as a Foreign Language)

LAD (Language Acquisition Device)

1.8 The Structure of the Study

This study consists of four chapters. Chapter two will provide a review of morpheme order studies, the feature reassembly Approach, a description of the five morphemes in English and their equivalents in Arabic and a literature review of some studies that have dealt with the (FRA). Further, chapter three will deal with the methodology of the study. It will include the research population, the sample, research tools, data collection, and statistical methods. The fourth chapter will deal with the results of the study, discussion and findings and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introductory Note

This chapter introduces a theoretical overview of the natural order hypothesis, the morpheme order studies in first and second language acquisition and linguistic features. Then this chapter explores the feature reassembly approach and some hypotheses that either contradict or support it. Further, this chapter sheds light on the Arabic and English plurals, articles, and tense, which refers to a particular event in the time of speech, and aspect which point out an ongoing event with no trace to a specific point. Moreover, this chapter provides an overview of previous studies based on the FRA, child and adult second language acquisition, and the research hypothesis. Last, this chapter explores the features and the predicted tasks facing the Saudi learners of English.

2.1 The Natural Order Hypothesis

The natural order hypothesis, proposed by Krashen in the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s is very important in morpheme order studies. According to this hypothesis, learners of a second language acquire the morphemes in a specific order regardless of instruction. Further, Krashen proposed an acquisition order of morphemes, namely, he indicated that the progressive –ing and the plural –s are acquired before articles (Krashen, 2009).

Morpheme order studies examined the acquisition order of grammatical morphemes by first and second English language learners. The first study was on three children learning English as their first language by Brown (1973). Further,

Dulay and Burt (1973) carried out a study on second language acquisition, which is similar to Brown's study, to determine whether L1 and L2 acquisition show similar patterns. The following section delve into the details of morpheme order studies in first and second language acquisition.

2.2 The Morpheme Order Studies in First Language Acquisition

Brown (1973) reported on a longitudinal study that he had conducted on three children learning English as their first language. Brown investigated the suppliance of fourteen morphemes in obligatory contexts. He looked at grammatical morphemes which must occur in some contexts. Most importantly, Brown was the first one who found out that children acquire their native language in a certain order. He concluded that the acquisition of the morphemes was controlled by the semantic and grammatical complexity.

2.3 The Morpheme Order Studies in Second Language Acquisition

Dulay and Burt (1973) investigated the order of morphemes in second language acquisition. They investigated the acquisition order of eight grammatical morphemes, present progressive –ing, plural –s, irregular past tense, possessive 's, articles, third person –s, copula *be* and auxiliary *be*, by three groups of ESL children with different L1s. They concluded that, regardless of the first language, second language acquisition was led by universal strategies, which led to the rise of a universal order of second language morpheme acquisition. However, this view was not accepted by everybody because many studies confirmed the effect of the first language on the second language acquisition. To illustrate, Luck and Shirai (2009),

who investigated the acquisition of morphemes by learners of different L1s to find whether they follow the natural order hypothesis or not, found some obvious effect of the first language. For example, Japanese, Korean and Chinese learners acquire the Possessive –'s earlier than predicted by the natural order hypothesis and show later acquisition of plural –s. Further, research on the acquisition of the English article has shown a clear effect of the first language (Khor, 2012).

2.4 Linguistic Features

Linguistic features have been investigated and defined by different researchers. They are defined as “the smallest structural unit expressing grammatical properties (White, 2003, p. 276). Further, den Dikken (2000, p.5) defined linguistic features as “properties of lexical elements, listed in lexical entries”. Features could be phonetic, like [-+voice], morpho-syntactic like [-+past], or semantic features like [-+animate] or [-+human]. This research is centered on morpho-syntactic features. An example of morpho-syntactic features is person, number, and gender. Moreover, the features could be interpretable or uninterpretable features. Interpretable features play an important role in semantics, for instance, number. On the contrary, uninterpretable features are totally grammatical and related to the morpho-syntax, for example, agreement or case.

According to the Minimalist Program, language consists of a universal computational system and a lexicon which carries formal phonological, syntactic and semantic features. These features are developed during the process of acquiring a first language. The way features are constructed is very important because it shows how language is built. Further, Chomsky argued that acquiring a first language goes through two processes, feature selection, and feature reassembly. The parametric differences between languages are due to the variation in both the features selected and how they are assembled onto lexical items and functional categories. In other

words, languages may have the same features, but they contrast in the organization of these features into words or morphemes. Therefore, the learning problems in L2 acquisition come from the inability of reselection or reconfiguration of features (Chomsky, 1998; 2000). Lardiere (2005; 2008; 2009), following Minimalism, proposed her Feature Reassembly Approach. As I mentioned earlier, this approach considers successful L2 acquisition to be determined by the reassembly of features.

It has been argued whether second language learners could successfully acquire grammar which has features that are not selected in their native language. Generative second language research explored the possibility of learning difficulty caused by the cross linguistic differences in the selection of features, for example, Lardiere (2006 ; 2009) and Hawkins (2005). Further, studies of SLA learning difficulties have consisted of two different views. The first view claimed that L2 learners are unable to acquire a new feature which is not available in their L1 after the critical period. They considered the lack to be in the computational system itself. In other words, it is impossible for adults to master a native like grammar if their native language does not have it (Partial Access' View). An example of these studies is Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou (2007). This idea is also called the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis. Another hypothesis which supports this view is the Representational Deficit Hypothesis or the Interpretability Hypothesis. In contrast, the second view which is shared by many studies like Lardiere (1998; 2007; 2009), Goad and White (2004), indicates that learners have a universal grammar (UG), which is available throughout the learning process (Full Access' View). Therefore, they could have a native like mastery of the second language. This view allocates the impairment "to the level of mapping of syntactic knowledge onto other grammatical domains", specifically morphology and phonology (Dominguez, & Myles, 2011, p.2). Some approaches that support this view are the Feature Reassembly Approach (FRA) proposed by Lardiere (2000, 2005; 2008; and 2009), and an approach that is built on

it which is called the Bottleneck Hypothesis (Slabakova, 2006; 2008; 2009), that will be discussed in the following section. Lardiere (2000; 2005; 2008; and 2009) emphasizes how features are morphologically bundled in the first and second languages. In the following section I will discuss the FRA and some hypotheses that either contradict or support it.

2.5 Feature Reassembly Approach

Lardiere (2008, 2009; 2013) noted that the process of second language acquisition is not simply parameter setting and feature selection. Further, she (2007; 2009) proposed to comparing how features are grouped into lexical items in the first and second language. She didn't focus, as in previous work, either on the interpretable or uninterpretable features, nor on the presence of functional categories in the second language grammar or on the resetting of the parameter to its target like value in the second language. The FRA follows the Full Transfer Full Access hypothesis, FTFA (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994; 1996) in the sense that it supposes that L2 acquisition involves a format of features which are assembled into L1 lexical items. Accordingly, L2 learners who have different L1 are expected to acquire grammar differently as they have different L1s backgrounds. Moreover, Lardiere asserts that since acquiring L2 starts from the first language of the speaker, the developmental phases differ from those of the first language. For instance, second language acquisition starts with a full group of fixed parameters, but the first language starts with a full group of unspecified parameters. FRA improves the FTFA hypothesis by claiming that second language acquisition is centered on rearranging the feature bundles of the first language lexical items into the ones of L2, in dissimilar contexts. In case the second language data suggests that L1 characterizations do not match, L2 learners will have to modify the L1 to match the

second language. However, if the L2 data does not agree that the first language structures are unsuitable, the first language grammar stays unmodified.

