

**TENSE AND ASPECT IN THE INTERLANGUAGE
OF GULF ARAB LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

JOSEPHINE O'BRIEN

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of the requirements for the Degree of**

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JOSEPHINE O' BRIEN

Abstract

Expression of temporality in English through the use of finite verbs is challenging for L1 Arabic learners of English. Non-target language forms have been recorded in the interlanguage of Arabic speaking Emirati students in a third level college system in the UAE. Analysis of the errors suggests that there may be systematicity in these non-TL forms. Two factors are considered in the study as possible influences on the learners' choices of verb forms. The first considers verb type, looking at how the lexical aspect of verb types affects verb form. The second factor considers the possibility of transfer from the Arabic tense/ aspect system and examines how the function of morphological forms in Arabic may affect choice of form in English. Two research instruments in the form of English grammar and Arabic translation tasks were designed to acquire data on English morphological forms selected by learners for both verb types and functions. In addition, the normal tasks required of learners i.e. free composition writing provided a source of verbs which were analysed for learner verb type, function and form associations. Learners at five language levels participated in the research. Data were analysed for rates of accuracy in the most common verb forms found in learner output and measured against expectations set by the grammar component of writing band descriptors used to assess student writing. All observed morphological choices for verb type and function were recorded, categorized and measured against the two selected hypotheses. Results indicate the relevance of certain features of both hypotheses and highlight the importance of taking dimensions other than form into consideration when considering verb use in learners' interlanguage.

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Arabic Transliteration Symbols
(J. Smart 1992)

Name	Initial	Medial	Final	Separate	Pronunciation
alif	ا	ا	ا	ا	see below
baa'	ب	ب	ب	ب	b
taa'	ت	ت	ت	ت	t
thaa'	ث	ث	ث	ث	th
jiim	ج	ج	ج	ج	j
Haa'	ح	ح	ح	ح	H
khaa'	خ	خ	خ	خ	kh
daal	د	د	د	د	d
dhaal	ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh
raa'	ر	ر	ر	ر	r
zaay	ز	ز	ز	ز	z
siin	س	س	س	س	s
shiin	ش	ش	ش	ش	sh
Saad	ص	ص	ص	ص	S
Daad	ض	ض	ض	ض	D
Taa'	ط	ط	ط	ط	T
DHaa'	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	DH
:ain	ء	ء	ء	ء	gh
ghain	غ	غ	غ	غ	gh
faa'	ف	ف	ف	ف	f
qaaf	ق	ق	ق	ق	g
kaaf	ك	ك	ك	ك	k
laam	ل	ل	ل	ل	l
miim	م	م	م	م	m
nuun	ن	ن	ن	ن	n
haa'	ه	ه	ه	ه	h
waaw	و	و	و	و	w
yaa'	ي	ي	ي	ي	y

List of Abbreviations

ATI	Arabic Translation Instrument
CA	Contrastive Analysis
CD	Certificate /Diploma
CG	Control Group
Ch.	Chapter
df	differential frequency
E	Event
EA	Error Analysis
EGI	English Grammar Instrument
ELT	English Language Teaching
FC	Free compositions
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
HD	Higher Diploma
IELTS	International English Language Testing Service
IL	Interlanguage
L1	First language
L2	Second language
le.	level
LL	Language learning
NS	Native speaker
NNS	Near native speaker
PET	Preliminary English Test
POA	Primacy of Aspect
PP	Present perfect
R	Reference
S	Speech
SLA	Second language acquisition
TA	Tense & grammatical aspect
TL	Target language
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UG	Universal grammar

Chapter One

Problems and Hypotheses

1.0 Introduction

Time is a universal concept and an integral component of human experience. All natural languages have evolved systems for the encoding of temporality (Levinson 1983, Comrie 1985, Hinkel 1992), and it might not be an exaggeration to claim that the measurement and articulation of temporal concepts are fundamental features of our lives.

The encoding of time through language differs from the concept, by being both linguistically and culturally specific (Guiora 1983, Levinson 1983, Comrie 1985, von Stutterheim & Klein 1987, Al Mutawa & Kailani 1989, Donnellan 1991, Hinkel 1992, Haded 1996). We learn to encode temporal notions when we learn our first language(s). Linguistic input from the environment interacts with learners' cognitive capacities shaping the initial interpretation and encoding of temporal notions in the first language (L1). No prior linguistic associations exist between temporal expression and morphological and syntactic structures. It is contended that within the development of the acquisition of the linguistic encoding of temporality, patterns common to all language learners can be found irrespective of the L1 (Robison 1990, Thomas 1990, Cook 1994, Bennett 1994).

It is generally accepted also that our early linguistic encoding of time is shaped by the semantic and grammatical focus and structure of the first language (Ausubel 1968, Gaies 1979, Sah 1981, Gass 1989, Dechert & Raupach 1989, Weist & Wycoka 1990, White 1991). The acquisition and learning of linguistic systems for the encoding of time in a second language (L2) and all subsequent languages occur against the background of existing associations formed during the learner's initial L1 experience. It is hypothesized, therefore, that the learning of any subsequent language occurs within the context of universal developmental patterns and parameters introduced by the structure of the L1 system.

1.1 Encoding temporality

Temporal notions are encoded linguistically in a variety of ways, some lexical and some grammatical (Lyons 1977). Temporality as conveyed through the lexical aspect of verbs is concerned with the inherent meanings of different verb types illustrated in examples such as 'know', 'run' 'finish', (see Ch. 2) and functions irrespective of the grammatical requirements of the utterance. Grammatical resources employed in the articulation of temporality vary from language to language (Lyons 1995, Lawler 2002), with finite verbs being one of the primary means employed (Downing & Locke 1992, Hinkel 1992). Definitions of tense and grammatical aspect (TA), components of the grammatical temporal system, are discussed in Ch 3. Suffice it for now to say that tense is the morphological mark on verbs serving to connect temporal events to speaker location while aspect deals with the nature of the event and the relationship of the facets of the event to the whole frequently involving syntactic features over and above morphological marking. Some languages such as Chinese and Japanese do not have verb inflections to mark tense and aspect, possibly complicating the acquisition of tense in tensed languages for learners from such language backgrounds (Comrie 1976, Guiora 1983, Riddle 1986, Coppetiers 1987, Hinkel 1992, Lyons 1995, Haded 1996, Bates 2001). Finite verbs are, however, integral features of the TA systems of English and Arabic as both languages grammaticalize time.

1.1.1 Challenges of English verb morphology

In English, verb morphology is closely associated with the linguistic encoding of temporal notions. L1 learners of English (the focus in the current research is on classroom-based learners depending almost entirely on input from instruction), like learners of other tensed languages, are hypothesized to go through a number of phases in mastering verb forms (Rutherford 1987, von Stutterheim & Klein 1987) before successful acquisition can be concluded to have occurred. Acquisition (where acquisition refers to the user's successful manipulation of verb forms in communicative situations without dependence on memorization or verbal signals in the form of adverbs of time though not necessarily knowing the rules that lie behind usage) of the English verb system is considered problematic for L2 learners,

irrespective of the L1 (Leech 1987). Larsen-Freeman (1983) cites verb tense as one of three language categories considered difficult for learners throughout acquisition (tested across five levels of proficiency).

Leech (1987) asserts that the areas of tense, aspect and modal auxiliaries are some of the most difficult for all learners of English. McCarthy (1991:62) notes that '*verb tenses*' in general are a '*traditional stumbling block for learners*', while Chappell & Rodby (1983) claim that errors in the encoding of temporal notions interfere with communication causing confusion, ambiguity and difficulties with processing reading texts. Schumann (1987), Weist et al (1990) and Bardovi-Harlig (1994) suggest that adult learners use adverbs and adverbial phrases initially to establish the real time of a situation. Mastery of verb inflections (where mastery refers to successful use and understanding of why various forms are appropriate), they claim, comes only at a later stage of development. It is contended that L1 Arabic speakers learning English have serious difficulties with the mastery of verb use in English (Scott & Tucker 1974, Mukattash 1981, Abufara 2000, Troudi 2002). Kharma and Hajjaj (1989:157) suggest that there are '*four major syntactic areas which constitute the greatest problems to Arab students*'. They list these areas as '*articles, prepositions, relative clauses and verbs*.' In their view, the first three may not seriously interfere with communication whereas '*the situation with verbs is different and mistakes made in their use are more serious. Consequently they deserve special treatment*.'

1.2 Context of the research

The current research was undertaken in the context of the preceding views and from the perspective of a practical teaching environment involving L1 Arabic learners of English as the target language (TL), where it is frequently noted by teachers that inappropriate, non-conventional use of verb forms among learners at all levels of language learning seriously interferes with successful communication.

1.2.1 Errors

Consider the following examples of verb use from learners' writings across a range of levels from elementary to upper intermediate.

1. Ahmed Abdullah a teacher.
2. He is my friend since childhood
3. If you played this game, you will be very fit.
4. Many parents are doing a big mistake when they are hitting their children if they did any bad work.
5. I had a meeting last week. The weather is very cold but I enjoy myself in the hotel. The food is very nice.
6. I going with my friends and we playing football.
7. Usually she is sleeping many hours a day.
8. In the past most of the people works at the sea to earn their living and the fathers were fishing or diving to get their food.
9. As I knew from your last letter you want to know more about myself.
10. These global companies are not committed to any country and they can move at any time when they found a country with a lower cost.
11. Dubai shopping festival happened once a year.
12. My early education gave me the opportunity to meet many friends and make new friendships, because it is in different levels and different schools. I enjoy this in school. At the first of my educational life I was memorizing all of what I study so it was one of the problems in that life. There was a problem which was finding the teacher when we needed him. There was just one break so if we wanted to meet the teacher we would lose the break. Some of the teachers were shouting while the others were trying to control the situation in a friendly way.

1.2.2 Goal of study

The main goal of the study is to examine how a group of L1 Arabic learners of English employ verb forms to communicate temporal notions, and to attempt to explain why they make the non-target language associations between verb form and function that they do. Through an analysis of learner errors within the context of proposed hypotheses, it is hoped to gain insight into the learners' interlanguage system and through assessing learners at five levels of language (from elementary to upper intermediate) to measure changes and development over time. Data were collected through grammar and translation instruments (Ch. 4) and free composition writing. These data were then employed to examine the associations created between verb form and function by the five groups of learners. At the same time, possible systematicity in observed errors was considered through the application of two hypotheses to help explain learners' use of verb forms. These hypotheses were selected as the interaction between verb type, form and function is recognized,

helping perhaps to explain why learners create the non-conventional associations they do. The first hypothesis considers the effect of verb lexical aspect on learners' choice of verb form (see Ch. 2). The second considers the transfer of L1 function – form associations to the learners' use of verb forms in the L2. As this involves consideration of contrastive analysis (CA), a short discussion of CA is undertaken in Ch. 2 followed in Ch. 3 by a contrastive view of English and Arabic TA systems. It is anticipated that verb forms selected by learners, though frequently inconsistent with those of the TL, may be systematic when viewed from within learner interlanguage and measured against hypothesized effective factors as set out in section 1.6.

The function of the TL within the educational and social environment of the learners is first outlined. Reasons for learning a language are of prime importance in motivation and eventual success. A short learner profile (expanded on in Ch.4) is provided, followed by some observations on function to form associations considered appropriate to the discussion. The selected hypotheses are then discussed in terms of their relevance to verb forms occurring in learner output.

1.3 English in the UAE

For historical reasons, English has traditionally been the first foreign language taught in many Arabic speaking countries (Kharma & Hajjaj 1997), true also in the UAE, the environment of the current study. In recent years (last 10 years), knowledge of English along with technology has taken on a new and urgent importance as both are viewed as signs of modernity and the key to economic success. Therefore, most third level institutions deliver courses through the medium of English to facilitate employment requirements in commercial enterprises (Kharma & Hajjaj 1989, 1997, Al Jassim 1995, Troudi 2002). The status of English among the local Gulf Arab population remains primarily instrumental functioning as the medium through which commercial and financial transactions are conducted with non-Arabic-speaking (Asian, European and North American) businessmen (Al Mutawa & Kailani 1989). It is not uncommon for the local businessman to have an Indian English-speaking worker who can deal with business interactions in English. Arabic remains the exclusive language of social interaction among the local population.

The subjects of the current research had their first English language learning experience in the UAE government schools. Therefore, the term 'learning' (referring to classroom based instruction) rather than 'acquisition' (here used to refer to language acquired in a TL environment) is more appropriate as none of the participants has had the opportunity to live or operate in an English medium environment. In general, school learners have between 500 – 800 hours of English instruction during the nine years of pre-tertiary education; theoretically an adequate amount of instruction to produce fluent and accurate speakers of English (Kharma & Hajjaj 1997). Circumstances, however, restrict the realization of competency in the TL.

1.3.1 Limitations in early learning

Though English language syllabi in the government schools have been revised to include socio-cultural topics reflecting the learners' environment, teaching methodologies, assessment and teacher training are issues that have not been adequately addressed (Al Reyes 1996, Bax 1997, 1999, Mawgeed 1999). Traditional learning styles of memorization are still prevalent (Al Reyes 1996, Jarrar 1999) producing what Al Reyes refers to (18) *'as passive communicators rather than active participants.'* The Minister of Higher Education (Nov. 2001:3) blames the *'poor output at the end of the school year'* on the *'traditional methods of teaching and examinations in the school.'*

1.3.2 Educational environment of research subjects

The subjects are students in the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), a college system loosely based on Canadian community colleges and established to train UAE nationals in the skills required for the workplace, with the goal also of ensuring that the graduates *'have the linguistic ability to function effectively in an international environment'* (Student Handbook 2002 – 2003:1). The qualifications offered in the HCT are certificates, diplomas and higher diplomas in a variety of disciplines including Business, Information Technology, Health Sciences, Computer Information Processing, Electronics and Avionics. All courses are taught through the medium of English. Troudi (2002:6) explains, *'The HCT have an English only policy.'* In general, native speakers of English with little knowledge of the learners'

L1 teach English. Students are expected to access information from English technical books and internet sites and deliver reports and presentations in English.

1.3.3 Importance of English to learners

The primary reason for improving language awareness is that success in the educational world of HCT directly depends on competence in English. Students cannot adequately handle complex texts in electronics, health care, business and accountancy without adequate language skills. Additionally, they cannot graduate until they achieve the required band 5 (or 6 if they wish to continue to degree level) on the IELTS examination taken at the end of year two in Higher Diploma (HD). Another motivator for language improvement is the need to ensure effective communicators in the workplace. Kharma & Hajjaj (1989, 1997:3) view the educational role of English as primarily *'to permit individuals to communicate with each other fluently and effectively in the common diverseprofessional situations of daily life.'*

Finally, some more practical financial reasons for improving the quality of English exist. Al Jassim (1995:2) identified the poor standard of English among undergraduate and post-graduate students as reasons for major governmental financial outlay in language training to bring learners to the required standard for overseas study. He suggests that institutions like the HCT *'must undertake to teach these students English language skills and prepare them socially and psychologically inside the UAE before embarking on their scholarship abroad.'* Given the importance of English to learners, and the gravity and persistence of verb errors across language levels, consideration of errors of form only is not adequate. Associations created by learners between the most common temporal functions and available English verb forms need to be explored.

1.4 Linguistic focus of the study

It is considered that the two central issues in the analysis of verb use are form and function (Weschler 1997). English has a limited number of morphological forms to encode a wide variety of temporal meanings. The forms should be relatively easy for the learner to acquire.

1.4.1 Function of verb inflections

Coppetiers (1987), Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman (1989), Wenzell (1989), and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) suggest that learner difficulties occur more in the area of meanings of verb inflections than with forms themselves. The problem, in their view, lies not so much in mastery of verb forms but in learners' understanding of the function to form associations with as Rutherford (1987:10) explains the learner bending *'the target language forms to the more direct service of intended meaning.'* The essential questions in the current research are how the subjects employ English verb forms to articulate temporal notions, and what associations they create between verb form and function.

1.4.2 Value of function- form analysis

Schachter (1992) suggests that learners make linguistic decisions based on their own hypotheses about the target language. Learners from the same L1 may come up with different solutions as they choose from what she refers to as different *'domains'* within the language. Tarone (1988:54) argues that a function-form analysis is relevant in interlanguage study allowing as it does insight into the *'linguistic system hidden in a learner's apparently unsystematic usage'* while Schachter (1986:119) believes that *'the hidden systems that constitute the learners' grammar are revealed once a function-form analysis is applied.'* In similar vein, Huebner (1985) and Rutherford (1984:139) point to function-form analysis as fundamental to understanding *'the inner logic of the learners' mental grammar.'* Huebner (1985) suggests that a detailed analysis of any function as encoded in a learner's IL may reveal systematicity in the apparently unsystematic. Through the application of a function-form analysis, a pattern may appear which, though not that of the TL, suggests that the learner is making his/her own valued judgements on how the language works. Such analyses require investigating the learners' function-form associations in the TL, looking at why these associations are formed and how they may change over time. Semantic, syntactic and transfer features may affect learners; the first two being inherent features of the TL while the second is a cross over from L1.

1.4.3 Semantic Level

At the semantico-lexical level, the nature of the verb may affect learner interpretation of the function – form association. A verb form performs one function with a variety of verb types, each with its own inherent semantics. Consider the following utterances.

13. He knows the Smith family very well.
14. He runs in the park (every day).
15. He finishes work (at 5 p.m. every day).

Verb forms in 13 – 15 represent what are conventionally called the 'present tense' referring to the location of the utterance in relation to the speaker. In example 13 and 14, unlimited duration is inherent in both verbs. In the case of 13, no adverbial time phrase is necessary and the state of knowing is continuous. The verb '*run*' describes an activity involving a number of phases. Durativity is inherent and an adverbial phrase (unless otherwise contextualized) is essential to define the time-frame of the activity or series of activities. The verb '*finishes*' describes the termination of an activity, with the inherent punctuality of the verb reinforced in the point 5 p.m. In each example, in addition to time location the verb form encodes the nature of the situation, as in the duration of 'know' and 'run' and the punctuality of 'finish' while other sentential features may contribute other aspectual features (Abufara 2000). It is hypothesized (Dowty 1986, Slobin 1985, Andersen 1991, Robison 1990, 1995, Fassi Fehri 2000) that the meanings inherent in different verb types could affect choice of verb form irrespective of deictic location.

1.4.4 Syntactic level

The syntactic structure of an utterance may reflect a variety of temporal foci. Consider the following

16. He runs for five hours every day.
17. He went to Spain last year for two weeks and he swam and played tennis every day.

In example 16, the verb *'run'* is inherently durative. The adverbial time phrase *'every day'* also indicates duration but of a serialized kind. The time-period *'for five hours'* though durative contains a finite boundary, while *'run'* and *'every day'* contain no such inherent limits. The situation may overlap time of utterance as well as being repeated indefinitely beyond that time. In example 17, in addition to the inherent duration of the verbs *'went'*, *'swim'* *'play tennis'*, the time phrase *'for two weeks'* suggests limited duration; *'to Spain'* provides a finite boundary; *'every day'* is habitual while the phrase *'last week'* indicates past time locating the situation before the time of the utterance. Learner interpretation of the temporal facet to be encoded morphologically in utterances, such as 16 and 17, may differ from the conventional English focus leading to the choice of a non-TL function-form association. For the mature native speaker of English, focus is on the time of the situation in relation to the speaker. The L2 learner of English may not encode the same temporal facet as native speakers.

1.4.5 Variation in temporal focus

A single situation may be grammatically encoded in different ways even within the same language (Dirven 1976). Consider the focus in the following examples from English. Imagine a situation where someone is invited to eat. A British English respondent may say:

18. No thanks. I'm not hungry as I have just eaten.

An Irish person responding to the same question will probably answer:

19. I'm after eating.

An American English speaker or L1 Arabic speaker generally says:

20. I am not hungry. I (just) ate.

In the above situation though the temporal focus in each utterance differs, each speaker's response is adequate to communicate that no food is required. In example 18, the current relevance of a completed situation is indicated through the present perfect form. In example 19, the state the respondent is in after the event is highlighted, with verb form (direct translation from Gaelic but still the prevalent form for present perfect situations in Ireland) communicating the effect of the event on the state. The past form in 20 indicates completion only. Consider what happens when different languages are involved. It is hypothesized that the learner's L1

interpretation of how temporality is encoded grammatically may affect the function – form associations created in the L2.

1.5 Are errors systematic?

The preceding examples highlight some of the challenges encountered by learners when attempting to master use of verb forms in English. It is possible that inherent semantic, syntactic and specific temporal features of the TL may influence learners' use of verb inflections. Let us now revisit some of the verb uses cited as learner errors in section 1.2. It could be argued that these errors, though reflecting a pattern of function-form associations inconsistent with those of the TL, are systematic. A general categorization of the errors in examples 1 – 12 identifies the omission of the verb 'to be' in equational sentences, use of the present form with stative verbs, in past habitual and durative situations and as a replacement for continuative present perfect use; -ing in habitual and durative situations and past form with punctual verbs, conditionals and temporal 'when' clauses.

1.5.1 Possible explanations for errors

The original contention was that transfer from the L1 might explain many of the learner errors. In a straightforward application of the function-form associations common to L1, a transfer approach would appear to explain observations made on the omission of the verb 'to be' in sentence 1 'Ahmed Abdullallah a teacher'. Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic (1983) note, '*one of the most frequent verb errors among Arab students is the omission of the copula.*' Similarly, transfer could contribute to verb choices made in 2 (present simple 'is' for 'has been'), 3 and 4 (past simple 'played' 'did' in conditional sentences, 8 (present simple and past progressive to describe past habituality), 9 ('knew' replacing 'know') and 10 (past simple verb in 'when' time clause). However, the presence of stative verbs in the present form (5, 12) and the punctual verb in the past (10, 11) cannot be explained by simply considering the influence of the L1. Noor (1996:1442) suggests that tense substitution such as present for past in stative verbs and past for present in achievement verbs '*seem unlikely to be due to negative transfer from Arabic.*' Additionally, the persistence of the -ing form (for which there is no correspondence in the L1) with durative situations in 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, led to the conclusion that the

lexical aspect of verbs might be a factor in learners' use of verb inflections (Andrews 1992). Therefore, the exploration of associations between verb semantics and verb inflections was considered of relevance in addition to L1 transfer.

1.5.2 Accuracy fluctuates

Another observed phenomenon of relevance to the study is the presence of correct and incorrect verb usage in the same text, even in the same sentence. Example 12 (section 1.2) from the writing of an upper intermediate student (2002) exemplifies this phenomenon. Verb inflections illustrate correct and incorrect use of past simple forms, -ing form and incorrect use of the present simple form. It is possible that learners may have acquired some but not all functions associated with a verb form (Johnston 1987). Ellis (1994:51) suggests *'the learners' knowledge of the target form is only partial; the learner may not have learnt all the contexts in which the form in question can be used.'*

It can be concluded, therefore, that a number of factors from within the TL and the L1 may influence learner output. Zobl (1990) argues that the isolation of one or other factor, developmental or transfer, may not be possible suggesting that it is perhaps better to view them as interacting rather than opposing forces. Nickel (1989:300) also points to the possible *'multiple interpretations'* available to explain why learners do what they do.

1.5.3 Change and interlanguage

Learners from five language stages in the HCT system (elementary, upper elementary, lower intermediate, intermediate, and upper intermediate) were selected to participate in the study. It was expected that a range of learners would facilitate conclusions on progression and regression across language levels. In Ch. 2, the questions of interlanguage (IL) and language transfer are discussed. If, as claimed, learner varieties are systematic, permeable and transitional, (Ellis 1985, Huebner 1985, Clahsen & Muysken 1986, Rutherford 1987, Tarone 1988, Larsen Freeman & Long 1991, El Daly 1991), an investigation of learners' use of verbs at different stages of development should indicate change.

If the learners' knowledge is constantly under review, as suggested (Ellis 1985, El Daly 1991), with revisions based on ongoing hypotheses testing, changes and progression should become obvious over time. If instruction is a catalyst for change, there would appear to be ample opportunity for learners to improve performance and eradicate non TL structures. Results from data collected across the five language levels should indicate whether or not use of verb inflections improves over time as well as indicating the nature of that improvement. It is possible that learner use may have fossilized and in spite of instruction, change may not occur. It is also possible that with increased instruction of a focused nature, improvement occurs followed by regression when instruction hours are reduced. These possibilities are explored in the data analysis (Ch. 5) and discussion in Ch. 6.

1.6 Hypotheses

Several issues have been touched on so far. The issue of verb choice on effective communication, learner errors, a variety of influencing factors from within the TL and the possible effect of the L1, have all been identified as possible sources of influence on learners' use of verb forms. Mukattash (1980) argues that each of these factors should be considered systematically. This, however, is impossible within the scope of one study. Consequently, two questions only have been selected for research.

- To what extent the lexical aspect of verbs (verb type) influences learners' choices of verb inflection.

Verbs denote situations that reflect a variety of situations including features such as durativity, stativity, punctuality, though these features are not overtly encoded on the verb. However, verb type may influence choice of verb morphology in the early stages of language development. In fact, the effect of verb type on verb inflection is considered a feature of universal developmental patterns both in L1 and subsequent language learning (LL) (Gass 1989) and has been investigated in a variety of studies that consider the primacy of verb aspect over all other temporal considerations. The findings of such studies are discussed under the Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis (POA) in Ch. 2.

- To what extent there is evidence of transfer of function – form association from the Arabic TA system.

It is hypothesized that learners bring knowledge of the L1 to the L2 learning situation (Gaies 1979, James 1980, Weist et al 1990). Wenzell (1989) argues that learners' interlanguage (Russian learners) reflects a function-form correspondence with the learner's native language. She claims that the true meaning of learner interlanguage cannot be determined without consideration of the L1 function - form.

It is argued that each verb form performs a variety of functions. The learner develops his/her own interpretation of the function of each form based on a number of factors. Two of these, inherent lexical aspect and L1 transfer, are explored in the current research.

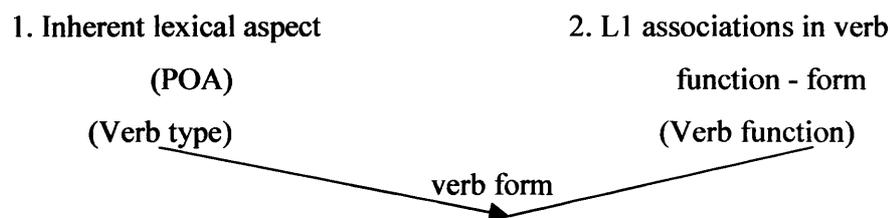


Figure 1.1
Verb type, form and function

1.6.1 Developmental influences

The first posited influence suggests the presence of developmental features that influence choice of verb inflections, resulting from specific associations made by the learners between the lexical aspect of a verb type and a particular morphological form. The research subjects are instructed learners in whom it might be argued developmental factors could be negated by graded input. It is contended (Lightbown 1983, Felix & Weigl 1991), however, that instruction does not eliminate the possibility of developmental errors, though it may interfere with natural processing. While acknowledging that not many comparative studies have been done, Weinart (1994:85) argues that the available data on language acquisition and learning suggest that *'naturalistic and classroom L2 learners process data in similar ways to*

construct and develop their own systems of communication.' She also argues that studies (96)

provide some evidence that very similar processes are involved, and support the view that classroom learners act upon the language input available to them in whatever form to create and develop their own systems of communication rather than react directly and immediately to the guidance of the teachers to develop the target language.

This view appears to be validated by the fact that, though the subjects in the current research have had over nine years of classroom language teaching with focused instruction on verb forms, errors of the type identified in examples 1 – 12 (1.2.1) frequently occur. The developmental hypothesis, associated with the effect of lexical aspect on morphological verb form, suggests that in early language acquisition, learners focus on semantic properties inherent in the verb. Whether L1 or L2, learners choose verb inflections that best express the internal temporal features of each verb (Pienemann & Johnston 1987, Robison 1995, Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds 1996) rather than the tense or grammatical aspect of the whole utterance.

The relevance of the POA hypothesis was first tested on L1 learners where no interference from a previous linguistic system existed. Subsequently, learner behaviour in L2 TA acquisition became the focus of investigation in aspect studies. Noor's (1996) observations (cited 1.5.1) and forms found in the learners' output as exemplified in learner errors (cited in 1.2.1) suggest that the POA hypothesis may help to explain some of the morphological choices made by the learners. The application of the POA hypothesis to the learner data does not negate the validity of the posited effect of the L1 on the L2 TA system. Yule (1998) suggests that the effect of one on the other may be to speed up or slow down the learning of the correct function - form associations.

1.6.2 Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis

According to the POA hypothesis, three temporal features are hypothesized to influence learners' choice of morphological forms (Andersen 1986, Shirai & Andersen 1995, Robison 1995, Rocca 1998).

- (1) Stative situations, as reflected through stative verbs, lack any essential phases. They, of course, have an onset and continue unchanged until

termination. Stative verbs are hypothesized to occur in the English present simple form irrespective of any tense considerations, reflecting the fact that this verb form does not indicate any phases i.e. is aspectually simple.

He knows the Smith family who live in the centre of town.

- (2) Activities involve change indicating various phases of actions. The phasal nature of the event is believed to influence the learner's choice, selecting what s/he perceives as an appropriate morphological form to encode the notion of change. The learner is hypothesized to choose the –ing verb form to encode unbounded activities.

He runs in the park everyday.

- (3) The third type of situation fundamental to the POA hypothesis is one with a clear endpoint. The endpoint may occur at the end of an activity and be located in verb and predicate rather than just the verb.

He drinks a cup of coffee before going to work.

The endpoint may be inherent in the verb.

He finishes work and then goes home.

The learner is believed to encode the perceived finite boundary in the –ed verb form irrespective of the regular or irregular nature of the verb.

He leaved home at 9 o'clock every day.

1.6.3 Language Transfer

The second proposed influencing factor is that of transfer of L1 function-form associations. Some of the recurrent errors, observed in learners' writing, indicate that the L1 may be a major factor in learner choice in the encoding of temporal notions. The relevance of L1 transfer is not given any serious consideration in the learning environment of the research subjects. There are practical and pedagogical reasons for this. From a practical perspective, very few teachers of English are familiar with either the classical or colloquial varieties of Arabic studied and spoken by the learners, making reference to possible L1 factors difficult. In the social and linguistic context of the Gulf, access to the local culture is limited and the facility to learn or use Arabic is restricted. Therefore, few of the teachers (apart from a small number of native Arabic speakers) have the knowledge and insight to identify and remedy transfer from L1.

From a pedagogical perspective, the teaching methodologies and curricula in use in the UAE have not considered transfer from the L1 as an important factor in learner errors, reflecting a general approach to L2 learning and acquisition in vogue for some considerable time. In spite of this general attitude there are those who view L1 transfer as relevant. Coppetiers (1987) and Donnellan (1991) claim that non-native speakers' perceptions of tense meanings are influenced by L1, as does Hinkel (1997:292), who suggests that, *'the learners' L1 referential constructs play a crucial role in their acquisition of temporality in discourse and the linguistic means of marking temporality.'*

The relevance of transfer from the L1 depends to some extent on the learning situation. If learners are in a native English-speaking environment, surrounded by English speakers who do not share a common L1 and with constant exposure to the TL, the effect of L1 on L2 output may not be pronounced or persistent. Conversely, in a homogenous language situation where learners remain in their own L1 environment with limited access to real situational TL use outside the classroom, the influence of the L1 is likely to persist for a longer period of time (Flege & Liu 2001).

In addition to the nature of the environment, there is the nature of the language learning process. The learner is viewed as an active participant in the process but learning of an L2 may be influenced by parameters set during the acquisition of the L1. In L1 learning, these principles have not been shaped by prior structures but as the specifics of the learner's own languages are acquired, parameters are set influencing all subsequent learning. Research on the relevance of linguistic principles and parameters has generally been approached from a syntactic perspective. Proponents claim that languages fall into a finite group of syntactic forms indicating word order, position of relative clauses with similarities or differences in these areas facilitating or impeding learning (Kellerman & Sharwood Smith 1986, Zobl 1983/4).

Semantic notions are important also to the question of transfer (Wierbicka 1992, Jaszczolt 1995). According to Coppetiers (1987) and Von Stutterheim & Klein (1987), the adult learner has only to access new forms. In Von Stutterheim and Klein's view (194), *'a second language learner - in contrast to a child learning his first language- does not have to acquire the underlying concepts. What he has to*

acquire is a specific way and a specific means of expressing them.' This is true to a point. The learners are cognitively mature, understand temporal concepts and know that many of these can be encoded linguistically.

Languages, however, do not always correspond in what they choose to encode and, as Al Kasimi (1977) points out, equivalents with the exact same semantic and grammatical functions in English and Arabic are rare. One language may encode one specific feature of a temporal situation such as duration, or punctuality whereas the L2 may encode another equally valid but different feature of the same temporal situation. An example of this difference in focus is seen in the encoding of past habitual situations in English and Arabic.

21. *Kaan* *Ahmed yasbaH* *wa*
Was 3 perf sing Ahmed he **swims 3 imperf sing** and
yal9b *al tanniis kul yoom fii 9Tlah*
 he **plays 3 imperf sing** the tennis every day on holiday
al shahur al maaDii.
 the month the last.
 Ahmed **swam** and **played** tennis every day on holiday last month.

The choice of verb form in English reflects the deictic location of the two events placing them prior to the time of the utterance. In Arabic, verb forms in habitual utterances reflect both past location and the ongoing nature of the two events (Kharma & Hajjaj 1989). An Arabic equivalent 'kaan' of English 'was' acts as a past time marker locating events in the past with the imperfective forms of the main verbs 'swim' and 'play' in Arabic indicating lack of completion (See Chs. 2, 3, 5 and 6).

L1 encoded meanings may take precedence over those of the L2, causing the learner to associate an inflectional form in L2 with a temporal focus transferred from L1 (Harley 1989). If parameters are set according to the function-form relationships in the L1, the details of function-form relationships in every subsequent language must be re-learned (Flynn 1987, Clahsen & Muysken 1989, Schachter 1992, Ellis 1994), necessitating the resetting of some parameters to suit the requirements of new languages (Schmidt 1980). The process differs from that of the child's acquisition of the L1 in that, though the temporal concepts and linguistic forms are new to the

child, s/he can learn the correct association without crossover from a previous source. In contrast, the L2 learners must learn not only new linguistic forms in the TL, but also the specific temporal notion to be encoded in those L2 forms.

James (1994), reporting on the findings of Coppetiers (1987) and Birdsong (1992) points out that the differences between the native speaker (NS) grammatical intuitions and those of Near NS indicate a difference *'not so much in the grammaticality judgments they made of forms as in the meanings they associated with these forms.'* It is posited, therefore, that verb forms employed by the learners in L2 to encode temporal situations may reflect the semantic focus of the utterance in the L1 (Wenzell 1989). The morphological choices may suggest the learners' approximation to grammatical patterns from L1 and thus interfering with the successful mastery of the new function-form relationship in the TL (Berwick 1985, Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak 1992), accounting for what Takano & Noda (1995) refer to as learners' failure to acquire a clear grasp of the correct linguistic choices in the L2. It is hypothesized in the current research that the Arabic verb function- form associations may influence learner interpretation of the English verb system in a number of ways. The following assumptions summarize what are hypothesized to be the L1 influences on Arabic speaking learners' successful mastery of the English verb inflectional system for the expression of temporality.

1.6.4 L1 Transfer Hypothesis

The primary focus of the two way Arabic verb morphological system is to record the completion or lack of completion of situations. The prefixal imperfective form describes situations that are not bounded, while the suffixal perfective is used when an endpoint is clearly indicated (Ch. 3). The functional division of Arabic verb forms into completed or not completed is hypothesized to affect learners' use of verbs in English in a number of ways.

A. Imperfective (prefixal form)

The Arabic imperfective verb form indicates that a situation is not completed but it does not differentiate between those situations that are aspectually simple (English present simple) and those that are progressive (English –ing form). This lack of

discrimination at the morphological level between simple and progressive situations is hypothesized to influence Arabic learners of English in a number of ways.

- Learners may use the English present simple and progressive indiscriminately to encode semantically imperfective situations in English. Where the learners perceive a difference between present simple and progressive it may be in the association of the –ing specifically with situations that involve duration.
- Habituality in the present is imperfective and it is hypothesized that the learners may use the present simple and progressive interchangeably to encode the habitual.
- It is hypothesized that habitual situations in the past (viewed in Arabic as unbounded) are generally encoded in the present simple or -ing form to indicate non-completion. If tense is considered it is included in the auxiliary verb though this may frequently be omitted.
- It is hypothesized that verbs (such as 'go', 'sleep' 'sit' 'run') classified as translocative in Arabic, durative in nature and whose inherent function is to indicate a change in location or state may occur in the '-ing' form in the English output of L1 Arabic learners irrespective of the grammatical requirements of the utterance. This may be influenced by the fact that such verb types in Arabic can occur in a participle form to illustrate situations that resemble those encoded in the English past and present progressive.
- Progressive situations in either present or past are generally not encoded with a separate morphological form in Arabic. They form part of the general imperfective with syntactic features disambiguating the aspect of the situation. As progressive situations are unbounded and as it is hypothesized that learners associate –ing form with such situations, it is expected that levels of accuracy in encoding progressive should be high (contrary to HCT descriptors – see Ch. 4). When incorrect forms occur, they are likely to be present simple forms.

B. Perfective (suffixal form).

The perfective form in Arabic communicates completeness, generally overtly stated in the utterance through a finite word or phrase indicating a boundary.

This completeness is not necessarily deictic. The Arabic system is hypothesized to influence learners' use of the past simple form in English in a variety of ways.

- It is hypothesized that the learners encode situations located in past time and with a clear boundary in the past simple form in English.
- Verbs in conditional clauses of possibility in English may be encoded in the English past simple form to indicate the logical sequential relationship between the two events in the utterance.
- Verbs in temporal 'when' clauses in Arabic generally occur in the perfective form to exemplify the sequential relationship between the event in the 'when' clause and the main event. It is hypothesized that learners may encode verbs in 'when' clauses in English in the past simple form.

C. Perfect

A variety of temporal notions are encoded in the English present perfect form. No separate perfect verb form exists in Arabic to encode all English present perfect concepts. It is hypothesized that learner interpretation of how English present perfect notions should be encoded is affected by how the situation is viewed in Arabic. Learners may search for an appropriate English form to encode their temporal interpretation of the situation, resulting in the following morphological associations with English present perfect.

- Past form for resultative utterances involving the present perfect
22. He has just eaten lunch. / He just ate lunch.
- Past form for existential utterances involving the present perfect
23. He has visited London several times. / He visited London many times.
- Present form for continuative utterances involving the present perfect.
24. He has lived/ been living in Abu Dhabi for four years.
He *lives/ is living in Abu Dhabi for four years.

1.7 Limitations

The study is both descriptive and explanatory. It attempts to describe the function-form associations found in learner writing and to explain the findings within the

context of developmental and transfer hypotheses. As the research is rooted in a practical situation, only those verb forms commonly employed by the learners in writing are selected for investigation: present and past simple forms, present, and past progressive, and present perfect. The future form is not included nor is past perfect and other more complex verb forms. The simple future is generally not confused with the other common verb forms while past perfect and other more complex forms are not common features of learner writing. The scope of the study is wide as it seeks to deal with a broad cross section of the common forms found among the written output of five levels of language learners from elementary through to upper intermediate. It is important to consider all the identified forms as part of a whole as learners seem to use them interchangeably at times.

It would not be practical to consider undertaking a longitudinal study of a few learners over a number of years and as the learning environment is reasonably homogenous it was considered more productive to look at developments across a broad range of learners.

The amount of data collected and the inclusion of enough data from each of the instruments to give a realistic picture of each form and function being investigated were restricted. Some restrictions were administrative as grammar and translation tasks were time consuming and involved taking time from regular class periods. Some limitations were linguistic, particularly in the free writing as a limited number of the forms (occurrence of 'when' time clauses) and functions (resultative and existential functions of the present perfect) required for the study were available in the learners' free writing. Time adverbials are a feature of many of the items in the English and Arabic grammar and translation tasks because they were seen as necessary to provide a clear context for the learners. No detailed comparison is made between the learners' responses in utterances with time adverbials and those without. The verb forms selected, with the exception of conditional and 'when' time clauses, are all from simple sentences. Though learners' written work indicates that problems occur in two verb constructions in such structures where the main finite verb is followed by the infinitive or -ing form in English, the scope of the research does not permit the analysis of such structures. Suggestions for future research to provide further insights into how learners use verbs in English are made in Ch. 7.