According to the FRA account and similar to FT/FA model, L1 has a great impact on the process of arranging existing features and lexical elements of the second language. Whereas according to the parameter resetting perspective, a particular morpheme is expected to represent a particular feature initiating a corresponding functional category, the FRA account, on the other hand, indicates that the absence of a morpheme does not necessarily indicate that a feature and its corresponding functional category do not exist; features may be encoded in the language in a way that is specific to that language itself (Albaqami, 2016).

Lardiere (2007), using the feature [-+past], presented a clear example of the cross-linguistic difference in the grammatical areas. In English the feature past is morphologically shown on the verb, in Irish it is shown on the complementizer to express agreement and in Somali it is shown on adjectives and determiners. Lardiere (2007) claimed that L2 research should not focus on the features which are already selected during the first language acquisition; rather it should examine the assembly of L1 and L2 features into feature bundles. The difficulties or inability of reaching a native like L2 acquisition is seen as a result of identifying and reconfiguring features from the first language to the second language, rather than the critical period problem.

For instance, Lardiere (2007) followed the oral and written data of a native Chinese speaker learning English as a second language throughout eight and a half years. Her study investigated different linguistic properties like definiteness, plural marking and case marking. The study concluded that “new features can be acquired and parameter values can be reset.” (Lardiere, 2007, p.23). Still, Lardier observed a huge amount of variability in the data, which she ascribed to the lexical realization

of features in the first and second language. Further, she emphasized the importance of examining features on morphological expressions in both L1 and L2. Most importantly, she predicted three types of difficulties which are faced by L2 learner when reassembling the features. The first difficulty is related to the presence or absence of a relationship between a particular feature with the same functional category. The second difficulty is due to how features are bundled into lexical items cross-linguistically. The last difficulty is a result of the compulsory/ non-compulsory realization of a morphological morpheme.

Moreover, the process of second language acquisition goes through two phases, namely, mapping and reassembling. The first phase is mapping: the L2 learner needs to map the bundle of linguistic features on words in the first language onto lexical items in L2. Learners will seek for morphological equivalents in L2 from the first language, probably on the basis of semantic meaning or grammatical function (Gil & Marsden, 2013). Mapping could be one to one mapping, one to none, or many to many, as Albaqami (2016) illustrates, one to none mapping refers to non-equal morphemes that is when a combination of features from the first language does not have an equivalent in L2, and therefore the L2 learner will have to find the grammatical correspondence, for example, some lexical items or single words in English may be matched to complex items in Arabic, like the word *through* which is mapped in Arabic to *min khilaal*. On the contrary, one-to one mapping is the opposite because it refers to mapping of identical morphemes, for example, the English verb *enter* is mapped into *yadkhal* in Arabic. Last, many to many mapping occurs when many expressions refer to one meaning interchangeably in a language, while in the other language the same many expressions would refer to different meanings, for instance, the motion verbs *yaqfiz* 'jump' and *yarkadh* 'run' operate similarly in both English and Arabic. However, in English the directional meanings vary according to the particle they take place with. Namely, *jump over* encode a

location, whereas *jump above* encodes direction. On the contrary, Arabic does not distinguish these directional explanations. In Arabic, the motion verb *yaqfiz* 'jump' would occur with *fag* or *'ala* interchangeably to refer to both *over* and *above* (Albaqami, 2016, p.67-72).

After mapping, the learner has to reassemble the features that do not equate in the same lexical items in the L1 and L2. Accordingly, FRA asserts that the L2 learner has to, in the beginning, transfer the first language to start a direct mapping between the forms of the first and the second language. If L2 learner fails to map, he/she has to adjust the feature bundles that they transferred from the first language and reassemble features that do not match in the first and second language. Most importantly, during the reassembly phase, the L2 learner may need to obtain a new feature or get rid of features which are selected in L1 but not L2. For that reason, FRA views interlanguage development as a process of assembling the second language features according to the first language feature arrangement (Shimanskaya, 2015). Feature reselection and reassembly is demonstrated in Figure 1, cited in Albaqami (2016: p.88)

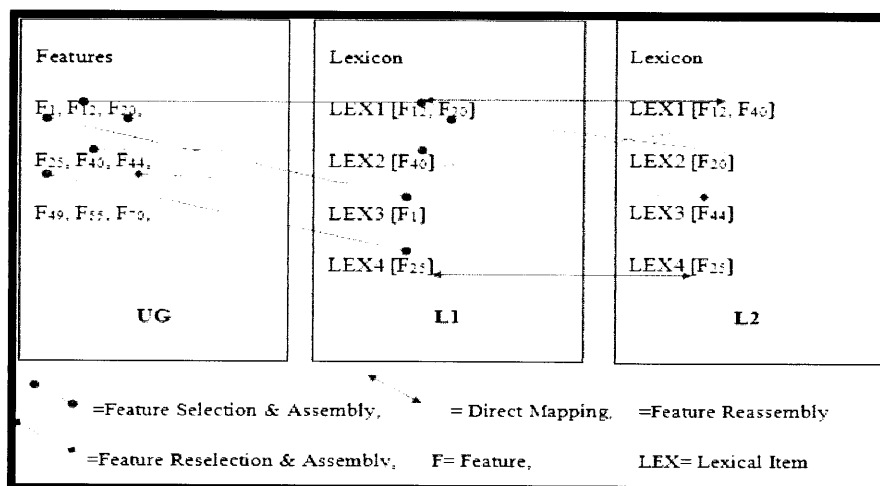


Figure (1): Feature Reselection and Reassembly onto Lexical Heads in L1 and L2 Acquisition (Albaqami, 2106).

This figure demonstrates a hypothetical group of UG features, and two hypothetical languages that arrange some of the features onto lexical items in ways that suit each language. Further, this figure shows how groups of features in UG are needed while acquiring a language.

The FRA contradicts some recent proposals that also ascribe the difficulties faced by L2 learners to linguistic features. To illustrate, unlike the Interpretability Hypothesis, Lardiere (2009) asserts that L2 learners are able to acquire all features regardless of their absence or presence in the first language. In other words, she indicates that L2 acquisition is a complex process and the difficulties are not due to the lack of certain features in the first language. She explains her point by discussing her study on a hypothetical English native speaker who is learning Korean and Chinese as a second language. She indicated that plural marking is considered to be a clear marking. Still, it has been proven that this feature and its morphological realization is not always shown cross-linguistically. To illustrate, in English, we use the plural –s to make a noun plural. However, in Korean and Chinese it is less frequent to use plural marking and the cases of their overt realization are very complicated. As a result, the L2 learner will have difficulty in reassembling the feature and thus the acquisition of the plural marker will be delayed.

There are some approaches that support the FRA in claiming that L2 problems, faced by even advanced learners, could be a result of not only the effect of the first language but also particular parts of linguistic elements. For instance, the *Bottleneck Hypothesis*, proposed by Slabakova (2006, 2008, 2009) and is based on the FRA, states that inflectional morphology is more difficult than other linguistic elements like semantics. According to Slabakova, inflectional morphemes are difficult to acquire because they have all the formal features to distinguish syntactic and semantic differences between languages. Therefore this hypothesis indicates that

inflectional morphology is the bottleneck or the obstacle of acquiring a second language. Further, this hypothesis predicts that once inflectional morphology is learned, the learner will acquire other relevant syntactic and semantic properties (Hwang, 2012).

In the following section I will describe plurals, articles, past –ed and present progressive -ing in Arabic and English.

2.6 Arabic and English Plurals

Saudi Arabic nouns are categorized into singular, dual and plural. Dual nouns refer to two things or persons. The dual form is recognized by the affixes. To illustrate, two books will be *ктаabiin*. Further, the plural form is as well recognized by the affixes. Saudi plurals can be represented by affixes (suffixes, prefixes and infixes); examples: *ктаab/kutub*,² (book/books); *qalam/?aqlaam* (pen/pens); *muslima/muslima-at* (muslim.fem-Pl); *muslim/muslim-iin* (muslim.msc-Pl).

On the second hand, English common nouns can be singular or plural. Dual is expressed through conjunctions like both/and, neither/nor, either/or. Most importantly, regular nouns are formed by adding the suffix –s.

² Traditionally, this type of plural was known as broken plural.

2.7 Arabic and English Articles

Saudi Arabic and English contrast in reflecting definiteness. To illustrate, Arabic has a hidden or null indefinite article, for example:

- (1) *madrasa*
 - a. *a school*

In fact, Saudi Arabic and English are similar with regard to the definite article *the* which corresponds to *-al* in Saudi Arabic, for example:

- (2) *al-madrasa*
 - a. *the-school*

However, they differ in the indefinite articles because English demonstrates the feature [number] through two articles, *a* to refer to [-plural] and null article to indicate [+plural].³ On the contrary, plural and singular Saudi Arabic indefinite nouns are distinguished by a null article (Albumlhah, 2016). Lardiere (2008) indicates that ESL learners of –ART L1(Arabic may be considered a [-indefinite ART] L1) find learning the article *the* easier than *a* and the null article, due to the complicated [number] feature related to indefinite articles.

³ There are other features involved in articles beside definiteness, such as specificity. However, my study will only be concerned with definiteness.

2.8 Arabic and English Tense and Aspect

Tense gives importance to a specific event which is related to the time of speech, for example, “He played football everyday”. On the other hand, aspect indicates how an event is ongoing with no indications to the beginning or final point, for example, “He was playing football” (Alruwaili 2014, p. 17).

2.8.1 Past Tense

Whereas English expresses the past by suffixing past –ed to the end of regular verbs, Saudi Arabic does so by means of infixation of vowels inside the root combined with a series of suffixation which represents person, gender and number; examples: Root:

(3) {k,t,b}; kataba (wrote.3 sg.msc)

(4) katab-at (wrote.3 sg-fem)

(5) katab-uu (wrote.3- Pl)

2.8.2 Aspect

I will, here, be concerned only with the aspectual distinction of habitual vs. progressive. As Alruwaili (2014) shows, the imperfect aspect in SA can show both habitual and progressive readings, while in English there is a morphological contrast between habitual and progressive as illustrated in the following examples:

(6) (a) Ahmad yal'ab alHiin

(b) Ahmed is playing now (progressive).

(7) (a) Ahmad yal'ab kil yawm.

(b) He plays every day (habitual)

2.9 Literature Review

Many studies investigated second language acquisition in terms of the FRA. For instance the acquisition of Korean plural marking by native English speakers (Hwang, 2012), the second language acquisition of French pronouns by L1 English speakers (Shimanskaya, 2105), second language acquisition of motion construction (Albaqmi, 2016), second language acquisition of Spanish Aspect morphology by native English speakers (Dominguez et.al., 2011), and second language acquisition of English dative constructions by Bahraini and Tunisian learners (Chekili, 2016). This section will cover some of the different studies in the field of FRA which are generative studies that shed light on L1 transfer.

2.9.1 Previous Studies Based on the Feature Reassembly Approach

Choi and Lardiere (2006) investigated second language acquisition of Korean wh-elements by English native speakers. The study emphasized on how the L2 learners clarify wh-expression, as in their first language the wh-operator and the [Q] feature are combined into one lexical item, for instance, wh-word as *what* or *who*. The study included average Korean learners. The sample frequently translated Korean wh-elements to English wh-words. This indicates that they mapped the feature bundle in the first language to their nearest correspondent in the second language without any recognition of the relationship between “a sentential particle and the wh-expression interpretation” (Shimanskaya, 2015, p.26).

Dominguez *et al.* (2011) explored second language acquisition by L1 English learners of Spanish aspect, imperfective morphology. The study included a sample of 60 English learners of Spanish, they were divided to 20 beginners, 20 intermediate and 20 advanced. Further, it included a control group of 15 L1 Spanish speakers. Most importantly, the results of this study indicated that the feature reassembly was more challenging, even for advanced participants, than the initial mapping of the

first language features to their equivalents in L2. Still, regardless of the fact that L2 learners differ in their proficiency level, they were successful in achieving a native like attainment of the progressive and the habitual meanings, which were probably mapped from their first language to the second. Therefore, the findings of this study support the predictions of the FRA by providing an empirical evidence of the validity of both the mapping and reassembly stages.

Hwang (2012) explored the L2 acquisition of Korean plural marking by native English speakers based on FRA. The difference between the two languages is what makes L2 learners reconfigure the particular features into their correspondence within the frame of the FRA. The objectives of the study are to shed light on the cross linguistic difference in number marking between L1 English and L2 Korean. Moreover, this study aims to explore the possibility of a native like attainment by L2 learners of both types of plural marker *-tul*. The sample of the study consisted of 85 L1 English speakers divided into four proficiency levels, and 31 L1 Korean native speakers. The participants performed an elicitation, acceptability judgment, preference, truth value judgment, and translation tasks. The results indicated that there is a proficiency development. However, many advanced learners did not show a native like attainment. Still, some very advanced learners integrated demanded features like specificity, non-numeric vs. numeric quantification, and distributivity into their description of Korean plural marking. Further, the [+ human] feature was not obtained by the majority of the sample even at excellent level. The results propose that recognizing the applicable features and reassembling them into language specific lexical items is not easy but achievable for some participants.