1.8 Outline of the research

In Ch. 2, developmental and transfer hypotheses are considered. Verb types and their associations with certain verb forms are described. The lexical aspect of verbs is discussed in the context of the POA hypothesis and studies done on the influence of the POA on L1 learners both tutored and untutored are summarized. The issue of language transfer and applications of developments in the field are also discussed. The notion of the parameters set by the L1 and affecting all subsequent language learning is considered along with the relevance of transfer to learner output.

A working definition of tense and aspect is presented in Ch. 3. As the target language is English, the definitions of TA are worked out in terms of the TL and then considered in terms of Arabic. The objective is not to 'fit' the L1 into a TL mould. It is argued, however, that where the encoded temporal foci differ between English and Arabic, problems may occur for learners. It is impossible to deal with all facets of the encoding of temporality in English. Therefore, those temporal notions that occur most frequently in learner input and output and the verb forms used to encode those notions have been selected for analysis.

The research subjects and process of data collection are described in Ch. 4. The subjects' linguistic background is explored along with performance expectations at each of the five levels. The process of data collection is presented with details of the control group, pilot study and final data used in the analysis. Methodology for data coding and analyses is also described.

Findings from tests and free compositions are presented in Ch. 5 from within the framework of two hypothesized influences of POA and the L1. Statistical results are given for the two types of coding of the data. Firstly, results are presented for grammatical accuracy; forms are either right or wrong within the given grammatical context. Secondly, results are given for the morphological alternatives selected by the learners providing insight into the relevance of the two posited influences. Chi square tests are used in the analysis of forms in terms of the POA and where applicable in certain of the assumptions about L1 transfer.

The results from the findings of the data analysis are discussed and interpreted in Ch. 6. The morphological choices associated with each of the four verb types in the context of POA hypothesis are considered. The learners' choices of form are also analysed for L1 transfer of function to form associations. Where possible, conclusions are drawn about the relevance of both hypotheses in the learners' use of the English TA system.

Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Ch. 7. Learners' progress as language learners in terms of overall accuracy and perceived influences is evaluated. Recommendations are made that might benefit the learners in overcoming some of the challenges presented by the English TA system. Further studies that could be undertaken to validate findings of the current research are suggested.

Chapter Two

Lexical Aspect and L1 Transfer

Part One: Primacy of Lexical Aspect and its effect on verb morphology

2.0 Introduction

Three main sub-domains of tense, grammatical aspect and lexical aspect were introduced in Ch. 1 and identified (Bertinetto 1994 and Klein (1994) as contributing to the expression of temporality in languages. Klein (1994:15) explains that temporality

shows up in the language in three different ways: first, the time of some event, action, process...related to some other time interval... (tense); second, the temporal course of an event... may be viewed or presented in different ways (aspect); third verbs...classified... according to their inherent temporal features.

The first two are grammatical while the third is primarily lexical, though can be a factor in grammatical aspect.

Temporal concepts are encoded through all of the above in English and Arabic. Tense is concerned with articulating the deictic relationship existing between the time of situation and another point in time (Comrie 1976, 1985, Lyons 1977, Dahl 1983, de Clerck 1991, Binnick 1991), while aspect describes the inherent temporal features of the situation whether it be progressive, habitual, or iterative (Smith 1986, Siewerska 1991). Both are encoded grammatically in English and Arabic (see discussion in Ch. 3). In addition, Weist et al (1990) and Bardovi-Harlig (1994) stress the importance of adverbs suggesting that time adverbials are the initial devices used by learners to encode time. These, along with temporal particles in Arabic (Gully 1995, Qafisheh 1997), are discussed where relevant to the acquisition of temporality.

In the current chapter, initial focus is on the third factor mentioned by Klein, namely, the lexical aspect of verbs. Temporal features such as situation phases, duration and punctuality can be communicated lexically through verb types (Comrie 1976, Dowty 1979, Smith 1983, Robison 1995). Verbs such as 'know', 'sing', 'write' are inherently durative and unbounded while 'finish' is punctual. In certain cases, the addition of a predicate to certain verb types can provide an endpoint to a durative situation as in

'sing a song', 'write a letter'. Such predicate additions to the verb type are classed as lexical aspect because the endpoint contained in the predicate is integral to the situation as a whole irrespective of tense or grammatical aspect changes.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1a. He runs every day. | 1b. He runs five miles every day. |
| 2a. He ran every day. | 2b. He ran five miles every day. |
| 3a. He was running when he fell. | 3b. He was running five miles when he fell. |

The differences between the examples in 1, 2 and 3 are those of tense in 1 and 2 and grammatical aspect in 2 and 3. The difference between a and b in all three examples is that of lexical aspect where the nature of the situation exemplified in the activity verb 'run' is changed fundamentally from an atelic situation to a telic by the addition of the predicate 'five miles.' The difference here is inherent in the situation and though there is nothing in 3b to indicate that the goal was accomplished, telicity is inherent in the situation itself while the progressivity in 'was running' illustrates grammatical aspect (Ch. 3). Grammatical aspect features such as habituality, progressivity and boundedness may be obvious from the verb form itself as in the progressive or at the level of the utterance as a whole as in habituality. The inherent lexical aspect feature of verb types may affect learners' choice of verb morphology (Dowty 1986, Andersen 1988, Robison 1990, Shirai and Andersen 1995).

2.1 Lexical aspect of verbs

Lexical aspectual features of duration (unbounded nature of situations) and telicity (where a clear goal or endpoint is inherent in the situation), located in verbs 'run' and verbs with predicates 'run five miles', is a feature of the lexicon. Verbs, of course, are not the '*actual situation*', (Smith 1983:480), but as they are the linguistic expression of situations they reflect the temporal features of real situations. Lexical aspect has been described by a variety of names: actionality (Bertinetto 1994) aktionsart (Klein 1986, 1995) viewpoint aspect (Smith 1983). Varying opinions exist on the differences between the concepts encoded in the above terms. However, for the purposes of the current research, it suffices to note that lexical aspect is concerned with features inherent usually to the nature of verbs. In Lyons (1977:706) view, lexical aspect refers to '*the aspectual character of a verb... that part of its meaning*

whereby it (normally) denotes one kind of situation rather than another.' Klein (1986:124) describes lexical aspect as indicating the

immanent temporal properties of the event, as implied by the lexical meaning of the respective expression usually of the verb: punctuality (at one point in time); duration (over a period of time); inchoativity (about to begin) etc.

2.1.1 Lack of overt coding of lexical aspect

Each verb has its own intrinsic semantics (Dowty 1972), independent of tense and grammatical aspect but unlike the latter two, verb types generally do not have separate morphological encodings (Binnick 1991) in English or Arabic, nor are these features usually taught as separate components of language lessons. Therefore, though verbs denote situations (the word situation in the main is used to refer to all) that may be events or states, there is no overt morphological differentiation between verb types at the surface level. Smith (1995:103) describes the situations encoded in verbs and their predicates as '*covert categories in grammar in the sense of Whorf (1956). They have distinctive sets of distributional properties, although not marked by an overt morpheme.*' The lexical aspect of a particular verb may at times dictate that verb's inflectional status and its ability to combine with various other features in the utterance, such as the general non-compatibility of states and achievements with progressives. The combined result gives an overall aspectual perspective on the situation (Shirai & Andersen 1995), contributing to the grammatical aspect of the utterance. The combination of the inherent aspectual features of verbs with grammatical aspectual features such as habituality, boundedness and progressivity (Schramm 1996), contribute to the compositional nature of aspect (Verkuyl 1972, Schopf 1984), which as Verkuyl (1994:11) suggests can be referred to as '*aspectuality*' to '*capture the whole area covered by the two notions*' of grammatical and lexical aspect.

It has been contended (Bronckart & Sinclair 1973, Antinucci & Miller 1976, Slobin 1985, Dowty 1986, Andersen 1988, Robison 1990, Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Andersen & Shirai 1994, Robison 1995) that the lexical aspect of verbs affects morphological choice to a greater extent than the TA considerations of utterances in the early stages of language acquisition, whether of L1 or L2, leading learners to associate particular

verb types with specific verb inflections. This contention initiated a series of studies giving rise to the primacy of aspect (POA) hypothesis, the validity and general implications of which are considered in the following sections (2.1.2 – 2.1.7) and the specific relevance of which to the research subjects is discussed in 5.2 (Ch. 5) and 6.3 (Ch. 6).

Robison (1990) suggests that learners use L2 morphemes to mark lexical aspect independently of their conventional TA functions. The learner encodes what s/he perceives as the inherent temporal features of verbs in the most appropriate morphological forms available in the language to reflect this perception. It is argued that the learner may not consider tense and grammatical aspect features to the same extent as lexical aspect features at these early stages. However, as learning progresses, it is claimed that the scope of each morpheme gradually expands in the learners' usage to include temporal considerations independent of lexical aspect (Andersen 1986, Robison 1990). Consideration is now given to the inherent aspectual features of verb types before discussing the implications of types on choice of verb forms as observed in learner output.

2.1.2 Verb Classifications

Situations are generally grouped into two main categories of states and events. The primary differentiating feature between the two is the absence or presence of dynamism (Nehls 1992, Weist et al 1993). Stative situations involve no internal dynamism (Hopper 1982, Downing & Locke 1992) indicating as Smith (1983:490) points out '*homogeneous stable situations*', while events are dynamic, subject to change (Vendler 1967, Mourelatos 1981, Harrison 1996) and require a constant input of energy to continue. In English, differences between the two types of situations may in some cases be morphologically marked. States, for example, are rarely found in the -ing form, because as Frajzingier (1985:66) explains the use of -ing with stative verbs '*would be redundant*' as it is '*a grammatical device to mark stativity*', and employed to lexicalise statehood in situations such as 'He is sleeping.' Comrie (1976) used the term 'phase' when discussing the difference between stative and dynamic situations. He suggests that all phases of a stative situation are the same and states undergo change only when external force is applied. The dynamic situation,

on the other hand, 'will only continue if it is continually subject to a new input of energy.' (49)

Events are subdivided into three further groups based on semantic distinctions of telicity (telicity refers to the presence of and atelicity to the absence of an inherent endpoint in the situation) and durativity (Comrie 1976, Bertinetto 1994, Robison 1995, Depraetere & Reed 2000). Durativity is common to all verb types except achievements. Both accomplishments and achievements are telic though the nature of the telicity varies. (see discussion in 2.1.4a) The following sentences illustrate each verb type.

4. State: He knows his friends like going to the cinema. (durative/ non-dynamic/ atelic)
5. Activity: He runs and swims to keep fit. (durative/ dynamic/ atelic)
6. Accomplishment: He runs five miles every day. (durative/ dynamic/ telic)
7. Achievement: He finishes work quite late every Monday night. (punctual/ dynamic/ telic).

The following diagram, based on Robison (1995) summarises the temporal features of different types of situations.

State	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
Non-dynamic	Dynamic -----		
Atelic -----		Telic -----	
Durative -----			Punctual

Figure 2.1

Verbs and their semantic distinctions

(Robison 1995 based on Vendler's categories 1967).

2.1.3 States

The status of stative verbs as reflecting inherent temporality has been challenged. Lamiroy (1987:284) argues that states and aspectual notions are incompatible, as aspect has to do with phases while states describe 'undifferentiated moments' (Smith 1983:490). Verkuyl (1993) contends that states lack duration while Klein (1995) refers to stative verbs as atemporal since they reflect no change (Olsen 1994). Palmer (1987) and Galton (1984), however, point out that the inherent durative nature of states explains why they are not found in the continuous form in English. Galton (71)

suggests, *'state-verbs lack continuous tenses because their meaning is already necessarily continuous in nature, so a continuous tense would be superfluous....'* The view of the inherent durativity of states is also supported by Lyons (1968:315) who claims that *'the implication of duration is already contained in the general meaning of these verbs.'*

The only time that a stative situation requires an input of energy is at its onset and termination (Lyons 1977). At these points, states involve some dynamism to get the situation going, which inception may be articulated morphologically in some languages. In English, the inception of a stative situation is represented through the combination of two verbs, the first ingressive i.e. 'begin' or 'start' followed by a state verb.

8. Do you understand? Yes, I understand. / I have begun to understand.

In Arabic, inception into a state (Mitchell & El Hassan 1994) can be indicated through a perfective verb or an active participial verb form. The inherent durativity of states may at times lead the learner to encode a state in the progressive form, leading to an utterance such as the following.

9. *I'm having a new car or I'm having a headache (learner example).

This occurrence of 'have' in the -ing form above may also be an outcome of the general use of 'have' to substitute for verbs such as 'take' and 'eat' where 'have' in the -ing form is accurate.

10. I'm having tennis lessons.

11. I'm having lunch.

Freed (1979) identified some syntactic and morphological features that help differentiate between states and event verbs. States generally do not occur in the progressive or as complements of verbs such as 'force' and 'persuade'. They are not found in pseudo-cleft constructions, or in collocation with adverbs such as 'deliberately', or 'carefully'.

2.1.4 Essential features of verb types

The four main verb types reflect similarities and differences in their lexical semantics. Verkuyl (1993) identifies telicity and duration as the two features essential to any understanding of the differences between verb types (Dowty 1986, Klein 1994, Salaberry 1999).

a. Telicity

Klein 1994, Da Cruz 1995, Depraetere & Reed 2000 refer to telic situations as right bounded events with a clear terminative point. The term 'telic' is often used to cover both inherent endpoints and linguistically signalled endpoints (Garey 1957, Brinton 1988, Smith 1991, Weist et al 1993). Depraetere & Reed (100) differentiate between telicity and boundedness explaining that telicity has to do with inherent or 'potential endpoints' while boundedness *'has to do with the actual termination of the situation that is signalled by means of linguistic elements.'* The word 'telic' derives from the Greek word 'goal', indicating that a certain goal has to be reached before an event can be seen as completed implicating thereby the lexical aspect of verbs alone and verbs and their arguments. In the former cases, i.e. verbs alone (generally referred to as achievement verbs), the conclusion 'he finishes' and inception and conclusion 'he coughs', 'he sneezes' are inherent features of verbs, which have as (Olsen 1994) and Weist et al (1993) explain coterminous starting and terminal points. Such situations cannot be broken down into phases, being in Freed's (1975:51) view not *'temporally segmentable.'* The semantic focus is on the point of inception and/or completion (Mourelatos 1981) and the situations cannot be said to have taken place 'prior to' their completion.

12. He starts work every day at 8 a.m.

Dillon (1977:33 - 36) argues that there are two types of achievement verbs. The first include verbs such as 'to leave', 'to depart' that are not segmentable while the second such as 'falling asleep' appear to require some time. Klein (1995) and Rapoport (1999:660), however, point out that the difference between accomplishments and achievements hinges on the phases of the action represented in the verb. Rapoport claims that

achievements as opposed to accomplishments have no initiator to bring the initial state into the picture. Unlike accomplishments which represent both the initial and final states, achievements represent only the final state.

Consequently, achievement verbs generally do not co-occur with the progressive because as Galton (1984:71) points out *'their meanings, involving as they do the idea of punctuality, are incompatible with continuity.'*

An example of achievement is

13. He finishes work every day at 5 p.m.

It is possible to find 'he is finishing work every day at 5 p.m.' but only in an utterance such as the following.

14. He normally finishes work at 4 p.m. but these days he is finishing at five.

In example 14, the –ing communicates the temporariness of the situation rather than an event in progress. Such use of the progressive is peculiar to English (see Ch. 3).

In the latter case i.e. verbs and their arguments, the endpoint is not inherent to the verb but rather to the whole argument. Such situation types are generally referred to as accomplishments and share some features with achievements (Brinton 1988). Both are telic and according to Verkuyl (1993:35) *'involve unique, definite temporal units.'* Accomplishments differ from achievements in being durative, a feature they share with activities. They are telic i.e. right bounded (Da Cruz 1995) and true only when the endpoint is reached. The inherent semantics of verbs in accomplishment situations such as 'sing' generally reflect atelicity. The addition of a noun phrase 'a song' introduces an endpoint indicating that the event is not over until the song has been completed (see examples 1, 2 & 3). Quantitative adverbial phrases 'twenty laps a day' and 'two games of tennis' provide a right bounded endpoint for both activities in the following utterance.

15. He swims twenty laps a day and plays two games of tennis.

The activities of 'swim' and 'play' are inherently durative but a clear terminative point is provided by the quantitative phrases 'twenty laps' and 'two games of tennis' (Smith 1983). The situations are accomplished only when the endpoint is reached i.e. twenty laps and two games of tennis and are therefore telic. There are, however, other temporal complications. The two events given in example 12, though telic, are from a grammatical aspect perspective unbounded because of their habitual nature i.e. seen in 'a day'. If such an utterance refers to past time, temporal implications become even more complex as pointed out already in 1.4.4.

15a. He swam twenty laps a day and played two games of tennis last year.

In 15a, a combination of accomplishment verb and argument (telicity), tense (last year) and grammatical aspect in the habituality (see discussion in Ch. 3) of 'a day' present a complex temporal challenge for learners.

Accomplishment situations are interesting examples of the interaction of the lexical semantics of the verb and predicate impact. While the verb in accomplishment situations is generally atelic as in 'swim' and 'run', the predicate adds the telic element, creating the essential difference between activities and accomplishments. Slabakova (1999: 286) explains that in English *'the difference between the two aspectual classes of verbs – accomplishments and activities – is signalled through the cardinality of the object.'* She suggests that learners at beginning and low intermediate levels see the verb as the crucial feature (292) *'in determining the aspectual interpretation of the sentence and will not be aware of the fact that in English it is the cardinality of the object that is crucial in determining telicity.'* She predicts that learners will treat telic situations in English such as 'make a cake' as atelic because of the nature of the verb failing to recognize the impact of the object, the feature which provides the telic element in the situation. She views the impact of the object as the essential difference between an action and an accomplishment as highlighted in the phrase *'cardinality of the object.'* This fundamental difference between the two verb types and its effect on learner verb choice is considered in the data analysis (Ch. 5) and discussion (Ch. 6).

Telicity, seen as an inherent feature of certain verb types and verb and their arguments, has been considered in the preceding discussion. The term 'bounded-

ness' is applied in grammatical aspect to indicate endpoints signalled syntactically and is discussed in Ch. 3.

b. Durativity

The second inherent semantic feature of verbs, durativity, may be a factor in learners' inflectional choices. To say that a situation has duration is to indicate that the situation lasted for a period of time with or without a stated endpoint. Activity verbs describe unlimited durative situations lacking, as Klein (1994) explains, temporal right boundaries. They have an onset that is not always stated and no obvious endpoint (atelic), being in Klein's view one state verbs where any change involves only the negative state of not doing.

16. He swims and plays tennis every day.

16. a. He does not swim and play tennis every day.

Some verbs are inherently durative and atelic e.g. 'swim', 'play' 'run', 'read' but durativity can be limited by additional predicate features (see 14 / 14a above). A punctual verb describing an instantaneous event is automatically considered non-durative but when repeated, durativity is added.

17. He coughed several times.

In example 17, the iterativity of the event, and not the single punctual 'cough', adds a durative element, prompting Chung and Timberlake (1988:220) to describe the series of 'coughing' as the '*inclusive macroevent*' in which the iterated individual events collectively form the complex structure of the larger event. The focus of the learner in 17 may be on the inherent telicity of the verb. Alternatively, the learner may emphasize the durative nature of the macroevent indicated through the indefinite quantification 'several'. Durativity in English is not associated specifically with any particular tense or grammatical aspect and Comrie explains that (1976:22) '*perfectivity is by no means incompatible with overt expression of the duration of a situation.*' As suggested in Ch. 1, the presence of a variety of temporal foci, reflected through lexical, grammatical and tense all contribute to the challenges faced by the

learners. The inherent semantics of verb types affects their ability to combine with different syntactic features.

2.1.5 Relevance of lexical aspect to learners

The relevance of the lexical aspect of verbs to language learning and acquisition can be seen in the primacy of aspect hypothesis (POA) (Bloom, Lifter & Hafitz 1980, Dowty 1986). The hypothesis contends that those verb inflections that normally function as tense markers in English operate mainly as markers of lexical aspect in early interlanguage. Learners' inflectional choices, consequently, are based on semantic interpretations independent of the grammar of the target language (Slobin 1985). These lexical aspectual categories, including a/telicity; punctuality and durativity; dynamicity and stativity, are inherent in the verb alone or in the case of accomplishment verbs in the verb and its argument. The verb inflections articulate the learners' perception of the internal temporal structure of the situation as reflected in the verb (Robison 1995), rather than the temporal structure of the whole utterance (grammatical aspect) or relationship to the location of the speaker (tense).

The choice of inflection to indicate the inherent semantics of the verb as perceived by the learner depends on the morphological structure of each language. It is hypothesized (Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Andersen & Shirai 1994, Robison 1995, Salaberry 1999) that the learner of English as either an L1 or L2 makes the following associations between verb types and morphological forms. The hypothesis does not give a specific proportion of expected occurrences and refers only to a significant correlation between verb inflection and lexical type (Robison 1990).

- verbs expressing situations that are perceived as non-dynamic and durative are found in the uninflected present form i.e. with no ending or -s e.g. stative situations such as 'be' 'see' 'hear'

18. *'I was in Paris last week. The weather* is very nice and I *see a lot of interesting places.'*

- verbs expressing actions viewed as dynamic and durative with no inherent endpoint are expressed through the use of -ing with the relevant part of the verb 'to be', though the auxiliary may often be omitted as it is a mark of tense and not inherent aspect;

19. *'He is *swimming and *playing tennis every day.'*

- verbs expressing situations that indicate termination or completion are generally found in the -ed form suffixed to the base part of the verb irrespective of the irregular form of the verb (Andersen & Shirai 1994, Bayley 1994, Robison 1990, 1994).

20. *'He goes to work every day and *finished at five o'clock.'*

20a. *'If you want something, you buyed it.'* (example from Robison 1990:328).

It is also hypothesized (Andersen 1986, Robison 1995) that as language learning progresses, inflections gradually come to be associated firstly with grammatical aspect and then with the temporal deictic nature of the situation as a whole. It is contended, therefore, that an understanding of the employment of verb morphology to indicate tense follows that of lexical and grammatical aspect. Robison (1990:316) suggests that

aspect is primary in the sense not that morphemes that denote aspect in the target language are acquired first, but that target language verbal morphemes, independent of their function in the target language, are first used by the learner to mark aspect.

The theoretical bases on which the primacy of aspect hypothesis is based are the Relevance and Congruence principles (Dowty 1986, Slobin 1985, Andersen 1988). The Relevance Principle states that aspect is more relevant than tense to verb meaning (Bybee 1985), while the Congruence Principle suggests that learners choose the morpheme whose aspectual meaning is most congruent with the aspectual meaning of the verb and predicate.

2.1.6 Application of POA to L1

The POA hypothesis was first applied to children acquiring their L1, with studies conducted both longitudinally and cross-sectionally on data, primarily from oral sources and among children from a variety of language backgrounds. Two studies, one by Bronckart & Sinclair (1973) on French speaking children and a second by Antinucci and Miller (1976) on Italian children, conclude that past forms are used to express most events that have a clear result, suggesting that the inherent telicity of verbs is the predominant influence. Verbs indicating activities and states, and containing no inherent endpoint (atelic), are represented in the learners' output with a

non-past verb form to show non-completion. Both studies above and a further study conducted by Smith (1980) use cognitive developmental features to explain the morpheme association phenomenon. Antinucci & Miller (1976) suggest that young children have not yet acquired a conceptual understanding of time, deducing consequently that they do not have a clear sense of linguistic time as manifested in tense. Children are seen as focusing mainly on the presence or lack of a clear result inherent in the verb, leading researchers to conclude that morphological development as an indicator of tense is tied to cognitive development.

Bickerton (1981) reinterpreted the data of the above studies, concluding along with Brown (1980) that both verb semantics and learner developmental factors are responsible for the emerging verb inflections. The claim is based on the hypothesis that children are more sensitive to the internal temporal architecture of situations than to the specific location of the event in relation to themselves. Bickerton (1984) suggests that some linguistic structures are '*bio-programmed*' in the brains of all language learners irrespective of the L1 with the two inherent aspectual distinctions of durative/punctual and stative/dynamic part of this '*bio-programming*'. Consequently, children from an English speaking background mark durative events with an -ing verb form and punctual with -ed forms. Brown (1980) shows that children under the age of three never use the progressive with stative verbs though statives are durative, thereby indicating the influence of innate awareness of the difference between stativity and dynamativity.

Further studies on L1 acquisition on learners from a variety of language backgrounds, (Aksu 1978, Simoes & Stoel Gammon 1979, Bloom, Lifter & Hafitz 1980, Stephany 1981, Berman 1987) appear to support the POA hypothesis and indicate that past inflections are usually first associated with telic verbs and progressive markers with durative situations. Robison (1995:348) in his summary of findings points out that the research to date

found that when children begin to inflect verbs the past inflections appear first with verbs that could be considered telic or punctual before they uniformly indicate anterior reference on all verbs; imperfective or progressive inflections associate with more durative predicates.

This early interpretation, however, may have been too simplistic according to Li (1989). He points out that not enough attention had been given to the effect of

linguistic input from the environment on the learners' output. He suggests that the observed phenomena in the studies cited above reflect input bias rather than innateness. If adult speech is biased towards the inflections suggested in the aspect hypothesis, for example, if adults tend to use achievement and accomplishment verbs when talking about the past and activities with the progressive, the learners' output may be affected. The early studies had focused only on the POA. Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds (1996:120), however, suggest that there are two '*potential sources*' for the acquisition sequence and both are found in L1 and L2 acquisition. There is the possibility that '*lexical aspectual class may be an acquisitional universal*' and additionally that input to the learners contains "*distributional bias*", as Schachter (1992) points out suggesting that developmental errors can be promoted by the nature of the input from the TL.

Shirai and Andersen (1995:747) consider both sources in their study on the oral output of three children acquiring their first language, English, in their home environment. The two questions investigated in the research are firstly, the connection between inherent semantic features of verbs and morphological choices and secondly the '*relationship between caretaker speech and children's acquisitional patterns.*' Their findings indicate that the -ed form is associated with verbs that are punctual, telic and resultative and -ing with activities and iterative achievements. They use Rosch's 1973 prototype account to explain the association of certain verb types with particular morphemes. According to the prototype theory, each category has its typical frequently recurring examples first acquired by children with the less typical acquired later. Shirai and Andersen (1995:747) point out that

Initially, children restrict their use of tense/ aspect inflections to the prototype of the category then extend the category boundary and eventually acquire the adult norm. Although the degree of this early restriction may differ depending on the language being acquired, this scenario appears to hold for most languages.

Telicity is probably more important than punctuality in the case of the past simple verb form in the early stages of language learning (LL). Huang (1993) concludes that the learners who made up his study associate the past form with achievement verbs that describe a single unitary situation in the past while repeated habitual situations are not found as frequently in the past form. In the case of the progressive, the prototypes are activity verbs associated with actions in progress and iterative

achievement verbs e.g. 'jump' which when considered as part of a series are atelic. Andersen and Shirai's (1994:362) ultimate conclusion is that it would be difficult to claim a clear focus on either tense or aspect in the early stages of language acquisition. However, from a diachronic perspective, as aspect is considered more inherent than tense, they claim that the notion of a past tense may have evolved from perfective aspectual marking and that *'prototypical past-perfective might thus be a cognitive axis for grammaticalization.'*

2.1.7 Application of POA to L2

From the 1970s on, research findings on patterns of L1 morphological acquisition were considered to have some relevance for the acquisition of temporal morphemes in L2 acquisition (Dulay & Burt 1974, Ervin-Tripp 1974, Ritchie 1978, Schmidt 1980, White 1985, 1986). Kandiah (1994) and Klein (1986: 23) point out that *'first and second language learning is basically one and the same process governed by essentially the same laws.'* Schumann (1987) conducted one of the earliest studies on the relevance of the language developmental processes apparent in L1 acquisition on the acquisition of tense and aspect in English as an L2. He studied the acquisition of the expression of temporality among untutored adults at the earliest stages of L2 development. His findings indicate that morphological features are fairly haphazardly distributed throughout the output of the learners with no indication of an association between aspect and verb inflections. He claims that there is a stage prior to either tense or aspect where learners rely solely on the pragmatic functions of adverbials and other such features to make temporal reference.

The first articulation of the claim of the relevance of the POA hypothesis to second language acquisition had been in Andersen's 1986 studies where he argues that L2 learners follow a particular sequence in the development of aspectual markers. Based on findings from these first studies involving the learning of Spanish as a second language in natural surroundings, Andersen argues (1991:318) that L2 learners develop aspectual marking in a particular sequence. The past form is used early on in acquisition on punctual verbs spreading gradually to accomplishment (telic), then to activities (dynamic and atelic) and finally to states (non-dynamic and atelic). The use of the present simple verb form moves in the reverse direction from states to

activities to accomplishments and finally to achievements. Andersen points out the one-to-one principle, where in the early stages of learning grammar, the L2 learner associates one form with one meaning. If the learners' focus is on the aspectual nature of the situation then a form such as a particular verb inflection comes to be associated with aspect and not tense. Rothstein (1985) describes a one-to-one association in a study done on native Hebrew speakers learning English who used the -ing verb form in English only when verbs were inherently durative.

Rohde's 1996 study conducted on untutored learners concludes that most of the verbs inflected as past forms are achievements. Verbs inflected as present simple form are states with the -ing form appearing primarily with activities and achievements. The latter association of -ing with achievements is interesting, as it appears to contradict earlier associations. Rohde explains the phenomenon, however, suggesting that the learners see the -ing form as a mark of future tense and not aspect, future tense being the primary function of the -ing form as used in the study. The aspectual function of the -ing form may be difficult to learn, according to Rohde because of the multi-functionality of the form. Shirai and Andersen (1995) explain the association of -ing with iterative achievement verbs as a concentration on the durative nature of a series of situations obvious in a situation such as '*He jumped several times*'. The focus in Arabic on a series of events is generally on the durative nature of the series rather than inherent verb punctuality or tense requirements.

Rohde concludes that the preponderance of past form achievement verbs gives some support to the aspect hypothesis. He is critical of the hypothesis for a number of reasons. The data do not indicate that the emerging inflections may mark other than the lexical aspect and no claims are made about the child's ability or inability to make tense distinctions. The number of uninflected verbs is greater among achievement than activity verbs with no explanation for this phenomenon. Rohde stresses the importance of conducting further studies including a focus on the age of the learners, as the time of exposure to L2 may be important for acquisition behaviour.

Both Robison (1995) and Salaberry (1999) suggest that the POA hypothesis is applicable to L2 tutored learners. Robison (1995:344-5) points to the redundant inflectional marking of inherent or lexical aspect in the emerging interlanguage of L2 learners while Salaberry (1999:151) claims that tutored learners '*show early*

development of verbal morphology and an apparent effect of lexical aspectual values on the selection of verbal morphology.' Felix & Weigl (1991) suggest that there is evidence available to prove the powerlessness of instruction in preventing developmental errors.

In cross-sectional studies done on tutored learners by Harley 1989, Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Bergstrom 1995, Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds 1996, Hinkel 1997, Shirai & Kurono 1998, Salaberry 1999 on Spanish, English and French learners, the past form is shown to be associated with punctual verbs and the progressive with non-punctual. The gap in the morphological distinction between telic and atelic verbs narrows with increasing proficiency levels, with the past form expanding to incorporate accomplishments and activities as well as achievements. The progressive form fails to develop at the same rate according to Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1996), though Robison (1995) indicates that the form is closely associated with durative, atelic and dynamic verbs, spreading to other verb types as proficiency level improves. Tense reference, as suggested by Bardovi-Harlig (1994), is achieved through adverbials, reflecting the learners' awareness of the deixis of the utterance.

Shirai and Kurono's 1998 (267 -268) study on Japanese learners of Chinese as an L2 concludes the relevance of the POA hypothesis to their learning situation claiming their study *'extends the applicability of the Aspect Hypothesis to a non-Indo-European language. Our results make it apparent that this hypothesis prediction is quite robust and can be considered a universal of SLA.'* However, they and other researchers (Andersen 1991, Robison 1995, Hinkel 1997) point to some inadequacies in the work done to date suggesting that much more needs to be accomplished before conclusively proving the relevance of POA.

Andersen (1991) highlights the importance of deciding exactly what meaning learners associate with each form, a point reiterated by Shirai and Kurono (1998:268) who suggest that adult learners' overuse of verb morphology may indicate a tendency to use *'the lexical item as an unanalysed chunk without really knowing the function of the morphological marking.'* Two explanations are possible: either the learner associates the inherent meaning of a verb with one form and sticks to that or s/he

learns a verb type associated with a particular morphological ending and reproduces that. Either situation suggests limited awareness of verb function to form. Secondly, Wolfe-Quintero (1996) stresses the importance of understanding distributional bias of verb types in discourse types. The temporal requirements of different discourse types should be analysed and the outcome made available in language teaching (Hinkel 1997, Shirai & Kurono 1998).

Differences between L1 and L2 learning and between tutored and untutored learners need further research (Shirai & Kurono 1998). Adult learners of L2 come with a developed L1 temporal system but Shirai & Kurono (268) believe that *'the relationships between the conceptual system and linguistic performance need further investigation.'* The progressive is overused on stative verbs among untutored L2 learners and less frequently among tutored learners (Shirai & Kurono), an occurrence rarely noted in L1 acquisition (Brown 1980). The possibility of the role of transfer of associations from the L1 is considered by Andersen & Shirai along with the hypothesized association of the form with a particular semantic function i.e. -ing with duration. Bardovi-Harlig (1998) explores the effect of narrative structure on inflectional choice suggesting that both lexical aspect and discourse pragmatics shape the temporal nature of the learners' interlanguage.

The findings from the studies in the preceding overview, though not fully consensual do support the POA overall in the contention that the lexical aspect of a verb affects learners' choice of morphological form, a view supported partly by examples in Ch. 1 (section 1.2) and explored in more detail in the ensuing chapters.

Part 2 Transfer from the L1

2.2 What is transfer?

In addition to the developmental factors hypothesized to affect acquisition of L1 and L2, L2 learners of any language carry L1 knowledge to the learning process, thereby accommodating the possibility of L1 transfer (Eckman, 1977, Hatch et al 1985, Sajavarra & Lehtonen 1989, Gass 1979, Gass 1989). Language transfer as described by Gass & Selinker (1983: 372) involves the use of the native language '*in some as yet unclear way in the acquisition of a second or additional language.*' White (1987:278) argues that '*prior knowledge*' has to be considered in language learning, claiming from observations made from testing English speakers on the transfer of L1 marked forms in preposition stranding that

a developmental view cannot be maintained in its pure form, where the assumption is that the learner can disregard his or her previous knowledge and focus on the L2 data as if starting from scratch.

Whether the influence of L1 is acknowledged or not in the current research environment, it is contended that it is a factor in learner interpretation of verb function to form associations.

The subjects in the current research are conceptually mature and have already acquired their L1 Arabic temporal system. The question, therefore, of transfer of some facets of the L1 system is a possibility that needs to be addressed. The relevance of the question of language transfer in the interlanguage of the learners does not hinge on the belief that a simple understanding of the structural differences between English and Arabic, and the incorporation of these differences into materials should lead to positive results for the learners. The proposal is that the learner focuses on a particular temporal facet of an event (duration, boundedness, and continuity), affected primarily by the focus of the L1 and seeks to encode that view as adequately as s/he can with the resources available in the L2. Fundamental to my hypothesis is the notion that the learners' primary focus is on meaning issues and that the choices made at the grammatical level reflect his/her semantic interpretation of events as affected by the L1 system.

2.2.1 Perspectives on L1 influence

The question of L1 influence in the classroom can be viewed from a teacher and learner perspective. Realization by teachers of the possible presence of L1 influences may affect how learner output is analyzed and how errors are dealt with, affecting in turn how material is presented. An approach that incorporates learners' prior knowledge could affect their perspectives on language learning particularly with adult learners.

Some teaching situations, however, downplay and even negate possible influences from the L1. The role of the L1 in the subjects' L2 output has not been given much consideration in the current learning environment (section 1.6.3). An attitude of this type is not peculiar being possibly more the norm than the exception, resulting from changing perceptions of the role of L1 in all language learning and the result of communicative theories of effective language learning. In a mixed group-learning situation in the TL environment, incorporation of materials based on L1 analysis is not feasible or practical. The learning environment, however, of the subjects is homogeneous with all participants sharing a common L1 and a similar learning environment. Therefore, consideration of the L1 is, I believe, imperative.

A brief outline of the development of contrastive analysis (CA) as a means of facilitating language learning is outlined in the following sections. The intention is not to suggest a return to an early CA approach. The aim is to recognize and accept the view that prior knowledge does affect all subsequent learning (Ausubel 1968) and to analyze the nature and effect of this knowledge (L1 Arabic) on the interpretation and encoding of temporal notions in English.

2.2.2 Early Contrastive Analysis

The early application of CA was structural. It was believed, that by identifying language points of similarity and difference between the L1 and the TL (Fries 1945, Lado 1957), that a more effective methodology could be developed to account for all the problems encountered by language learners. Lado (1957:2) points out that

the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language

will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. The teacher who has made a comparison of a foreign language with the native language of the student will know better what the real problems are and can provide teaching for them.

In Fries' (1945) view, the best learning materials were those based on a scientific description of the L1 structure. Information gathered from an analysis of L1 was believed to highlight problem areas for learners, primarily language habits already formed. The learner was viewed as having no control over decision making about choices of forms but was seen as working from a set of habits and stimuli transferred from L1 and constantly requiring unlearning. The view of the LL process as habit formation initiated the early strong '*classical contrastive analysis hypothesis*' (James 1980). Though attempts were made to include culture (Lado 1957), the emphasis in contrastive analysis was mainly on pronunciation and grammar (Odlin 1989).

Transfer was viewed as occurring either in a positive or a negative way. Positive transfer occurred when the structure of the L2 resembled that of the L1 and facilitated the new knowledge. Negative transfer occurred when the language structures differed and learners imported the structures of the L1 to that of the L2 thereby preventing acquisition of the correct L2 structures (Towell & Hawkins 1994). The belief that a simple identification of structural similarities and differences could provide the key to learner difficulties and facilitate the language learning process persisted for some time. Selinker (1966) claims that if there is a preponderance of structures that parallel structures from the L1 then transfer has occurred. Carroll (1968:114-5) suggests that

the hypothesis of applied contrastive linguistics is that wherever there are similarities, learning can be facilitated and wherever there are contrasts, learning may be retarded or interfered with..... Facilitation and interference are spoken of as representing positive or negative transfer, respectively.

Similarly, Sajavarra & Lehtonen (1989:36) explain that in psychological terms 'transfer' describes the extension of previous knowledge to a new area, a phenomenon involving '*the transportation of linguistic structures from a previously learned language to a new language.*' The definitions recognize the relevance of prior knowledge on new learning but operate at the level of structure.

One of the chief values of early CA was the facilitation it provided to the development of materials for teaching grammar points in the language classroom. By providing a comparison of L1 with L2, CA identified the differences between the two languages and allowed the development of syllabi that focused on perceived difficulties as well as new structures for the learners. In fact it has been pointed out by Sheen (1996: 185) that the role of CA was as input to the materials writer who would then know what to concentrate on in the development of teaching materials that would help the learner break old habits and acquire new ones (Sanders 1981).

2.2.3 Shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis

CA, however, could not account for all difficulties encountered by the learners and it over-predicted errors, some of which did not occur (Wardhaugh 1970, Flynn 1987). The oversimplification encouraged by a CA approach failed to recognize the complexity of the language-learning task. Nickel (1971:296) explains '*an error was claimed for CA which could also have been claimed by other sources ...proving that ...sometimes several reasons may be responsible for one and the same phenomenon in this case an error.*' Kreszowski (1981) & Sajavaara (1981) also note that predictions of difficulties based on differences were not always true while Flynn (1987:23) explains that CA

failed to reliably predict when interference from the L1 will occur in L2 acquisition Surface structure comparisons between the L1 and the L2 do not reliably predict problems nor do matches in surface structure features reliably predict facilitation in language learning.

CA was concluded to have had only limited validity and application and behaviourist views of language learning were discredited (Ellis 1994).