Gil and Marsden (2013) explored second language acquisition of the English polarity form *any* and its equivalents, like wh-existentials, in Korean, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese. This study suggested that native speakers of English and Japanese who are learning Mandarin Chinese and Korean as a second language need

to recognize that *wh*-forms can be expressed as existentials and interrogatives. However, Japanese learners of Mandarin Chinese need to recognize that existentials and interrogatives are linked morphologically. As a result, this study predicted that English native speakers who are learning Mandarin Chinese will face difficulty more than L1 Japanese learners, because there is no morphological relationship between existentials and interrogatives in their first language. The results of this study supported Gil and Marsden's (2013) declaration of the significance of elements like meaning and grammatical function to create the initial mapping. Moreover, this study concluded that English and Japanese learners acquire Mandarin Chinese in a different way due to the distinct way English and Japanese deal with existential quantifiers.

Cho and Slabakova (2014) conducted a study to investigate second language acquisition of definiteness in Russian by L1 English and Koreans. Russian does not have articles. Definiteness is not encoded directly. It appears directly by using word order and adjectival possessors. The sample consisted of two groups; 53 Koreans learning Russian as a second language; and 49 native English speakers learning Russian as L2. Moreover, there was a control group that had 56 native Russian speakers. Similarly, to Russian, Korean neither encodes definiteness nor have articles. On the contrary, English encodes definiteness by means of articles. The sample were asked to judge whether some sentences are acceptable or not in a given context. Most importantly, this study indicates that mapping features that are directly encoded in the first language to the ones that are indirectly encoded in the L2 is difficult. Further, this study concluded that Koreans did not produce a native like attainment. Their achievement on word order shows that the hardest acquisition process was to remap the indirect encoded features in both languages because it requires reassembly.

Shimanskaya (2015) conducted a research on second language acquisition of French object pronouns by English L1 speakers. Unlike French, English lexicalizes the feature [+ Human]. However, both languages lexicalize the feature of grammatical case. Still, French encodes case value more. The experimental study included two groups. A group which consisted of 87 English native speakers learning French as a second language in the US, and a control group of 43 L1 English learners of French as a second language in France. The experiment was carried out using a picture selection task, a grammaticality judgment task with correction and a self-paced reading task. The [+ Human] feature in the first language would be mapped to the ones in the L2, in accordance with the semantic differences between clitic and strong pronouns. Further, to proceed towards a native like attainment of French, L1 English speakers need to examine the pronominal arrangement in their native language. The results of the study supported the claim of the initial mapping from the first to the target language. Further, the following phase, which is the reassembly, involved adding to the second language case value and grammatical gender.

Albaqami (2016) explored how feature bundles in the first language influence the second language acquisition of motion construction. This study examines the way semantic features of motion constructions are configured onto lexical items in Arabic and English. Motion constructions of both languages distinct with regard of whether path of motion is shown on a verb or by a separate particle. The study included 60 L1 Arab learners of English and 20 L1 English learners of Arabic. Further, the study included two control groups of 20 L1 Arabic and English speakers. This study was carried out by using acceptability judgment and animation description tasks. The results of the study indicate that the challenge in learning a second language is due to the different encoding of features in the first and second languages, the ones that were available or matched in the first language were less difficult. Further, knowing both types of motion construction in English and Arabic

improved the learner's level. This study supports the predictions of the feature reassembly approach and Stringer's (2012) declarations that the development of a second language is not merely a parameter resetting.

Chekili (2018) argues that if Lardiere's claim in her (FRA) is right, then this must also indicate that speakers of different dialects of the same language would presumably find distinct types of complications and therefor, they will encounter different reassembly procedures. In order to prove this claim, the study included a feature based task on Bahraini and Tunisian Arab learners of English dative constructions. The instrument in the research was a grammaticality judgment task. The results supported the claims of the FRA.

2.9.2 Child & Adult Second Language Acquisition

Children vary in the pace of learning a second language. The learning of a second language depends on different elements like the child's abilities and the surrounding domain. Further, the young learners' motivation, interest towards language learning and the extent to which they practice the language plays an essential role in their learning and fluency level. McLaughlin (1984) indicates that child second language acquisition could be simultaneous or sequential. Namely, if a child learns two languages at the same time or simultaneously before the age of three years old, he/she develops as a monolingual child learning a first language. However, some studies argue that when children learn two languages, one language may develop more than the other. On the other hand, if children learn a language after the age of three or sequentially, their language development will be affected by many factors like the language learning domain, because the rules and structures of their first language will have already been learned. They will have to learn a second language structure, syntax and vocabulary.

Dulay and Burt (1973,1974) explored the correctness of use of fourteen grammatical morphemes by six to seven years old Spanish and Chinese children. This study concluded that morphemes like progressive-ing, were used more correctly than morphemes like the present singular -s. Further, other longitudinal case studies, like Gavrusseva & Lardiere, (1996), Hakuta (1978), Lakshmanan (1993,1994), indicated that ESL young learners make errors in morphemes like past -ed and present singular -s. Further, the studies concluded that learning these aspects differed among children. For example, Marta, the Spanish child in Lakshmanan (1993,1994), study provided some morphemes more than 80% times after being exposed to English for few months. On the contrary, Uguisu the Japanese child in Hakuta (1978), could not speak English without thinking for many months, and even after she became fluent, she made errors with third person -s and past -ed. All these children including Dulay and Burt's study concluded that ESL young learners find learning the third person singular -s and the past -ed challenging (Paradis, 2005).

Most importantly, Unsworth (2005) indicates that child and adult L2 acquisition differences are discussed according to three views: age, developmental sequences, and L1 transfer. First, age refers to either the time of testing or the time of the first exposure to L2. Age at the time of testing is related to L2 child and adult contrast according to different cognitive abilities that exist in different age groups, and the effect of the testing methodology on the result. The testing methods should be appropriate for each age group, that is, not too difficult for young subjects and not too unchallenging for the adult participants. The second issue regarding L2 child and adult acquisition contrast is developmental sequences, for example, morpheme order studies examined developmental sequences which I discussed earlier. Further, Schwartz (1992) indicates that resemblance between these groups shows that they utilize the same L2 acquisition procedure which is UG. In other words, children and adults L2 learners go through the same developmental phases. The third point in the

contrast between L2 child and adult learners is L1 transfer. Children and adults L2 learners have linguistic knowledge from their L1. Thus, there is a possibility of L1 transfer which affects the target language grammar. I discussed this matter earlier. In the following part I will explore some studies that investigate child L2 first language transfer.

Hazendar (1997) provides an evidence of L1 transfer through his study on a Turkish L1 child learning English as a second language. Turkish word order is SOV, whereas English is SVO. The researcher was interested in the VP in the child's utterances. The data was collected after being exposed to English for one month in the UK at an English nursery school at the age of 4. Accordingly, the data tracks an initial stage of second language acquisition. The researcher arranged the child's utterances according to the order of the head initial and final. The result indicated that the subject utterances after two and a half months were OV, for example, "I something eat" Hazendar (1997, p. 99). However, gradually the utterances VO order like "going this way" became more used Hazendar (1997, p. 101). Consequently, this study's result shows that there is L1 transfer and it also highlights the importance of the initial stage and the successive development in L2 acquisition.

Moreover, many studies proved that L2 children and adult learners from the same L1 are alike with regard to L1 transfer, for instance, Gilkerson (2006) study, which tests the Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis, differentiate between 32 Spanish children with 33 Spanish adults in acquiring English particle verbs. Children were first exposed to English at the age of five years old and they were tested at the age of four and eight. On the contrary, adults were first exposed to English at the age of 18 or more and they were 21 and 45 years old at the time of testing. In addition, data was collected by using two tasks, namely, elicited production task which requires an experimenter to act out the verbs to the participants in order to describe them, and a

Comprehension Language Evaluation-Elicited Production, which consisted of sentence completion task. It was used to know the L2 proficiency level. The participants were divided into three groups according to their proficiency; this method was used to conclude development of participants who differ in their level. The results of the study showed that while the L2 children and adults have some differences in acquiring particle verbs, they show the same developmental phases. The difference between the adults and children was ascribed to L1 transfer, which is more constant in adults than children.

This thesis includes only children participants who speak the same language. In fact, both adults and children already have linguistic knowledge when they start learning a second language. Adults and children who speak the same language will not contrast in their mapping and reassembling stages as they have the same L1. Thus, the L2 child and adult contrast has no effect on the prediction of the FRA

2.10 Commentary on the Literature Review

The previous studies have been beneficial to my research in many ways. They were useful for me with regard to research methodology, because every study has different instruments and generative research design, which enabled me to choose the best that suits my study. Further, all studies investigated different types of features, which helped me to recognize how features are mapped and reassembled in different languages.

2.11 Research Hypothesis

Learners will first learn the morpheme that requires less feature reorganization. Further, as Gill & Marsden proposed, mapping is done on the basis of correspondences in meaning or grammatical function. Thus, the mapping task will be according to the corresponding L1 Saudi Arabic feature. To recapitulate, the features of the L1 and L2 morphemes are shown informally in the table below:

Table (1) <i>The Features of L1 and L2 Morphemes</i>				
Morpheme	L1		L2	
Article	Definite	Indefinite	Definite	Indefinite
	al	0	the	a (sg) 0 (pl)
Plural	Different types of affixation		-s	
Past	infixation		-ed	
Aspect	Habitual	Progressive	Habitual	Progressive
	imperfect	imperfect	Present simple	Present progressive

2.12 The Features and the Predicted Learning Tasks Facing the Saudi Learner of English: Mapping and Reassembly

On the basis of similarities in meaning or grammatical function (Gil and Marsden 2013), the learner maps:

- a. *the* ([+Def, -Cl]) to *-al* ([+Def, +Cl]). Mapping is straightforward.
- b. *a/an* [-Def, -Null]) to zero (-Def, +Null]). Here, the mapping is not direct.
- c. *-s* ([+Pl, +suffix]) to [+Pl, various affixations, +Gender]. Here, too, there is no direct mapping.
- d. *-ed* ([+Past, +suffix]) to [+Past, +infix, +Person, +Gender]. No direct mapping either.
- e. [+Present, + simple] to [+Imperfect]

[+Present, +continuous] to [+Imperfect]. There is here no direct correspondence as a result of the overlapping.

Following the mapping tasks, the learner will turn to reassembling the features just in case there is a mismatch between the two languages. Reassembly is argued to be the result of poverty of the stimulus (Gil and Marsden, 2013). The learner needs to do the following:

- a. Replace [+Cl] by [-Cl]. No difficulty. Positive evidence is freely available.
- b. Discover that [+Null] should be changed to *a/an*: difficulty is expected as a result of poverty of the stimulus: the input does not show that *-book*, *-table* are incorrect.
- c. The learner must here delete the various affixes, delete Gender and add *-s*.

Positive evidence is available from *chair (masc.)/ chairs; table (fem)/ tables*

- d. The learner must delete the features of [+infix, + person, +Gender, +Num] and add *-ed*. Positive evidence is available from *he/ she/ they/ liked*.
- e. The learner must discover that +Imperfect corresponds to both the present simple and progressive: he must delete the features of Person, Gender and Num. And add

the English features (e.g. 3P sing -S; be; -ing). Difficulty is predicted as a result of poverty of the stimulus. On the basis of the above, the order of difficulty and hence acquisition is: a-c-d-b-e.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introductory Note

This chapter introduces participants of the study, materials and procedures and coding and data analysis.

3.1 Participants of the Study

The data was collected from 50 grade one six-year old Saudi female learners in Rowad AlKhaleej International School in Dammam city. The sampling method was a cluster random sampling, as I tested four classes and then I chose 50 individuals randomly (Fraenkel, et al, 2015). I chose this school because learners learn English intensively at an early age, which enabled me to collect data from ESL young learners. The sample started learning English from the age of three, and also practise English at home.

3.2 Materials and Procedures

The learners were tested one by one. I started the testing procedure by explaining to the learners that this is not a graded test. The data elicitation was through a Grammaticality Judgment (GJ) test and a Sentence Completion test (SC).

Generative SLA is not only concerned with variation at the level of production (hence the production measure of Sentence Completion) but also which learners' intuitions regarding (un-)acceptability. The Grammaticality Judgment task is an adequate way to tell if L2 learners know that certain structures are not acceptable in the L2 even though they are acceptable in their first language (See, Rothman and Slabakova, 2018, p. 14-15). In the following section I will briefly describe each test.

3.2.1 The Grammaticality Judgment Test

The grammaticality judgment test was designed to test the participants' knowledge of the morphemes in the study. Learners were asked to mark whether the underlined parts of each sentence were correct or incorrect, and to correct sentences that they thought wrong. This test included grammatical, ungrammatical sentences and distractors. The distractors in the test are important because they help in distracting the learners from being aware of the tested item under investigation. Furthermore, according to Gass & Selinker (2001), second language input does not give learners knowledge of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. Thus, the GJ test is vital in UG research. It forces the learners to judge a sentence to be acceptable or not in the L2 and to correct the unacceptable sentences to make sure the learner understands the incorrect ones. Moreover, if the learners have a good knowledge of L2 grammar they would include correct grammar in their judgments and exclude the incorrect ones. This cannot be concluded from only the production of a language (Mackey, M. Gass, 2005).

3.2.2 The Sentence Completion Test

The GJ test explored learners' knowledge of the morphemes in the study. The sentence completion test was used to elicit learners' comprehension of the morphemes. The purpose of the test was to shed light on the learners' difficulty and their ability to complete sentences with the correct morpheme.