A further immediate problem was that this surface approach did not meet the communicative and functional needs of the learners who might know all about the language but still not know how to use it. Kaplan (1966:3) points out that '*foreign students who have mastered syntactic structures have demonstrated an inability to compose adequate themes, term papers, theses and dissertations.*' Focus on surface grammar was very limiting and restrictive (Jaszcolt 1995) and failed to include areas such as semantics, lexicon, text studies and psycholinguistic factors. Sheen (1996:185) suggests that the '*rejection of CA input in teaching and learning in the*

'70s resulted from its close association with the stigmatized structural method and not from inappropriateness on the basis of empirical evidence.'

Attempts to refocus contrastive analysis to incorporate semantics into the equation and to develop what Marton (1981:176) describes as *'a semanto-syntactic category'* were proposed as being the most suitable pedagogical application of CA. Dirven (1976:2) talks about the

redefinition of contrastive analysis within a conceptual approach" and points out that CA "must try to combine the grammatical approach with the analysis of certain conceptual strategies which shape and are shaped by the grammatical systems of the two languages.

An assessment of how impressions and experiences are organized into concepts should be conducted paying attention to the facets of these concepts emphasized by each language and subsequently articulated grammatically (Krzyszowski 1981). Dirven (11) calls this contrastive application of the differences between L1 and L2 the *'conceptual approach'* whereby the learner becomes aware of the concepts that lie behind the forms and a *'refined semantic analysis'* is provided. The possibility that temporal notions may be interpreted differently in languages is considered. The grammatical encoding of temporality in the L1 might reflect a different focus to that of the TL and could lead the learner to make choices that attempt to encode the same temporal focus in the L2, thus leading to structural errors in the TL. Sajavaara (1981:41) notes this feature of the interrelationship between form and meaning. He points out *'the interrelationship between form and meaning remains a burning problem despite attempts to solve it. There is no safe method for the specification of the surface categories which correspond to certain deep semantic entities.'*

2.2.4 Error Analysis

Two developments in particular, in the early 1970s, those of error analysis and the notion of interlanguage (IL), brought about a major shift in thinking about language development from L1 structural transfer to a broader perspective on language learning. The first of these, the shift away from contrastive to error analysis (Corder 1967, 1974, Wardaugh 1970), introduced a changing perspective on the learner from conditioned respondent to someone with a measure of control over his/her learning, eventually giving rise to the second major development that of interlanguage (IL).

James (1994:180) differentiated between CA and EA in the following manner '*some features of L1 are explained by comparing the L1 with the L2: this is predictive CA. Others are identified by comparing IL with L2: this is EA.*' Nickel (1971) explains that CA and EA do not exclude but rather complement each other. CA predicts ease or difficulty of language learning based on a contrast between the L1 and TL while EA attempts to analyse the source of the errors. Abbas (1995:195) points out that '*the use of CA and/or EA in a study is largely determined by the type of topic being investigated*' and indicates that he found a contrastive study productive in his research on the use of adverbials in English and Arabic.

In general, CA was seen as involving the learner only as a passive recipient of the fact whereas the second provided insight into how the learner processes information about the TL. Corder (1974:19) points out that there were no '*important conclusions*' to be expected out of a better understanding '*of the role of the mother tongue in the acquisition process*' moving from an analysis of the differences as a predictive tool in language learning to an analysis of the errors as committed by the learners in text production.

In Corder's view (1974:96), error analysis (EA) was productive because it permitted an insight into the learner's language learning process and a measure to tell how far the learner '*has progressed.*' It could also gauge how much the learner has yet to learn; the strategies being used to discover the language and how errors are used by the learners in the learning process. It also became clear through EA that learners from different backgrounds often produced the same errors. These intralingual or developmental errors (Richards 1971), indicated that it was more productive to consider errors from a developmental rather than a contrastive perspective. Of course, EA could not account for all learner behaviour, limitations becoming obvious as it became apparent that it did not account for the strategy of avoidance, whereby learners managed to avoid certain challenging structures and thereby minimize the possibility of error.

EA occurred in the context of the changing focus in language teaching and learning from a form to a function based approach with the emphasis on the use of the language in communicative situations. The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics

(Chomsky 1957) also had repercussions in the classroom and the move to a consideration of the psychological dimension to and the universal factors involved in language learning changed how the process of LL was viewed. From being viewed as a passive repetitive process, language learning evolved into a dynamic process (Chomsky 1959, McNeill 1966) with learners' errors as part of a continuum providing a measure of learner progress through different stages of language learning (Bickerton 1976). Corder (1974: 93) saw all learners' errors as significant because they are

evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language and indeed, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the errors which provide the important evidence.

2.2.5 Interlanguage and Language Transfer

The other major development was the proposal (Selinker 1972) that the learner constructs his/her own mental grammar which, though systematic (Hakuta & Cancino 1977), differs fundamentally from the L1 and L2. These systematic linguistic varieties found in the learners' IL result from the interaction between language input, possible developmental features and prior language knowledge (Schachter 1992), forming what Selinker (1972), and Selinker & Lamendella (1978) refer to as interlanguage (IL). Nickel (1989:296) claims that this phenomenon was '*an evolutionary phase developing out of CA*'. The learner is viewed as an active participant in the language learning process, the performance of which is guided by a set of abstract rules that he/she constructs. Haidar (2000:414) describes the process as that of the learners developing '*informal 'theories' and 'hypotheses' about natural phenomena based on their own observations and experiences.*'

The learner varieties as Klein (1997:308) explains

are not imperfect imitations of a real language - the target language - but systems in their own right, error free by definition and characterized by a particular lexical repertoire and by a particular interaction of organizational principles.

Selinker views the second language learner as producing a set of utterances in the TL, differing from those of native speakers, but with a systematicity of their own (Kumpf 1982, Huebner 1985). The argument is that IL is worthy of study in its own right independently of the L1 and the TL (Selinker 1972, James 1994, Weinert

1986). The learner creates his/her own representation of linguistic input received from the environment (McNeill 1966, Corder 1974), while constantly revising hypotheses about the language based on fresh input (Schachter 1992). The same process, argues Corder (1974:20), operates for both adults and children and in the early stages, the internal program for both goes through the same phases. He suggests that

learners appear to have some sort of internal program which operates in such a way as to create essentially the same sequence of development of the internal representation so long as there is adequate data for the acquisition process to operate on.

He cautions against placing too much importance on the effect of the L1.

Viewing language learning as a developmental process, (Dulay & Burt 1974, Krashen 1985, Hakuta & Cancino 1979), undergoing constant revision was an enormous change in thinking about how languages were learned. The views of Krashen, Dulay & Burt (1982:2) on the influence of L1 and their criticism of its validity in language learning appeared to sound the death knell for the question of L1 transfer. Their claim suggests that, '*learner's first languages are no longer believed to interfere with their attempts to acquire a second language grammar.*' This approach appeared to relegate the L1 to insignificance.

Not all views on the place or displacement of L1 in the language learning process were as extreme as those of Krashen, Dulay and Burt. Though influence of the L1 was marginalized, it was never completely abandoned and retained a role as a feature of the input that helped the learner create his/her intermediate grammar. Rutherford (1987) and Larsen Freeman & Long (1991) propose L1 and instruction as two of the initiators of change in the IL. Rutherford (128) believes that the learner system (IL) undergoes "*rapid ontogenetic change as learning progresses 'atypical rapidity'*" (Sridhar 1981:227) being vulnerable to '*invasion*' of features from both L1 and L2 (Lightbown 2000). It has been argued (Huebner 1985, Clahsen & Muysken 1986, Larsen Freeman & Long 1991) that learner varieties in the IL are '*amenable to systematic change*'; permeable (Tarone 1988, Rutherford 1987) and transitional (El Daly 1991, Ellis 1992).

This new view of language learning established the idea that learners go through many phases, '*approximative systems*' (Nemser 1971, Marton 1981, Hatch & Warner-

Gough 1983); '*transitional competence*' (Corder 1967, 1974, Sah 1981) '*idiosyncratic dialect*' and '*interlanguage*' (Selinker (1972), in their attempts to reach native speaker competence in the TL. The learners' IL develops along a restructuring continuum (Corder 1974, Tarone 1988) where the learner continually restructures the L1 knowledge to make it conform to L2 rules and integrates L2 with pre-existing knowledge of language universals. The IL system is permeable (Ellis 1986) and transitional and the ongoing revision reflects the involvement of cognitive and communicative learning strategies (Krashen 1985, Ellis 1986).

Interlanguage views do not eliminate the notion of L1 but see the learners' intermediate systems as having their own validity suggesting as Sridhar (1981:227) points out the '*indeterminate status of the learner's system between L1 and L2... (Interlanguage) explicitly recognizes the rule-governed systematic nature of the learner's performance and its adequacy as a functional communicative system.*' Additionally, the effect of L1 varies over time. Zobl (1982) and Hammerley (1991:64) claim that L1 interference is strongest in '*beginners, lowest in intermediate learners and very strong among advanced learners.*'

2.2.6 Fossilization

The preceding comments might lead us to believe that should learners persist in the learning endeavour, they will eventually reach native speaker competence. Nickel (1998:4) in his discussion of interlanguage reminds us of Selinker's claim (1992:246) that less than 5% of foreign language learners are estimated to reach native speaker competence. Therefore, though change is viewed as a fundamental feature of the learners' IL, paradoxically, stasis is also typical. There is no guarantee that even if learners pass through a variety of stages in language development, aided by instruction in the process that they will eventually reach native speaker competence. Learners may reach a plateau where non-TL-structures fossilize (Selinker 1972) leaving them with an incomplete system when measured against the TL (Schachter 1992). Various theories have been proposed as to why learner language fossilizes (Schumann 1987, Meisel, Clahsen & Pienemann 1981, Ellis 1985, 1992, Selinker & Lakshmanan 1992). Ellis (1985) and Nickel (1998) argue that learners lose motivation when their communicative needs are met (Pienemann 1984) causing fossilization to set in.

Selinker & Lakshmanan (1992:198) propose the '*multiple effect principle*', where '*two or more SLA factors work in tandem*' to contribute to the likelihood of the '*stabilization of interlanguage forms leading to fossilization.*' They, along with Wode (1978), Zobl (1982, 83), Andersen (1983), Broselow (1992) and Wolfe-Quintero (1996:356) view '*the role of language transfer*' as one of the central factors in the process of language learning and when combined with other possible universal developmental factors could lead to the stabilization of incorrect forms. The role of L1 is once again accepted as a feature in learner development but not necessarily a positive one. Schachter (1992:32) also questions the validity of transfer as a positive contributor to the language learning process and suggests instead that

what is currently viewed as evidence for the process of transfer is now more appropriately viewed as evidence of a constraint on the learner's hypothesis testing process. It is both a facilitating and a limiting condition on the hypothesis testing process, but it is not in and of itself a process.

2.2.7 Linguistic Parameters

Chomsky (1975:29) introduced the question of linguistic parameters claiming that there are innate linguistic abilities that provide '*the system of principles, conditions and rules that are properties of all human language,*' but at the same time this universal grammar '*provides a finite set of parameters, each with a finite set of values*'(11). The finite set of values given to each parameter within individual languages sets up constraints on language learners in their attempt to learn all subsequent languages (Ellis 1986, Clahsen & Muysken 1989, Hakansson & Colberg 1994, Bennett 1994, Slabakova 1999). Zobl (1990:44) argues that sensitivity to parameters gives a system to adult L2 learning. If this were not so '*interlanguage varieties would result that are a hodgepodge of L1 and L2 properties.*'

The value of the parameters is initially set by the value of the parameters in the L1, becoming the learners' working mental grammar. It has been hypothesized that ability to revise parameters depends on the availability of Universal Grammar (UG) principles. Flynn (1987), Zobl (1990), Thomas (1990), Broselow & Finer (1991), Uziel (1993) argue that UG principles are still at work in the acquisition of L2 and in this way L1 and L2 share similarities in the paths of acquisition. Clahsen & Muysken (1989) argue, however, that UG is not available and that L2 learners apply general

problem-solving strategies to L2 learning. Schachter (1986) and Felix & Weigl (1991) believe that UG is only partially available. Flynn (1987:31) points out that L1 and L2 acquisition are guided by '*innate principles of language recognition*', but because there are '*differences in structural properties between the L1 and the L2 from the early stages of acquisition*' the L2 learner has to reorganize existing parameters from the L1 to meet the requirements of the L2. The question is on what basis the reorganization takes place.

White (1992) and Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak (1992) believe that L1 and L2 learning differ fundamentally because in L2 learning, learners make incorrect generalizations based on their L1. In L1 acquisition, there is no interference. Schmidt (1980) suggests that though L2 learners try to organize the L2 grammar in accordance with universal principles, they constantly revise hypotheses about the L2 from the context of the L1 (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991). It is the semantic focus of the L1 and its subsequent grammatical encoding that determines whether or not a new parametric value is necessary for the expression of certain concepts.

The evidence that triggers parameter re-setting has also been debated. Schwartz & Gubala-Ryzak (1992) argue that once positive evidence is available from the L2 the adjustment in parameters occurs because it is not possible to maintain two parameter settings at the same time. However, this is not necessarily the case and Berwick (1985:184) suggests that learners could possibly maintain two '*mutually exclusive parameter settings at once*', a view supported also by White's research (1991, 1992).

It has been argued (Eckman 1977, Zobl 1983, 1984) that L1 transfer is most likely when the L1 structure is unmarked or when the L1 pattern coincides with a universal developmental stage in second language acquisition (Kellerman & Sharwood Smith 1986). Wolfe-Quintero (1996:357) questions, '*whether the innate cognitive capacity for language learning exists separately from the L1 that is acquired or is converted into the L1 so that the L1 becomes the only source of information about possibilities in the L2,*' a question echoed also by Bley-Vroman (1983/ 1989) and Schachter (1992). In terms of aspect, Slabakova (1999) argues that Slavic learners transfer the L1 value of aspect parameters in their learning of English.

2.3 Importance of Meaning

Hale (1988) suggests that it may be very difficult to eradicate L1 parameter settings from the learners' linguistic output, even when the learner has conscious grammatical knowledge of the target form in the L2. Consideration must be given to the meanings that underlie the forms. Jaszczolt (1995:) points out *'syntax is semantically motivated: when there is a grammatical distinction in L1 which is not present in L2, then there is a difference in meaning which is grammaticalised in L1 as opposed to L2.'* Kandiah (1994) reiterates the need to consider meaning and criticizes the abstract nature of the UG discussion pointing out that learners are concerned with more than abstract principles. Learners have to look at how forms and structures interact with meaning and contribute to the making of meaning.

Coppetiers (1987) and Kandiah (1994:121) attribute the difficulties encountered by the L2 learner to the differences between L1 and L2 *'not just of form but of those whole complexes of semantic, cognitive, cultural and other forms that these forms interact with.'* Kandiah points out that instead of trying to prevent the matching of L2 with L1 structures, a more psycholinguistically viable approach would be that of *'interlinguistic transderivations'* (ITD) involving getting the learners to take actual sentences from the L2 and search for their equivalents in L1, thereby developing an intuitive awareness of the universal principles they both share. He claims that adult learners seek such a conscious approach, a view supported by Rutherford and Sharwood Smith's consciousness raising approach.

2.4 Value of Instruction

The discussion so far has dealt with general considerations of parameter resetting in language acquisition though Kandiah is concerned with language learned in formal situations. The value of instruction in parameter resetting is debatable. Long (1983, 1988) concludes that instruction is a positive factor whereas Ellis (1992), Felix & Weigl (1991) & Hinkel (1992) are less certain. Studies by White (1991) also indicate that parameter resetting does not occur through instruction alone though Krashen's extreme view of the inability of language learned to become acquired is not supported. Learners' performance, in fact, appears to be affected by the kind of task being performed (Hyltenstam 1983, Tarone 1985 & Ellis 1987, Bialystok 1984/

1990), a phenomenon noted also by El Daly (1991) when assessing the writing proficiency of ten Arabic and Spanish speakers. El Daly's conclusions reflect those of Tarone and Bialystok when he points to the fact (164) that learner output varies according to situation, topic and task.

The written output of El Daly's surveyed learners points to the fact that L1 plays a major role in the L2 composing process. The findings suggest that learners' morphosyntactic errors in composition writing are due in part to incorrect knowledge of grammar or inability to transfer grammatical knowledge to the composing process. El Daly (168) suggests that there could be a deficiency in their conceptual understanding of the grammatical forms and he questions whether his learners' knowledge of grammar is adequate *'to meet the demands of the problem they are facing.'* He also believes that the complexity of the task makes it impossible for the learners to focus on more than one thing at a time so that learners, though having the necessary knowledge, cannot display this in writing.

Kharma (1983) and Kharma & Hajjaj (1989) conclude that Arabic students of English are confused by the form meaning association in the TL as well as by the differences between the L1 and L2. They cite as an example the continuous and perfect forms in English and point out these meanings can be expressed in Arabic *'it is simply that different ways and forms are employed to express them.'* Noor (1996) suggests that the most common source of the deviations he discovered in his Arabic learners' output could be traced to the influence of the native language. Similarly, Maalej (1999:16) found that learners borrowed heavily from Arabic in their use of determiners in English. He says *'this process of translation and/or transfer of features of information structuring, which cuts across the local and global levels of writing in Arabic, is important to notice and eradicate.'*

2.5 Exploitation of L1 as a teaching tool

Sheen's 1996 study on ways to exploit CA supports the bilingual approach of Kandiah, Rutherford and Sharwood Smith. He used an inductive and deductive approach in the classroom to test the relevance of CA. In his discussion of cross-linguistic influences, he claims that CA plays an important part in SLA and must be taken into consideration in the preparation of teaching materials and methodology.

In his experiment, the group taught deductively, with information on how English and Arabic differ from each other, performed better than the group taught inductively. Emphasis was placed on the understanding of grammar and the need for a conscious awareness of the grammar rules with those taught deductively. Sheen points out (189) that a *'greater emphasis was placed on the understanding of grammar rules and /or lexical meaning and the necessity for a conscious effort to commit it to memory and to use it correctly.'*

A deductive approach based on a discussion of the differences between the two languages can benefit the learner only if the question of meaning is incorporated into the discussion. The learner needs to become aware of the different interpretations of temporal concepts in the L1, and how these differ from those of the L2 (Kandiah 1994). Hinkel (1992:565) suggests that if the morphological structure for the expression of time differs from one language to another, the *'morphological time reference'* may not be accessible to these speakers' conscious intuitions. He (1997:292) goes on to explain that the perception of time as viewed through the L1 influences how well learners perform in L2 and cites Dietrich, Klein and Noyau (1995) who found that *'the learners' referential constructs play a crucial role in their acquisition of temporality in discourse and the linguistic means of marking temporality.'* Hinkel (568) believes, therefore, that implications for teaching should include a thorough explanation by teachers of, in the case of tense and aspect the *'English time attributes and notions and the reference terms used to describe them and their impact on the meanings of tenses.'* Similarly, Slabakova (1999:284-5) reiterates the importance of meaning issues. She believes that the fundamental question of parameter setting has not been satisfactorily solved and therefore it is *'appropriate to turn to another parameter that combines universal semantic categories with different syntactic reflexes in different languages.'*

Bybee & Dahl (1989) found that in the expression of temporality, certain meanings are universal in terms of their grammatical encoding. They conclude that certain areas associated with temporality *'are commonly expressed by grams (grammatical morphemes) in the languages of the world'* (53) and identify *'six gram-types'* (55) which cover tense and aspect notions in between 70 – 80 % of the languages they investigate. Languages may be at different stages of diachronic development having started from a basic aspectual focus (55). The problem is how to measure the

temporal focus in the verb forms of the L1 against those of the L2, especially if both languages are not at the same stages of diachronic development. This discrepancy may cause the parameters set up by the L1 to interfere with TL-like performance in L2 (Bates & Macwhinney 1987). Wolfe-Quintero (1996:361) suggests that *'the semantic universals may be unavailable unless they are used in the L1.'* Nickel (1998: 5) highlights the problem of *'equivalence'* and suggests that the setting up of any functional-semantic equivalence may be very difficult as *'languages possess systems and subsystems peculiar to themselves.'*

2.6 Linguistic perspectives on time in different languages

Morphological forms are employed in Arabic to encode temporality but the aspectual or tense focus articulated in the form may not necessarily be the same as English verb forms. A number of temporal concepts may be expressed through one morphological form in one language while having separate forms in another. One language may classify a form according to semantic concepts that underlie it, thereby labelling it as tense or aspect while another language may classify tense and aspect forms based on morphological forms only. Harrison (1996:1) points out that all languages do not necessarily have inflections to mark aspect but they do have ways to express the meanings that are *'embedded in aspectual categories.'* Some of these differences have been identified by Kharma & Hajjaj (1983) who refer to the English 'continuous tenses' and the present perfect as being available to Arabic learners conceptually but not as verb forms as they are presented in English. The function to form relationship may be the main obstacle to the successful control of the expression of temporality for L1 Arabic learners of English. Pica (1994) suggests that though L1 is an influencing factor

it is a highly differentiated one, much more intricate than that predicted through contrastive analysis. As such, learners' L1 can be a powerful influence on language development, but it can be suppressed, enhanced, or otherwise modified by the contributions of a broad range of linguistic, psychosocial, and cultural factors.

2.7 Conclusion

Discussions in Ch. 2 introduced and considered two factors that may be influential in L2 development. Lexical features of verb types and their possible impact on

learners' early performance in L2 learning were discussed. Research suggests that though there is not an overall consensus on the full impact of verb type on morphological form, it is definitely a feature worth considering when looking at learners' overall performance. Research findings and observed errors in Arabic learners' output influenced the decision to include consideration of the impact of verb type on verb inflection. It is of course recognized that no one explanation can cover all observed phenomena and therefore further possible influences are sought in a consideration of the impact of L1 on L2.

As pointed out in the preceding discussion (2.2), the notion of transfer from the L1 has gone through many stages. In the current research it is again not seen as a definitive explanation but rather as an aid to understanding learner performance. It has been stressed all through that the impact of L1 has to be viewed from the perspective of meaning taking both verb function and form into consideration, as learner interpretation may be based on views of temporal situations in the L1 system and the adequate expression of those notions through suitable forms in the L2. In the current chapter, L1 influence was considered from a general perspective. In the following chapter (3), a discussion of the system in English and Arabic for the expression of temporality to the extent that it serves the purpose of the current study is presented. General definitions of tense and aspect are discussed, and then applied to the specifics of English and Arabic TA systems. Semantic and syntactic features are given consideration with emphasis being placed on how a variety of meanings can be encoded in one form and how function-form associations from L1 can affect L2 output. The possible semantic, syntactic and morphological parameters set by the learners' L1 are considered.

Chapter Three

Contrastive Review of English and Arabic TA Systems

3.0 Introduction

English and Arabic have grammatical systems for the encoding of temporal concepts (Hinkel 1992, Haded 1996), providing a familiar framework facilitating to some extent acquisition of the English TA system (Hinkel 1992). The assumption, however, that Arabic speakers learning English as an L2 understand the notion of the grammatical expression of temporal concepts is at a very general level. Languages, though grammaticizing the expression of time, do so in different ways and may verbalize different temporal facets of a situation. The morphological encoding of past habitual situations in English, for example, focuses on past deictic location while the verb phrase in the Arabic past habitual indicates imperfectivity in the main verb and past time location in the helping verb. One language may depend on syntactic features other than verb form to communicate certain facets of temporality. The challenge for learners is, consequently, grammatical and semantic and what is needed as Svalberg (1995:66) points out is *'a grammar awareness which systematically links meanings with their grammatical encodings, and which includes not just grammar rules but also the meaningfulness of these rules.'*

3.1 Tense

A definition of TA applicable to the current study is first discussed before considering the differences between English and Arabic. Both TA are closely associated with time in language teaching involving as they do the grammaticalization of subjective, psychological time (Givon 1982, Brown & Miller 1986, Lewis 1986, Nehls 1992, and Schramm 1996), varying in focus from language to language.

3.1.1 Definition of tense

Klein (1994: 18) refers to tense as the '*entire phenomenon*' of the grammaticalization of time, a phenomenon generally articulated through the verb (Downing & Locke 1992), as Haded (1996:52) explains '*tense is indicated on the verb by the verb morphology.*' Comrie (1985:9) defines tense as '*the grammaticalized expression of location in time*' locating '*the time of a situation relative to the situation of the utterance*' (1976:2). Deixis is central to tense (Ota 1963, Comrie 1976, Lyons 1977, Dahl 1983, Kilby 1984, Palmer 1987, de Clerck 1991, Fleischmann 1989, 1991, Binnick 1991, Bertinetto 1994, Schramm 1996). Freed (1979:10), while viewing tense as a way of making '*specific reference*' to an event '*in particular with respect to the time of the utterance*', also comments on tense as a way of indicating the '*ordering of events*', suggesting two fundamental temporal functions. The first involves an event considered in terms of speaker location and the second in relation to another event. In both cases the locations involve 'before', 'after' or simultaneous with' either speaker time or narrative time.

3.1.2 Tense is deictic

Svalberg (1995:69) suggests that the fact that '*there is more than one reference point in the grammar*' is '*what is peculiar about tense in English.*' She refers to these points as '*speaker time*' and '*story time.*' In each case, the '*axis of orientation*' (Bull 1971) differs.

a. Speaker time/ primary tense

Speaker location is the vantage point indicating a relationship of 'at', 'before' and 'after' the time of speaking (Downing & Locke 1992), illustrated in the following diagram (Svalberg 1995:70).



Figure 3.1
Primary Tense

The reference (R) and event (E) points coincide, precede, or follow (S) speaker location.



Figure 3.2

Reference Points for primary tense

b. Narrative time/ secondary tense

The narrator designates a temporal location to the story, choosing to tell the story from a selected vantage point, generally from the perspective of another event. All other narrated events maintain a relationship of 'before', 'at' and 'after' to the reference point (Svalberg 1995:70).

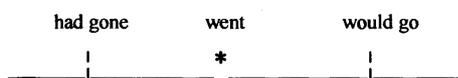


Figure 3.3

Narrative time

The focus is still on the relationship between two points in time, albeit separate from the time of utterance. The reference point (R) and the event point (E) in examples 1 - 3 below occur before speech time (S) while in 4 /5, both could be simultaneous with or after speaker time. The verb forms articulate the relationship between R and E.

1. He had eaten breakfast when the bus came.



The sequence of events can be communicated equally effectively through the use of sequence indicators 'before', 'after'.

2. He ate breakfast before the bus came.



Non-finite verb forms in dependent temporal clauses exemplify secondary tense, where the time of the event depends on the finite verb in the main clause. In each of the following examples, though the relationship between the two events remains the same, the tense location differs ranging from past to present to future.

3. Having finished work, Ahmed went home.



- 3a. When he had finished work, Ahmed went home.

4. Having finished work, Ahmed goes home.



- 4a. When he has finished/finishes work, Ahmed goes home.
 5. Having finished work, Ahmed will go home.
 5a. When he has finished/ finishes work, Ahmed will go home.



Figure 3. 4

Reference Points for secondary tense

In examples 1 – 5, the essential temporal requirement is that the event in the non-finite clause should occur before the second event 'of going home'. This can be done through either of the two methods above (Murphy 1999, Azar 1992). The three temporal points, of speech (S), event (E) and reference (R) define the relationships inherent in tense (Reichenbach 1947, Aqvist 1978, Dahl 1983, Comrie 1985, and Hatav 1993). Reference (R) may be where the speaker is (in which case (S) and (R) coincide), or where s/he chooses to place the story with (E) viewed in sequential relation to that reference point, before, after or at.

3.2 Aspect

Non-sequential relationships exploring the interaction between reference and event time fall into the category of aspect. Aspect is not deictic and functions as Maslov (1988:63) explains *'irrespective of the moment of speech or ...of the time of another action mentioned or implied.'*

3.2.1 Definition of aspect

Aspect defines the nature of the situation, according to Freed (1979:10) *'in terms of such things as inception, repetition, completion, duration and punctuality.'* In Comrie's (1985:3) view, aspect is *'different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation'*, involving as Smith (1995:7) suggests *'preliminary stages, internal stages and resultant stages.'* The question of the relationship of the event to other identified temporal points is fundamental to aspect involving a description of the relationship between the two temporal points, reference and event.



Figure 3.5

Reference points for aspect

Three aspects are encoded morphologically in English (Klein (1994:108, 1995:688) and are said to make up the English grammatical aspect system. Simple aspect describes situations presented in their entirety without any focus on the internal temporal architecture of that event. The following examples contain fundamental temporal differences. However, in both cases the single events of 'goes' and 'went' are viewed in their entirety and at one level if the relationship between the events and reference points 'every day' and 'yesterday' is considered it can be represented in Figure 3.6 below. However, aspectual features at the syntactic level in example 6 include the notion of habituality; thereby changing the overall aspectual perspective, making it imperfective while 7 is perfective.

- 6. Ahmed goes to school every day.
- 7. Ahmed went to school yesterday.



Event included in reference time

Figure 3.6

Reference points in simple aspect

Progressive aspect focuses on phases of an event that may be located in different time frames as illustrated in the following examples.

- 8. Ahmed is talking to his friends right now.
- 9. Ahmed was talking with his friends when the phone rang.



Reference included in event time

Figure 3.7

Reference points in progressive aspect

In both 8 and 9, the reference points 'now' and 'when the phone rang' are contained in the event time.

Perfect aspect describes an event viewed as either having occurred or at least having begun before the reference time (which is also S time). If already completed, it is considered by the speaker as having some current relevance. This can mean that the event is still true as in 11 below or that in the speaker's perception, the event though completed has some current relevance or ongoing effect.

10. Ahmed has visited Syria four times.

11. Ahmed has lived/ been living in Sharjah for three years.

The event time precedes but also includes the reference point, from a subjective perspective in sentence 10 or objectively in sentence 11.



Event precedes but also includes reference time (fact or speaker interpretation)

Figure 3.8

Reference points in perfect aspect

3.2.2 Aspect is integral

Linguistically, aspect as a grammatical 'idea' or category has been less investigated than tense. Lyons (1977: 704) attributes this indifference to the Greco-Roman grammatical tradition whereby the teaching of grammar was distorted with all morphological verb forms classed as tense. Kurylowicz (1964) and Bybee (1985) point out, however, that in Indo-European languages tense is seen as diachronically secondary to aspect. One possible explanation for the neglect of aspect could be its comparative subjectivity, as Hasegawa (1998) suggests, since aspectual concepts are far more dependent on speaker interpretation than tense. Tense is more tangible, presenting time as a '*past-present-future continuum*' and more readily accessible to analysis as it is independent of the '*speaker's mental state*.' Whatever the historical and /or psychological reasons for the neglect of aspect, it is still common to find it subsumed under the category of tense in learner grammars generating confusion for learners in trying to differentiate between the 12 '*tenses*' that English is claimed to have (Celcia Murcia & Larsen Freeman 1983).

Semantically, aspectual concepts are far more '*salient*' than those of tense (Lyons 1977, Kumpf 1982, Hasegawa 1998). It has been claimed that aspect is an earlier acquisition

than tense in both L1 and L2 (Foley & Van Valin 1984, Bybee 1985) with Lyons (1977:705) suggesting that *'aspect is ontogenetically more basic than tense, in that children whose languages have both, come to master the former more quickly than they do the latter.'* It is also contended that aspect when marked on the verb form is a more integral part of the verb than tense as in 'I am going' where aspect is marked on the main verb '-ing' and tense on the helping verb. Siewerska (1991:115) explains *'aspect markers occur closest to the verb nucleus followed by tense with modal operators constituting the outermost layers.'* There are syntactic limitations on precisely what aspects of a situation can be communicated. Bache (1985:66 - 67) quoting Forsyth (1970:353) points out that

although aspect does basically express the speaker's subjective attitude to a given action in the real world, the choice of aspect in a context ...is to a considerable extent dictated by the objective considerations of meaning, syntax and expressional emphasis...

3.2.3 Expression of aspect

Aspectual expression is, as Smith (1995:5) explains, *"usually signalled morphologically; each morpheme is associated in the lexicon with a schema that gives the properties of the viewpoint."* The linguistic and conventional constraints on the speaker in aspectual choices vary from one language to another and may not always reside in the verb or verb phrase alone (Freed 1979, Maslov 1985, El Hassan 1987). According to Sapir (1921:108) *'aspect is expressed in English by all kinds of idiomatic turns rather than by a consistently worked out set of grammatical forms'*, and is arguably a much more complex concept semantically and syntactically than tense. It can be communicated through the inherent lexical semantics of the verb (see Ch. 2); the verb and its argument; the subject and object of verbs, adverbial time phrases and singular and plural nouns (Verkuyl 1972, Hoepelman 1978, Freed 1979, Smith 1983, Schramm 1996) as well as verb morphology. In Michaelis's view (1998:73) aspect is a constructional process and should be viewed

not as a general system of rules but as a lattice of locally applicable semantic, formal and pragmatic constraints. The domain of applicability is the grammatical construction, a conventional form-meaning pairing whose properties are not predictable on the basis of independently motivated principles of syntax, semantics or pragmatics.

The fact that aspect occurs in a variety of ways outside the verb phrase cannot be ignored as such aspectual features may impact on morphological structure.

Verkuyl (1993:11) uses the term *aspectuality* to 'to capture the whole area covered by the two notions' of grammatical and lexical aspect. In his examples illustrated in 12 and 13

12. Judith ate a sandwich yesterday.

13. Judith ate sandwiches all day yesterday.

the accomplishment situation (illustrated in verb + predicate) 'ate a sandwich' in 12 is telic with telicity indicated in the finite number of sandwiches 'a sandwich'. In 13, the activity verb 'eat' is atelic as no endpoint is indicated in the object 'sandwiches'. The difference at this level is that of lexical aspect between an activity 'eat' and an accomplishment 'eat a sandwich' and in Arabic the morphological forms of perfective (12) and imperfective (13) (see discussion 3.3.1) illustrate this aspectual difference of completed and non-completed (Bybee & Dahl 1989). In English, however, morphological choice is affected by the boundedness indicated in 'yesterday' with verbs in both utterances referring to actions completed prior to the time of speaking. Morphological choice in the Arabic translation of 13 indicates a certain element of speaker choice as both imperfective verb form to indicate the non-completed nature of the situation or perfective to illustrate the prior occurrence of the situation are possible.

3.3 Arabic TA system

The definitions of tense and aspect presented in the preceding descriptions fit the temporal functions of English verb morphology but may not categorize all Arabic temporal meanings. All languages, as already claimed do not encode temporality in the same way. Giorgi and Painesi (1997) point out "*languages convey different temporal and aspectual properties because the morphemes expressing tense and aspect exhibit different properties.*" These differences may affect how learners manipulate the TA system in English. Kharma and Hajjaj (1989:157) explain

The main problem encountered by Arab students in dealing with the English verb-system emanates from the fact that each verb-form in English (simple or expanded) expresses many different meanings, and the two systems in the two languages sometimes

express the same meanings through the same forms, but at other times the area of overlap ends and each system goes its own way.

Before looking at these differences and how learner output may be affected by them, Arabic morphological forms and functions are discussed from the perspective of their relevance to what learners have to do in English.

3.3.1 Tense in Arabic

The two-way morphological division in Arabic is argued (Ali1988, Smart 1992, Baraka 1993, Qafisheh 1975, 1997 Haded 1996, Versteegh 2001) to have clear semantic functions. Suffixal forms '*al maaDii*' 'perfective', (Chejne 1969, Fleisch 1974, Comrie 1975, Kaye 1987, Kharma & Hajjaj 1989, Holes 1995) denote completed situations while prefixal forms '*al muDaar9*' 'imperfective', (Holes 1995) describe non-completed. Some linguists (Beeston 1970, Bishai 1971, Fleisch 1974, McCarus 1976, Wright 1981 and Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic 1983) have argued that neither form denotes time deictically in the way that English does. In Mitchell & El Hassan's (1994:8) view Arabic verb forms, are only '*tenuously concerned*' with tense differences, the primary function of which, they argue, is essentially aspectual, showing the distinctions between situations that have been realized or carried out and those that have still to be realized. They point out (8) '*the two-tense system of the Arabic verb embodies basically a realized/unrealized distinction rather than very clear temporal differences.*'

a. Status of Arabic as tense or aspect language

Traditionally, Arabic has been categorized as an aspect and not a tense language (Tritton 1943, Haywood & Nahmad 1965). Fassi Fehri (2000) and Haded (1996:47) argue that categorizing Arabic as a tense or aspect language is '*inconsistent and unjustifiable.*' Brustad (2000:204) suggests that '*the perfect (perfective) and imperfect (imperfective) represent relative past and relative non-past respectively*' in Classical Arabic and she adds that this is true also for the various Arabic dialects (Beeston 1970, Eisele 1988, Ingham 1995, Qafisheh 1975). Shlonsky (1997:96) & Fassi Fehri (2000) conclude that Arabic verb forms have deictic potential because in the absence of all

other functions '*sentences with a bare verb have a tense component*', as illustrated in the following examples, where Arabic morphological verb forms of perfective, imperfective and future auxiliary 'sawfa' with imperfective provide deictic reference in a manner similar to that identified for English in Figure 1.

14. *yadhab* *aa'laa aal madrasah kul yawm*

He goes **3 masc imperf** to the school every day.

He goes to school every day.

15. *dhahaba* *aa'laa aal madrasah aa'ms.*

He went **3 masc perf** to the school yesterday.

He went to school yesterday.

16. *sawfa* *yadhah* *aa'laa aal madrasah bukra.*

future auxiliary he goes **3 masc imperf** to the school tomorrow.

He will go to school tomorrow.

Cuvalay-Haak (1997:127) argues that Arabic verb forms are polysemous, a view that she says '*runs counter to traditionalist orientalist approaches*' concluding that '*a simple verb form can thus be associated with two or more operators.*'

b. Perfective and narrative

One clear tense function of Arabic perfective forms is to establish deictic location at some point in the past (Kharma & Hajjaj 1989). Once this is done, the writer/ narrator is free to encode all unbounded or habitual utterances in the imperfective form with or without 'kaan'.

Consider the following narrative on Ibn BaTuuTah (Brustad (2000:12).

17. *Kharaj* *Ibn BaTuuTah min beladtuhu Tunjah*

He went out **3 sing. masc. perf.** BaTuuTah from country his Tunjah

qaaSdaa *aalHaj, ya9iish*

setting off **3 sing. masc. active participle** the Haaj, he lives **3 sing. masc. imperf.**

khalaal riHltuhu biin aal naas, yariHil

during journey his among the people, he travels **3 sing. masc. imperf.**

m9 aal qawaafil wa yqiim *fii aal jawaaiiaa wa*

with the tribes and he gets up **3 sing. masc. imperf.** in the wind and

yazuur *aahil aal 9lm.*

he visits **3 sing masc imperf** family the world.

(Ibn BaTuuTah left his country, Tunjah, setting off on the Haj. During his journey, he lived among the people, travelled with the tribes, rose with the wind and visited the world's people.)

Such use may account for what Farquharson (1989:5) refers to as an unconcern for time in Arabic verb forms. She explains that there '*is a tendency for verb sense to drift which may be connected with somewhat of an unconcern with time.*'

c. Imperfective and non-finite verbs

A primary reason for the argument of tenuous concern of form with tense is the multifunctionality of both Arabic forms. The Arabic imperfective form encodes both finite and non-finite English verb forms. Fassi Fehri (2000) explains that, in tense languages, non-finite verb forms such as participles and infinitives are used to complement the finite form of the verb in the main clause, whereas in Arabic this relationship is generally encoded in the imperfective form. Consider the following utterances where Arabic imperfective translates both English participle form and infinitive.

18. *jaat* *umuha* *tabkii.*

She came **3 fem. perf.** mother her she cries **3 fem. imperf.**

She came to her mother crying.

19. *yadhab* *aa'laa aal mgahii* *li'aann* *yashrab*

He goes **3 masc imperf** to the coffee shop so as he drinks **3 masc imperf.**

qahwah.

coffee.

He goes to the coffee shop to drink coffee.

20. *Bdaa'* *yagraa'*
 He began **3 masc perf** he reads **3 masc imperf**.
 He began reading

21. *yakml* *yagraa'* *wa*
 He finishes **3 masc perf** he reads **3 masc imperf** and
yadhab *aa'laa al biit*.
 he goes **3 masc. imperf.** to the house.
 He finishes reading and he goes home.