3.3 Coding and Data Analysis

The design of the study is quantitative correlational as I will explore the relationships between the two languages by shedding light on the related features and the mapping tasks. Both tests will be scored as correct or incorrect. I gave one point for correct answers and zero for the incorrect answers. This will enable me to list English morphemes from the most to the least difficult for ESL Saudi first graders. Further, I will use descriptive statistics to analyze the data, particularly, mean, mode and standard deviation, in forms of tables, to show how accurate learners are in using the morphemes of the study correctly.

Chapter Four

Results, Discussion, and Recommendations

Chapter Four

Results, Discussions, and Recommendations

4.0 Introductory Note

This chapter will include the results of the study. It will further discuss the findings and conclusions of the results in light of the research questions. Last, it will include limitations and suggestions for further research. Moreover, it will discuss the results of two tasks, Grammaticality Judgment Task and a Sentence Completion Task, to investigate the feature reassembly and the order of acquisition of the morphemes in the study.

4.1 Results

Learners face difficulty due to their failure in reorganizing the features that are bundled differently in the L2. Reorganizing the features involves the difficulty that the learners face when they do not have an equivalent, and thus, they start the second stage in the (FRA) which is reassembling the features. In fact, some morphemes need more reorganization than others, thus they will be acquired late. In other words, when there is a lot of reorganization learners will face difficulty in learning. On the contrary, when there is no reorganization a lot the morpheme will be learned quickly. In this part, I will provide the percentage of the grammatical and ungrammatical answers of both GJ and SC tasks, and also descriptive statistics that show the mean, median mode, standard deviation, max and min of the learners' percentage of correct answers.

The results of the test show that acquiring past *-ed* was not very difficult for the learners. The correct answers in the GJ test were 81%. The incorrect answers were 20%. Further, the result indicates that the SC test was easier than the GJ, the participants found completing the sentence easier and less confusing. The learners

were correct in 90% of the questions and they were incorrect in 10%. Table 2 below shows descriptive statistics of the results of both tests.

Table (2) <i>Results and Descriptive Statistics for the Past ed on GJ and SC Tests</i>								
Test	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
GJ Test	80%	20%	3.22	4	4	0.9	4	0
SC Test	90%	10%	3.6	4	4	0.9	4	0

Furthermore, the results indicate that the learners scored better in progressive –*ing* on the SC test than the GJ test. The correct answers on the GJ test were 62%, while the incorrect answers were 38%. On the other hand, the correct answers in the SC test were 99% and the incorrect answers 2%. It was easier to complete the sentences after the verbs *are* and *is*. Most importantly, the majority of the learners judged the sentences that do not have a verb *to be* and *-ing* attached to the verbs *write* and *read* to be correct, which shows a mapping problem. Table 3 demonstrates descriptive statistics of the progressive –*ing* on both tests.

Table (3) <i>Results and Descriptive Statistics for the Progressive -ing on GJ and SC Tests</i>								
Test	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
GJ Test	62%	38%	3.7	4	4	1.2	6	1
SC Test	99%	1%	3.94	4	4	0.2	4	3

Plural –s was very easy for the majority of the learners in both tests. The learners' correct answers in the GJ test were 90% and the incorrect answers were 10%. On the contrary, the correct answers in the SC test were 98% and the incorrect answers were 2%. Table 4 below demonstrates the descriptive statistics of plural –s.

Table (4) <i>Results and Descriptive Statistics for the Plural -s on GJ and SC Tests</i>								
Test	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
GJ Test	90%	10%	3.6	4	4	0.7	4	1
SC Test	98%	2%	4.88	5	5	0.7	5	0

The learners' correct answers in the article *a* on the GJ test were 89% which is not much different than the plural *-s*, it is only one percent less. Further, the correct answers on the SC test were 87%. The result on the GJ test is also not much different than the SC test. The SC test is two percent higher. Table 5 below shows descriptive statistics of the article *a*.

Table (5) <i>Results and Descriptive Statistics for the Article a on GJ and SC Tests</i>								
Test	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
GJ Test	89%	11%	2.68	3	3	0.4	3	2
SC Test	87%	13%	4.34	5	5	0.8	5	2

The learner's correct answers in the article *the* on the GJ test were 92% and the incorrect answers were 8%. On the second hand, the correct answers on the SC test were 87% and the incorrect answers were 13%. The results of both tests are close to one another. Table 6 below shows the descriptive statistics of article *the*.

Table (6) <i>Results and Descriptive Statistics for the Article the on GJ and SC Tests</i>								
Test	Grammatical	Ungrammatical	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Max	Min
GJ Test	92%	8%	2.76	3	3	0.6	3	0
SC Test	87%	13%	4.36	5	5	0.9	5	1

4.2 Discussions and Findings

In this section, a detailed explanation of the results is presented. It includes interpretations of the learners' errors.

The results of the GJ test show that the overall accuracy score of the plural *-s* is 90%. The errors were mostly in the wrong sentences "She gave me three toy.", and "He is eating two sandwich". Five learners judged the first sentence to be correct, and twelve learners judged the second sentence to be correct. Plural *-s* corresponds to different types of affixes in SA. The learners had difficulty in deleting the various features which are affixes in the L1 words *al'aab* and *sandawishat* and replacing them with *-s*. There is no direct mapping here. Thus, the difficulty is due to a failure to map the features. On the contrary, the results of the SC test show that the learner's

accuracy scores are 98%, where one learner scored zero and one learner made one error.

Moreover, the results of the GJ test indicate that the article *a* accuracy score is 89%. The errors were in the sentence “I have the friend.” Three students judged the sentence to be correct. Further, eleven learners judged the sentence to be wrong, but they did not correct it with the article *a*. They corrected the sentence by replacing the article *the* with *some*, *this*, *that* or *my*. Moreover, some learners just added plural *-s* to the end of the noun and omitted the article. On the second hand, the results of the SC test indicate that the article *a* accuracy score is 87%. Fourteen errors were in the sentence “Today is a cold day.” Nine learners completed the sentence with the article *the*, three learners used *very* and three learners left it empty. Further, eleven students encountered difficulty in completing the sentence “I want a piece of pizza.” Three learners completed the sentence with *some*. Two learners overgeneralized *the*. Six learners completed the sentence with *one*, *little*, *big*, and *to eat*. In addition, the learners found difficulty in completing the sentence “My father is a doctor.” Five learners generalized the article *the* to complete this sentence. The difficulties are faced by the learners due to a failure to map the L2 features [-def, -null] to the L1 [-def, +null]. The learners did not discover that [-null] article *a* in English is represented by +null in Arabic. Moreover, the learners faced difficulty because of poverty of the stimulus, as the input does not show that a sentence like “I have friend” is incorrect

Furthermore, the results of the GJ test show that the past *-ed* accuracy score is 81%, the errors were in the wrong sentences “The girl clean her room yesterday.” and “They cook good food last year.” Fifteen learners judged the first sentence to be correct, and thirteen students judged the second sentence to be correct. Further, four learners judged the sentences to be wrong, but they corrected the verb by adding an *-s* instead of *-ed*. On the other hand, the SC test shows that the past *-ed* accuracy

score is 90%. The learners' errors were in the sentence "The girl (jump) over the fence last Monday." Nine learners did not complete this sentence correctly. Four of them completed it by adding *-s* to the verb *jump*. Five learners added *-ing* to the verb. Further, four learners added *-s* to the verb *plant* in the sentence "We (plant) the seeds last week", and three learners added *-s* to the verb *wash* in the sentence "He (wash) the dishes yesterday." Some errors are maybe due to the progressive *-ing* distractors in the test. Most importantly, the difficulty in acquiring this morpheme is due to the non-direct mapping in L1 and L2. The learners need to delete the infixes and agreement features from the L1 verbs and add past *-ed*. Some learners failed to do this, which caused them to face difficulty.