The main verb provides temporal location (18/ 20 in past time and 19 /21 present) while the second verb in each case establishes the events of 'crying', 'drinking' and 'reading' as non-completed, functioning as non-finite and infinitive verbs in English. In Arabic, the second verb in the verb phrase is in the imperfective form (O'Leary 1923, Smith 1983, Brustad 2000).

c. Secondary tense

Secondary tense, as defined in the English TA system describes temporal sequential relationships between R and E. In Arabic, the term describes a relationship of logical sequence independent of the temporal location of the narrative. The Arabic perfective form is used in conditional and time clauses to illustrate the logical temporal relationship existing between two events. Realization of one event depends on the prior completion of another. Whether the main event refers to the past, present or future is irrelevant as Bybee & Dahl (1989), Smart (1992) and Ingham (1995) point out. Ingham (137) explains, *'The preference is for the Time or Condition clause to precede the main clause and to contain a verb in the perfective.'*

The question of deictic anteriority to the time of utterance is not an issue as *'the Time or Condition clause is unmarked for time reference'* (Ingham) and actual time reference (Smart 1992:217) *'must be worked out from the meaning and the context'* In conditional clauses, the verb in the apodosis establishes the time of the event while the verb in the protasis is generally encoded as perfective. Although the circumstances referred to by the verb in the protasis may be unrealized at the time of the utterance,

the condition must be met before the main event can occur. The perfective establishes a relationship of dependency between the two propositions.

22. *Aadhaa* *waSaltu* *bdrii, aazurukii.*

Conditional particle I arrived 1 **sing perf** early, I (will) visit 1 **sing imperf** you.

If I arrive early, I will visit you.

The conditional particle 'aadhaa' reflects modality, and combined with the perfective verb in the protasis suggests certainty that the condition will be met. If the particle 'law' or the imperfective verb form (non-completion) is used in the protasis, there is no such expectation.

In a similar manner, the function of the perfective in subordinate time clauses is to indicate the logical relationship that exists between the situation in the main clause and that in the subordinate time clause irrespective of tense as Comrie's (1976:73) example illustrates.

23. " *aajiki* ' *aadhaa Hamar* *aalbasr.* "

"I (will) come 1 **sing imperf** when it ripened 3 **masc perf** the dates."

"I shall come to you when the unripe dates ripen."

The imperfective verb '*aajiki*' has future reference while the perfective verb '*Hamar*' establishes that the first action '*shall come*' cannot happen until the second has been realized. It is context and not verb form that clarifies time reference in Arabic (Abdul Fattah & El Hassan 1994 and Ingham 1995). Perfective and imperfective can refer to the past and non-past (Bybee & Dahl (1989).

3.3.2 Aspect in Arabic

It can be argued that, from the perspective of tense, English and Arabic have morphological forms indicating the sequential temporal relationship of events to the speaker. The situation in a contrastive aspectual sense is more complex. The traditional division of grammatical aspect into perfective (completed), and imperfective

(non-completed) situations, (Klein 1994) provides as Comrie (1976:24) explains a '*genuine aspectual opposition*' in Arabic, and argues that the different subdivisions of

habitual – continuous' 'durative – habitual'.... 'do in fact join together to form a single unified concept, as is suggested by the large number of languages that have a single category to express imperfectivity as a whole, irrespective of such subdivisions as habituality and continuousness.

English, however as Andrews (1992:286) points out, has '*no general form that corresponds to all imperfective situations*', which difference could be argued to contribute greatly to learner difficulty in differentiating between the alternatives. Kharma & Hajjaj (1989:157) suggest '*the categorical grammatical meanings expressed by the continuous and perfect forms in English cannot be easily associated with clear-cut expanded forms in Arabic.*' In the following discussion, attention is first given to the encoding of aspect in the two Arabic morphological forms of imperfective and perfective (section 3.3.1). This is followed by a consideration of the English verb forms and Arabic correspondences with a view to considering transfer from the Arabic system to English.

3.3.2.1 Imperfective

Imperfectivity can be divided (Comrie 1976:24) into a '*number of distinct categories*' including the habitual and continuous, the latter being subdivided into non-progressive and progressive. One feature common to all imperfective situations is duration indicating as Comrie (1976:41) explains '*that the given situation lasts for a certain period of time, or at least is conceived as lasting for a certain period of time.*' In English, morphological forms (present simple and progressive forms) differentiate between some imperfective situations; while in Arabic other sentential features often perform this function. Imperfective describes a variety of situation types including timeless facts, statives, habituals and progressives, each with its own distinct temporal features though all encoded in the one single form in Arabic.

a. Timeless

Mitchell & El-Hassan's (1994:102) definition of Arabic timeless situations applicable to English also explains that such situations

are characterized by a particular type of duration which differs from that (of) progressive, habitual and even stative aspect. This type of duration is unlimited, omni temporal, appropriate to so-called general truths and scientific properties The validity of such expressions extends over present, past and future time.

The imperfective verb in Arabic to encode these timeless features does not require adverbial phrases of temporal limitation and as such these utterances are syntactically less complex than other imperfective types.

b. Statives

Stative situations share some of the temporal features of timeless facts. The verbs 'to be' and 'to have' are probably the most frequently used stative verbs in English and describe situations that exist unchanged over an unspecified period of time. In Arabic, a verb 'to be' though available, is not employed in non-completed stative situations. Such utterances are verb-less though the verb 'to be' equivalent to 'equals' is understood but not required (Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic 1983). Brustad (2000) explains, *'the absence of a tensed form indicates that the time reference is understood to be the moment of speech.'*

A stative utterance completed in the past requires the appropriate part of the past form of the verb 'to be' translated as 'kaan' to locate the situation prior to the moment of the utterance. This form is often referred to as the only truly deictic verb form in Arabic, because its only function is to locate the event in past time. In many cases it occurs alongside the imperfective to locate habitual and progressive situations in the past. The verb 'kaan' can combine with other stative verbs in the imperfective to indicate a state that was true for a period of indefinite time in the past.

24. kaan yHibbuhaa.
was 3 masc perf he loves 3 masc imperf her.
He used to love her.

The second most common stative verb in learner lexicons is 'to have' for the expression of possession. In Arabic, though verb forms exist, possession is generally (Haywood &

Nahmad 1965) expressed through a prepositional phrase consisting of a preposition '9ind' translated as 'to' or 'with' preceded or followed by a noun i.e. the possessor, or the preposition with an attached suffixal pronoun indicating the possessor. The word itself does not have a temporal component and if occurring alone is assumed to depict present possession.

25. *Hamda 9indhaa siiarah jadiidah*

Hamda to/ with her 3 fem prep. car new.

Hamda has a new car.

If the temporal reference is intended to illustrate a situation of possession in the past, the verb 'kaan' 'to be' functions as a temporal marker. Alternatively, another perfective verb in the text can act as a temporal indicator.

A second preposition 'lii' followed by a pronoun representing the person who has the object or quality can also be used.

26. *lii waja9 shadiid.*

to me 1 sing. prep. pain strong.

I have a strong pain.

There are of course verbs 'to own' 'ymlik' indicating possession and declined as regular verbs.

In general, stative verbs in Arabic and English do not occur in the progressive aspect, as seen in the lack of compatibility of English stative verbs with the -ing form. In Arabic, the restrictions are syntactic rather than morphological. Stative verbs in common with other verb types are compatible with 'maa zaal/ lissa' equivalent to English 'still' as illustrated in the following example (Holes 1984:119).

27. *huwa maa zaal b yHibbhuaa.*

he still proclitic b duration he loves 3 masc imperf her 3 fem obj pronoun.

He still loves her. (proclitic 'b' in progressivity 3.3.2.1 d)

They do not, however, combine with the particle 'qaa9id' (see progressivity below) which encodes progressivity. A combination of a stative verb and qaa9id as in

28. *huwa qaa9id*

**b*

yHibbuhaa

He **mark of progressivity proclitic b duration** he love **3 masc imperf**
her **3 obj fem.**

is as unacceptable in Arabic as its English translation is.

28a He *is loving her.

Inceptive phases of stative situations requiring a two verb combination in English can be communicated in Arabic through a single morphological form often referred to as the active participle (Holes 1995, Mitchell & El Hassan 1994, Brustad 2000).

29. *faahim*

part. indicating inception into a state understood

He has begun to understand.

The function of this form when used with stative verbs is to note entry into the state. Holes (1995:122) explains this form as describing '*the state in which the subject of the verb from which it is derived finds itself as a result of the action or event which the verb describes.*' He also explains there is no deictic time marking in the form, any sense of temporality associated with it being interpreted through the context of situation. In English when one enters a state, entry is recorded simply through the simple present form '*I understand*'; '*I know*' '*I see*' whereas in Arabic, a speaker has three possible affirmative choices in answering a question such as 'do you understand?' S/he can use the participle as indicated above to show inception into the state as in '*9aarif*', '*faahim*' communicating the notion that 'I have entered the state of knowing or understanding'. This should not be interpreted as Noor (1996) suggests as 'I am knowing' or 'I am understanding'. A second possible choice is the imperfective form '*aa9rif* 1 **sing. imperf.**; '*afham*' 1 **sing. imperf.** or the perfective form in '*aariftu* 1 **sing. perf.** = 'I knew' or '*fahimtu* 1 **sing. perf.** 'I understood'. In this context, the perfective form does not mean a state of knowing or understanding that is over. The Arabic utterance communicates entry into the state (aspect) whereas

the English utterance communicates the sense of completion prior to time of utterance (tense). It is as Holes has pointed out the context of situation that disambiguates the form.

c. **Habituals and iteratives**

All habitual and iterative situations in Arabic are viewed as imperfective (Beeston 1970) with an adverbial phrase of habituality accompanying the imperfective verb to clarify verb function.

30. *Tashrib* *Samira qahwah kul yawm .*

She drinks 3 fem imperf Samira coffee every day.

Samira drinks coffee every day.

The nature of the verb, whether durative or punctual, does not affect the imperfectivity of habituals and iteratives. Past habitual events are encoded for tense and aspect. The appropriate part of the Arabic verb 'kaan' 'to be' establishes past deictic time while the imperfective form of the main verb indicates the non-realized nature of the whole series.

31. *Kaanat* *Samira tashrib* *qahwah kul yawm*

She was Samira she drinks 3 fem. imperf. coffee every day

al sanah al maaDii.

the year the last.

Samira drank coffee every day last year.

Durative situations in the past with no overt boundary and repeated punctual events are encoded as imperfective. Consider the verb 'cough' in the following utterance.

32. *Kaan* *yas9l* *Tawaal al liil.*

He was 3 masc perf he coughs 3 masc imperf all the night.

He coughed all night.

'Kaan' locates the event in the past while the imperfective verb form establishes the ongoing nature of the coughing with no clear end stated.

d. Progressivity

The meanings associated with the English expanded verb forms (progressive and Present Perfect) are articulated in Arabic in a variety of ways. The active participle (Haywood & Nahmad 1990, Mitchell & El Hassan 1994, Holes 1995, Cuvalay-Haak 1997, Brustad 2000), along with a multiplicity of particles, auxiliaries, adverbial phrases and other sentential elements along with the two morphological forms contribute to the communication of TA features in Arabic (O'Leary 1924, Brustad 2000). In Arabic, both habitual and progressive situations are categorized as aspectually imperfective (Comrie 1976) but the nature of the imperfectivity differs. In the former, each situation is complete, and forms part of a non-completed series (Meziani 1979, Holes 1990). Situations labelled as progressive are single incomplete events, viewed from an internal perspective and containing no reference to a boundary. Progressive perspectives on events are grammatically encoded in English, whereas in Arabic (with exceptions) they are not differentiated from other imperfective situations, as Abufara (2000:9) points out '*there is no Arabic match for the English distinction in this aspect.*' Both habituais and progressives are encoded as imperfective (Mukkatash 1980, Al Aswad 1983, McGuirk 1986, Ali 1988), depending on the adverb or adverbial phrase to disambiguate the two (Abufara 2000).

33. *yshraab* *qahawah kul yawm / thalaathah maarat fii al yawm.*

He drinks 3 masc imperf coffee every day/three times in the day.

He drinks coffee every day

34. *yshraab* *qahawah aalaan.*

He drinks 3 masc imperf coffee now.

He is drinking coffee now.

It is possible to differentiate between progressive and non-progressive situations as some Arabic dialects do. Qafisheh (1975/ 1997:5) points out that the proclitic b-

prefixed with the imperfective form of the verb is often used in Gulf dialects to indicate action in progress.

35. *b+yatkallam*

proclitic b he talks 3 sing. imperf

He is talking.

In other dialects (Egyptian and Sudanese), however, proclitic 'b' indicates habituality Mitchell & El Hassan (1994).

36. *b+ yruH lii aal madrasah mashie kul yawm.*

proclitic b he goes 3 masc imperf to the school walking every day.

He walks to school every day.

Many Arabic dialects indicate progressivity through the employment of the active participle 'gaa9id' of the translocative verb (see below) 'g9id'. This translates literally as 'sitting', functioning like the French 'en train' 'in the process (cannot combine with statives and habituals) and declined for number and person. Mitchell and El Hassan cite (91) 'colligability with aspectual elements 'gaa9id' as necessary to show that a verb can be progressive, a point made by Holes (1976) who says that the progressive aspect of non-stative verbs in Gulf Arabic and many other dialects is expressed by the imperfective form of the verb, often preceded by the particle 'gaa9id', belonging to a translocative group of verbs.

37. *Ahmed gaa9id yaqraa' aalaan.*

Ahmed sitting 3 masc active participle he reads 3 masc imperf now.

Ahmed is reading now.

e. Participle

The use of the active participle with translocative verbs can differentiate between progressive and habitual situations (Bohas et al 1990) in Arabic. Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic (1983:615) suggest that the active participle on such verb types functions like a dynamic adjective and makes a sentence 'equational rather than

verbal.' Translocative verbs, intransitive and inherently atelic verbs of motion, are the only verbs in the non-past form that have the facility to indicate a difference between aspectually simple and progressive situations.

38. *Adnan dhaahib* *aal sawq aalaan.*

Adnan going 3 masc active part. the market now.

Adnan is going to the market now.

The same sentence can be translated using the imperfective form where the adverbial phrase 'now' or 'at the moment' clarifies temporality.

38a. *Adnan ydhahib* *aal sawq aalaan.*

Adnan goes 3 masc imperf the market now.

Adnan is going to the market now.

The participle form, though generally translated with the English present progressive agrees in number and gender with the subject. It is more functionally adjectival than verbal, describing a state or condition that the subject is in, as pointed out by Qafisheh (1997:1) in the following example.

39. "*al shaarja* *mizdahrah bi aal 9mal al Sinaa9iia.*"

"The Shaarja 3 fem active part. flourishing with the work the industrial."

Sharjah is flourishing with branches of industry.

Clearly, it is possible to encode the temporality of progressivity; it is, however, more syntactic than morphological.

The Arabic active participle or imperfective can be used in what Holes (1990:146) calls '*verb strings*' to show different phases of a situation (Hunston & Francis 1998). In English, choice of the infinitive or -ing form depends on the inherent semantics of the main verb and/or the aspectual focus of the situation corresponding to the Arabic system, where the inherent semantics of the main verb also affects the choice of imperfective or active participle. The former communicates an aspectually simple situation while the active participle indicates a situation in progress (Qafisheh 1975).

The temporal location of the utterance is encoded in the finite verb and tense does not affect the choice of form of the second which remains in the imperfective or participle.

40. *kamiltu* *aakal* *aal faaTur.*
 I finished 1 sing perf. eating 1 sing. active part. the breakfast.
 I finished eating breakfast.

f. 'kaada'

The specific aspectual focus of the imperfective form is seen in the function it plays in utterances with the helping verb 'kaada' (almost) used in Arabic to show that something remains unfinished. The semantics of 'kaada' indicate lack of completion (Gully 1995), necessitating its combination with the imperfective verb form. 'Kaada' can be declined like regular verbs and its form either perfective or imperfective indicates time. This contrasts with the structure in English where the main verb form indicates time and 'almost' lack of completion as seen in the following examples.

40. *yakad* *yaluun* *al Suura.*
 He almost 3 masc imperf he paints 3 masc imperf the picture.
 He has almost painted the picture.

41. *kaad* *yfaqad* *al muftah.*
 He almost 3 masc perf he loses 3 masc imperf the key.
 He almost lost the key.

3.3.2.2 Perfective

A situation is classed as aspectually perfective if it is presented as 'a single unanalysable whole' (Bache 1982: 60, Thompson Panos & Thomas-Ruzic 1983). The event is presented 'from the outside as a complete whole.' Siewerska (1991:117) explains, 'reference time must coincide with the time of the whole event including its completion.' An event viewed perfectly is not necessarily punctual and may

involve a period of time. In Arabic, the function of the perfective is to differentiate between the clearly completed and other situation types.

a. Bounded / non-bounded situations

A situation is perfective (Beeston 1970) if an end is implied or explicitly stated. In the absence of any explicit evidence, all situations whether stative, habitual or progressive are viewed and encoded as imperfective. Boundedness can take a number of forms. Deictic reference to an event that occurred prior to the moment of speaking is bounded by tense features. Boundedness articulated through adverbial phrases indicating limits as in 'in three hours' are aspectual. Unlike English, Arabic perfective forms generally occur only when boundedness is overtly stated with explicit reference to the realized condition. Smith (1983:494) observes that *'aspectual meanings focus on certain properties of idealized situations. In English, I have argued, aspect focuses on the endpoint properties of situations; but considerable variation exists among languages.'* Compare verb forms and temporal notions in the following utterances.

42. He walked along the beach every day last year.

43. He walked on the beach from six to eight o'clock yesterday.

The temporality involved in both sentences is quite different. The situation in 42 continued for an indefinite period of time while that in 43 clearly spanned a period of two hours. In both utterances in English, focus is on the tense adverbial 'last year' and 'yesterday' and consequently both are encoded in the past simple verb. Now consider the same utterances in Arabic.

44. *Kaan* *yamshii* *9laa aal shaaTii kul yawm*

He was **3 masc perf** he walk **3 masc imperf** on the beach every day

al sanah al maaDii.

the year the last.

He walked on the beach every day last year.

45. *Mashii* *9laa aal shaaTii min sitah aa'laa thamaaniiah aamis.*

He walked **3 masc perf** on the beach from six to eight yesterday.

He walked on the beach from six to eight yesterday.

There is a difference in aspectual perspective here. The first habitual event in 44 does not have an overt marker of boundedness while the second does in the time frame 'eight o'clock'. The verb combination in 44 describes both tense in 'kaan' and the aspectual nature of the habitual in the imperfective verb 'yamshii'. A time frame is involved in 45 but includes a clearly stated right boundary 'eight o'clock'. Therefore the Arabic perfective form is used.

Example in 3.2.3 (12, 13 based on Verkuyl 1993) illustrated a situation where a verb and finite number predicate defined a telic situation. The indefinite plural 'sandwiches' describes a non-bounded situation while 'three' in example 47 contains inherent limits in the situation. The English verb form 'ate' in all examples focuses on the location of the situation in past time.

46. *Aakalat Judith sandwiitsh.*

She ate 3 fem perf Judith a sandwich.

Judith ate a sandwich.

47. *Aakalat Judith thalaathah sandwiishat.*

She ate 3 fem perf Judith three sandwiches.

Judith ate three sandwiches.

48. *Kaanat Judith taakal sandwiishat kul al yawm.*

She was 3 fem perf Judith she eats 3 fem imperf sandwiches all the day.

Judith ate sandwiches all day.

In example 46 and 47, the finite nature of the situation is communicated through the definite numbers 'one' and 'three'. The morphological choice of perfective 'aakalat' 'she ate' (3 fem perf.) indicates the completed nature of the 'eating' situation. In example 48, no definite limit is set to the number of sandwiches eaten suggesting that the event could have gone on indefinitely. The verb 'kaanat' 'she was' (3 fem perf of verb 'to be') locates the event prior to the time of utterance while the imperfective verb 'eat' indicates the non-bounded-ness of the situation. The morphological form focuses on the aspectual nature of the event.

3.3.2.3 Perfect

Perfect aspect is discussed in section 3.4 from a contrastive perspective. All that is necessary here is to point out with Holes (1990:191) that in Arabic '*There is no morphological set of forms which are consistently associated with the perfect.*' This absence of a corresponding present perfect form in the L1 (Mukattash1980) is undoubtedly highly significant in the difficulties encountered by learners in mastering this form. These differences and difficulties are discussed in Section 3.4.4.

3.4 Contrastive focus on form

Each language has a limited number of verb forms available to encode several temporal notions resulting in forms that perform a variety of functions (Cuvalay-Haak 1997). One verb form in English and/or Arabic can encode a variety of temporal as well as modal meanings. This may affect learner judgement. In addition, the presence of a number of temporal foci in an utterance (Ch. 1) may result in confusion for the learner as to which one should be morphologically encoded. Andersen (1988: 60) points out that

some but not all verbal inflections are multifunctional in that they encode not only aspect but also tense and subject-verb agreement - the relative attention paid to any one of these categories by the learner changes over time as the learner acquires greater sophistication in the language.

When considering the effect of L1, one has firstly to consider how the learner views and interprets the temporality of an utterance. Lexical, tense and grammatical aspectual functions have been considered. It is possible that the learner makes a direct interpretation of the function to form association from L1 to L2 that works in some situations. This can be seen in single realized bounded events in the past, encoded in perfective in Arabic and past simple form in English. On the other hand, the availability of a number of English forms to encode Arabic imperfective is confusing for the learner. In the rest of the chapter, each English verb form, present simple and progressive, past simple and progressive and present perfect is considered from a functional and contrastive perspective.

3.4.1 Present

Celcia-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:112) view the present simple form as presenting the '*immediate factuality*' of the situation without any consideration for '*internal temporal constituency*.' The focus is on the situation viewed in its entirety (Nehls 1992) while the Arabic imperfective form often seen as the most direct translation of present simple form focuses on lack of completion.

a. Timeless and stative

Timeless facts and general truths are usually found in the English present simple form and Arabic imperfective (Holes 1990). A sense of permanency is a predominant feature of such situations, thereby excluding the application of the -ing in English with its sense of the temporary (Herweg 1991). No adverbial time phrases are required as time is unlimited. Utterances that communicate general factual information can include adverbs of frequency such as 'generally' and 'usually'.

Stative verbs were discussed in Ch. 2. Stative situations are non-dynamic, homogenous (Herweg 1991, Bertinetto 1994) and as Smith (1983: 490) explains '*lack internal structure*'. They are aspectually simple. Syntactically, what differentiates them from other situations (except timeless facts) is the fact that a stated time frame either adverbial or prepositional is not required. An utterance such as

49. Mohammed Ahmed is an Arab from Monday to Friday.

is clearly ridiculous and imposes boundaries on a situation that is unbounded. Stative situations are not encoded with progressive forms in either language.

One consequence of the absence of the copula in Arabic stative utterances is that the verb 'to be' is frequently omitted in English utterances (Scott & Tucker 1974, Mukattash 1978, 1986, Noor 1996).

50. *MuHammed min al aamaaraat.*

Muhammed from the Emirates.

Muhammed is from the Emirates.

51. *Muhammed fii Dubii.*

Muhammed in Dubai.

Muhammed is in Dubai.

However, in past time, a deictic form 'kaan', the past of 'yakuun' 'to be' is used to indicate that the situation occurred before the time of utterance. Its function is purely that of communicating tense.

52. *Kaan Muhammed fii Dubii aams.*

Was 3 **sing perf** Muhammed in Dubai yesterday.

Mohammed was in Dubai yesterday. (See error 1 in Ch. 1)

b. Habitual

The most frequent function of the present simple form in learner output is in the expression of habitual and repeated situations. Such situations are aspectually imperfective in Arabic and whether in present or past time are encoded as imperfective. Functional grammarians i.e. Dik (1989) and Siewerska (1991) applied the term '*quantificational aspect*' to distinctions that involve habit and repetition. Both types involve duration though extended time may be more a feature of the whole series than the single event (i.e. punctual events) that makes up the series. This appears contrary to the view of Hoepelman (1978) and Freed (1979:19) who view duration as referring simply to single events, as Freed (19) explains '*single events that are unspecified as to duration but are understood as being temporally extended*'" Siewerska (1991) explains, however, that the term quantificational is used to indicate that the distinctions hold over sets and series of events suggesting that each single event forms part of a series with overall duration even in the case of punctual verbs contained in the series. Comrie (1976:27), though he differentiates between iterativity and habituality, points out that both involve duration. Habituals may be duratively unbroken as in:

53. The statue of Oscar Wilde sits on a rock in the park in Merrion Square.

54. Nelson's statue stood in the middle of Dublin for several years.

Habituals may also display the broken duration common to iteratives as in:

imperfective. In many aspect languages it is possible ...to combine punctual verbs and the imperfective ...but such constructions invariably express repetition.'

The nature of the Arabic iterative affects verb choice in the past.

3.4.2 Progressive

Another type of imperfective situation relevant to learner output is phasal of which the progressive is the most common, in which as Siewerska (1991:118) explains '*the difference in the relation between reference time and event time is most evident.*' Ota (1963) and Joos (1964) claim that the progressive is in fact the English aspectual system because it manifests aspect grammatically. The reference (R) is clearly embedded in the event time which extends beyond the reference point (Hatav 1993, Klein 1994). The primary discourse function of the progressive as pointed out by Downing & Locke (1992: 372) is to background certain information in order to highlight other events, providing what they describe as '*a temporal frame around some point of time.*' Progressivity assumes duration but as Smith (1983), Quirk et al (1985), Lewis (1986) and Palmer (1987) point out duration is generally of a limited type (Abufara 2000) with the expectation of change a feature of the speaker's choice of form.

Joos (1964), Celcia-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1983) Bland (1988), view change along with temporariness as the most important features of the progressive. Bland (1988:3) suggests that contrasting the present progressive with the present simple is misleading and that the focus should be on the notion of change. This helps the learner focus on the internal structure of an event, developing awareness of the temporariness of the situation, rather than just '*action in progress.*' The notion of temporariness and expected change accounts for the semantic difference between the following utterances.

58. I work in Abu Dhabi (used to communicate a permanent fact).

59. I am working in Abu Dhabi at the moment (temporary arrangement).

The encoding of both types of situations in present time in a single morphological form in Arabic is hypothesized to cause confusion for the learners. The difference between habituais and progressives is clear from the verb form in English but not so

in Arabic. The present progressive form is generally labelled as a continuous tense. However, habituality involves continuity also and as both forms are encoded in a single Arabic form it may be difficult for learners to understand the difference. In English adverbial phrases clarify the difference whereas in Arabic they are essential to disambiguate the temporality intended.

58. *tashrab* *Mariam Haliib aalaan.*

She drinks 3 sing. imperf. Mariam milk now.

Mariam is drinking milk now.

59. *tashrab* *Mariam Haliib kul yawm.*

She drinks 3 sing. imperf. Mariam milk every day.

Mariam drinks milk every day.

60. *Kanaat* *Mariam tashrab* *Haliib 9ndmaa raatuhaa.*

Was 3 sing. perf. Mariam she drinks 3 sing imperf milk when I saw her.

Mariam was drinking milk when I saw her.

61. *Kanaat* *Mariam tashrab* *Haliib kul yawm khilaal*

Was 3 sing perf Mariam she drinks 3 sing imperf milk every day during

thaalathah sanawaat.

three years.

Mariam drank milk every day for three years.

The correspondences and differences between the English present simple/ progressive and Arabic imperfective function to form are summarized in the following tables. The first table shows correspondences between present simple and Arabic imperfective (though all of the correspondences are not covered in the research).

Present Simple Form in English**Imperfective form in Arabic**

English	Arabic
1. Timeless facts	1. Timeless facts
2. Stative situations that are not completed.	2. Stative situations that are not completed
3. Habitual events	3. Habitual events
4. Repeated iterative events	4. Repeated iterative events
5. Describing process	5. Describing process
6. Conditionals - modality - to express the possibility of an event occurring.	6. Conditionals - to express the probability that an event will not be completed
7. Planned events such as schedules (future)	7. Planned events such as schedules (future)

*Table 3.1**Present simple and imperfective***Progressive/ English****Imperfective/ Arabic**

English	Arabic
1. Action in progress at the time of speaking	1. Action in progress at the time of speaking
2. Conveys the notion of temporariness	(temporariness is not conveyed morphologically in Arabic)

*Table 3.2**Progressive / imperfective***Progressive /English****Active Participle/ Arabic**

English	Arabic
1. Actions in progress at the time of speaking.	1. Actions in progress at the time of speaking when the verb is intransitive and translocative.

*Table 3.3**Progressive / active participle*

Variety of English forms**Imperfective**

English	Arabic
1. infinitive or –ing	1. Second verb in two verb constructions
2. present perfect – continuative	2. Events that began in the past and are still ongoing
3. Depends on the time of the situation – focus is on tense	3. Combines with 'kaada' 'almost' to show non-completion of an event

*Table 3.4**Arabic imperfective and English correspondences***English forms****Arabic active participle**

English	Arabic
1. Present perfect or past simple	1. Shows the current relevance of a past action
2. Present simple	2. Inception into state of knowing and understanding in verbs of cognition

*Table 3.5**Arabic active participle and English correspondences***3.4.3 Past**

The only other single morphological form in English used to describe temporality is the past simple form, generally used to describe situations completed before the time of utterance. Lewis (1986) interprets the past simple in a psychological rather than a deictic sense concluding that it refers to situations perceived by the speaker as being remote from him/her, though this remoteness does not necessarily refer to distance in time. The form can be viewed as multi-functional, operating as a modal marker in conditionals and indicating speaker attitude in the politeness factor.

One of the primary functions of the past simple form in English is to locate the situation prior to the time of the utterance. The time is generally clarified through the addition of an adverb or an adverbial time phrase.

62. My daughters went to China last year.

The English past and Arabic perfective encode bounded durative situations. In 64 and 65 below, writing a letter/ visiting a friend are clearly durative but 'a/' three times suggest boundaries. Therefore the perfective form is used in Arabic as is the past form in English.

64. *Katabaat* *risaalah aa'laaa aakhtuhaa aams.*

She wrote **3 fem perf** letter to sister her yesterday.

She wrote a letter to her friend yesterday.

65. *Zaaraat* *Sadiiqatuhaa thalaathah maraat* *aal usbu9 aal*

She visited **3 sing perf** friend her three times the week the last.

maaDii.

She visited her friend three times last week.

Duration can also be conveyed through the use of adverbial phrases of time.

66. *qaraa'* *Hassan aal kitaab fii aarb9ah saa9aat.*

He read **3 sing perf** Hassan the book in four hours.

Hassan read the book in four hours.

The addition of 'in four hours' 'fii arbaa saa'aat' provides a clear boundary and consequently the perfective is used. The English and Arabic utterances appear to correspond. The fact that the verb form in Arabic focuses on aspectual completion and the English form with deictic location does not complicate the issue here. However, the absence of an explicit boundary in Arabic affects the syntax of the utterance.

67. *Kaanat* *nSraa mariidah aamis* *wa kaanat*

She was **3 fem perf** Nasra ill yesterday and she was **3 fem perf**

t9Tas *tawaal aal liil.*

she sneezes **3 fem imperf** all the night.

Nasra was ill yesterday and she sneezed all night.

No explicit endpoint is stated making the imperfective form possible, with 'kaanat' locating the situation in the past. However, there is a greater degree of flexibility in the encoding of such situations in Arabic and if the speaker chooses to encode the utterance as perfective, it would not be considered incorrect.

The encoding of past habituals shows clear differences between English and Arabic. Though English has an aspectual form that communicates the ongoing nature of the habitual, 'used to', past habitual situations are generally articulated through the past simple verb form along with an adverbial phrase of habituality. The habitual is communicated in the adverbial phrase '*every day*' and the temporal location is identified in '*last year*'.

68. Samira drank coffee every day last year.

Arguably, the verb form focuses on tense rather than the serialized nature of the habitual. 'Used to' once commonly employed to indicate past habituality is now used infrequently, suggesting a diachronic development to increased emphasis on tense.

In Arabic, the grammatical convention for the encoding of past habituals includes tense information with the choice of the correct part of 'kaan' 'to be' followed by the imperfective (Abdul Fattah & Shahir El Hassan 1994) indicating the continued non-completed series of events. Haded (1996:49) explains that if the past form 'kaan' is followed by the imperfective of the main verb, '*it has the force of indicating 'habitual' or 'durative' sense.*' Disambiguation occurs through contextual information such as 'every day'. The example of Samira swimming is encoded in Arabic as:

69. *Kaanat* *Samiira tasbaH* *kul yawm al sanah al maaDii.*

Was 3 fem perf Samira she swims 3 fem imperf every day the year the last.

Samira swam every day last year.

What is interesting is that if the Arabic habitual is encoded in the perfective it would not be considered grammatically incorrect.

The Arabic equivalent of English past progressive mirrors the structure of the habitual. The discourse function of the past progressive is to form a background to some other event in the past. In Arabic, it is context that clarifies the intended meaning of progressive or habitual.

70. *Kuntu aarkab al diraajah 9ndmaa Darabat + nii*
 was 1 sing perf ride 1 sing imperf the bicycle when hit me 3 fem sing perf
aal siiarah.
 + me obj pronoun the car.
 I was riding my bicycle when the car hit me.

Though the present perfect is discussed below, the existential use of the present perfect is included here as it is generally encoded in Arabic with the perfective form. In the following English utterance, speaker choice permits either present perfect or past simple verb form. If the speaker wants to highlight the possibility of the event occurring again, s/he may employ the former while choosing the latter if the focus is on the completed event. (Of course there is no choice if a time frame is mentioned.) Such an event is encoded perfectly in Arabic.

71. *zaaraat Miriam London.*
 She visited 3 sing perf Miriam London.
 Miriam has visited London. / Miriam visited London.

The following tables summarize the main points of similarity and difference between the English past simple and progressive and the Arabic perfective and 'kaan' with imperfective.

Past Simple**Perfective**

English	Arabic
1. Single realised events both durative and punctual	1. Single realised events both durative and punctual
2. Repeated event where the number of times of occurrence is clearly stated.	2. Repeated event where the number of times of occurrence is clearly stated.
3. Description of states in the past as realised - durative	3. Description of states in the past as realised - durative.
4. Conditionals - to express improbability/ modality	4. Conditionals - relation of one event to another - secondary tense.
6. Past can be used in place of existential present perfect (see section 3.4.4)	6. Existential present perfect
7. Past can be used in place of resultative present perfect	7. Resultative present perfect
8. Verb of inception + infinitive	8. Inception of state for verbs of cognition.
9. Habitual events	9. Habitual events

*Table 3.6**Past and perfective***Progressive /English****kaan + imperfective /Arabic**

English	Arabic
1. Progressive in the past	1. Progressive in the past
	2. Habitual in the past

*Table 3.7**Progressive / kaan Imperfective***3.4.4 Perfect**

Bulos (1965:75) points out that the English present perfect (PP) is so typically English that many Arabic speaking people '*never acquire a real mastery of it*' (Hinkel 1992). In the acquisition of L1, it is argued (Gathercole 1986:550) that the presence of the present perfect in children's L1 English input affects the rate at which they acquire mastery of the form. Gathercole found that Scottish children '*use the present perfect*

form long before their American counterparts, and that the earlier use of this form correlates positively with greater frequency of use in SE (Scottish English) adult speech to children.'

The grammatical status of the PP has been the subject of much discussion. Feigenbaum (1981:393) describes it *'as a phase or relative tense that places the state or event chronologically before another or before a point in time'*, commenting also on the current relevance of the form. Whatever the compositional status of the PP Klein's (1992, 1995), consideration of the polysemousness of the form is essential in a contrastive sense. Michaelis (1998:10) suggests that the *'present perfect is a complex of distinct (although related) aspectual constructions each of which provides a unique means of bridging the gap between past and present.'* She sees her view as a refinement of Jespersen's 1931 analysis where he states that *'first, the perfect is a retrospective present, which looks upon the present state as a result of what has happened before in the past; and second the perfect is an inclusive present which speaks of a state that is continued from the past into the present time'* (Michaelis: 47).

In Depraetere & Reed's (1999) view, the perfect connects the past with the present in two ways either retrospectively or inclusively as in the following.

Retrospective present

72. He doesn't want to eat now because he has eaten already.

Inclusive present

73. He has lived in Dubai for the last two years.

Michaelis expands on this analysis and points to *'three distinct implications'* concerning the present state of affairs. The first is resultative; the second existential and the third continuative. She gives the following examples to illustrate what she means by each term.

Resultative (see Ch. 1)

74. Ahmed has just eaten breakfast.

(the results of a past situation are still relevant)

We invite Ahmed to eat but he doesn't want to because he has just eaten.

Existential

75. Harry has visited twice this week (situation has occurred more than once within a particular time span.).

Such use, of course, does not always involve recency in a temporal sense and may involve the speaker's perspective on what constitutes a present inclusive time span as in

76. She has visited Egypt three times already.

Continuative

77. She has lived here for three years (obtains throughout a present-inclusive time span.).

Michaelis (116) argues that each one of the above involves a separate grammatical construction with separate deep structure representations, arguing consequently that *'the PrP will be seen as a case of constructional polysemy.'* This view has important implications for the teaching of the PP as it suggests that it cannot be presented as a single form; it must be shown to encode a variety of propositions. The semantic space occupied by PP utterances in English can be encoded in Arabic in a variety of ways. Each of the above examples (74, 75, 76 and 77) is encoded in a separate verb form in Arabic. The first can be expressed through a participle form or perfective as the event is past; the second through the use of the Arabic perfective and the third through the imperfective.

The PP connects the present with the past (Moy 1982) either because the speaker believes it to have some current relevance or in reality the situation is still ongoing, creating a clear connection with the present. Because of the association with the present, the PP can never combine with an adverbial that indicates a specific definite point in the past unless it is with the adverbial phrase of time *'since last year'*, *'since yesterday'*. In the case of the latter two the *'since'* adverbial phrase does not refer to an action completed at a definite point in the past but connects that point in the past with the present indicating that something began at the point identified by the *'since'* phrase and is still true up to the present.

An adverbial time phrase introduced by *'since'* can combine with perfect but not past constructions. In such structures, only the lower inceptive boundary of the event is

specified as in '*since 1999*'. The upper boundary is seen as the reference time, which in the case of the PP is the moment of the utterance. 'Since' cannot be used in the past because it does not include an upper boundary located specifically in the past. 'For' construction can be used with any verb form but like since can only be used with the continuative PP.

There is no single form in Arabic corresponding to the English PP. However, the various semantic functions performed by the PP can be expressed through a number of different syntactic structures. Holes (1995:192) identifies four categories which correspond to the English present perfect. These can be combined into the three categories identified by Michaelis. The first one involves the use of the active participle to express current relevance of a past action (Depraetere and Reed 2000).

78. *hiya ka:tbi halmaktu:b* (Holes 1995:126)

She write – A. **PART** this – the – letter

She has written this letter.

The perfective form can be used (Caenepeel 1995) but this gives the sense of completion that does not include current relevance.

The second type involves the use of the perfect form to express a situation which occurred in the past (existential) and could be repeated, situations which in English can also adequately be described using the past form. Al-Kasimi (1977) suggests that two different languages may have two different grammatical patterns to determine certain aspects of experience and gives as an example the Arabic 'waSal' pointing out that it can be translated into English either as 'he arrived' or 'he has arrived'.

Common examples from learners' output include the following.

79. *hal zurtu miSr?*

Question particle you visited 2 **masc sing perf** Egypt?

Have you visited Egypt?

80. *zurtu miSr thalaathah maaraat.*

I visited 1 **sing perf** Egypt three times.

I have visited/ visited Egypt three times.

Situations beginning at a time prior to the utterance and still ongoing, either in unbroken manner, habitual or repeated regularly (Feigenbaum 1981), are generally expressed with the imperfective verb in Arabic.

81. *ashtaghil fi aal sharika sitah sanwaat*

work **1 sing imperf** in the company six years.

I've been working in the company for six years.

Finally, in any discussion of the PP, it is useful to consider the Arabic particle '*qad*' which can convey modality or tense and aspect. When placed before the perfect stem, it has 'time-related functions' (Holes 1990) and gives the sense of a completed action with current relevance.

82. *qad*

shiribtu

qahwah.

Particle indicating completion I drank **1 sing perf** coffee.

I have just drunk the coffee.