Moreover, the GJ test results indicate that the article *the* accuracy score is 92%, Four learners judged the sentence "Give me the hat I gave you yesterday" wrong. Further, four learners did not judge the sentence "The yellow cat that my sister gave me disappeared." correctly. Last, three learners judged the wrong sentence "She is a best in grade one" to be correct. On the contrary, the results of the SC test show that the accuracy score is 87%, where the errors were mostly in the sentence "I loved the present you gave me on my birthday." Fifteen learners did not fill the sentence correctly with the article *the*. The learners completed the sentence with either *a*, *my*, *your* or *that*. Moreover, two learners completed the sentence "The kid is playing" with *a*. Two learners completed the sentence "The cat is nice" with *my*. Most learners mapped the article *the* to *-al*. The majority of the participant did not find difficulty in this morpheme because mapping is straightforward.

Lastly, the results of the GJ test indicates that the accuracy score for the progressive *-ing* is 62%. The errors were mostly in the sentences "I read my book with my friend at this moment." And "They write the sentence at this moment" Thirty-two learners judged the sentences to be correct. The rest of the learners erroneously corrected the verb by using the past or plural forms. The learners

encountered difficulty because they did not discover that, unlike Arabic, in English the habitual and the progressive are expressed in different forms. There is no direct mapping, thus the learners found difficulty in these two sentences. In addition, learners faced difficulty in judging the sentences “They are watch the film now.” and “She is eat the food now.” Some learners judged the sentences to be correct, but other learners corrected the sentence by writing the verb without a verb *to be* and an inflection. Some learners corrected the sentence by adding *-s* or past *-ed* to the end of the verbs. Moreover, some learners erroneously corrected the sentence “The student is studying right now.” by omitting the helping verb *is* and the progressive *-ing* or by changing the *is* to *are*. On the second hand, the SC test shows that the accuracy score is 99%. The learners erroneously completed some sentences with past *-ed*. This is maybe due to the past *-ed* distractors in the same set of questions. Most importantly, they found completing the sentences after verb to be much easier than judging erroneous sentences that do not have a verb *to be* and *-ing* attached to the verb in a progressive context. The percentage scores of the GJ and the SC tests are displayed graphically in Figure 1, which demonstrated the difference between the two tests.

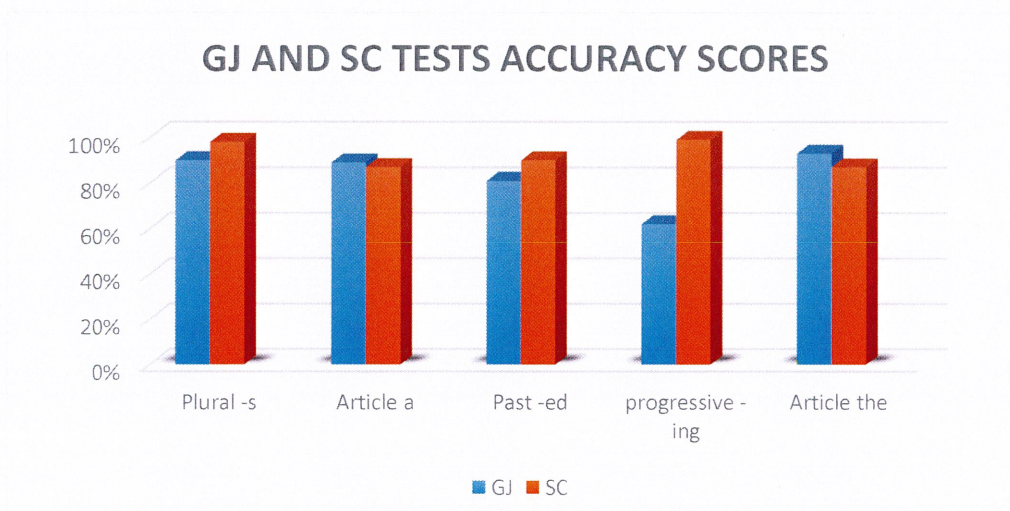


Figure (2)

Percentage Score Results for the GJ and the SC Tests

The overall results may be combined as follows to give an idea about the order of acquisition:

<i>Table (7)</i> <i>The Combined Results of the GJ and the SC Tests</i>		
Morpheme	Grammatical	Ungrammatical
Past <i>-ed</i>	85%	15%
Progressive <i>-ing</i>	80%	20%
Plural <i>-s</i>	94%	6%
Article <i>a</i>	88%	12%
Article <i>the</i>	89%	11%

This suggests the following order of acquisition:

1. plural *-s*
2. Article *the*
3. Article *a*
4. Past *-ed*
5. Progressive *-ing*

The results show a slightly different order than the predicted one, which is due to the small percentage differences between plural *-s* and article *the*, on the one hand, and between past *-ed* and article *a* on the other. The following table 8 demonstrates the difference.

Table (8) <i>The Difference between the Predicted Order and the Results Order of Acquisition</i>	
The Results Order	The Predicted Order
Plural <i>-s</i>	Article <i>the</i>
Article <i>the</i>	Plural <i>-s</i>
Article <i>a</i>	Past <i>-ed</i>
Past <i>-ed</i>	Article <i>a</i>
Progressive <i>-ing</i>	Progressive <i>-ing</i>

So on the whole, we can safely say that the results are compatible with the predictions made earlier in terms of the FRA.

4.3 Conclusion

The main goal of this study was to reveal the acquisition order of the morphemes in the study by Saudi grade one learners, and to generalize the findings to similar populations of learners. The study investigated the features of L2 morphemes and the features of the corresponding L1 Arabic morphemes. Moreover, the study explored the mapping tasks and the difficulty that the learners encounter as a result of the failure to map and reassemble the features. The theoretical framework of the study was the Feature Reassembly Approach (FRA) proposed by Lardiere (2005). Data was collected through a Grammaticality Judgment test and a Sentence Completion test. The following paragraphs present a summary of the main findings of the study.

The first question reveals the features of the second language morphemes, which are articles *the* and *a*, past *-ed*, plural *-s*, and progressive *-ing*. The features of the article *a* are ([-Def, -Null]. Further, English *the* has the features [+Def, -Cl].

Moreover, the plural *-s* has the features [+Pl,+suffix]. In addition, the English past *-ed* has the features [+Past, +suffix]. Lastly, the features of the progressive *-ing* are [+present, +continuous] as it indicates the continuous.