'*qad*' can be replaced by a more emphatic form '*laqad*'. Gully (1995:171) refers to the mediaeval Arabic grammarian Ibn Hisham's analysis of the particle '*laqad*'. He explains that it is derived from the '*lam al ibtida*' the lam of inception which originally preceded a noun. It came to precede the imperfective indicative because of the resemblance of the imperfective to a noun and finally came to '*precede the past when the time factor was approaching the present as in "inna zaydan laqad qama"*' "*Indeed zayd has stood up.*' '*qad*' can also be combined with '*kaan*' and the perfect form to refer to an action/ event which occurred before the main event, somewhat like the past perfect in English. Though this loose equivalence between '*qad*' and present /past perfects exist, it is quite a formal structure and is not common in the learners' Arabic lexicon.

Present Perfect**Arabic Translation**

English	Arabic
1. current relevance of a past situation	1. active participle or perfective
2. existential situations	2. active participle or perfective
3. continuative situations	3. imperfective

*Table 3.8**Present perfect and equivalents***3.5 Conclusion**

The preceding discussion focused on features of the English and Arabic systems relevant to the current research. At no time was it suggested that the analysis is definitive. Features selected for the discussion have a direct relevance to the perceived difficulties encountered by L1 Arabic speakers in English and the research subjects of the current work.

Areas of overlap and dissimilarity were highlighted. The focus in the discussion, though working from morphological forms was intended to concentrate on the functions that lie behind these forms. Interpretation of temporal notions and their morphological encoding in the L1 may help account for some of the anomalous forms observed in research subjects' written output. Tense, as defined for the purposes of the current research and viewed from a cross-linguistic perspective appears as a fairly straightforward notion and in simple situations easy to communicate. However, aspectual notions, discussed in the current chapter, present a more complex cross-linguistic situation. Challenges may occur for learners when the functional focus of verb morphology in the L1 is other than that of the TL. Encoding of habitual, bounded, progressive and perfect situations were identified to help illustrate some of the challenges facing Arabic learners. It was pointed out that syntactic features in one language may perform the function of morphological features in another as illustrated in surface differences in the expression of habituality and progressivity in the two languages. Though the focus is primarily on verb morphology, it is impossible to discuss TA systems without considering all syntactic features.

The discussion forms the background to the analysis of data illustrating learner performance in the expression of temporal notions in English. The following chapter (4) describes how learner data were accessed followed by analysis and discussion of the data in Ch. 5 and 6.

Chapter Four

Subjects and Methodology

Part One: Research Subjects

4.0 Introduction

In Ch. 1, it was noted that the accurate morphological encoding of temporality in English can be challenging for learners in general and Arabic speakers in particular. Some of the perceived challenges faced by L1 Arabic learners were identified and the possible systematicity in the learners' non-TL use of verb forms posited, for which two hypotheses were proposed as a possible explanation for some of the observed forms.

4.1 Restatement of hypotheses

Two factors hypothesized to play a role in learners' language development in the accurate use of morphological forms have been selected for exploration.

4.1.1 Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis (outlined in Ch. 1), considers developmental factors that may influence all L1 and L2 learners' use of verb morphology irrespective of the language. The question for exploration in the current research is the extent to which the lexical aspect of verb types affects learners' choice of verb morphology and whether or not the association between verb type and verb morphology can help explain some of the non-TL forms found in research subjects' output. According to the hypothesis investigated by researchers Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Andersen & Shirai, Robison 1990, 1995, Salaberry 1999 and termed the POA, the lexical aspect of verb types influences learners' choice of morphological forms in the initial developmental stages of language learning and acquisition. Learners are affected by the inherent aspect of verb types rather than other temporal considerations and search for an appropriate verb inflection to reflect what they view as the inherent aspect or temporal meaning of that verb. The choices made depend on the morphological forms available in the language in question. In English, the focus on lexical aspect is

hypothesized to affect learners' associations between verb type and available English verb morphology in the following way.

4.1.1a Stative verbs and morphological forms

- Stative verbs occurring in stative situations are likely to occur in the present simple form irrespective of tense and grammatical aspect features. This association is hypothesized to occur in the learners' language development because of learners' interpretation of the present simple form as representing situations that are non-dynamic and non-phasal lacking change over time. This gives rise to output such as the following found in learners' compositions:

I had a meeting last week. The weather is very cold but I enjoy myself (1.2.1)

Morphological forms associated with stative verbs in the subjects' writing are examined to test the relevance of the influence of stative verb types on form and thereby the validity of assumption one of the POA.

4.1.1b Activity verbs and morphological forms

- Dynamic situations as expressed through atelic activity verbs with no inherent endpoint are likely to occur in the progressive form in English irrespective of any tense and/or grammatical aspect features in the utterance. The choice of the –ing form to represent dynamic ongoing situations is believed to occur because of learners' association of the form with the expression of duration and inherent lack of endpoints or boundedness. Such occurrences can be seen in learner language as in:

I going with my friends and we playing football (1.2.1)

Morphological forms associated with activity verbs in the subjects' writing are examined to test the relevance of the influence of the lexical aspect of such verbs on choice of form.

4.1.1c Achievement/ accomplishment verbs and morphological forms

- The third lexical aspectual feature hypothesized to affect morphological choices is telicity or the inclusion of a clear endpoint signalling the completion of a situation. Endpoints as discussed already (Ch 2), may be inherent in the verb (achievement types) as in 'finish', 'start' or be contained in the verb and its argument (accomplishments) as in 'sing a song'. The latter type is more complex as an activity verb (atelic) and a predicate (often finite numbers introducing telicity) are involved. It is hypothesized that learners' focus being on the endpoint will lead to the choice of a regular past simple form –ed to encode such verb types in English. The two verb types are examined in separate categories because though both verb types are telic there are fundamental differences that may affect learner output.

An example from learners' writing can be seen in the following:

Dubai shopping festival happened once a year. (1.2.1)

Morphological forms associated with achievement and accomplishment verbs as occurring in learner output are examined to test for the relevance of the association between lexical type (telicity) and verb form (-ed).

4.1.2 Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesized factor believed to affect learners' emerging verb inflections is the transfer of form – function associations from L1 Arabic. The following assumptions on the possible effect of the L1 TA system on learner output in English have evolved from the researchers' own analysis of the Arabic TA system and perceived differences and difficulties encountered by the learners. The primary focus of Arabic verb forms, though illustrating tense, is on the expression of the boundedness (perfectivity) or non-boundedness (imperfectivity) of situations. The Arabic imperfective verb form as discussed in Ch. 3 does not differentiate between simple and progressive situations as the English morphological system does, though there is clarification at the syntactic level. Chronologically and logically (possible conditions and 'when' clause) perceived situations are encoded in the Arabic perfective verb form. Situations classed as present perfect in English are not

encoded with a separate form in Arabic and the choice of verb form depends on the aspectual nature of the situations. Such features of the Arabic morphological verb system are hypothesized to affect learners' output in the use of English form – function associations in the following way.

4.1.2a Situations termed imperfective in Arabic

- The Arabic imperfective verb form does not differentiate between English and progressive situations and depends on syntactic features for disambiguation. It is hypothesized that the research subjects will use the two English forms of present simple and progressive indiscriminately. There may be a tendency to associate the –ing form with any situation that expresses duration.

Many parents are doing a big mistake when they are hitting their children.

- Habituality in Arabic is imperfective and based on the assumption above, learners may use both simple and progressive forms to encode present habituality.

She is usually writing a letter to her friends.

- Habituality in the past in Arabic is also considered imperfective, a feature encoded through choice of Arabic verb forms. It is hypothesized that this Arabic form – function association will affect learners leading to the choice of either present simple or –ing form with or without either a present or past auxiliary verb to indicate tense.

In the past the farmers were fishing and diving to get their food.

- Verbs classified as translocative in Arabic can occur in a participle form in Arabic to describe a situation in a state of progress as Qafisheh (1997: 38) points out expressing "*the meaning of performing*". This is hypothesized to lead learners to encode such verb types in the –ing form whether or not the utterance requires such a form.

I am going with my friends every week.

- Progressive situations are unbounded and it is expected that learners are likely to encode them accurately in the –ing form. Though this verb form does not occur in Arabic, it is hypothesized that learners acquire it quite quickly and associate it with duration rather than progressivity, sometimes overusing the form.

4.1.2b Situations termed perfective

- Clearly bounded situations located in the past are encoded with a suffixal verb form in Arabic indicating the perfective completed nature of the situation. It is hypothesized that learners transfer the association to English with positive results in the encoding of past completed situations in English.

She passed her examination last week.

- The perfective form is used in conditional clauses of possibility in Arabic to illustrate the logical sequential relationship existing between the condition and main event i.e. the main event cannot occur until the terms of the condition are met. It is hypothesized that learners may transfer this logical association to English conditionals of possibility and encode the conditional verb in past simple form.

If you played this game you will be very fit.

- The same logical temporal relationship as possible conditions is found in temporal clauses introduced in Arabic where the verb is in the perfective form to indicate the necessity of the situation occurring prior to the main event. It is hypothesized that learners may put verbs in 'when' clauses in the English past simple form irrespective of the grammar of the utterance.

These global countries are not committed to any country and they can move at any time when they found a country with a lower cost.

4.1.2c Situations termed perfect

The English present perfect is a polysemous form encoding a variety of temporal concepts each of which has its own separate encoding in Arabic. It is hypothesized that the present perfect form is challenging for learners and they may resort to their L1 system to encode the different notions covered by the form in English.

- Continuative situations such as 'He has lived/ been living in Dubai for ten years' are likely to be encoded as imperfective with either the present simple or progressive replacing the present perfect.
- Resultative perfect where the situation though completed still has an effect on the present moment may occur either in the past simple form or a participle reflecting the Arabic system as in 'He just ate lunch/ he eaten lunch.'

- Existential perfect where it is clear that the situation is completed and any perceived current relevance is only in the speaker's perception as in 'He visited/ has visited Cairo several times.'

The validity of the preceding assumptions were explored through three research instruments. Grammar and translation tasks along with composition writing were used to gather a corpus of verbs to help facilitate exploration of the validity of the notion of L1 transfer. The design of the research instruments, methods of data collection and analyses are discussed in the current chapter. Firstly, however, the current chapter expands on the learner profile introduced in Ch. 1, looking at early language learning factors that might affect performance in English.

4.2 Profile of Research Subjects

The first foreign language in the UAE is English. Learners attend six fifty-minute periods of English per week from first year of primary school under the current educational organization. Prior to 1992, English was introduced as a school subject in the fourth year of primary, with four and six fifty-minute English periods per week. The RPs entered the primary school system prior to the 1992 changes, giving them approximately nine years of English with between four to six periods a week at secondary level. Length of exposure to the TL is an obvious factor in learner competence and it may appear surprising to have a group among the RPs classed as beginners. It may be more appropriate to classify level 1 (le.1) as 'false beginners' when considering the nature as well as the length of exposure to English. Flege & Liu (2001:532) remind us that '*the quality as well as the quantity of L2 input that is received*' is influential pointing out that '*the use of English with other non-native speakers is likely to result in unauthentic L2 input.*'

4.2.1 Textbooks

Language input in the classroom comes primarily from a locally produced Ministry of Education and Youth textbook series called '*English for the UAE*' (currently being revised to '*English for the Emirates*' 2002 -2003). Textbook materials focus on topics related to the students' lives and traditions in the UAE with factual information on issues such as environmental and business concerns in the UAE, OPEC and basic

scientific and technology subjects. In addition, simplified literary extracts from well known writers adapted from Arabic and familiar to the students are included. The approach adopted in the presentation of material is communicative with the emphasis on developing the four skill areas in language through familiar topics and functional use of language in social situations. Exposure to a wide variety of lexical items is also incorporated.

The overt teaching of grammar is not a feature of the course. This in itself is not necessarily negative. The Teacher's Book, companion to class book 9, points out (16) that the course

does not in general teach grammar explicitly. However, teachers should always be careful to use grammatically correct English." It is also pointed out that "without knowing, pupils will be introduced to grammatical concepts such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, articles.....

It is suggested that the explicit teaching of grammar is not to be completely eliminated but should only occur (5) '*when the need for it arises within a communicative context.*'

Language acquired in the manner of L1 involves abundant comprehensible input from the environment and repeated practice on the part of the L1 learner. The materials in the UAE textbooks communicate familiar and culturally relevant information to the learners. Verb forms and functions are introduced through reading and speaking contexts with the learner expected to deduce the temporal functions of verbs from the context. The amount of overt teaching of verb function to form relationships depends on individual teachers. Student workbooks provide some language practice, generally in sentence transformation exercises. These exercises can be useful but need to be accompanied by overt instruction on the function of each form. In Book 5, (32) students are instructed as follows.

Rewrite using 'Now'

(1) 'He usually plays tennis at the club'. (6 more sentences)

The learners learn to do the exercise, associating the word 'now' with the –ing form as practiced in class. The result is that without the signal 'now', learners may be in serious doubt about the correct verb form to choose in free writing. Similarly, an exercise where the learners are given pictures as prompts and asked to write about

what they did yesterday (workbook Book 4: 13) usually generates correct verb forms. Such an approach resembles a rote memorization task and may work successfully at lower language levels where a mono-temporal text requires only one verb form, a situation clearly observed in composition writing at levels one and two (ie. 1 & 2). If real comprehension of function to form relationships is lacking, however, problems arise when a higher level of manipulation of different verb forms is required in more complex texts (See Ch. 5 and 6).

4.2.2 Teaching and learning styles in secondary schools

Successful curriculum development involves more than just a culturally appropriate syllabus. Al Reyes (1996:19) criticised educational reform that has focused only on the curriculum. In his view, the adoption of a curriculum that is '*based on theories that have proven their validity*' in other educational environments is not good enough in the UAE. A variety of factors need to be considered in the educational reform package. Materials are affected by the teaching methodology adopted and assessment tools employed at the end of the course.

Teaching and learning styles impact on the implementation of any curriculum and need to be revisited and revised before any change of syllabus can be effective. Bax (1997, 1999) points out that ELT in the UAE can take ideas from outside but suggests that two things should be taken seriously (1999: 505).

We need to look closely at the particular context we are working with, including all its cultural, social and political complexities and we need to tailor our approach to suit that context.

Harrison (1990) criticizes teaching styles in the UAE schools, pointing out that a communicative syllabus is not really feasible in the existing learning environment in the UAE because of the unavailability of properly trained teachers to deliver the curriculum in an effective manner. He concludes that attitudes to the course materials and their actual implementation seem to have a greater effect on the achievement of goals than the nature of the materials themselves.

How the learner processes linguistic information is an important question and is affected by the teaching and learning styles. Harrison (1990) suggests that lack of

individual freedom along with an inability or reluctance to cultivate an individual learning approach has implications for the effective use of any communicative materials. The predominant methodology for the teaching of English in secondary schools is traditional memorization patterns (Osterloh 1986, McKay 1992, Wallace 1996, Mawgeed 1999) producing as Al Reyes (1996:18) explains '*passive communicators rather than active participants*' in the learning process. Memorization does, of course, have validity but is not the only way to learn. A cognitive approach where the learner is able to make informed decisions based on acquired knowledge is important in understanding the function to form relationship of verbs in any language. It is of little use if the learner knows that the -ing is attached to the base part of the verb but has no idea of the temporal function of the form.

The teaching of formal classical Arabic is conducted in a similar manner often resembling that of a foreign language (Rosenhouse 1989), with instruction being morphological rather than functional or communicative. Jarrar (1999:315) suggests

the teaching of Arabic grammar is another major obstacle that should be addressed. Functionally, no more than half of the grammar taught is needed. This dualism of the Arabic language and the problems of teaching it have not been addressed properly yet in spite of a few attempts.

Opinions from students and other Arabic speakers suggest that the standard of knowledge in classical Arabic is well below that expected of a competent literate native speaker. It has to be assumed that the experience of learning the L1 must impact in some way on all subsequent language learning and that the exploitation of L1 knowledge can only be done effectively if learners have an adequate grasp of that knowledge.

Teachers of English in the UAE government schools are generally L1 Arabic speakers. This again is not necessarily negative. Feedback, from students, school inspectors and personal observations, however, suggest that there are serious flaws in the teaching of English during the secondary school years. The point is made in Teacher's Book 9 (9) that '*the use of Arabic is not encouraged, but it is not banned altogether.*' Students' comments, however, on the teaching situation in secondary schools indicate a degree of frustration with the methodology used and the teaching system. Students point out that teachers give information about English through

Arabic as if it were a content subject to be memorized. They also criticize the teachers' English indicating that it is often inadequate to meet the demands of the task and learner needs. The following comment from a student who participated in a survey on students' perceptions of the problems of English language teaching in the schools reveals the frustration felt by many. *"The teaching of English was very bad at the public schools because there really was no system to follow. Teachers were not able to teach the students with the modern style which would improve their skills. This phenomenon continues until today and students from the public schools are poorer in English than students from other schools."* (Student survey carried out by the researcher as part of action research project, May 2002).

4.2.3 Learners in tertiary education

In Ch. 1, section 1.3.2, a brief summary of the education environment of the learners was provided and it was noted that the research participants represent learners from five levels of language learning, in the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), a tertiary technical college. On completing the secondary school, learners may have a number of choices for follow-up education depending on their achievement in the final national examinations. Results of these examinations determine opportunities for future study. The highest achievers enter the University of the UAE where the courses offered are mainly of an academic nature.

The HCT college system provides technical education in preparation for the workplace. Some learners choose to enter this system even when adequate examination grades ensure a place in the university. Reasons for this are threefold. Since English is seen as the key to success in the international business world, the English only policy of the HCT attracts many students; the amount of technology available in the college appeals to students who view technology as a definition of modernity; opportunities for employment compared to graduates from other institutions are far greater.

4.2.4 Entry to College Programs

Applicants to the HCT are assessed with in-house English and Mathematics tests. The English test, generally referred to as the English Diagnostic Assessment (EDA),

determines the learners' linguistic levels. The EDA consists of tests in reading, grammar and writing. The grammar component tests the use of prepositions, comparatives, articles, pronouns and conditionals as well as verb forms, in straightforward cloze test format. The writing test requires a 150 – 200 word text on a basic topic such as '*Describe your Daily Routine*' or '*Describe what you did last weekend*', and tests the learners' ability to use the common verb forms of simple past and present primarily and to a lesser extent, past and present progressive, future and present perfect. The writing scores on the EDA are calculated by grading the writing texts according to a set of writing descriptors on a scale of 0 - 9 used to rate writings throughout the college system (see Table 4.2 and Appendix A).

The results of the EDA determine learners' placement in one of two programs: the first a basic certificate (2 years) followed by a one year diploma, generally referred to as the CD program (Certificate/Diploma). This program begins with a two year basic course, at the end of which successful students receive a certificate in their chosen major. Students can continue for a further year and gain a diploma for which, in addition to the required grade in the specific content areas, a pass grade in the Cambridge PET examination must be achieved. The second program is a Higher Diploma consisting of a Foundations (one year of intensive English and Mathematics), followed by three further years of study in the fields of Business, Engineering, Computer Technology, Accountancy or Health Science courses. At the end of four years, students graduate with a Higher Diploma in their selected major. The exit English requirement for successful graduation from the HD program is a Band 5 in the IELTS examination which is taken at the end of students' third year in the college (year 2 of their major). If the required band is not achieved at this stage, students can repeat the exam two more times.

Each academic year is divided into two semesters with a variety of assessment measures used to determine students' ability to progress to the next semester. The amount of instruction time for English varies from year to year. In the CD program, learners have ten English language contact periods (45 minutes/ revised in 2002 to eight fifty-five minute periods). Learners can enter the Foundations program through two routes. They can progress from the CD program, though this is uncommon, as most CD students prefer to move on to the workplace. The second and more common route is direct entry if learners' exit grades from the secondary school and their performance on the EDA test are adequate. Learners begin an intensive English

programme of 16 contact periods (45 minutes/ revised in 2002 to twelve fifty-five minute periods) a week, involving all four language skills. If successful at the end of the Foundations year, learners enter the HD program where they begin study on their elected major. However, the number of English contact hours is reduced over the years in HD. The standard number of English classes in year 1 HD is approximately 5 fifty-five minute periods a week while in year 2 this can drop to as low as two and a half fifty-five minute periods a week.

4.2.5 Research subjects at five language levels

All research subjects were selected from students registered in the CD and HD programs and were grouped into five linguistic levels, determined by their placement in the above programs. Though all students have had nine years of English in secondary schools, the language level of those registered for the CD program as measured by their performance on the EDA test is generally low. Consequently year one CD learners have been categorized as elementary (le.1). Upper elementary learners are registered in years 2 and 3 of the CD program (le.2), level 3 (le.3) in Foundations, while level 4 (le.4) are from year one HD and level 5 (le.5) year two. Students were not selected from year 3 HD program as language courses in year 3 are specifically geared towards the ESP needs of the learners. There is no general English language component. The following table outlines linguistic level, college program, age and exit competency bands required in writing tasks to exit from the particular program in which the student is participating.

Linguistic level	College Program	Age	Writing band score
Level One Elementary	CD Year 1 60 learners	17 - 19	3
Level Two Upper elementary	CD years 2 & 3 60 learners	18 - 20	4
Level Three Lower intermediate	Foundations 60 learners	17 - 19	5
Level Four Intermediate	Higher Diploma/year 1 60 learners	18 - 25	6
Level Five Upper intermediate	Higher Diploma/ year 2 60 learners	19 - 26	6

Table 4.1
Research Subjects

The 60 learners listed at each level participated in the two grammar tests described in 4.2.1 below.

4.2.6 Writing – teaching and testing

Though learners study and are tested in all four skills, the focus of the research is on how learners express temporality in written work. Therefore, writing task types taught and tested, classroom methodology and methods of assessment of writing are given priority.

a. Task types

Writing tasks at le. 1 & 2 consist of basic narrative and descriptive text types. Materials used during the courses are appropriate commercial Headway and Headstart books along with some supplementary in-house materials. Materials for upper level courses also consist of a variety of commercial and in-house materials. At elementary and upper elementary levels, the verb forms in FCs (free compositions) are generally present and past simple.

As learners progress, the demands of the writing task become more challenging. At le.3 - 5, task types are more challenging and learners are expected to employ wider lexical, structural and cognitive resources where memorization of model answers and formulaic phrases does not work. Vocabulary has to be expanded and opinions and points of view developed in a constructive manner. Verb forms of simple present and past, progressive present and past, future and present perfect may occur. It could be argued that a communicative syllabus with its focus on the development of oral abilities has affected writing ability. The culture of the respondents who participated in the current research is pervasively oral and features of local Arabic oral structure have been noted (by researcher) in both the spoken and written output of the learners. Kobayashi & Rinnert (1992) found in their research on the effects of L1 on second language writing that oral proficiency *'as compared to grammar knowledge accounts for more of what contributes to second language writing quality indicates that a positive relationship exists between speaking and writing in this data.'* It should also be noted that free writing where students have the opportunity to express ideas, opinions and points of view is not a regular part of the L1 classroom.

b. Classroom methodology

The writing course in HCT at all levels assumes an understanding of basic sentence structure, and adopts a task-based approach, with narrative, descriptive essays as the main focus at le.1 and 2, and comparison/ contrast, problem / solution, advantages /disadvantages and discursive/ argumentative essays at the three upper levels. Along with the basic verb forms identified as the focus of the research, the past perfect form may occur in learner scripts. Learners appear to have been introduced to the form in their school course and use it to communicate temporal remoteness (mistakenly used as an equivalent to the past simple) rather than sequence of events. There is no overt testing of grammar in final examinations though teachers use grammar tests as revision to check on learner understanding.

Learners practise these types of tasks over and over in the classroom with sample answers provided at students' insistence. The persistence of a traditional approach to learning right through to third level education leads to dependence on the teacher and on prepared models where the most common strategy employed is the memorization of examples already worked on in the class and then repeated in the exam. The learner (at lower language levels) as writer does not make informed decisions on syntactic or morphological choices; s/he works primarily from a memory bank of tasks covered during lessons and because the task types are limited the opportunity for error is also restricted and the outcome may be apparent accuracy. Salebi (1986) made the same observations when scoring the compositions of a group of Arab learners of English. Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992:185) point out that *'when confronted with cognitively complex tasks, second language writers, even those with high second language proficiency, tend to employ 'chunk style' – a style by which they maintain internal structure.'*

It is possible that learners remember pre-practiced composition types and try to slot different lexical items into a memorized model to suit the requirements of the task. Uzawa & Cumming (1989:184) suggest that at lower language levels, learners use two types of strategies when composing. They may prepare and *'rehearse'* the information in the L1 and then translate or summarise what they prepared and/ or they may use memorized chunks. It has been noted even at the upper language levels, that on being assigned a writing task learners immediately ask (writer's own

personal experience) about the task type expected. Learners understand the discourse structure of different task types and this gives an apparent fluency to the writing. However, it is contended that memorization is still a factor in output influencing the organization and discourse features of the task. On close examination, it is clear that grammatical information about the TL has not been adequately processed. Reliance is still on memorized models. Context clues in the form of adverbial phrases and, as hypothesized, features of developmental and L1 processes particularly in the choice of verb form may affect composition.

c. Assessment / writing band descriptors

Exit levels from each course are set by HCT writing descriptors (Appendix A). The descriptors consider task fulfilment, communicative fluency, cohesion of text as well as grammatical accuracy establishing that it is learners' overall achievement on all of the above features that makes for successful communication. For the purposes of the current research, expected rates of accuracy were established for each verb form at each of the language levels. This was done through careful consultation with a group of colleagues involved in the teaching and assessment of HCT learners. Descriptors for structural range and accuracy were considered and an expected percentage rate for each form at each level was decided on to allow measurement of observed forms against an expected rate of accuracy for each form at each language level.

4.2.7 Values for chi square tests

An expected percentage rate of accurate use for each verb form at each of the five levels was deduced from an analysis of the requirements set out in the Band Descriptors. The expected figures arrived at for each verb form under consideration in the research are set out in the following table, 4.2. These figures are used in the chi square tests to measure accuracy rates in each form at each level in each of the three instruments. Learners' poor performance in the area of grammar, in particular the competent management of verb forms with the resulting negative effect on communication is one of the primary motivators for undertaking the current research. The percentage figures set out in Table 4.2 illustrate an agreed upon accuracy rate in the use of the most common English verb forms. Their employment in the first set of chi square tests is done to illustrate the discrepancy between observations and expectations in the use of verb forms and to justify to some extent why the research was undertaken.

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Past simple	50%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Present simple	25%	50%	80%	95%	95%
Progressives	10%	40%	60%	70%	70%
Present perfect	5%	10%	25%	50%	50%

Table 4.2

Accuracy rates expected for verb forms (HCT descriptors)

Values used in the chi-square tests for the primacy of aspect and transfer hypotheses differ from those used above. The values for chi square tests to investigate the relevance of the POA were established by considering expectations set by the features of the hypothesis and described in section 4.6.2. Values for tests done to establish the validity of the transfer hypothesis were set according to the grammatical accuracy of the verb form as used in particular functions and outlined also in 4.6.2.

Part Two: Methodology

4.3 Research Instruments

As the thrust of the current research is the consideration of learners' actual use of verb forms in written output, it seemed appropriate to analyse verbs from tasks familiar to the learners and common to course requirements. The obvious instrument was free composition writing (El-Daly 1991), as this is the writing task most frequently assigned to the learners and used for testing. However, as specific hypotheses have been proposed as factors in learner choice of verb forms, it was essential that an adequate number of each verb type, form and function be available for analysis. This could not be guaranteed through the analysis of free compositions alone, a problem faced also by Kharma & Hajjaj (1989) in their research. Three distinct temporal categories of lexical aspect, tense, and grammatical aspect were selected for investigation (Ch. 1, 2 & 3) and the instruments needed to reflect the focus.

In the initial search for a suitable instrument, grammaticality judgement tests were considered. Schachter, Tyson and Diffley (1976), used only judgements of grammaticality as data and argued for the inclusion of such data in describing interlanguage. However, though grammaticality judgement tests were employed with a group of learners in a short experiment to allow judgement on the appropriateness of a variety of verb forms in performing given temporal functions, such tests were not selected as the final instrument for data collection. Learners were not familiar with these tests and the tendency among them was to guess in a somewhat random and haphazard manner. In addition, the time involved in acquiring enough data for proposed analyses, and administrative considerations made the use of such instruments difficult.

It was also recognized that learner performance varied depending on the type of task being performed. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:29) explain that at one time it had been thought reasonable to expect a consistent performance from learners irrespective of the task. *'The logic was that if subjects had acquired a particular structure then they should be able to use it in all contexts and modalities.'* This is clearly not the case. Though the employment of relative grammaticality judgement

tests designed to tap into L1 parameters could possibly provide insight into learners' judgement of the use of verb forms, the aim of the research was to consider associations formed by learners between verb types, functions and forms. Therefore, it was necessary to access data where learners actually use verb forms in a composing process. Free composition writing of the task types normally assigned learners was felt to be the most suitable instrument. To access a wide variety of verb types and functions, composition writing was supplemented by preparing two additional instruments: one an English grammar cloze test that considered many of the forms, types and functions of verbs used by learners and the second an Arabic translation of the first where learners had to translate a verb from a sentence into the most appropriate English verb form. All three instruments used are described in the following sections.

4.3.1 English Grammar Instrument (EGI)

An English grammar instrument (EGI see Appendix Ai), incorporating the five most common verb forms in learner writing, the relevant lexical verb types (section 2.1.2), and the most common verb functions, was prepared. The original EGI consisted of 100 sentences with 18 items added for examples of past habitual situations (5 items), 'when' time clauses (3), bounded and unbounded past time situations (10) giving 118 items in total. The following tables list the verb forms, types and functions included in EGI. There were 300 respondents in total, 60 at each of the language levels. The total given in the following columns reflects the total number of learners multiplied by the total number of verbs selected in each section.

a. Verb Form

The test items included the following verb forms encoding a variety of tense and aspectual notions. The number of tokens of each verb form used in the analysis is given in the following table.

Verb forms	Number	Total
Past simple	28 x 300	8400
Present simple	27 x 300	8100
Progressive	24 x 300	7200
Present Perfect	21 x 300	6300
All forms	30,000	

Table 4.3

Verb forms and tokens

b. Verb type

The lexical aspect of each verb was tested using Robison's tests adapted from those by Dowty, Fillmore, Kenny, Lakoff and Vendler (See Appendix B). Each verb type is hypothesized to influence the morphological form selected by the respondent (see Ch. 2). The following examples from the EGI illustrate the use of each verb type.

1. Stative: Ali doesn't own a car but this motorbike belongs to him (item 21).
2. Activity: The children are walking on the wall and that is very dangerous (19).
3. Accomplishment: First I prepared all the ingredients and then I cooked dinner (20).
4. Achievement: Classes start at 7.30 every morning but students are often late (36).

The frequency of each verb type in the instrument is recorded in Table 4.5.

Verb type	Number	Total of verbs analysed from all RPs
Stative	25 x 300	7500
Activity	28 x 300	8400
Accomplishment	21 x 300	6300
Achievement	26 x 300	7800
All types	30,000	

Table 4.4

Verb type and tokens

c. Verb function

The function of each verb in terms of the encoding of tense and grammatical aspect was also assessed in the EGI. The following list shows the frequency of each tense type and grammatical aspect.

Tense

- Present 27 x 300 = 8100
- Past 28 x 300 = 8400

Secondary tense

- Conditionals 3 x 300 = 900
- When ' time clauses 3 x 300 = 900

Grammatical Aspect

- Phasal (progressive) $24 \times 300 = 7200$
- Stative $25 \times 300 = 7500$
- Perfective $10 (5 \text{ perfective} + 5 \text{ bounded}) \times 300 = 1500 + 1500$
- Habitual & iterative $17 (12 \text{ present and } 5 \text{ past}) \times 300 = 3600 + 1500$

Table 4.5

Verb function and tokens

Subjects were advised to read the whole sentence and were then asked to insert the correct form of a given verb in the blank in each sentence. The base form of each verb was given and subjects had to encode the verb in the form most suitable to the context in which it occurred as in the following example

While I (speak) _____ my friend, I heard the phone ring. (4)

The meanings of the test items were kept quite simple to avoid word meaning questions. Teachers facilitating the tests were given a list of verb meanings in Arabic which subjects could check if necessary. Clues in the form of a verb already marked for tense were included where appropriate. Adverbial phrases provided the necessary temporal focus in some utterances. Learners were pointed to those clues before the test started and advised to read the whole utterance before attempting to put the verb in the correct form. There was no way to ensure that this advice was followed indicating a possible limitation with this type of task.

The expected grammatical form at times coincided with the hypothesized morphological form as outlined in the POA and illustrated in the following example.

Sheikha lost her bag while we were in the market yesterday. She is very careless and does not look after her things. (13)

The verb 'lose' is achievement and therefore hypothesized to occur in the past form; grammatical aspect indicates perfectivity, as it is a completed punctual event and 'yesterday' indicating occurrence prior to the time of utterance requires a verb form that encodes past tense.

In some examples, however, the morphological requirements of the utterance do not permit the coincidence of the three systems in one form.

Listen! Can you hear the train? It is arriving at Platform 3 and people are rushing to get through the gate even though the train has not stopped yet. (45)

The verb 'arrive' is an achievement verb. Its function in the utterance above is to indicate an event in progress at the time of speaking, thereby showing progressive aspect and present deictic location, requiring a verb form contrary to the POA expectations.

4.3.2 Arabic Translation Instrument (ATI)

The Arabic translation instrument (ATI) is a translation of the EGI, prepared with the advice and help of Arabic speaking colleagues. Each of the items in the EGI and supplementary tests was translated into Arabic. Extensive feedback, both oral and written, was obtained from groups of learners to ensure that the Arabic verb forms for verb functions were those commonly used in the Emirati Arabic dialect. As the majority of sentences involved straightforward use of simple verb forms, interference from differences between colloquial and classical varieties was not a problem. Learners were asked to read each sentence and then translate the underlined verb into the most suitable form in English. The base form of each verb in the English translation was provided in brackets to facilitate unknown vocabulary. Translation was limited to the verb because of time constraints and subjects were advised to read the whole sentence before choosing a verb form.

Translation is not a component of the HCT curriculum though learners take Arabic courses in specific writing tasks such as letter writing for the workplace. In fact, the use of the L1 is openly discouraged, which is not a big issue as most of the English language teachers do not speak Arabic. The rationale behind a translation instrument was to facilitate insight into what learners do when provided with an Arabic verb form clearly reflecting a temporal perspective other than that expected in the conventional TL requirement. Learner performance can be compared on items that have been identified as highly susceptible to interference from the L1 as seen in the case of secondary tense, bounded events and present perfect items. At the same time, it may be possible to gain insight into whether or not learners interpret and encode situations such as the imperfective differently in both instruments. Comparison between the two instruments could also provide insight into conflicting facets of the developmental and transfer hypotheses. Verb types are hypothesized to occur in

particular forms irrespective of the grammatical requirements. Where the verb form in Arabic is other than that hypothesized by the POA (see hypotheses 1.6.4), learner output may provide insight into which of the hypothesized influences is stronger.

4.3.3 Free Compositions (FCs)

Composition writing was described in 4.2.6. Data to illustrate how learners employed verbs in their free writing were collected in addition to the two instruments described above. Two hundred pieces of student writing were procured at each of the five levels, giving in total 1,000 compositions. Time and administrative constraints prevented the acquisition of compositions from all the same learners who participated in the grammar tests, but all writing reflects that of students at the five language levels covered in the tests.

The first free writing samples, collected over a twelve-month period (2000 – 2001), consisted of 500 compositions. These were added to in 2001 – 2002 to ensure a large enough corpus of verb forms, types and functions to permit comparison with findings in EGI and ATI. Some compositions were written under test conditions and some in the regular classroom under the teachers' supervision. This was done to ensure that the work was the student's own without help or input from outside sources.

Compositions yielded between 12 – 30 verbs per writing, depending on level and topic. A sample number of each verb form, type and function were selected and analysed. To facilitate comparison of accurate forms in learners' output across levels and with EGI and ATI, where possible an equal number of each form, type and function were selected. The required amount of data was selected randomly from the corpus. In some cases however, as with progressive and present perfect forms, a smaller number had to be used in the analysis due to infrequent occurrence of the forms in free writing. The compositions were read for verb form, type and function. The counting of verb occurrences was done manually and each recorded verb, subject and predicate inserted into tables in a computer file. These were then coded (see description below) and results analysed. The following tables give the numbers of each verb form, type and function selected from the free writing. An equal number of present and past verb forms was selected at each level to facilitate comparison, with the total being half that of the EGI and ATI. However, the sample

size for progressive and present perfect forms is small and incorporates all forms occurring in the compositions.

Verb forms	Number
Present simple	4,050
Past simple	4,200
Progressive	699
Present perfect	575
Total	9048

Table 4.6

Verb forms in FCs

Verb types	Number
Stative	3750
Activity	4200
Accomplishment	3150
Achievement	3900
Total	15,000

Table 4.7

Verb types in FCs

Tense

- Present 4050
- Past 4200

Secondary tense

- Conditionals 355
- When 'time' clauses 205

Grammatical Aspect

- Phasal (progressive) 699
- Stative 3750
- Perfective 1500
- Habitual & iterative 3600 present & 1500 past

Table 4.8

Verb function in FCs

4.4 Control Group (CG)

A group of native English speakers acted as a control group providing feedback on expected verb form choices in the test items. A homogenous group of native English speakers was required but this was impossible within the context of the UAE English medium schools, where students come from a variety of L1 backgrounds. Therefore, a group of Irish learners consisting of thirty-three 17 – 18 (mean age 17.5) year old native speakers of English, all of whom were in their final year of high school in Dublin, Ireland (1999 –2000) were used as the control group. Their responses indicate regular native speaker use of verb forms in the designated sentences. The control group completed the grammar instrument under test conditions.

In almost all cases, the responses registered 100% agreement on verb form encoding tense and grammatical aspect of utterances. Unless otherwise stated in Ch. 5, all respondents in the control group chose the expected verb form. Four sentences requiring present perfect form were found to generate mixed responses with CG respondents choosing both present perfect and past simple as indicated in the following table.

Item	Past	Present Perfect
42	24.5%	75.5%
60	9.5%	90.5%
91	19%	81%
100	60%	40%

Table 4.9

Verb choices on four PP items

The nature of the event in these utterances is open to speaker interpretation (see Ch. 3) as reflected in verb choice. Subjects' verb choices are discussed within the context of such interpretations in Ch. 6. Based on feedback from the control group, modifications were made to other items in the test instrument. These involved the addition of more contextual information to make the temporal features of the situation more transparent in addition to the revision of some lexical items to avoid ambiguity.

4.5 Data Collection

The initial pilot study was done in 2000 – 2001 and the final set of data was collected in early 2002.

4.5.1 Pilot group

Data were collected initially in 2000 – 2001 from a group of 298 respondents unequally divided among five language levels. The goal was to collect a wide range of data from a cross section of Arabic learners of English from a number of third level institutions in the UAE. Respondents on the first test consisted of Arabic speaking Emirati, Palestinian, Jordanian, Egyptian and Sudanese learners from a number of tertiary educational institutions in the UAE. The EGI was used along with a shorter version of the ATI. Data from the grammar/ translation instruments as well as from a wide range of free writing collected from the same learners appeared to support the assumption that the hypothesized influences were factors in learner output. The following observations were noted.

- the tendency of stative verbs to occur in present simple form and achievement verbs in past simple form
- the preponderance of the –ing form and its association with durative events, habitual and iterative or situations that occur a number of times and over an extended period of time
- conditional verbs in the past simple form
- confusion with the present perfect verb form
- use of past simple forms with bounded situations

4.5.2 Data for the study

Though the findings from the pilot study group suggested that proposed hypotheses could have some relevance to L1 Arabic learners' use of verbs in English, the data were procured from learners from a wide range of national, social and educational backgrounds with the only common factor being the Arabic language. An unequal number of respondents participated at each level and a shortened version of the Arabic translation test was used making comprehensive comparison with the EGI impossible. Consequently, it was decided that data should be collected from a more

homogenous group. The grammar tests were administered a second time to a homogenous group, consisting entirely of HCT learners. It was hoped that this would ensure a level of homogeneity in the influencing variables and the language learning environment both prior to and current with the research. For the final data analysis, a total of 300 students, 60 at each of the five language levels, all graduates of the Emirati government school system and students in HCT, completed both instruments (Feb – May 2002). Teachers working in the HCT system provided help in administering the tests during class time. The number of respondents in many cases exceeded 60 at each level. Incomplete tests were first eliminated and those of learners who had attended an English medium school were also discounted. The English test was administered first followed by the Arabic, all completed within a two-week time frame.

4.6 Coding of the data

The scripts of subjects who participated in the EGI and ATI tests were numbered from 1 – 300, each participant having a corresponding number in both instruments. All data were entered into files in the Statistics Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) and subdivided into files according to verb forms to be investigated in the study.

- Present simple form
- Past simple
- Progressive (present/past)
- Present perfect

Responses for each verb form were then subdivided again into language levels.

1 = elementary

2 = upper elementary

3 = lower intermediate

4 = intermediate

5 = upper intermediate

Though subjects are divided equally in the main between male and female, a cross gender comparison on performance was not done as the focus is on how learners at each level use verbs rather than the difference between gender. Comparisons were made across levels and between instruments.

4.6.1 First coding and analysis

All responses in the three instruments were coded for accuracy of verb form according to the requirements of the sentence context, and as indicated by control group choices. This was done first to give an overall view of learners' ability in using the verb forms selected for study. The first coding was for accuracy of form with correct responses coded as 1 and incorrect as 0.

The SPSS was used to help with calculating results with frequencies counted initially in the descriptive statistics program. These results are presented in tables in Ch. 5 along with the statistical significance of the difference between the expected and observed rates on each form for each level. A chi square test was carried out on each set of results for each form at each of the five language levels. The chi square test was considered suitable, as the aim was to test whether a significant difference exists between an observed number of accurate responses and an expected number. The expected accuracy rates as set out in the HCT writing descriptors (Figure 4.2) were used as values in each test. All chi square results are included in the tables in Ch. 5 as this allows comparison across levels. In most cases, the greater the chi square result the greater the difference in a negative sense (observed responses are much lower than expected responses) between observed and expected. When the reverse is true, it is pointed out in the discussion in Ch. 6.

An analysis of the type described above establishes only how well respondents perform in using verb forms accurately. Where differences between observed and expected are great, it is assumed that challenges exist for learners that are possibly not being addressed. The relevance of the proposed hypotheses is not considered through these tests but results here establish a basis for consideration of the different verb types and functions encoded in the forms that might prove difficult for learners. If learners find these basic verb forms challenging, having had several periods of classroom instruction in their use, it can only be concluded that there are factors impeding their understanding.

4.6.2 Second coding and analysis

The data from the three instruments were coded a second time to provide information on all morphological choices made by the learners. This second coding was done to facilitate exploration and analysis of all verb choices made by the learners. This was considered essential if the relevance of development and transfer hypotheses were to be explored. The following codes were used for data entry.

1 = present simple

2 = past simple

3 = progressive

4 = present perfect

5 = future

6 = other

Responses for all verb choices as coded above for the three instruments were entered into SPSS, firstly in a single file providing all verb choices made by subjects on all items. The data were then subdivided to reflect choices at language levels for verb types and verb functions. Inflections for the past simple both regular and irregular were labelled as past. Though indicating unfamiliarity with irregular verbs, 'ed' on irregular verbs was coded as past as it suggested learner awareness of either deixis and/ or perfective aspect, though not correct irregular forms. Present simple forms with or without -s were also coded as present. Learners, though aware of the number/ person function of 's' on the verb, frequently omit it when using the present simple form. Pienemann & Johnston (1987:81) point out that the third person '-s' "*is seen as a relatively late developmental feature*". As the focus of the research was not on learner accuracy in number and person and the occurrence of the omission of the 's' is all pervasive it was thought best to group verbs with or without 's' as present simple form.

Learners frequently omitted the auxiliary verb 'is' 'was', necessary for the establishment of the tense of an utterance, when using the progressive forms in all instruments. Therefore, in the first recoding of responses all -ing verb forms with or without a helping verb were coded as 3. Omission of the tense component, in the verb to be, was interpreted as a greater concern with aspect than tense. The number of omissions of the helping verb is included in tables in Ch. 5 and Appendix C.

Forms coded as perfect include those where learners used 'have' with the past participle or included only the past participle. The latter form was interpreted as limited learner awareness of the sense of completion inherent in existential and resultative uses of the present perfect. There is, of course, no real way of knowing where the learner was operating from a kind of formulaic approach (Ellis 1984, Bates & MacWhinney 1987, Weinart 1994), without understanding the meanings that lie behind the present perfect. The use of the future was limited and required only 'will' with the base part of the verb. Forms such as 'am catch' 'was catch' were grouped separately as 'other' because the rationale for the learners' choices was not clear. Suggestions are made in the discussion as to why learners may choose these anomalous forms.

The second set of coded data provided information facilitating the analysis of the data within the context of the two hypotheses. The POA (see Ch. 2) considers four verb types and three verb forms as factors in learner choices. Responses for each example of the four verb types at each of the five language levels were copied from the original file of total verb choices and pasted into separate files reflecting morphological choices for all examples of stative, activity, accomplishment and achievement verb types. These files were then further subdivided into language levels allowing for a cross comparison of morphological choices for verb types at each level. The expectation was that, irrespective of grammatical tense and aspect requirements, learners would encode each verb type in the following way.

- stative verbs in the present simple form
- activity verbs in the -ing form (progressive form)
- accomplishment and achievement verbs in the past simple.

The hypothesis does not consider other influencing factors. The subjects are, however, experienced language learners who have had years of classroom instruction in the use of English. Knowledge of grammatical tense and aspect has been available to learners even if their acquisition of these has been inadequate. It is important, I believe, to consider whether or not awareness of grammatical features of the utterance is a factor. Therefore, two types of tests were conducted on the results. The first chi square test was conducted with the focus on verb choices as anticipated

by the POA. The expectation was that if the hypothesis was relevant, learner choices would fall significantly into one of three categories depending on verb type. The null hypothesis suggests that if there is no factor influencing verb choice, the expected frequencies of each of the three forms i.e. present simple, past simple and progressive are assumed to be equal. Therefore the values of the first test done were generated by the SPSS programme reflecting the null hypothesis and divided equally among the three verb forms of present, past and progressive. In the case of each verb type, a value of 33.3% (one third of the total number of verbs) according to the null hypothesis was inserted for the anticipated morphological form, while the other two forms were grouped together at 66.6%. If results showed the number of observed verb forms to exceed that assumed by the null hypothesis, the POA was considered to have possible relevance.

A second chi square test was carried out on each verb type giving the value of expected frequencies as that required by tense and grammatical features of each verb in context. Both outcomes are included in Ch. 5. In the first test, there were verb forms that did not fit the expected three according to POA. These forms were excluded from the first set of tests, as can be seen from the total (see Appendix C). These missing forms were included in the second test and fall into categories present perfect, or other. Values reflecting the true number of forms according to the grammar of the utterance were inserted in the values in chi square tests. The number of observed hypothesized forms according to verb type was compared with all other forms. Where a higher than expected number of the form occurred, the POA was considered to have some relevance. Where the observed fell short of the anticipated number, other factors were considered to be influential.

The second hypothesis, testing the role of the L1 in learners' choice of morphological forms, is considered in a further set of tests. The hypothesis and set of assumptions, set out in Ch. 1 and 4, are explored in a number of chi square tests, the results of which are given in Ch. 5. The specifics of the transfer of anticipated features from the L1 are examined in the following tests.

- Chi square tests to assess learner choice of form to encode imperfective situations that may be encoded in the present simple or progressive in English. One imperfective verb form covers both situation types in Arabic resulting in difficulties for the learners in discriminating between the accurate employment of

each form. Tests considered present simple and progressive forms only and compared the observed occurrence of each form in utterances that are both aspectually simple and progressive. All other forms were excluded.

- Chi square tests to assess how learners use verbs to encode habitual situations in present time. Figures are given for all selected verb forms in the tables. Learner difficulties may originate in difficulties in discriminating between present simple and progressive forms to encode the habitual. Chi square tests consider the difference in choice between the two, with the expectation being that there is no significant difference between the observed frequencies of both forms.
- Chi square tests to assess how learners use verbs to encode habitual situations in past time. If learners focus on the imperfective nature of past habituais as influenced by the L1 system, it is expected that either present simple or progressive form should occur. All imperfective forms i.e. present and progressive are grouped as one and compared with the observed frequency of the past simple form.
- Chi square tests to assess whether there is a tendency for learners to choose the progressive form when using translocative verbs. Such verb types can be encoded in a participle form in Arabic to indicate a situation in progress at the time of the utterance. The accurate values according to the grammatical requirements are given in the chi square values and comparison made between observed frequencies of simple and progressive forms.
- Chi square tests to assess how learners use verbs to encode present and past progressive situations. Learner tendency to overuse the –ing form is expected to result in a high rate of accuracy. The observed frequency of the progressive is compared with all other forms.
- Chi square tests to assess how learners encode past single event situations that are clearly bounded. Such situation types are aspectually perfective in Arabic and the associations between situation boundedness and perfective verb form may result in a high accuracy rate. Observed past simple forms are compared with all other forms.
- Chi square tests to compare learners' encoding of past bounded and unbounded situations. Situation types in Arabic that are not clearly bounded are encoded imperfectively, though tense may indicate completion. In both situation types i.e. bounded and unbounded, observed forms in the past simple are compared with all imperfective forms i.e. present simple or progressive.

- Chi square tests to assess the learners' choice of morphological form for the encoding of secondary tense in conditional and 'when' time clauses. The influence of associations between temporal notions and morphological forms in the L1 are expected to guide learners to the choice of the past simple form. The observed frequency of this form is compared with all imperfective forms.
- Chi square tests to assess the learners' encoding of situations that require the present perfect in English with consideration given to the fact that the different semantics of the present perfect form and its encoding in Arabic may influence the verb inflections selected by the learners. Details of the anticipated forms are given with each of the tests in Ch. 5.

Results for all the above tests are presented in Ch. 5 and are discussed in Ch. 6.

Chapter Five

Results

5.0 Introduction

The challenges encountered in the expression of temporality in English by L1 Arabic learners were outlined in the preceding chapters and hypotheses presented as possible explanations for some of the observed anomalous forms. In Ch. 4, the instruments used for data collection were presented along with the method of coding and analyses of results. In Ch. 5, results for accuracy rates in learners' use of verb forms are first discussed, followed by a consideration of the morphological choices made in the context of development and transfer hypotheses. While the EGI and ATI instruments were designed to yield a defined number of verb forms, functions and types, verbs were selected from a corpus of 1000 free compositions (200 at each of the five language levels) according to the criteria of form, function, and type relevant to the research.

5.1 Accuracy Rates

Accuracy rates in the use of the following verb forms with a variety of verb types and functions are presented. The first set of results given in the present section reflects the accuracy of the following forms in the context in which they occur.

- Present simple
- Past simple
- Progressives both present and past
- Present perfect

Responses from the total number of subjects for verb types are subdivided into five language levels coded as follows:

- 1 = elementary
- 2 = upper elementary
- 3 = lower intermediate
- 4 = intermediate
- 5 = upper intermediate

Chi square tests were carried out on each set of results for each form, calculating the significance of the difference between correct and incorrect forms. Expected accuracy rates for each form at each language level according to HCT writing descriptors were provided in Ch. 4 (Table 4.2). The figures do not represent absolute values for learners in general. Instead, they assume that given the many variables in the learners' educational and social environment, learners should be able to use the most common verb forms at those suggested rates of accuracy. The values (expected accuracy rates varying from level to level) are employed in the value section of the chi square tests to measure observed against expected. The expected rates are given in the right hand column of the following tables, along with the observed accuracy rates for the three instruments (EGI, ATI and FC). The differential frequency (df) in all cases is 1. As the difference in almost all cases is significant (.000), the actual chi results are given to permit insight into discrepancy size between expected and observed accuracy rates and to facilitate comparison across levels. Unless otherwise indicated, control group responses (33 respondents) matched the expected form with 100 % accuracy rate. Results for subjects' performances in the use of each form are given in the following sections and discussed in Ch. 6.

5.1.1 Present Simple Form

It was noted (Ch. 2) that the present simple verb form encodes a variety of temporal situations indicating verb type, aspectual function, tense and modality. The following results concentrate on accuracy of form while the question of type and function are considered in subsequent analyses. A comparison of the patterns of accuracy rates in the three instruments over the five levels is presented in the following line graph (Raw scores are available in Appendix C).

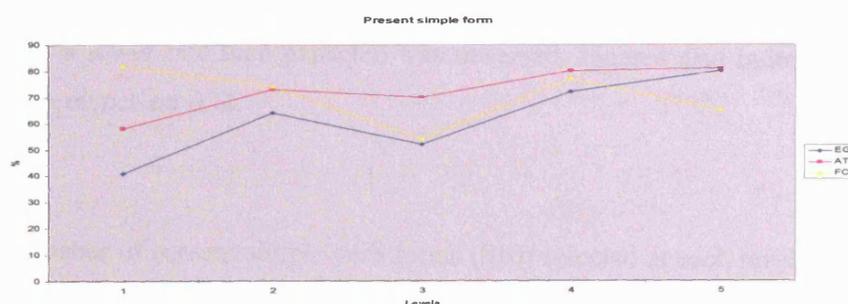


Figure 5.1
Comparison of accuracy rates (%) in present simple form

a. EGI and ATI

Table 5.1 gives percentages for accuracy rates in EGI and ATI. Each instrument yielded a total of 8100 present simple verb forms (1620 at each of five levels) generated from 27 items by a total of 300 subjects (60 at each level). Chi square tests measure observed against expected accuracy rates. In all cases, the difference is statistically significant.

Levels	Observed EGI	Observed ATI	Expected rates
1	41%	58%	25%
2	64%	73%	50%
3	52%	70%	80%
4	72%	80%	95%
5	80%	81%	95%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	234.696	127.232	767.423	1740.819	767.368
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	928.267	354.669	34.818	767.368	669.643
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.1

Present simple form (EGI/ATI)

Le.1 and 2 figures reflect a higher than expected accuracy rate while at the three upper levels a lower rate than expected was observed. Figures also indicate better overall performance on ATI.

b. FC

An equal number of present simple verb forms (810) selected at each level from the FCs (a total of 4050 present simple verbs) was analysed to provide data on learner use of the form in free writing. The selection was done randomly from a larger corpus of verbs. Each verb form was first coded for accuracy, followed by a chi square test to measure the difference between the observed and expected rates.

Level	Observed FC rates	Expected rates
1	82%	25%
2	74%	50%
3	54%	80%
4	77%	95%
5	65%	95%

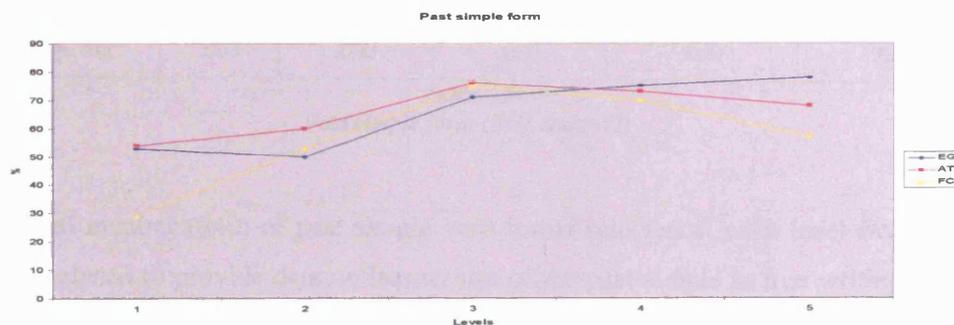
FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	1402.352	185.857	343.526	550.234	1528.428
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

*Table 5.2
Present simple form (FC)*

5.1.2 Past simple form

A variety of tense and aspectual notions are encoded in the past simple form in English. The following results reflect only accuracy rates in the use of the past simple verb form without taking verb type and function into consideration. A comparison of the patterns of accuracy rates in the three instruments over the five levels is presented in the following line graph



*Figure 5.2
Comparison of accuracy rates (%) in past simple forms*

a. EGI & ATI

The data sources for results presented in line graph 5.2 are EGI and ATI. Each instrument yielded a total of 8400 past simple verb forms (1680 at each of five levels) generated from 28 items by a total of 300 subjects (60 at each level). Accuracy rates for each level according to the expected proportion (given in right hand column of table below) provide a measure against which learners' actual performance is gauged. Except for le.1, observed rates are significantly lower than expected.

Levels	Observed EGI	Observed ATI	Expected rates
1	53%	54%	50%
2	50%	60%	80%
3	71%	76%	100%
4	75%	73%	100%
5	78%	68%	100%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	4.200	918.932	13236.451	9774.546	6635.212
Asymp. Sig	.040	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	8.571	514.821	9248.488	11179.261	15847.059
Asymp. Sig	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000

*Table 5.3
Past simple form (EGI and ATI)*

b. FC

An equal number (840) of past simple verb forms selected at each level from FCs were analysed to provide data on learner use of the past simple in free writing. The selection of 840 (total 4,200) verbs at each level was done randomly from a larger corpus of verbs. Chi square tests with values similar to those in EGI and ATI were used. Observed rates are significantly lower at all language levels than expected.

Levels	Observed FC	Expected rates
1	29%	50%
2	53%	80%
3	75%	100%
4	70%	100%
5	57%	100%

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	154.286	361.113	4679.227	4833.00	14987.688
Asymp. Sig	.000	.062	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.4

Past simple form (FC)

5.1.3 Progressive

The English progressive form is said to exemplify the notion that aspect is more central to the main verb (Siewierska 1991) than tense. The progressive aspect is encoded in the -ing form of the main verb and tense in the helping verb 'to be'. In the current analysis, all observed forms in the -ing with or without the helping verb were coded as progressive. Both progressives present and past are grouped together but are analysed separately in the transfer sections. The line graph compares accuracy rates at each level across the three instruments.

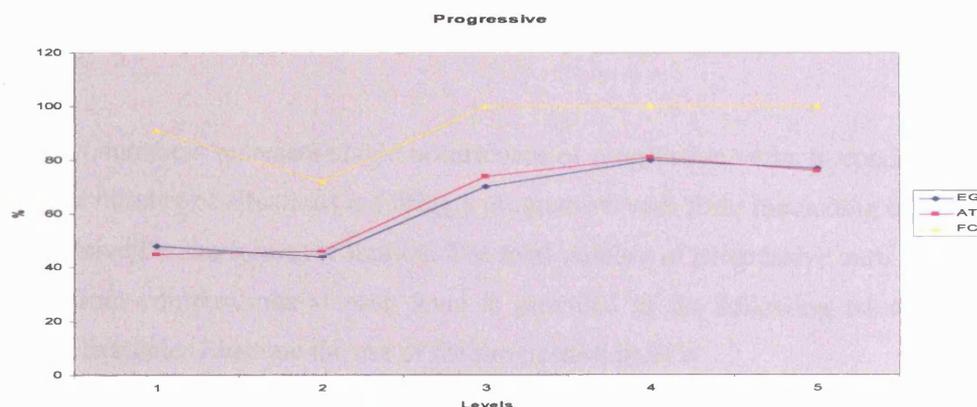


Figure 5.3

Comparison of accuracy rates (%) / progressive

a. EGI & ATI

A total of 7200 verbs (1440 at each level) in the present and past progressive, generated from 24 items were analysed from EGI and ATI. Results in percentages are presented in the following table.

Levels	Observed EGI	Observed ATI	Expected Rates
1	48%	45%	10%
2	44%	46%	40%
3	70%	74%	60%
4	80%	81%	70%
5	77%	76%	70%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	3230.008	7.824	11.123	62.067	35.767
Asymp. Sig	.000	.005	.001	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	3453.403	3.961	69.517	76.402	28.601
Asymp. Sig	.000	.047	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.5

Progressive form (EGI and ATI)

Chi square results reflect a highly significant difference between observed and expected. The observed exceed the expected at all levels. Le.2, with the lowest incidence of progressives is the only result that does not show a significant difference between expected and observed.

b. FC

In the FCs, numbers represent single occurrences of progressive verbs in continuous texts. The number of situations requiring a progressive verb form (excluding the use of progressive for the future) is limited. The total number of progressive verb forms selected from compositions at each level is provided in the following table. The following examples illustrate the use of the progressive in FCs.

1. At the moment, we are sitting in the park having a picnic.
2. Nowadays, women are playing an important role along with men in developing the society.

Example 1 indicates how the progressive form is employed in elementary and upper elementary texts where description of a picture is sometimes a given task. As used in example 1, it is accurate. Example 2 is illustrative of the use of the progressive form at the three upper language levels. Either present progressive or simple could be considered correct. Learners use of -ing form is probably affected by the inclusion of 'nowadays' suggesting a temporariness often not intended by the overall meaning. Such usage of the form was coded as accurate.

Figures are given for all counted progressive forms. It was not possible to choose an equal number at each level as the actual discourse requirements of the form in

composition writing were found to be quite limited. Therefore, the number included in the data analysis reflects the total number of present progressive forms required by learner texts at each level. Past progressive forms were infrequent and therefore not included.

Levels	Total number	Observed FC	Expected Rates
1	82	91%	10%
2	36	72%	40%
3	140	100%	60%
4	225	100%	70%
5	216	100%	70%
Total	699		

Chi square results could not be calculated for levels 3, 4 and 5 as results showed 100% accuracy.

FC

Level	1	2
chi-square	613.938	14.405
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000

*Table 5.6
Progressive form (FC)*

The above results suggest either the learners' complete familiarity with the function of the form or alternatively a tendency to use the –ing form indiscriminately in situations where it is not required, indicating association of the –ing form with functions far beyond its limited semantic range (Ch. 6).

5.1.4 Present Perfect (PP)

The English present perfect (PP) is challenging for learners (see Ch. 1 & 3). Awareness of challenges facing learners is reflected in the expected accuracy levels (HCT) varying between 2% at elementary level to 50% at upper intermediate level. The various semantic functions of the present perfect form were discussed in Ch. 3, and are considered in the analysis in Ch. 6. The following line graph compares accuracy rates across levels and instruments.

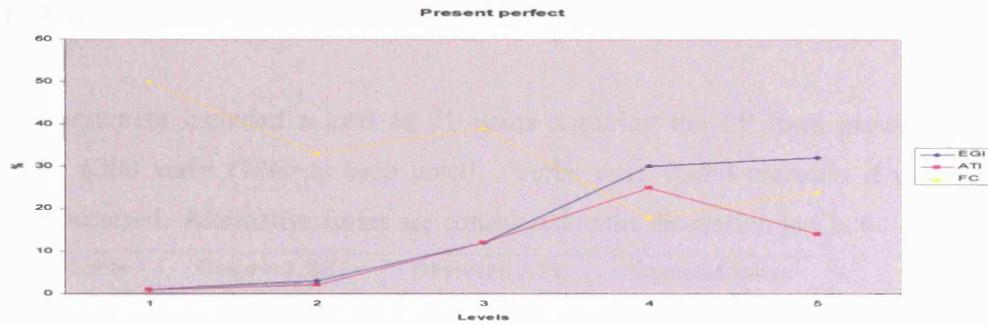


Figure 5.4

Comparison of accuracy rates (%) in PP forms

a. Control Group

Responses of the control group to the 21 items in the test showed some difference of opinion on the encoding of four of the verbs (see Ch. 4).

Number	33
Present perfect verb forms	21
Observed PP verb forms	652 = 94%
Observed past simple verb forms	41 = 6%

Table 5.7

PP forms (CG)

The responses occurring in the past represent situations that could accurately be viewed as past in English.

3. What can I do? I have lost (lost) my key. I'm looking for it right now because I need it to get into my house. (42)
4. What's happened? Fatima has just fallen (fell) off her bicycle and she is crying. (60)
5. We have already eaten (ate) breakfast. We ate it about an hour ago. (91)
6. Ahmed has just left (left) the house. He is going to his mother's house. (100)

b. EGI & ATI

Each instrument included a total of 21 items requiring the PP form providing a possible 6300 verbs (1260 at each level). Verbs were coded correctly if present perfect occurred. Alternative forms are considered in the discussion in Ch. 6.

Level	Observed EGI	Observed ATI	Expected Rates
1	1%	1%	5%
2	3%	2%	10%
3	12%	12%	25%
4	30%	25%	50%
5	32%	14%	50%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	38.496	10709.030	2688.75	201.600	170.870
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	38.496	10806.429	2722.557	321.029	663.013
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

*Table 5.8
Present perfect forms (EGI and ATI)*

c. FCs

PP occurs infrequently in free writing (figures below reflect the total number of PP forms found in FCs). This may suggest an avoidance strategy. When it does occur, it appears to be in a formulaic situation reflecting contexts that could have been memorized as in the following.

7. He has been a student in HCT for three years.
8. She has been working in the bank for two years.

Levels	Number of PP forms in texts	Observed FCs	Expected Rates
1	12	50%	5%
2	18	33%	10%
3	96	39%	25%
4	260	18%	50%
5	189	24%	50%
Total	575		

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	51.158	10.889	2.504	115.671	51.923
Asymp. Sig	.000	.001	.114	.000	.000

*Table 5.9****Present perfect forms (FC)*****5.2 Testing the hypotheses (POA)**

The second coding of data as given (4.5.2) indicates all morphological forms selected by the learners. The first set of chi square tests on the recoded data attempts to evaluate the effect of the lexical nature of the verb on learners' morphological choices (see Ch. 2 & 4). Responses were categorized according to those forms given for each of the four verb types indicating subjects' association between verb type and form. Three morphological forms are relevant to the POA: present simple form (1), regular past simple –ed (2) and –ing forms (3). Verb forms such as present perfect, future and incorrect combinations e.g. 'am go' were not counted in the first test.

Chi square tests were employed to measure the significance of the difference in frequency of verb forms with verb types across the five levels. The values for the tests were set based on the null hypothesis assuming that if there is no affective factor on learner choices, responses should be equally distributed among the three morphological forms of present, progressive and past. Where the null hypothesis was proven to be invalid, the relevance of the POA hypothesis was considered as a possible explanation for the preponderance of one form with a certain verb type.

The possibility of learners' grammatical knowledge affecting the encoding of each verb type needs to be examined. It is possible that inherent verb aspect does not affect morphological choice to the extent that tense and grammatical aspect factors do. To test grammatical effects on learner output, the same data were tested a second time. The expected values given are the number of correct forms of the hypothesized verb form for that verb type according to grammatically accurate tense and aspect features of the items. All other forms are grouped together with the expected value reflecting the combined percentage of each form.

5.2.1 Stative Verbs

The inherent semantics of stative verbs (unchanging, non-phasal) are hypothesized to affect learner morphological choices through the encoding of such situations in the present simple verb form. The frequency of each verb form (25 in total) expected for the accurate grammatical encoding of stative situations is presented in the following table.

Present	Past	Present perfect
10x 300	11x 300	4 x 300
3000	3300	1200

Table 5.10

Expected verb forms with stative verbs

A total of 7500 stative verbs (1500 at each level) were counted. Where subjects responded with other than the three hypothesized verb forms, no response was recorded thus explaining why the total number of verbs is less than 1500 at each level. No progressive forms were expected.

a. EGI/ ATI

Results for the encoding of stative verbs in EGI and ATI are presented in the following line graph and tables. The line graph compares the incidence of stative verbs in present simple form at each language level and in both grammar instruments. According to the null hypothesis, there should be no difference in the distribution of verb forms among the three morphological forms of present simple, progressive and past simple. Therefore the values provided in the chi square test were .33 for all present simple forms and .67 for all others. According to the grammar features of the sentences, 40% of verb forms should occur in the present simple form. Therefore the values of .40 were inserted in the chi square test for all present simple verbs and .60 for all others in the second chi square test. The same procedure was followed with the FCs though present simple form requirements varied from level to level. The table gives figures in actual numbers and percentages for all choices occurring in the present simple form. Full details of verb forms for the morphological encoding of stative situations are included in the tables in Appendix C.

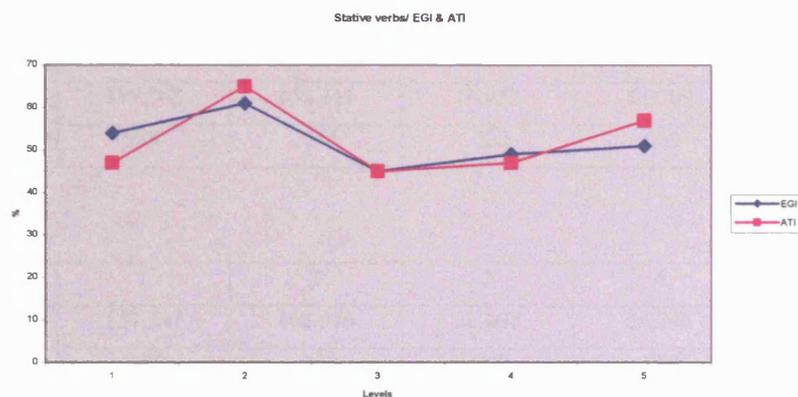


Figure 5.5
Observed stative verbs in present simple form (EGI & ATI)

Levels		1		2		3		4		5	
Verb	Exp	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	500/33%(POA)	807	712	909	974	671	669	736	708	763	856
Present	600/ 40%(gram)	54%	47%	61%	65%	45%	45%	49%	47%	51%	57%

The figures in the table above illustrate the frequency of choice of present simple verb forms. Under expected figures, 33% reflects the expected number of present simple forms according to the null hypothesis (i.e. no affective factor) while 40% reflects the number of present simple forms necessary to meet the grammatical requirements of the utterances. The following chi square tests measure the difference between observed and expected according to both POA and grammatical accuracy requirements.

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	294.332	571.688	99.294	193.044	245.700
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	350.643	786.194	124.871	176.923	431.656
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.11
Chi test results with stative verbs / EGI and ATI (POA)

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	119.565	306.211	16.452	61.709	91.913
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	157.241	462.076	28.407	54.248	209.614
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.12

Chi test results stative verbs /EGI/ATI Grammatical

b. Free Compositions

An equal number of stative verbs at each level (750) were selected from the total corpus of FC verbs. A composition title likely to yield stative verbs was selected with a random selection of verbs taken from those compositions. Values for the first test reflect the values of the null hypothesis while those for the second test reflect the expected number of grammatically accurate forms. The line graph compares the distribution of present simple verb forms across language levels, while the table provides the varying figures for expected % of accurate forms in present simple verb form.

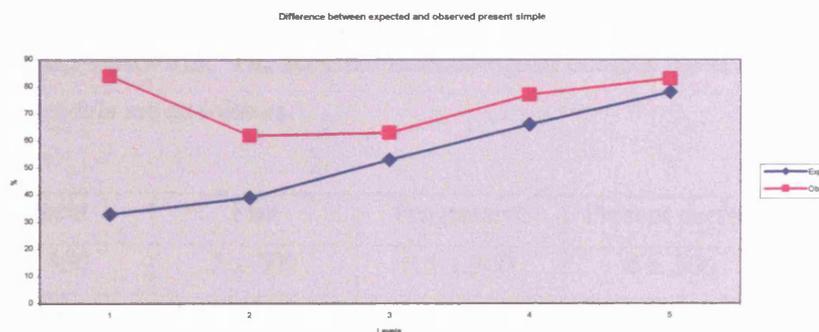


Figure 5.6

Observed Vs expected present simple verb form in FCs

Stative (POA/ FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	250/33%	630	33%	465	33%	476	33%	578	33%	622
Present	249/33%	84%	39%	62%	53%	63%	66%	77%	78%	83%
Total	750	698	750	676	750	726	750	735	750	740

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	1044.931	373.869	320.309	658.708	866.216
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.13

Chi test results stative verbs / FCs (POA)

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	993.959	237.949	34.831	40.933	14.268
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.14

Chi test results stative verbs in FC (grammatical)

In all cases in all instruments, the observed frequency of present simple verb forms with stative verbs exceeds the expected.

5.2.2 Activity Verbs

The inherent semantics of activity verbs with the focus on phases and action are hypothesized to affect learner choice through the encoding of such situations in the progressive -ing verb form. The accurate morphological choices for activity verbs in the test instruments are as follows.

Present	Past	Progressive	Present perfect
5 x 300	2 x 300	15 x 300	6 x 300
1500	600	4500	1800

Table 5.15

Expected verb forms with activity verbs

a. EGI /ATI

EGI/ ATI contained 28 activity verbs with 300 RPs, giving a total of 8400 activity verb tokens (1680 verb tokens at each level). The line graph compares the number of activity verbs observed in progressive form at each language level and in the two instruments. According to the null hypothesis, 33% (.33) are expected to occur in progressive form while the grammatical accuracy rate is 54%.

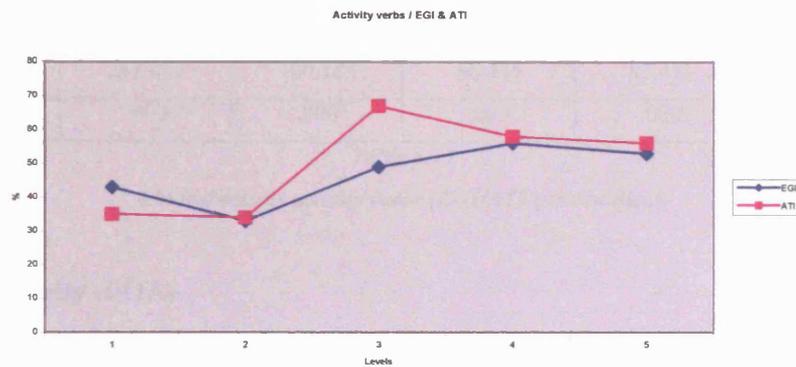


Figure 5.7
Observed activity verbs with progressive form/ EGI & ATI

The following table indicates the frequency of progressive forms with activity verbs and the expected % according to the POA and grammatical accuracy requirements.

Verb	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Prog	560/33%	43%	35%	33%	34%	49%	67%	56%	58%	53%	56%
Prog	900/54%	726	586	551	572	831	1124	945	977	886	944
Total	1680	1634	1627	1639	1578	1624	1564	1564	1481	1543	1570

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	96.565	.283	242.496	531.920	416.189
Asymp. Sig	.000	.595	.140	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	6.699	7.531	760.912	728.075	522.549
Asymp. Sig	.010	.006	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.16

Chi test results activity verbs / EGI and ATI (POA)

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	60.235	274.106	5.236	34.586	7.268
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.022	.000	.001

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	241.812	200.184	86.445	85.411	23.730
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.17

Chi test results activity verbs (EGI/ATI grammatical)

b. FC /Activity (POA)

An equal number of activity verbs were selected from the corpus of verbs taken from FCs. The line graph compares the observed with the expected, which varies from level to level (see table below).

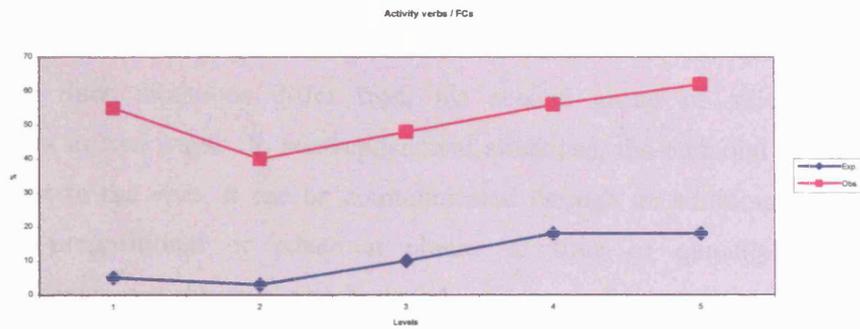


Figure 5.8

Observed Vs expected % of activity verbs in progressive form/ FC

FC

Form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Prog	39	463	26	337	87	402	151	471	150	517
	5%	55%	3%	40%	10%	48%	18%	56%	18%	62%

Levels	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	252.920	31.888	115.349	261.975	352.906
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.620	.000	.000

Table 5.18

Chi square results activity verbs in FC (POA)

Levels	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	4904.280	4317.747	9726.562	4176.088	16032.246
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.19

Chi test results activity verbs in FC (grammatical)

Chi square tests reflect a highly significant difference between the two groups particularly in the grammar accuracy test.

5.2.3 Accomplishment Verbs

The inherent semantics of accomplishment situations involves duration and a clear endpoint. Such situations differ from the second group of telic verbs i.e. achievement in two ways. In accomplishment situations, the endpoint is generally not inherent in the verb. It can be communicated through an additional predicate, usually a prepositional or adverbial phrase of time or quantity. Secondly, accomplishments are durative and bounded, whereas achievements are generally punctual. In accomplishment situations, it is hypothesized that learners are affected by the endpoint in the whole utterance and encode the verb in the past simple verb form irrespective of the tense of the utterance. The test items are grammatically accurate if encoded as follows.

Present	Past	Progressive	Present perfect
5 x 300	8 x 300	6 x 300	2 x 300
1500	2400	1800	600

Table 5.20

Expected verb forms with accomplishment verbs

a. EGI/ATI

The EGI/ ATI contained 21 accomplishment predicates, giving a total of 6300 verb tokens (1260 at each level). Where RPs responded with other than the three hypothesized verb forms in the POA test, no count was included. The line graph compares choices of past simple forms in the two grammar instruments. The percentage expected for grammatical accuracy is 38%.

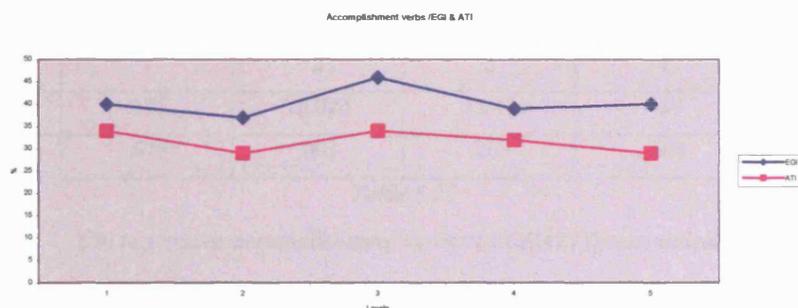


Figure 5.9
Accomplishment verbs in past simple form (EGI & ATI)

The following table indicates the % of past simple forms that occurred with accomplishment verbs and the expected proportions according to the null hypothesis (testing POA) and % of grammatically accurate past simple forms required.

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	33.3%	40%	34%	37%	29%	46%	34%	39%	32%	40%	29%
Past	480/ 38%	507	427	472	360	582	423	491	405	499	369
Total	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	35.417	21.154	132.116	31.938	38.838
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.340	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	2.460	5.590	5.068	.222	3.577
Asymp. Sig	.117	.018	.024	.638	.059

Table 5.21

Chi test results accomplishment verbs in EGI/ATI (POA)

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	22.480	11.702	104.889	19.881	25.349
Asymp. Sig	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000

ATI					
Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	.175	12.024	1.240	.439	9.010
Asymp. Sig	.676	.001	.265	..508	.003

Table 5.22

Chi test results accomplishment verbs in EGI/ATI (grammatical)

b. FC

A total of 630 accomplishment verbs were selected from compositions at each language level and rate of observed forms in the past simple forms is compared with the expected number of the same form. The difference is illustrated in the following line graph.

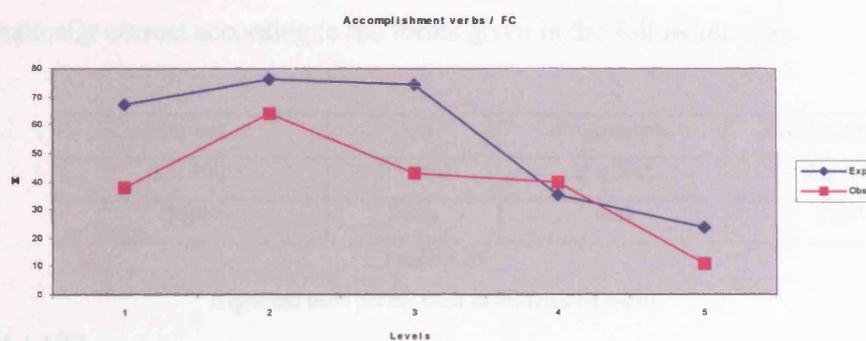


Figure 5.10

Observed and expected accomplishments in past simple form

The following table indicates the number of past simple verb forms expected compared with observed.