The second research question identifies the features of the corresponding L1 Arabic morphemes. The Arabic *al-* has the features [+Def, +Cl] as *-al* is always attached to nouns, whereas the article *a* is represented through features [-Def, +Null] in SA. Further, features of SA plural are [+Pl, various affixations, +Gender]. In addition, SA does not have a morpheme to show the present progressive, it is shown through internal vowel change in the root morpheme, the feature of SA is [+Imperfect]. Furthermore, the features of the past in SA are [+Past, +infix, +Person, +Gender].

The third question sheds light on the mapping tasks. According to the (FRA) the difficulty in L2 is due to not being able to reorganize the features which are bundled differently in the L1. Learners of English as a second language mapped the article *the* to the corresponding Arabic article *-al*. Furthermore, the article *a* is not mapped to a particular morpheme as the L1 has a null functional category for it. The majority of the learners were able to provide the required article. Further, the learner reorganized the feature [+plural] when learning the plural *-s*. the learners just replaced the different affixations in Arabic with the English plural *-s*. Further, learners faced difficulty in judging sentences that do not have a verb to be and *-ing* attached to the main verb. Most learners did not discover that the habitual and the progressive are expressed in different forms.

The last two questions show the consequence of reorganizing the features, and the order of acquisition. The results of the study indicate that the most difficult morpheme for the learners is the progressive *-ing*, and the least difficult is the plural *-s*. As Lardiere (2007) proposed, L2 acquisition is focused on reconfiguring the feature bundles of L1 lexical items into the ones of the second language in dissimilar

context, if they do not have a match, learners will face difficulty when they reassemble the features. Accordingly, the order of acquisition of the morphemes of the study after combining the results of the tests is as demonstrated in the following table 9.

<i>Table (9)</i> <i>The Order of Acquisition According to the GJ and SC Tests</i>
1. Plural <i>-s</i> 2. Article <i>the</i> 3. Article <i>a</i> 4. Past <i>-ed</i> 5. Progressive <i>-ing</i>

4.4 Limitations of the Study

1. The sample in the study was not divided into groups according to level.
2. The study did not include native speakers as a control group.
3. The sample were all of the same L1 group and the same dialect. Including participants from different first language or dialect will support the claim of the effect of the first language or L1 transfer.
4. The present study focused only on the acquisition of the morphemes in writing and not spoken discourse.

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Appendices

Appendix (1)

Student's Name: Grade: 1 (.....)

Q. 1 Circle  if the underlined word is correct. Circle  if the underlined word is incorrect. Correct the incorrect words.

1. The girl clean her room yesterday.



.....

2. The boy helped the sick man last Monday.



.....

3. The cats are eating.



.....

4. They cook good food last year.



.....

5. My friend watched a movie with me last weekend.



.....

6. The clouds are white.



.....

Q. 2 Circle  if the underlined word is correct. Circle  if the underlined word is incorrect. Correct the incorrect words.

1. The student is studying right now.



.....

2. The girls are dancing now.



.....

3. The oranges are round.



.....

4. I read my book with my friend at this moment.



.....

5. They write the sentence at this moment.



.....

6. The rooms are clean.



.....

7. They are watch the film now.



.....

8. She is eat the food now.



.....

Q. 3 Circle  if the underlined word is correct. Circle  if the underlined word is incorrect. Correct the incorrect words.

1. The yellow cat that my sister gave me disappeared.



.....

2. I had a nice book.



.....

3. Give me the hat I gave you yesterday.



.....

4. I have a doll.



.....

5. She is a best student in grade one.



.....

6. I have the friend.



.....

7. I have six bags.



.....

8. She gave me three toy.



.....

9. He is eating two sandwich.



.....

10. I have two eyes.



.....

Appendix (2)

Q.1 Complete the following sentences

1. cat is nice.
2. Today is cold day.
3. They are (swim) in the pool now.
4. kid is playing.
5. My father is doctor.
6. I loved present you gave me on my birthday.
7. She (walk) with me yesterday.
8. I want piece of pizza.
9. sun is hot.
10. Do you know name of the girl?
11. She is (pull) the rope hard.
12. I have kitten. Her name is LuLu.
13. The girl is nice person.

Q.2 In the blank space, write the correct form of the word in brackets

1. I have two (book)
2. The five (girl)..... are nice.
3. They are (clean) the room.
4. The six (table)..... are big.
5. The three (teacher) are in the class.
6. The (car) are outside.
7. They are (fix)..... the door.

Q.3 Write the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. She (close) the door yesterday.
2. I am (think) of my little sister now.
3. The girl (jump) over the fence last Monday.
4. The girl is (walk) right now.
5. We (plant) the seeds last week.
6. He (wash) the dishes yesterday.
7. The girl is (make) a snowman at this moment.
8. They are (go) right now.

ملخص الدراسة:

هذه الدراسة ناقشت الترتيب التسلسلي لاكتساب خمس وحدات صرفية في اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية، القواعد الصرفية الخمسة هي أدوات التعريف (a) و (the)، قاعدة الماضي (ed)، قاعدة الجمع بوضع (s) في نهاية الجمع، وقاعدة المضارع المستمر (ing). اتبعت الدراسة نظرية إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية التي تشير إلى أن الصعوبة التي يواجهها المتعلم أثناء اكتساب اللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية تكمن في الفشل في إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية المختلفة في الترتيب، في اللغة الأم عن اللغة الثانية. الهدف الأساسي لهذه الدراسة هو اكتشاف مكامن الصعوبة والسهولة التي يواجهها المتعلم نتيجة الإخفاق في إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية والتي يترتب عليها اكتساب متسلسل للقواعد الصرفية في اللغة الثانية. هذه الدراسة تناقش أيضاً أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في عناصر القواعد الصرفية بين اللغة الأم واللغة الثانية.

عينة هذه الدراسة تتكون من خمسين متعلمة سعودية في الصف الأول في مدرسة رواد الخليج العالمية في الدمام. الأدوات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة هما اختبار الحكم على صحة بعض الجمل نحويًا واختبار إكمال الجمل. الباحثة جمعت نتائج الاختبارين للحصول على النتيجة النهائية التي وضحت الترتيب التسلسلي لاكتساب الوحدات الصرفية الخمس. وجدت الباحثة بعد تحليل النتائج احصائياً أن النتائج تتفق مع نظرية إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية (FRA)

المفردات الرئيسية:

العربية السعودية، أدوات التعريف، الانجليزية، العناصر اللغوية، الاكتساب المتسلسل، قاعدة الماضي (ed)، الجمع (s)، المضارع المستمر (ing)، إعادة تجميع العناصر اللغوية.



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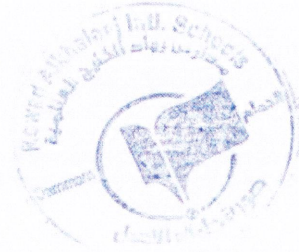
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