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Past	423	242	479	403	466	271	221	253	152	69
	67%	38%	76%	64%	74%	43%	35%	40%	24%	11%
Total	630	630	630	630	630	630	630	630	361	630

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	40.170	258.023	51.670	23.750	113.037
Asymp. Sig	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.23

Chi test results accomplishment verbs in FC (POA)

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	129.361	57.243	223.804	14.287	42.708
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.24

Chi test results accomplishment verbs in FC (grammatical)

5.2.4 Achievement Verbs

The fourth and final verb type hypothesized to affect morphological choice is achievement. The POA hypothesis suggests that verbs encoding telic situations are likely to occur in the regular past simple -ed form. The items (26) exemplifying achievement situations (1560 verb tokens at each level) in the test instruments are grammatically correct according to the forms given in the following table.

Present	Past	Progressive	Present perfect
8 x 300	7 x 300	2 x 300	9 x 300
2400	2100	600	2700

Table 5.25

Expected verb forms with achievement verbs

a. EGI / ATI

Verb forms selected to encode achievement situations are listed in the following table and analyzed within the context of POA and grammatical accuracy. The line graph compares choice of past simple forms across levels and in the two instruments. The grammatically accurate rate is 27%.

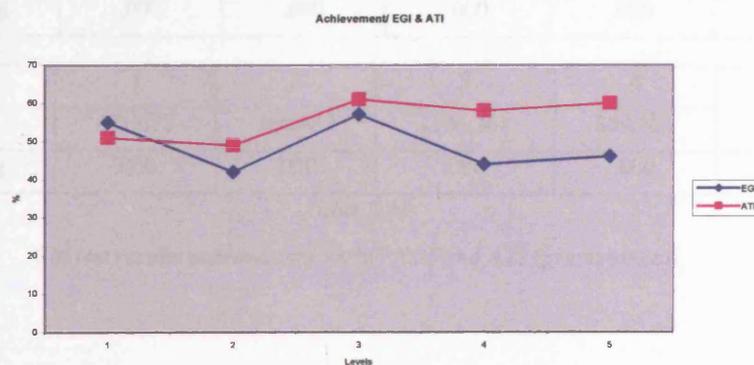


Figure 5.11

Achievement verbs in past simple form (EGI & ATI)

The table below illustrates the actual observed number and % of achievement verbs occurring in the past simple. Expected % i.e. 33% and 27% reflects the requirements of the null hypothesis (POA) and grammatical accuracy respectively.

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	520/33%	863	793	649	761	893	951	688	905	713	932
Past	420/27%	55%	51%	42%	49%	57%	61%	48%	58%	46%	60%
Total	1560	1511	1536	1507	1550	1458	1410	1359	1391	1346	1433

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	385.749	63.330	449.462	90.106	121.037
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	240.343	174.127	705.147	541.262	542.803
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.26

Chi test results achievement verbs / EGI and ATI (POA)

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	679.965	187.814	769.153	236.481	287.481
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	471.678	366.489	1106.261	889.482	897.422
Asymp. Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.27

Chi test results achievement verbs / EGI and ATI (grammatical)

FC

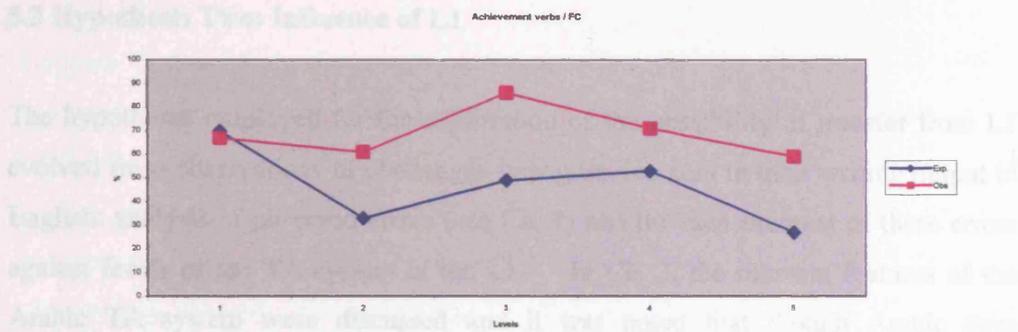


Figure 5.12

Observed Vs expected past simple forms and achievement verbs (FC)

The table below gives the observed measured against the expected number of past simple verb forms in FCs. The expected number varies from level to level.

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Past	260/33%	523	260	476	260	671	260	554	260	460
Past	546/70%	67%	33%	61%	49%	86%	53%	71%	27%	59%
Total	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	450.069	277.087	1009.253	531.120	234.212
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.28

Chi test results achievement verbs / FCs (POA)

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	.610	277.087	438.858	110.968	399.047
Asymp. Sig.	.435	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.29

Chi test results achievement verbs / FC (grammatical)

5.3 Hypothesis Two: Influence of L1

The hypotheses employed for the exploration of the possibility of transfer from L1 evolved from observations of challenges facing the learners in their writing output in English; analysis of observed errors (see Ch. 1) and the measurement of these errors against facets of the TA system in the L1. In Ch. 3, the relevant features of the Arabic TA system were discussed and it was noted that though Arabic does communicate deictic location, the primary function of the verb forms is to record aspect, in terms of completion or lack of completion of an event. It is hypothesized that the learners may make grammatical choices in English based on the interpretation of temporal situations in the L1. Possible influences from the form to function relationship of Arabic are explored in the following sections.

5.3.1 Encoding imperfective situations

Situations classified as morphologically imperfective in Arabic represent two distinct types of semantic situations in English, aspectually simple and progressive, represented by present simple and present progressive forms. The absence of a separate Arabic morphological form to differentiate between aspectually simple and progressive situations (except for translocative verbs) makes distinguishing the difference in function of both verb forms challenging for learners.

The first hypothesis associated with the effect of the Arabic imperfective on learner output in English suggests that the absence of morphological differentiation in Arabic between events that are aspectually simple and progressive in English results in learner confusion about English simple and progressive forms. From a general perspective, it is suggested that learners use the forms indiscriminately though this assumption is refined in later hypotheses. To discover how learners encoded situations that are aspectually imperfective in Arabic and that fall into simple and progressive categories in English, verb forms were analysed in 34 utterances from the EGI and ATI. Of these items, 22 are aspectually simple and 12 progressive, giving a total of 2040 verb tokens at each level. Though the incidence of the imperfective is found in past time also, the present exploration is limited to non-past situations to eliminate the complications introduced with a different tense.

a. EGI / ATI

Subjects' choices of present simple and progressive forms were counted and results recorded in the following tables. Chi square tests to measure the significance of the difference between observed and expected rates of occurrence of each form were carried out. Forms other than present simple and progressive were not included. Expected ratios for each form are 65% present simple and 35% present progressive. The values .65 and .35 were inserted in the chi square test. The first line graph compares expected present simple forms with observed while the second compares observed progressive with expected.

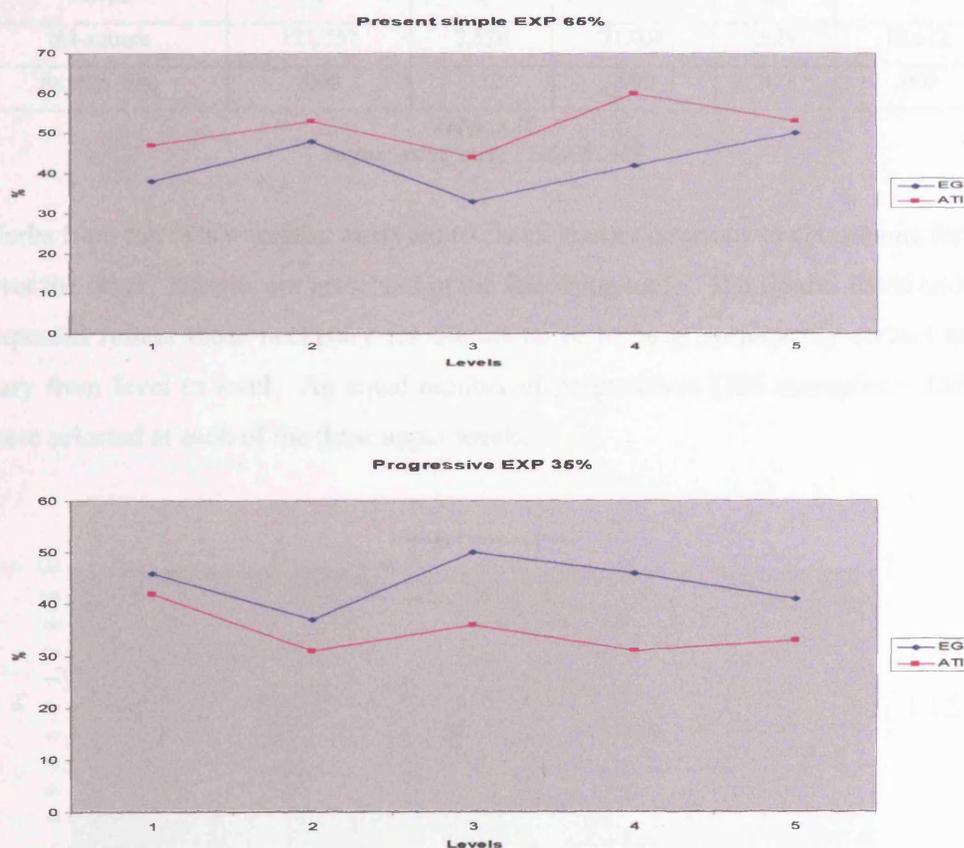


Figure 5.13

Present and progressive forms/ Imperfective

The following table gives % of observed present and progressive forms, the expected rate of which is compared with the observed in chi tests.

Verb Form	Expected	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Simple	1320/.65	38%	47%	48%	53%	33%	44%	42%	60%	50%	53%
Progressive	720/.35	46%	42%	37%	31%	50%	36%	46%	31%	41%	33%
Total	2040	1695	1622	1605	1710	1745	1617	1644	1817	1706	1872

EGI

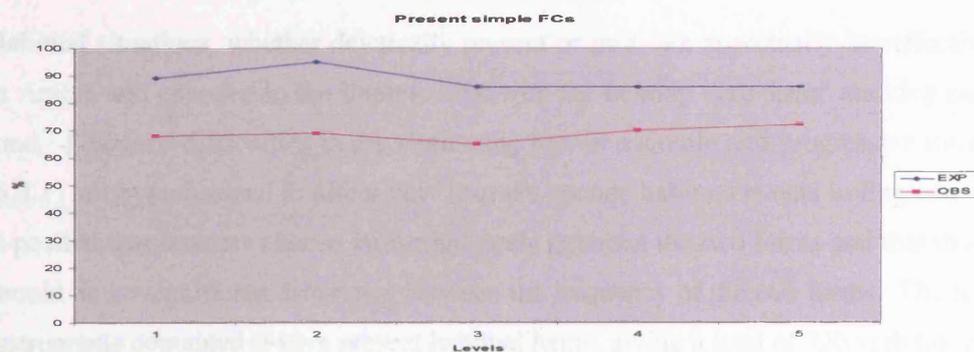
Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	292.690	48.893	488.096	224.707	89.693
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	121.757	2.526	71.038	.629	10.112
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.112	.000	.428	.000

Table 5.30
Imperfective verbs / EGI & ATI

Verbs from the FCs were also analysed to check learner tendency to choose one form over the other. Results are presented in the following table. The figures listed under expected reflect those necessary for the utterance to be grammatically correct and vary from level to level. An equal number of progressives (100 examples = 14%) were selected at each of the three upper levels.



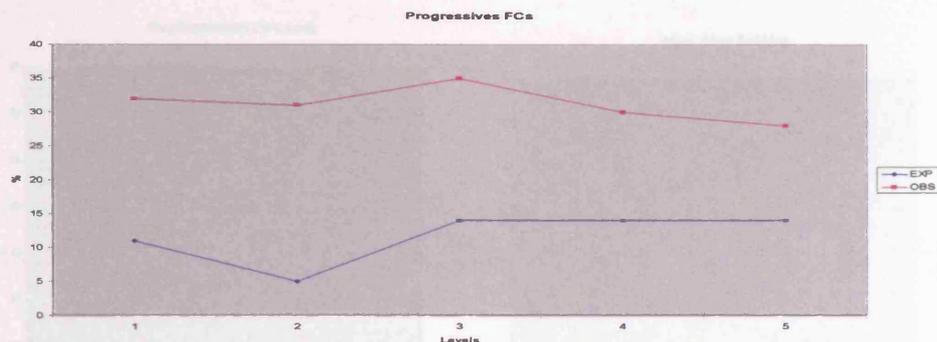


Figure 5.14

Present and progressive forms in FCs / Imperfective

FC

Verb Form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs
Simple	89%	68%	95%	69%	86%	65%	86%	70%	86%	72%
progressive	11%	32%	5%	31%	14%	35%	14%	30%	14%	28%
Total	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	284.639	1048.762	274.546	160.011	120.00
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.31

Imperfective verbs (FCs)

5.3.2 Present Habitual

Habitual situations, whether deictically present or past, are aspectually imperfective in Arabic and encoded in the imperfective with the helping verb 'kaan' marking past time. Learners' difficulties in discriminating between simple and progressive forms (5.3.1) are hypothesized to affect how learners encode habitual events in English. It is posited that learners choose indiscriminately between the two forms and that there should be no significant difference between the frequency of the two forms. The test instruments contained twelve present habitual items, giving a total of 720 verb tokens at each level. The correct form for each token is the present simple verb form. Learners' choices are given in the following tables. Chi square tests measure the difference between the choice of present simple and progressive. Though a high incidence of past simple forms was noted at the two lower levels, these were not included in the chi square tests. The following line graph compares present and progressive choices.

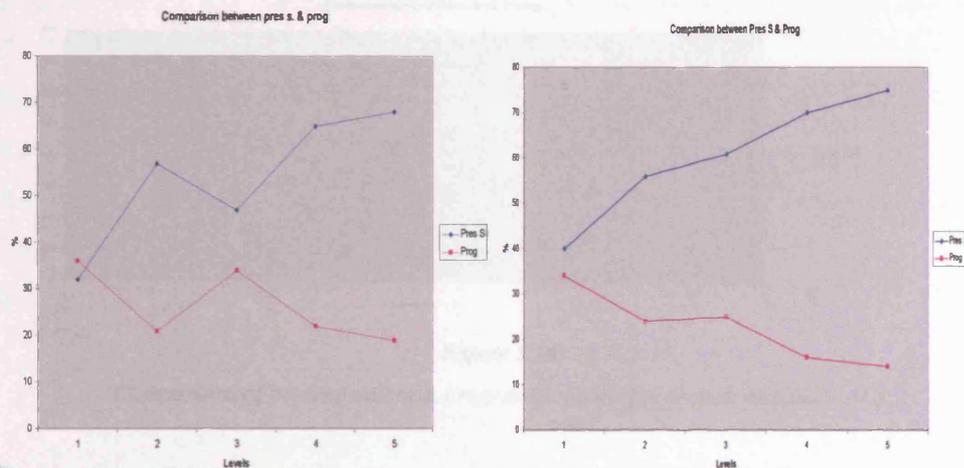


Figure 5.15

Frequency of present and progressive forms in habitual utterances

Level/verb	1		2		3		4		5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	32%	40%	56%	55%	47%	61%	65%	70%	68%	75%
Progressive	36%	34%	21%	24%	15%	13%	9%	12%	10%	9%

a. EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	1.600	119.719	14.395	148.158	195.064
Asymp. Sig.	.206	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	2.568	95.394	115.238	245.186	298.100
Asymp. Sig.	.109	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.32

Chi test results/ comparing frequency of present simple & progressive forms EGI/ATI

b. FCs

720 examples of present habitual utterances were extracted from the free compositions and verb forms selected by learners are recorded in the following table. The line graph shows the differences between the occurrences of the present simple and progressive calculating whether or not these differences are significant. Other forms i.e. past simple and others are not included in the calculations.

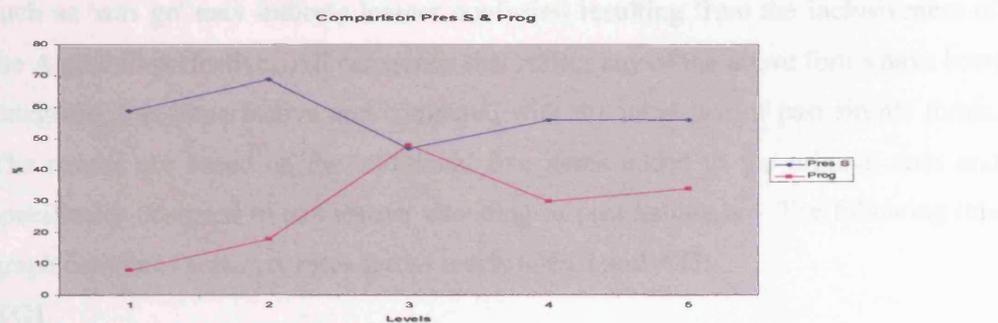


Figure 5.16

Comparison of present simple & progressive forms for present habitual (FC)

Comparison of the frequency of present and progressive forms is illustrated in the following chi square test.

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present	59%	69%	47%	56%	56%
progressive	8%	18%	48%	30%	34%
Total	720	720	720	720	720

FC

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	24.939	107.339	2.222	11.756	9.339
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.136	.001	.002

Table 5.33

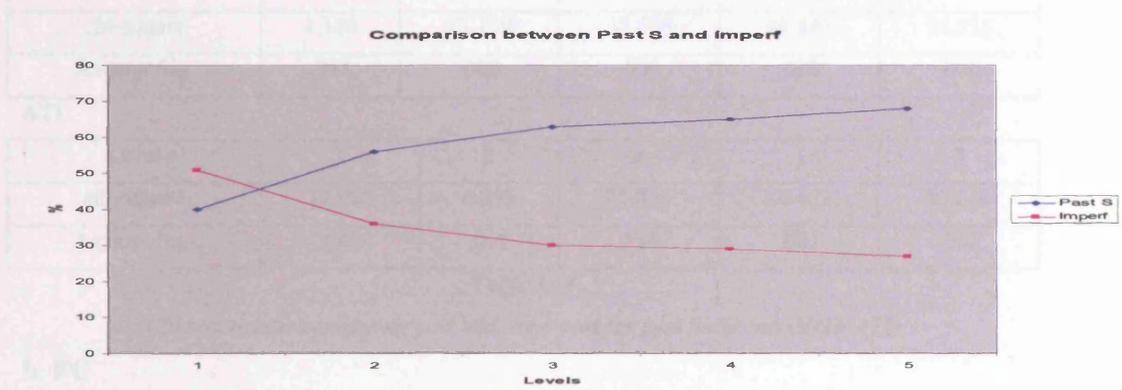
Chi test results on present simple and progressive forms for habitual (FCs)

5.3.3 Past Habitual

Habitual situations in Arabic are aspectually imperfective and consequently encoded in the imperfective verb form. The helping verb 'kaan' marks deictic location while the function of the main verb is to communicate the aspectual nature of the event. It is hypothesized that the learners are likely to search for a verb form that conveys the non-completeness of the whole series of single situations. In my view, learners choose either the present simple or the -ing form with or without the appropriate part of the verb 'to be'. The present simple or base part of the verb may contain a past tense form of 'to be' i.e. 'was' 'were', while the progressive may or may not have an appropriate auxiliary verb. If the progressive form is selected the outcome resembles the Arabic form in its two part verb phrase constituency. The non-standard forms

such as 'was go' may indicate learner confusion resulting from the inclusiveness of the Arabic imperfective. All categories that reflect any of the above forms have been categorized as imperfective and compared with the incidence of past simple forms. The results are based on the additional five items added to the original tests and specifically designed to test learner encoding of past habituals. The following line graph compares accuracy rates across levels in EGI and ATI.

EGI



ATI

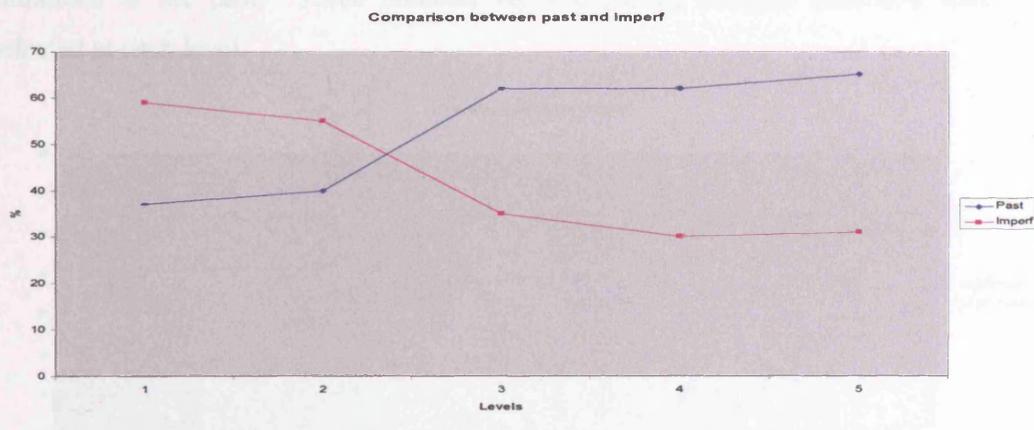


Figure 5.17

Comparison of past and non-past forms for past habitual (EGI/ATI)

Chi square tests measured the difference between the choice of past simple verb forms and all others observed that suggested learner focus on imperfectivity (present simple, progressive or other).

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Imperfective	51%	59%	36%	55%	30%	35%	29%	30%	27%	30%
Past	40%	37%	56%	40%	63%	62%	65%	62%	68%	65%
Total	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	4.188	13.139	37.696	43.847	54.525
Asymp. Sig.	.041	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	12.965	6.255	21.898	20.482	33.680
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.136	.001	.002

Table 5.34

Chi test results comparing past with non-past for past habituals (EGI/ATI)

b. FC

The following table provides learner choice of verb form when encoding habitual situations in the past. Three hundred verbs encoding habitual situations were selected at each level.

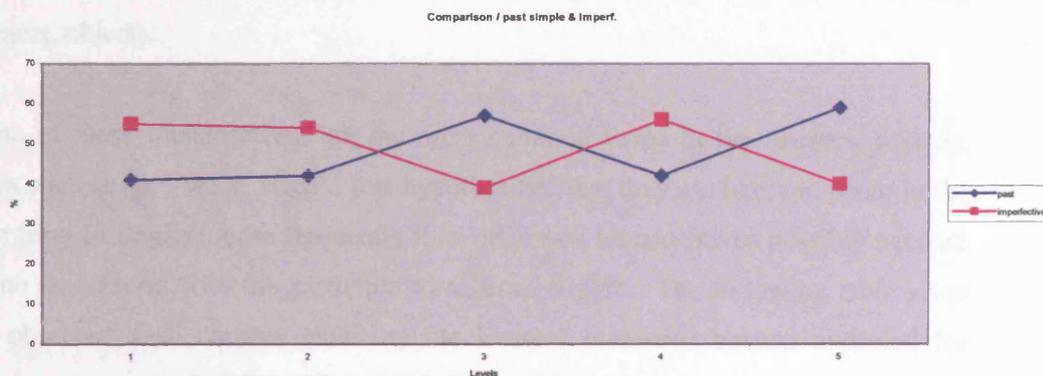


Figure 5.18

Comparison of past with non-past forms for past habituals (FC)

The following table illustrates the percentage of past simple and non-past verb forms selected to encode past habituals in the FCs.

FCs

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Imperfective	55%	54%	39%	56%	40%
Past	41%	42%	57%	42%	59%
Total	300	300	300	300	300

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	9.720	7.680	4.320	7.680	5.880
Asymp. Sig.	.002	.006	.038	.006	.015

Table 5.35

Chi test results for past and non-past forms /past habitual (FCs)

5.3.4 Translocative verbs

Verbs classed as translocative in Arabic because they exemplify a change of location as in 'go' or change of state as in 'sleep' may occur in a participle form to indicate a situation that approximates to 'being in that state' as in 'going' 'sleeping' (O'Leary 1923, Qafisheh 1975 & 1997). With these verb types, it is possible, to show the difference between an action that occurs habitually or is repeated over time and one that is happening at the moment of speaking, corresponding somewhat to the difference between the English simple and progressive. The form used in Arabic to mark the progressive aspect on translocative verbs is the active participle indicating, in addition to the state of the situation, number (singular and plural) and case ending (subject, object).

Some of these translocatives are the most common verbs in the learners' lexicon, verbs such as 'go', 'walk' 'sleep'. It is hypothesized that they are likely to occur in the -ing form in English more frequently than other non translocatives possibly because of the association with the participle form from Arabic. The following table gives the observed verb choices made by the learners measured against expected for translocative verbs in EGI, ATI and FC. Five translocative verbs from EGI and ATI were analysed. Three of the five verbs required the present simple form (60%) while the other two (40%) were accurate if occurring in the progressive form. Examples are given from the tests.

9. It's 3 p.m. Noura never sleeps at this time of the day but she (sleep)

_____ now. I can't believe it. (9)

10. The old man has nothing to do all day, so he (sit) _____

outside his front door watching people go by.

Chi square test compares the expected with the observed number of both present and progressive forms.

'is sleep'. The table provides data on such responses under the category 'other'. Chi square tests show differences between progressive (with or without 'to be') and all other forms.

Levels	1		2		3		4		5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Progressive	49%	47%	46%	45%	67%	68%	78%	77%	74%	73%
All others	51%	63%	64%	55%	33%	32%	22%	23%	26%	27%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	.068	5.000	80.000	222.222	168.200
Asymp. Sig.	.794	.025	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	3.472	6.422	88.200	204.800	145.800
Asymp. Sig.	.062	.011	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.37

Present progressive verbs (EGI/ATI)

Present progressive as used in le. 1 & 2 FCs indicates situations in progress at the time of writing. At upper levels, the use describes trends that could easily be encoded as present simple. It is questionable whether or not learners are aware of the difference between simple and progressive forms in terms of illustrating the temporariness of the situations. Results of 100% accuracy were recorded at the three upper levels while le.2 had 10 out of 35 forms incorrect. Learners chose simple over progressive forms, a tendency noted already among le.2 learners.

B. Past progressive

The past progressive form functions as an indicator of phasal events in past time. The progressive form contains no indication of completion with time information carried on the appropriate part of the verb 'to be'. It is hypothesized that the learners may produce two anomalous forms. If learner focus is exclusively on deictic location, s/he may choose the past simple form. Alternatively, if the concentration is on the phasal aspect, the helping verb may be omitted and occasionally the present simple form may be selected. There were 12 items in the test instruments, giving a

total of 3600 with 720 items at each level. The following figures indicate subjects' choices when encoding these situations. Both progressive forms (with and without helping verb) are combined and compared with the incidence of all other forms. The % given for non-progressive indicates a high rate of inaccuracy in use of the form particularly at lower levels. Non-target forms were mainly simple present and past (Appendix C).

EGI/ ATI

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
non-prog	53%	55%	58%	56%	28%	24%	23%	15%	18%	19%
Prog	47%	45%	42	44%	72%	76%	77%	85%	82%	81%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	3.200	20.672	140.450	276.272	293.889
Asymp. Sig.	.074	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	8.450	11.250	198.450	352.800	273.800
Asymp. Sig.	.004	.001	.000	.000	.000

*Table 5.38
Past progressive verbs (EGI & ATI)*

Incidence of the past progressive in free compositions was too infrequent to permit analysis.

5.3.2 Perfective situations

Bounded events in Arabic in past time are encoded in the perfective form. Situations containing a clear boundary indicated through a finite number or a once off event are classed as bounded. The perfective form, which Smart and Altorfer (1999:164) describe as being used to indicate a "sort of sudden death instantaneous action", is employed to illustrate this boundedness.

12. *sa9alat* *Samiira mara9 wahida amis.*
coughed 3 sing fem perf Samiira time once yesterday
 Samiira coughed once yesterday.

The time adverbial 'yesterday' locates the event in the past, dictating the choice of verb form in English. The past simple is used to signify the deictic location. The quantifier 'once' provides a clear boundary, indicating that the event is completed. In English, the situation is aspectually simple, and viewed in its entirety. In Arabic, the utterance is aspectually perfective as it is clearly completed with the perfective form employed for 'cough', making it easy to equate the utterance with the English past simple (see Ch. 3).

There are times, though, when the correspondence between the two types in both languages is not so straightforward. Situations in the past, indicating indefinite quantification, indefinite repetition or habituality are classified as aspectually imperfective in Arabic and this must be indicated on the verb form. The following examples illustrate this point. Though there is no difference in the verb form in English between 11 & 12, the imperfective form is employed in Arabic in example 12. The quantifier 'many' introduces indefiniteness eliminating an overt boundary. Therefore, the situation is aspectually incomplete with the appropriate form of the 'kaan' anchoring it in the past.

11. *Kaanat*

Samira ta9asal

kathiir

Was 3 sing fem perf to be Samira coughs 3 sing fem imperf many times

aamis.

yesterday.

Samira coughed many times yesterday.

However, it should be noted also that if the utterance is encoded in the perfective in Arabic it is grammatically quite acceptable.

a. EGI / ATI

The following first set of results provides figures for the choices made by learners in the EGI and ATI for five items (giving a total of 300 verb tokens at each level) in the perfective. These items are clearly bounded and the expectation is that the learners' performance will reflect the semantic similarity between the two languages and encode these events with the past simple verb form. Results give figures for occurrence of forms that occur in the past and imperfective (present and progressive

i.e. non-completed). Tests items used were 13, 20, 79, 82, and 95. All verbs were correct in the past simple form. Chi square tests measure the difference between the incidence of past and non-past forms.

Verb Form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	300	74%	65%	66%	64%	88%	90%	86%	86%	91%	82%
nonpast	0	26%	35%	31%	36%	10%	7%	7%	9%	8%	14%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	71.053	32.013	185.287	214.041	457.020
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	27.000	24.653	219.919	197.260	145.415
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.39
Perfective situations (EGI and ATI)

Bounded Vs unbounded

Supplementary items (Ch. 4) were added to the original test instruments to test possible difference in the encoding of overt bounded situations in the past and unbounded.

12. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Sultan felt very thirsty and he (drink)

_____ two glasses of water.

13. Saeed was very thirsty and he (drink) _____ a lot of

water.

An equal number of verbs (300) in bounded and non-bounded situations in the past were extracted from the FCs and results are included in the following tables. The first set indicates learner responses on past bounded events. The second set of results indicates choices of verb form for unbounded situations. All verbs are correct if encoded in the past simple form. .

Bounded situations

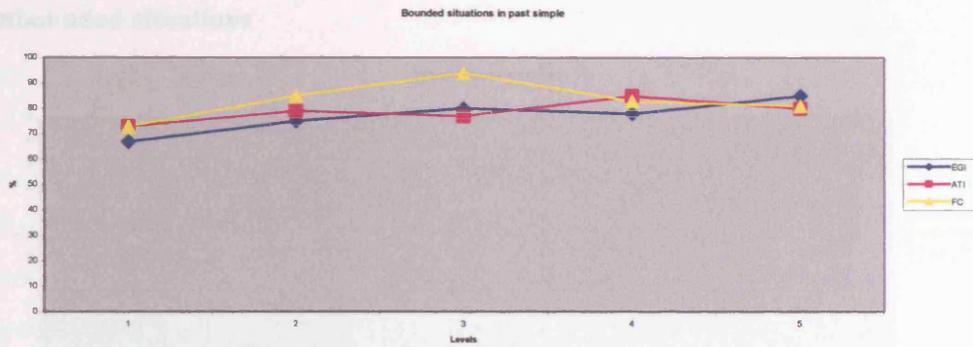


Figure 5.19
Comparison in frequency of choice of past simple for bounded situations

Chi square tests measure the difference between the choice of past and non-past verb forms.

Form	EXP	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5		
		EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC
Past	300	67%	73%	73%	75%	79%	85%	80%	77%	94%	78%	85%	83%	85%	80%	81%
Non Past	0	33%	27%	27%	25%	21%	15%	20%	23%	6%	22%	15%	17%	15%	20%	19%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	62.132	77.013	119.539	102.284	164.280
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	65.333	100.920	87.480	144.213	110.413
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

FC Bounded

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	63.480	147.000	232.320	128.053	115.320
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.40

Bounded situations in all instruments

Unbounded situations

5.2.7 Secondary tests

Unbounded in past simple form

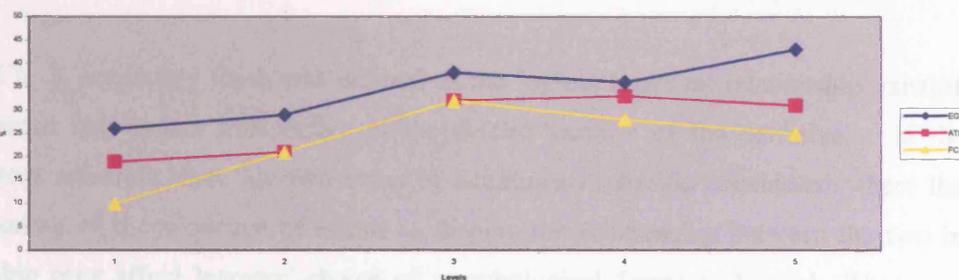


Figure 5.20

Comparison of past and non-past verb forms in unbounded situations

Chi square tests measure the difference in frequency between the past simple forms and non-past forms (present simple and progressive)

Form	EXP	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5		
		EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC
Past	300	26%	19%	10%	29%	21%	21%	38%	32%	32%	36%	33%	28%	43%	31%	25%
Non Past	0	73%	80%	90%	70%	79%	79%	61%	67%	67%	61%	66%	72%	56%	67%	75%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	65.772	51.285	15.517	19.330	5.660
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.017

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	112.758	103.114	36.295	33.784	43.611
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

FC Unbounded

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	188.813	100.920	37.453	58.080	73.013
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.41

Chi test results for past and non-past verb forms in unbounded situations

5.3.7 Secondary tense

In Ch. 3, secondary tense was defined as the logical temporal relationship existing between two events irrespective of the deictic location of the narrative. In the current research, there are two types of situations in Arabic considered where the encoding of the sequence of events to display the relationship between the two in Arabic may affect learners' choice of morphological forms in English. These are conditionals and 'when' time clauses. The perfective form as used in both clauses does not indicate time in relation to the speaker. It describes the logical temporal connection between the two situations. One situation must be completed before the second can occur.

A. Conditionals

Conditional utterances in EGI and ATI are examples of the first conditional which normally follows the verb sequence of present simple in the 'if' clause and future or modal in the main clause. The table below shows the verb choices made by the learners in the 'if' clause in the first conditional. Learners had to depend on contextual clues mainly from the verb in the main clause to interpret the modality intended. Three conditional utterances are used from the two instruments to explore learners' performance. This gave a total of 180 verb tokens at each level.

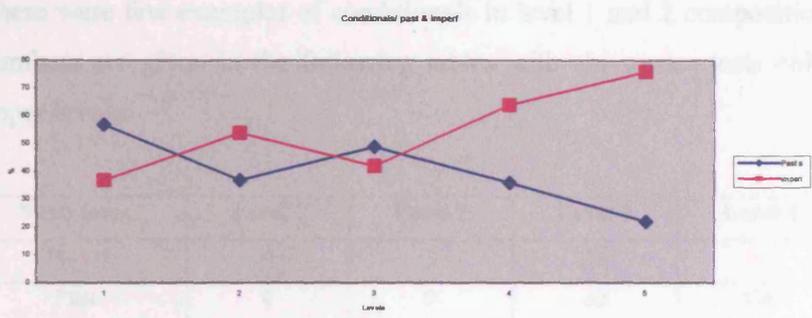
15. If Sara (find) _____ her cat, she will be very happy. ((10)

16. If you (drop) _____ that glass onto a hard floor, it will break. (22)

17. If the driver (brake) _____, his car will crash into that lorry. (74)

The chi square tests measure the significance of the difference between the incidence of past simple forms and a combination of present and progressive which I have grouped as imperfective. The following line graphs compare the frequency of both forms in the two instruments.

EGI



ATI

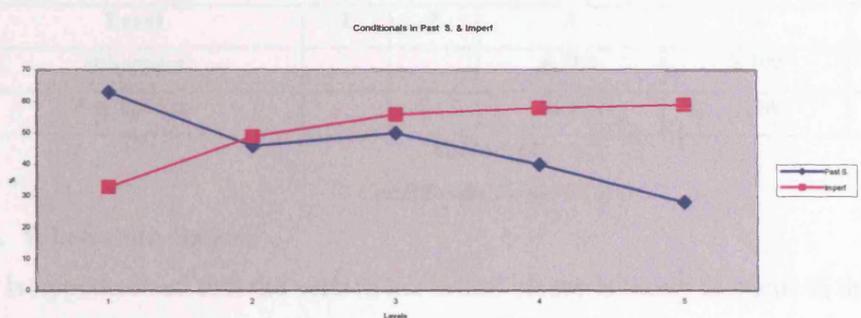


Figure 5.21

Comparison between incidence of past simple and non-past for conditionals (EGI & ATI)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	57%	63%	37%	46%	49%	50%	36%	40%	22%	28%
Pres & prog	37%	33%	54%	49%	42%	56%	64%	58%	76%	59%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	6.721	6.244	.066	14.531	53.158
Asymp. Sig.	.010	.012	.940	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	16.237	.146	.024	6.153	19.848
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.702	.878	.013	.000

Table 5.42

Comparison between past & non-past forms for conditional (EGI/ATI)

FCs

There were few examples of conditionals in level 1 and 2 compositions. The actual numbers are given in the following tables with chi square tests only for the three upper levels.

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present	4	2	16	60	44
Past	4	9	60	100	56
total	8	11	76	160	100

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square			6.368	2.500	.360
Asymp. Sig.			.012	.114	.549

Table 5.43

Conditionals verbs (FCs)

B. When time clauses

It is hypothesized that the verb in the 'when' clause is likely to occur in the past form because as in the conditional, the situation in the main clause cannot occur until the situation in the 'when' clause is realized. The supplementary test included three items testing the encoding of the verb in the 'when' clause. Results of frequency of choice of past simple and /or imperfective (combination of present and progressive are shown in the following line graph and table.

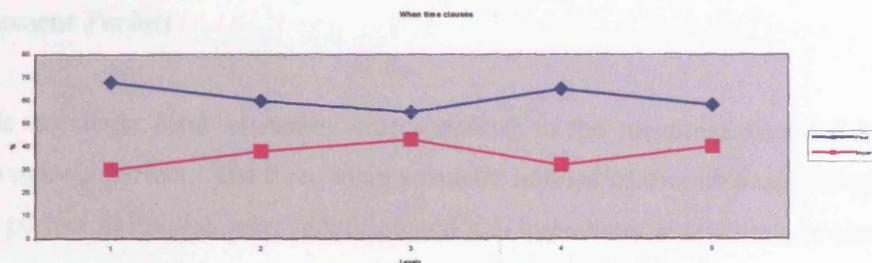


Figure 5.22

Comparison between past & non-past verbs in 'when' clauses

EGI & ATI

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	68%	71%	60%	66%	55%	59%	65%	66%	58%	59%
Imperf	30%	27%	37%	31%	42%	38%	30%	29%	40%	39%

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	36.364	10.566	1.089	24.200	6.422
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001	.297	.000	.011

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	25.978	15.022	6.422	35.556	10.756
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.011	.000	.001

Table 5.44

'When' clause verbs (EGI/ATI)

FC

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Past	6	13	38	30	28
Non-past	4	2	22	30	32
Total	10	15	60	60	60

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	.400	8.067	4.000	.000	.053
Asymp. Sig.	.527	.005	.046	1.000	.819

Table 5.45

Chi test results for 'When' clause verbs (FCs)

5.3.8 Present Perfect

There is no single form in Arabic corresponding to the meanings encoded in the English present perfect. The three main semantic notions communicated through the present perfect in English were identified and it is hypothesized that each is encoded through a separate form in Arabic. It is argued that learners' output in English is affected by the semantics and consequent forms in Arabic. The employment of the present perfect is not common in the output of the learners at the lower language levels and when it does occur, it tends to suggest a formulaic use. It was argued in Ch.3 that the multi-functionality of the PP must be recognized and considered when analysing the morphological choices made by learners. The following line graph shows accurate frequencies of three uses of the PP in EGI. Results for ATI are slightly lower at all levels.

EGI

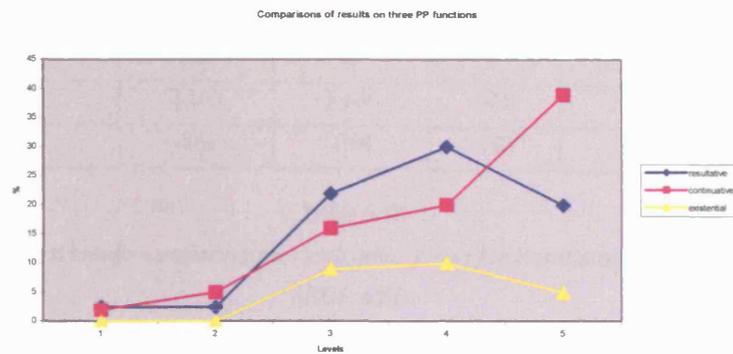


Figure 5.23
Accurate PP forms

A. Resultative

Utterances that reflect the use of the present perfect as resultative are analyzed first. Such utterances in Arabic occur either in the perfective form or in the active participle the function of the latter being to include the notion of current relevance. Such utterances are correct in the past form in American English. There were only two items providing data on the encoding of the resultative present perfect in EGI and ATI. Figures for all choices made are given in the following tables because this particular use of the pp seems quite confusing for learners. There are a variety of semantic notions involved in the situation, completion, recency and current relevance. This differs to the other two uses where the continuative clearly indicates an ongoing situation and the existential a completed one. Chi square tests compare choice of past form with all others.

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	44%	31%	33%	34%	48%	52%	45%	50%	34%	50
pp	2.5%	2%	2.5%	2%	22%	2%	30%	14%	38%	20%
Total	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	.138	6.339	7.024	10.133	2922
Asymp. Sig.	.710	.012	.008	.001	.087

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	2.169	3.438	.450	3.967	3.482
Asymp. Sig.	.141	.064	.503	.046	.062

Table 5.46

Chi test results comparing past with other forms for Resultative PP verbs (EGI, ATI)

In FC, resultative use of the present perfect occurred at levels four and five only as indicated in the following tables. Resultative PP occurs infrequently in FCs.

Verb form	Level 4	Level 5
Present	12%	22%
Past	86%	66%
progressive	2%	12%
pp	0	0

	4	5
chi-square	20.632	2.455
df	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.117

Table 5.47
Resultative PP Verb forms (FC)

B. Continuitive

It is hypothesized that situations that originated at a time prior to the time of utterance and still continue up to and past the moment of speaking and which are encoded in the present perfect in English occur in the present form in the learners' output. The results are presented as they occur in the learners' output and are based on responses to four continuative present perfect items. Chi square tests measure the frequency of present and progressive forms compared with past forms.

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
non-past	69%	82%	77%	82%	55%	65%	51%	70%	42%	71%
Past	27%	16%	16%	16%	27%	15%	20%	9%	17%	11%
pp	2%	0	5%	0	16%	18%	27%	20%	39%	16%
Total	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	44.546	96.018	14.232	17.153	25.352
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	107.579	116.939	127.398	84.537	106.726
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

*Table 5.48**Verb forms for continuative PP (EGI,ATI)***FCs**

PP forms were infrequent in FCs though a higher incidence of continuative was noted than resultative. Numbers are given for each level in the following table.

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present	3	3	12	35	13
Past		1	0	2	10
progressive		2	7	47	10
pp	3	3	28	36	33
other					
Total	6	6			

Level	2	3	4	5
chi-square	1.000	17.190	76.190	5.121
df	1	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.317	.000	.000	.024

*Table 5.49**Continuative PP verb forms (FC)***C. Existential**

In English, the encoder has the choice of selecting the present perfect for some completed situations in order to communicate the possibility of their recurrence. The encoder, through selecting present perfect communicates the possibility that this situation could occur again. The situation is clearly over as in "I have visited Cairo three times" - each one of these visits is completed but the speaker keeps open the option of repeating the situation through the choice of the present perfect form. This type of utterance is encoded in the perfective form in Arabic and it is hypothesized

that the learners are likely to put such utterances into the past form in English. Chi square tests compare frequency of past forms with all others. There are four items in EGI and ATI indicating existential present perfect.

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	66%	70%	66%	65%	62%	61%	79%	69%	71%	68%
pp	0	0	0	0	9%	5%	10%	9%	5%	13%
Total	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240

EGI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	25.350	24.067	13.067	79.350	43.350
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

ATI

Level	1	2	3	4	5
chi-square	36.817	20.417	16.860	33.750	64.692
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 5.50

Existential PP verb forms (EGI, ATI)

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present			7	11	7
Past	3	6	33	80	67
progressive					4
pp	3	6	9	11	13
Total	6	12	49	102	91

FC

Level	3	4	5
chi-square	16.900	52.319	48.649
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.117

Table 5.51

Existential PP verb forms (FC)

All of the above results are discussed in Ch. 6.

Chapter Six

Analysis of Results

6.0 Introduction

The data presented in Ch. 5 are discussed in the current chapter, focusing on accuracy of verb form, and the relevance of development and L1 transfer hypotheses to subjects' verb forms. The questions explored are learners' verb function to form associations; reasons for the development of these associations and the extent to which learners alter their perspectives over time on how the English TA system operates.

6.1 General considerations during analyses

6.1.1 Single/ multiple associations

Each morphological verb form can encode a variety of semantic concepts. It is possible that a learner acquires each function separately over time, a feature described by Johnston (1987:14) as the learner's *'early tendency to associate a single optimally distinct form or structure with a single function. This takes time to eradicate and has to be done naturally in its own time.'* Conversely, learners may use one verb form for a number of functions depending on other syntactic features to disambiguate meaning. Brindley (1993:180) found that the –ing form was the only temporal marker present in the output of a number of immigrants to Australia. Wenzell (1989) concluded that his research participants communicated all anterior events with the base part of the verb while –ing form articulated all continuous events. The tendency of single to multiple associations, explains Johnston (14), changes over time as the learner refines his/her understanding of a form and imposes *'gradual restrictions on the usage of a previously learnt structure.'*

6.1.2 Erratic performance

Learners' tendency to use a form correctly in one utterance and incorrectly in another even within the one piece of writing has also been noted. Larsen- Freeman & Long (1991) refer to the erratic correct and incorrect nature of learner responses and

suggest that ILs change fast. Rutherford (1987:40) views this phenomenon as part of the natural process of achieving accuracy. He explains:

that learner progress is in fact unsteady but there is a perceived regularity in this unsteadiness. Learners have been observed apparently to manifest early correct usage of a grammatical form to then 'regress' to ungrammaticality at a later stage, only to emerge finally with the grammatically correct usage once again.

6.1.3 Learner Strategies

Learners use various repair strategies to compensate for knowledge deficit (Bickerton 1976, Zobl 1982). Bickerton argues that time adverbials are used as tense markers (features of pidgins and basilects) by early learners as compensation for their inadequate understanding of verb function to form relationships; while in Zobl's view, the effect of L1 is strongest in the early stages of LL when the learner fills knowledge gaps with transfer structures. Bickerton concludes (186) that *'verb tenses as they are conventionally understood are not really learnable at lower levels of proficiency.'*

6.1.4 Performance on different instruments

Research suggests that task type affects learner performance. Schmidt's 1977 research results (as chronicled in Nunan 1987:145) found that accuracy levels increased on formal compared to informal tasks among adult Arabic speaking learners. Similar results were noted by El Daly (1991:162) who points out that research data support the variability position that *'maintains that L2 learners' performance varies according to the kind of language use that they engage in and the kind of knowledge that they acquire.'* Both grammar instruments tested verbs at the sentence level with context clues provided in verb inflections and /or adverbial phrases, a feature missing in the FCs.

Tarone (1988) points to findings from a 1976 study by LoCoco in which he claims learners commit most errors in verb form in free compositions and fewest on translation tasks. It has to be noted composition writing is a complex process involving the generation of ideas with correct lexical and grammatical encoding of those ideas in L2. James and Garrett (1992) and El Daly (1991:94) suggest that the learner *'can attend to only one thing at a time or think only one thought at a time.'*

In El Daly's view, writers pay attention to one factor first in the composition process, then another finding it difficult to attend to mixed activities. It might be expected also that translation tasks would yield the highest levels of L1 transfer. Nickel (1989:297) points out, however,

translation does not necessarily result in more transfer errors than, for instance, free compositions. Certain types of students realize that translations do contain transfer 'temptations' and therefore are more careful than they would in doing free composition where they often tend to neglect form because of their interest in communication and content.

This view was reinforced by Kobayashi & Rinnert (1992) who suggest that translation exercises of lower proficiency students should show greater error frequency but they found that this was not so.

6.1.5 Common Error

A common inaccurate form found across all language levels in all instruments accounting for most of the missing forms from the data count of the different structures is the combination of the noun/ pronoun + verb 'to be' + the base part of the verb as in 'I am go' 'I was go' 'I am went' 'I was went'. Bartelt (1983) cites studies done by Clark (1976) in which she postulates that forms such as 'was go' refer to the past simple. One can speculate on whether the learner intended such forms to represent the past simple or continuous forms. Such results were categorized as 'incorrect' '0' in the accuracy tests and as 'other' '6' in all coding of data. One possible explanation may be early teaching methods. Classroom observations and student feedback suggest that Arabic pronouns such as 'anaa' 'I' 'huwa' 'he' are often presented as 'I am' or 'he is' to compensate for the fact that verb 'to be' is not necessary in Arabic equational utterances, possibly accounting for why learners create verb forms such as 'I am go' or 'I am went'.

Part One: Verb forms

6.2 Accuracy rates

In Ch.4 (Table 4.2), accuracy rates based on HCT writing descriptors were provided to give an indication of where outcomes are in relation to expectations. Such expectations outlined in Table 4.2 are used only in accuracy analyses. At lower levels, the observed frequencies matched or exceeded the expected frequently, an observation not generally applicable to upper levels. Accuracy rates did improve across levels in EGI and ATI with some anomalies observed at le.2 and 5. In FCs, however, fluctuations in accuracy rates were observed in present simple and present perfect, supporting the variability position commented on in 6.1.4, reflecting influence of task type (le.1) and possible effect of reduction in English contact hours (le.5).

6.2.1 Present simple form

EGI and ATI were used across all levels without varying the question type while tasks in FCs reflect verb use in assignments suited to each language level. Highest recorded accuracy rate of all instruments was in le.1 FCs while lowest was at the same level in EGI, clearly suggesting that task type, pre-preparation and classroom circumstances affect outcome. Writing tasks at le.1 - 2 are variations on daily routines in present or past time, tasks practised regularly in class and for which learners have clear associations between task and verb form. In fact, errors generally take the form of substitution of one simple form i.e. present for past or vice versa. It could be argued that accuracy by association rather than comprehension has led to these results.

Accuracy rates recorded at le.2 were noticeably higher in EGI and ATI than those of 3. Revisiting learner profiles (Ch. 4) reminds us that le.3 learners, though grouped at a linguistically higher level, are new graduates from secondary schools. The form most frequently observed among new entrants is the -ing, reflecting what Nickel (1989:295) has referred to as '*intrastructural confusing*' between simple and progressive forms. Specific focused instruction is given to explaining the different functions of the two accounting perhaps for the higher accuracy rate in the simple

form at le.2 and recurrence of -ing at le.3. Overall, accuracy rates in ATI are higher than those of EGI, a clear indication it would seem of learners' association of the present simple form with Arabic imperfective.

Considering overall results as presented in line graph 5.1, clear parallels are obvious in results for the two grammar instruments, whereas FCs deviate. As noted above accuracy at le.1 is undoubtedly related to the restricted nature (verb form requirements) of the composition task. Conversely, the wider demanding topic and grammatical task types at upper language levels appear to result in a poorer grammar performance overall. In addition, contact hours are reduced at le.5 contributing possibly to a drop in performance. It has to be remembered that the environment is EFL and most learners depend almost totally on the language class for feedback. When instruction time is reduced, a noticeable drop can occur (informal discussion with teachers) in accurate use of English (reflected more in FCs than in EGI and ATI). The fact that le.5 learners scored better in grammar instruments than FCs may reflect learners' recognition of context clues and associated grammar while performing less accurately when dealing with verb forms in free writing.

Present simple form as used in the test instruments and FCs covers a number of temporal functions including stative, habitual/ iterative, factual and conditional. Stative situations are built around semantically simple verbs, what Klein (1995:682) refers to as '*atemporal*' or '*0-state verbs*', involving no change. The nature of statives generally eliminates combination with progressives or adverbial phrases of time and quantity. Verbs in stative utterances can occur in present, past or future tense, with the context surrounding stative verbs in EGI and ATI helping identify the required tense.

Habituality was generally indicated through adverbial time phrases. Habitual situations are a complex of individual situations that together form an ongoing series. Though there is a form 'used to' in English to illustrate habituality in the past, the focus is generally on deixis with a past simple verb form and an additional habitual phrase. Adverbial phrases 'every day'; 'every evening' 'usually' in ten of the EGI/ ATI items may have positively affected learners' choice of grammatical forms. Of the remaining four items, time is not indicated syntactically on two; a third includes the durative phrase 'all day' and the fourth the negative marker 'never'. In Arabic,

habituals are aspectually imperfective with each event forming part of a continuous series. The fact that Arabic does not distinguish morphologically between English habitual and progressive events is vital to understanding learners' verb use. This difference is explored in section 6.4.1.

Present simple verb form in English in conditional clauses reflects the modal nature of the utterance. Possibility by its essence contains notions of simultaneity or posteriority; lacks completion being aspectually imperfective. Conditionality in Arabic (Ch. 3) operates from a different semantic perspective employing the perfective form to communicate that the main situation cannot occur until that in the conditional clause is completed.

Exploration of the ratio of accurate present simple verb forms with verb functions indicates the following.

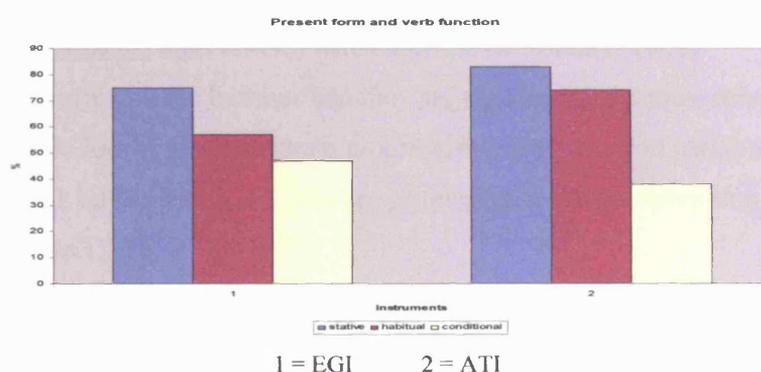


Figure 6.1

Comparison of use of present simple form in different situations

A higher accuracy rate is recorded in ATI for statives and habituals suggesting that in direct translation, learners associate Arabic imperfective form with English present simple form. Verbs in conditional clauses in Arabic are generally encoded in the perfective form accounting for a higher rate of past simple verb forms in these sentence types.

Of the 4050 present form verbs analysed in the FCs, 2050 were statives and 2000 general statements about facts, habits and trends. Verb choices for the encoding of these situations are illustrated in Figure 6.2.

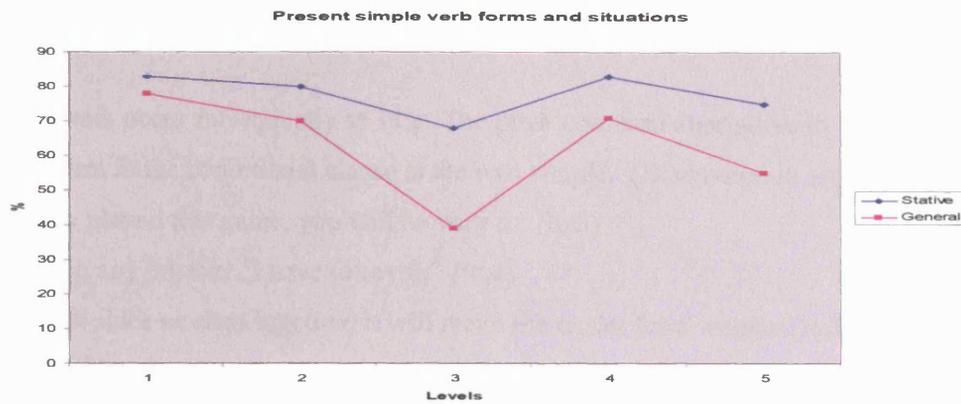


Figure 6.2
Comparison of accuracy rates in function of present form (FC)

The most common error in habituals, iteratives and general fact statements is substitution of progressive for simple verb form as illustrated in the following.

1. People are wearing light clothes when they are on holiday. (le.1)
2. They are surfing on the beaches and they are walking on the mountains. (le.3)

Accurate simple forms, and inaccurate progressives, may occur in juxtaposition.

3. People walk on the beach and they are swimming in the sea when they are on holiday. (le.1)
4. My father works in the army. My mother stays in the house and my brother going to school.' (le.2)
5. The festival gives people opportunities to gather together. Children are playing and having fun. It brings fun for everyone. (le.3)

The -ing form in 'giving' 'playing' and 'having' indicates duration as well as repeated situations. The verb 'brings' could be viewed as reflecting a more stative or timeless situation. The -ing form with the following verbs adds a dimension of temporariness possibly not intended by the writers.

6. People are using the cars for travel. They are making noises and pollution. (le.4)
7. The family is playing an important role in our lives. (le.4)
8. Factories and cars are emitting a huge amount of carbon. (le.5)
9. People are very poor and they do not have money and they are drinking dirty water. (le.5)

Development (POA) and transfer hypotheses are explored in section 6.3/ 6.4 as possible explanations for the above phenomena.

Conditionals occur infrequently in FCs. The most common alternative to the present simple form in the conditional clause is the past simple. (Discussion in section 6.4.7)

10. If you played this game, you will be very fit. (le.3)

11. If I did any mistake, I have to say it. (le.4)

12. If both sides worked together, it will make life easier for a woman.(le.5)

6.2.2 Past simple form

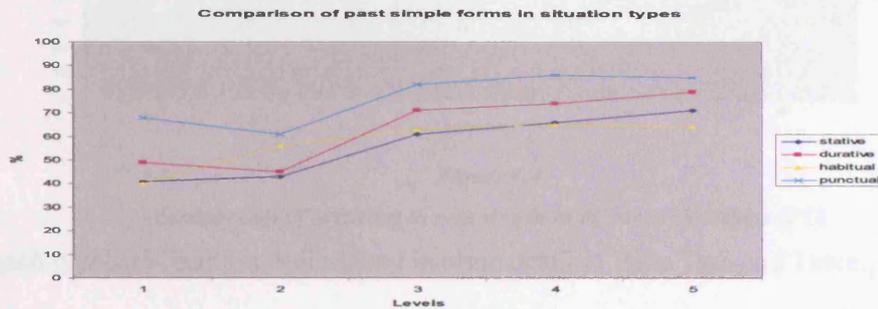
In English, the primary function of past simple forms is to communicate prior completed situations, removed from speaker location either through temporal and /or psychological distance. The English past simple form is intimately associated with tense as completion in English is generally interpreted as occurring prior to speaker time. Bickerton (1984), Hatch, Gough & Peck (1985) suggest time and process of acquisition of past simple verb forms are not always clear and may be heavily influenced by learners' L1. Arabic perfective forms have clear aspectual functions quite separate from deixis, though they can locate situations to the speaker.

HCT performance expectations on past simple form accuracy range between 50% at elementary to 100% at upper levels, an accuracy rate realized only at le.1 in EGI and ATI and not at all in FCs (see line graph Table 5.4). While chi square results (Ch. 5) note no significant difference between expected accurate and inaccurate forms at le.1 in EGI /ATI, inaccuracy rates at le.1 (FCs) are significantly higher (154.286) than expected rates. Though EGI results reflect a steady improvement in accuracy rates (except at le.2), this is not mirrored in ATI or FCs where accuracy peaks at le.3 and drops at le.4 and 5.

Analysis of the relationship between verb form, type and function may help explain performance. In addition to accuracy rates on 28 past simple items in EGI and ATI, results for 5 items used to test past habitual are listed in the following analysis of verb form with function. Durative and punctual indicate inherent properties of the verb. In EGI and ATI, such situation types reflect a single occurrence with a clear endpoint. Verbs in both types could be classified as accomplishment in durative and achievement in punctual. The most pertinent feature is the endpoint. Stative situations consider verb type and function. Habituals presented in Table 6.4 included

signals of habituality. Each verb type and function is discussed in Parts Two and Three. Suffice it here to consider the accuracy differences in each type.

EGI



ATI

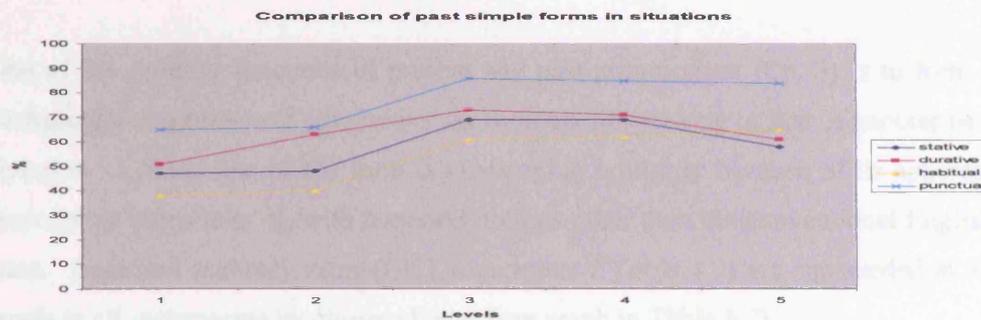


Figure 6.3

Comparison of use of past simple form in different situations

Single durative and punctual situations being right bounded are aspectually perfective in Arabic. Highest accuracy rates occur with punctual situations and lowest with stative and habitual. Incorrect stative verbs occur primarily in the present simple form. Single durative events and habituais do not fall into one incorrect category, with inaccurate responses almost equally distributed between the present simple (13%) and the progressive (12%).

Past simple forms in the FCs occur in narrative texts (1e.1-2) and in comparative, causal and discursive text types at 1e.3– 5. All verb types occur in a variety of situations. Durative and punctual indicate verb types found in single events. Verbs in habitual utterances may be durative or punctual with overall duration added to punctual verbs through the continuity present in a habitual series. Of the 820 verbs selected at each level from the corpus of 1,000 compositions, verbs reflecting four categories below were selected in equal numbers (205 of each).

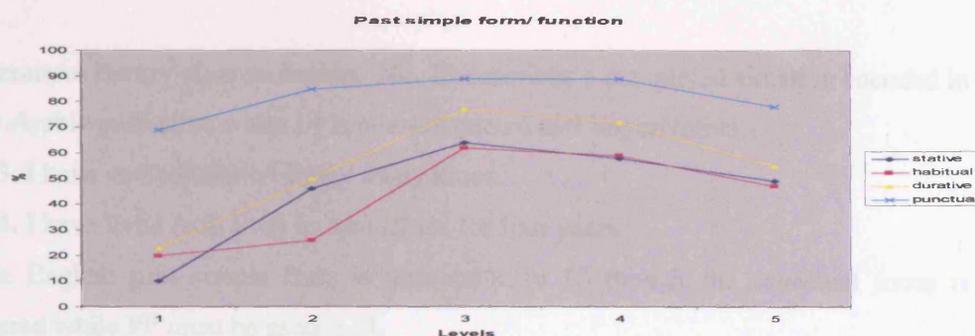


Figure 6.4

Comparison of accuracy in past simple in different situations (FC)

Each type and function is discussed in more detail in Parts Two and Three.

6.2.3 Progressive

One of the primary functions of present and past progressives (Ch. 3) is to form a background to a reference point either the moment of speaking or that of another past situation. Correct use of the form is challenging primarily because of its apparent association in learners' IL with temporal notions other than the conventional English ones. Expected accuracy rates (HCT descriptors / Table 4.2) are superseded at all levels in all instruments by observed rates (see graph in Table 5.7).

I would like to contend, however, that accuracy rates observed in all instruments may not indicate a clear understanding of progressives but instead a tendency to overuse the -ing form. In FCs, the TL use of the progressive is limited but the -ing form is pervasive. Mukattash (1980:344) points out that *'error counts based on the study of free compositions are misleading if the correlation between the frequency of use and the frequency of errors is not calculated.'* Bickerton (1975) believes that in the early stages of LL, learners ignore syntactically marked constructions and select the lowest common denominator, for example, association of -ing form with duration. Possible associations with the form are discussed in Parts Two and Three.

6.2.4 Present Perfect

The English present perfect (PP) is a multi-functional form (Ch. 3) with no single equivalence in Arabic. The semantic difference encoded in the following two

utterances is very clear in Arabic. No. 13 describes a completed situation encoded in the Arabic perfective while 14 is non-completed and imperfective.

13. I have visited/ visited Egypt many times.

14. I have lived (still live) in Abu Dhabi for four years.

The English past simple form is acceptable in 13 though the aspectual focus is altered while PP must be used in 14.

Test items in EGI and ATI exemplify three PP functions of resultative, existential and continuative. Context clues were added in continuative PP items to indicate that situations are still true (see item 61 and 73 in EGI). Negative situations are aspectually imperfective. Though results for all PP verbs are presented in graphs 5.11 and 5.12, discussion of function to form relationships in PP considers only positive examples of the verb type to avoid consideration of variables such as negatives on verb form. Results for EGI and ATI at le.1 are similar (see line graph 5.10). At le.2, differences are minimal with a 97% inaccuracy rate on both. At le.3, similar rates occur, indicating a small group who competently deal with the form irrespective of the effect of translation. EGI results are higher than ATI at le. 4 – 5 with a difference of 5% and 18% respectively between the two instruments, suggesting the influence of L1.

The PP occurs infrequently in FCs and accuracy rate is low overall. In elementary composition writing, PP use is mainly formulaic occurring in utterances such as

15. Fatima has been a student in HCT for three years.

In such contexts, learners generally produce the correct form because the sentence or a variation on it has been practiced and memorized as a chunk (see Part Three).

Part Two: Verb types

6.3 Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis

The second coding of verb choices explores the relevance of two proposed hypotheses with all responses considered irrespective of in/accuracy. This coding facilitates exploration of the effect of verb type (POA) and verb function (transfer) on verb form. Stative and achievement types are discussed in the following sections as the semantic nature of both appear to influence verb form. From a temporal perspective, both verb types are semantically simple and have limited combinatorial possibilities with adverbial phrases. Statives situations are durative, unbounded and non-phasal, resulting in less syntactic complexity than other situation types. Achievement verbs are less semantically complex, the focus being on a single point of time expressed through adverbial punctual combinations such as 'at five o' clock'. Less syntactic and semantic complexity in both types restricts morphological choices. Achievement verbs are not durative, removing tendencies common with durative verbs and situations, to use the -ing form.

6.3.1 Stative Verbs

POA suggests that stative verbs are likely to occur in the present simple form with or without -s. In both analyses, outlined in Ch. 5, results show a greater proportion of stative verbs in the present simple form (Table 5.11- 5.14). The first chi test considered results from the POA perspective. The second considers grammatical accuracy using the values for the correct grammatical forms. If grammatical knowledge is more influential than developmental factors, results should indicate a reasonable level of grammatical accuracy in verb form (all verbs forms were considered in the second test- see Appendix C).

The results of the first test (see Table 5.11) suggest that learners at all levels in both EGI and ATI, encode stative situations more frequently in the present simple form than other forms, a result reinforced by the second set of tests. Chi tests indicate differences between frequency of present simple form and all other forms as being significant at all levels, highest at le.1 and 2 and though lower at le.3 – 5 still exceeding the grammatically accurate rates. Interestingly, at all levels, (especially 1

and 3) a high incidence of stative verbs occur in the –ing, a feature associated by Shirai & Kurono (1998) with untutored L2 learners (see Ch. 2) but rarely found in L1 acquisition (Brown 1980). Partial transfer from L1 may be a factor (see discussion with FCs below).

Results at le.3 in EGI and ATI reflect the highest grammatical accuracy rates (mostly in correct use of past simple forms with stative verbs) with the lowest chi-square difference of all levels (16.452 and 28.407 respectively). Hypothesizing why this is so, one could suggest more contact hours at le.3 than 4 and 5 proves effective, more focus on the learners' part on the past time signals in the utterance and possibly more focused instruction of past simple forms. Le. 5 accuracy rates approximate those of le. 1.

The morphology of stative verbs in composition writing suggests that POA could account for the high incidence of present simple form stative verbs. Two chi square tests were also conducted on 750 stative verbs at each language level. The expected number of present simple forms varies from level to level (see Table 5.13/ 5.14). Both tests show that the number of observed compared to expected present simple forms is significantly higher at all levels. Progressive forms are uncommon though higher at le.3 and 5 with such verbs as 'to enjoy' and 'to hope'.

It is possible that Arabic narrative conventions may reinforce a feature associated with stative verbs, exemplifying Selinker and Lakshmann's (1992) multiple effect principle. The Arabic practice of establishing deixis through the opening narrative verb, with a perfective verb locating situations in the past and subsequent verbs in the imperfective if unbounded may lead learners to use the same procedure in English, a system that may help explain the following:

16. I went to Paris last week. The weather* is very cold.' The plane *has good food and comfortable seats and the hotel *has nice food and a clean place. (le.2)
17. English was my favourite subject. I *like English from the beginning. (le.1)
18. When I was a child I played outside with my neighbours because I *love to play outside. Now I stay at home. (le.2)
19. Life thirty years ago *are healthier than now because they ate healthy food. (le.2)

Further examples of possible multi-factor influences can be seen in upper level FCs. Writing here involves a wider range of topics with a wider requirement of lexical items and grammatical structures. The occurrence of accurate and inaccurate verb forms in a single utterance persists.

20. When I was young, I didn't eat meat because I *don't like it but now I do. (le.4)

21. People since 20 years ago lived in small houses and we *have few hospitals and that was changing.' (le.5)

In 20, negative particles may have affected verb choice. The negative particle in classical Arabic carries temporal information with the main verb remaining in the imperfective signalling imperfectivity. In colloquial Arabic, the main verb signals time location with a single negative particle 'mah' for all. In 20, examples of correct 'didn't eat' and incorrect 'don't eat' negatives occur.

The most frequently occurring stative verbs in FCs are 'to be' and 'to have'. The verb 'to be' in present equational utterances is frequently omitted as its equivalence is not necessary in Arabic. The following example, though considered incomplete in English, is grammatically accurate in Arabic.

23. *al taks haar al youm.*

The weather * hot today.

The weather is hot today.

Such example types are found at all levels.

24. There weren't any shopping malls and the transport *worse than now.' (le.3)

25. During the period the person at risk of tooth decay. (le.5)

Conversely, over use of the verb 'to be' is observed in the following verb phrase.

26. I *am really want to be good in writing.

The combination of the verb 'to be' with non-past forms occurs with all verb types. Early instruction patterns may help explain this (see 6.1.5).

27. When I was young, I *was hate the fish and I was like the chicken and chocolate too much.' (le.4)

Both 'hate' and 'like' are stative verbs but in Arabic could be realized in the context above through the combination of 'kaan' and the imperfective verb indicating habituality.

Possession in English is generally articulated through the verb 'to have'. The Arabic system is different (see Ch. 3). In the following example, non-stative verbs occur in the past while stative verbs 'have' and 'want' do not.

27. I worked in the Statistics department for one week and in the Personnel Section. In the Personnel Section I* have a lot of work. When any employee *wants to take leave, I typed the forms.' (le.2)

There are far fewer tokens of other stative verbs besides 'to be' and 'to have'. The verb 'feel' in the following utterances 'we feel so sad' and 'they feel so happy' is used to describe emotions felt at the time of leaving an old neighbourhood and moving to a new one. The verb 'to know' is an exception, occurring as it frequently does in the past form. In Arabic, the speaker/ writer may choose to focus on the inception of knowing, resulting in the employment of a participle or perfective form of the verb 'to know', often translated as past simple in English, as the following example illustrates.

28. As I knew from your last letter... ..

Accurate consideration of past tense with stative verbs was highest at le.3 (62%) and 4 (64%) while that at 5 (around 35%) was lower than that of any other except 1. Though the chi test indicates the lowest difference between observed and expected at le.5, this has to do with sample size rather than greater accuracy. At upper levels, English instruction is reduced leading to the possibility that deprived of constant practice and correction, accuracy rates drop. Such observations on practice and correction could be generalized to all levels (see present simple FCs /EGI le.1) suggesting that more focussed practice and grammar consciousness-raising is necessary at all levels.

Accurate and inaccurate forms are noted side by side in the same text.

29. In the past businesses were weak because there *are few trained people. (le.3)

30. In the past the UAE was poor and people *have only small houses. (le.4)

31. In the past, people worked hard and there *are no places to have fun. (le.4)

Stative verbs in the progressive are infrequent occurring primarily at le.3 & 5.

Consider the following examples.

32. In my childhood I *was liking to play football.

33. About the new life we *are having in the UAE, we are facing a very serious problem – the fast food.'

34. Most of the young people *are wishing to have a licence as they grow up.

35. They *are thinking that speeding is a challenge. They are driving fast and making accidents.

In example (32), the reference is obviously to a habitual feeling in one's childhood and can be encoded in the verb phrase 'kaan' with an imperfective main verb. This structure can be used with all verb types and does not indicate progressivity. This form, as sometimes suggested, does not correspond to the English past progressive. A different set of semantic connotations is contained therein. As pointed out in Ch. 3, statives do not collocate with progressive markers 'qaa9id'.

In example 34, if 'wish' were replaced with 'hope' the sentence would be correct providing a sense of anticipation in the –ing form. Each of the following FC examples indicates past time though the stative verb is in the present form.

36. In the past, the camel *is very important, because it was carrying many things. (le.3)

37. There *are many changes when oil was discovered. (le.3)

38. Overall there *are two sharp increases in wheat prices which were in 1980 and 1995. (le.4)

39. When the Turkey earthquake happened, I felt I *want to cry. (le.4)

40. My parents cared that me and also my sisters and brothers that we should have all the vaccines and medicines that we *need. (le.3)
41. In the past business *are weak because there are few people who are trained. (le.3)
42. When the earthquake happened, I felt I *want to cry. (le.4)
43. In the past, when people *need the doctor, the doctor went to them. (le.5)
44. In the past the education *is very simple. (le.5)

6.3.2 Achievement verbs

The second verb type the lexical semantics of which is considered to affect morphological choice is achievement. Results on both tests (POA and grammatical) indicate a far higher incidence of past simple verbs than required, at a rate of about two observed to every one expected in EGI and ATI. The highest significant difference between expected and observed past simple forms is noted at le.3 in EGI and le.3, 4 and 5 in ATI. Results may have been biased by the fact that of the 26 achievement type verbs, three are conditional and nine require PP for accurate encoding (existential type). This may be judged as a weakness of these particular test items as the variable of PP could be a distracter affecting overall outcomes.

Levels	Present		Past		Prog.		PP	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
1	37%	54%	47%	45%	6%	4%	2%	.2%
2	50%	51%	43%	42%	4%	2%	3%	2%
3	22%	25%	56%	63%	6%	3%	13%	6%
4	22%	20%	51%	61%	4%	3%	22%	15%
5	22%	20%	49%	52%	3%	2%	24%	17%

Table 6.1
Achievement verbs and PP

With the exception of le2, past simple occurs more frequently than any other verb form. This could be seen as a confirmation of POA hypothesis, but may also reflect alternative encoding of PP utterances. Achievement verbs in two utterances required the -ing form: 'is leaving' (3) and 'is arriving' (45).

Table 6.2 shows the choices made.

	3		45	
Verb form	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present Simple	30%	45%	26%	44%
Past simple	22%	18%	35%	31%
Progressive	45%	30%	32%	22%

Table 6.2
Achievement verbs and progressive

There is a clear tendency for the Arabic imperfective to be encoded as present simple in English. The fact that around one third of the responses for 45 occur in the past simple in both instruments is interesting. It is possible that subjects did not read the whole utterance in English. However, this does not account for the high incidence of past in ATI where the verb form was clearly imperfective in Arabic.

Achievement verbs in the past form are more frequent than other forms in the FCs and up to twice the expected rate was observed at all levels except le.1, where the difference between the expected and observed is not significant (.435). An explanation as to why learners perform so accurately at le.1 in FCs has already been proposed with writing task type and classroom instruction cited as two possible reasons. The task type at le.1 generally involves a narrative on daily routine either in the present or past, a task repeatedly practiced in the classroom. Alternative forms occurring in past routine narratives are usually present simple suggesting that RPs associate habit and routine with present and past simple verb forms. Achievement verbs are rarely found in the -ing form because of the punctual/non-phasal nature of the verb. Linguistic input may also be a factor whereby many of the achievement verbs occurring in learner input occur in the past simple form (Li 1989, Schachter 1992, Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds 1996 (Ch. 2).

FC examples indicate a tendency among learners to encode achievement situations in the past simple irrespective of text requirements. Examples from compositions on present routines illustrate a common learner tendency to accurate and inaccurate verbs side by side.

45. At 10 p.m. every day she and her husband *arrived at her house and she prepares dinner. (le.1)

46. At the weekend I go with my friend to play football. I * arrived at the house at

5 p.m. and I go meet my family. (le.2)

47. Dubai Shopping Festival *happened once a year. (le.3)

48. In a typical day, when she *reached her house she *found that she has to do many things. (le.4)

49. In any school we *found many activities. Some girls like all activities and some like only one or two. (le.5)

Occasionally, the –ing form occurs for the habitual as in

50. A man and his wife were leaving home every day at 8.30 a.m. (le.1)

The past form is also used frequently to replace PP as in

51. Scientists * didn't found the cure for cancer. (le.4)

6.3.3 Activity and Accomplishment Verbs

Activity and accomplishment verb types share some semantic features (durativity) while differing in one fundamental. Activities are inherently unbounded while accomplishment situations are bounded with an endpoint indicated in the predicate. Both differ fundamentally from stative and achievements in involving a number of temporal considerations. I would like to argue, (based on observations and learner feedback), that the challenge presented by such verb types lies in their temporal semantics that allows for a wider scope in adverbial combinations and consequently a more complex syntactic structure.

The POA hypothesis focuses on different temporal facets of each situation type. In activities, the unbounded nature of the event is the focus, anticipating the progressive form while in accomplishment situations, the endpoint is hypothesized to be the dominant feature resulting in the –ed form. Tests do not support either hypothesis. The POA results for activity (Table 5.16) record a higher incidence of –ing forms than any other verb type (all –ing forms with or without the helping verb are included) appearing to support the hypothesis.

However, activity results on the second test (Table 5.17) indicate that learners do not reach the expected number of –ing forms (except at le.3 & 4 in ATI). Such results suggest that features other than verb semantics affected choices. Sentences containing the temporal adverb ‘while’ (six in total) displayed a higher accuracy rate (between 67.4% - 81.5%), suggesting a possible formulaic association between ‘while’ and the progressive form. Choice of form may have been affected by Arabic verb type and structure. Verbs that are classed as translocative in Arabic (see Ch. 3) such as ‘sleep’, ‘walk’, ‘sit’ with the potential to occur in the participle form (equating to English –ing) were noted to occur more frequently than other types in the progressive form (around 70%). The verb ‘sit’ in Item 38, though necessitating the present simple form, recorded up to 50% choice of progressive in both instruments except le.2, suggesting that verb type is a factor. Adverbs of time, ‘at present’ ‘at the moment’, in some utterances may have contributed to correct verb choice as these are taught in combination with the progressive form.

In situations where a form other than the progressive was selected, choices varied between past and present simple. In some items (12 and 77), neighbouring verb forms may have distracted learners leading to forms other than the accurate one (in both cases the progressive). Item 12 has verbs in past simple and progressive. It is possible that learners did not read to the end of either sentence and may have anchored their choice on an incorrect interpretation of temporality. A persistent flaw in any grammar instrument is that learners may not read the whole utterance to grasp the full temporal context of the situation contained therein. Though advised to do so, there is no way to conclusively prove that subjects read the whole sentence.

Learners at le.1 chose equally between the present and past simple forms suggesting that their choices were affected by accompanying verbs. More present forms than expected were observed at le.2, indicating the already noted pervasiveness of the present simple form. The Arabic imperfective verb form does not discriminate between simple and progressive functions, another possible factor. In addition, a determined effort is undertaken initially to limit the indiscriminate use of –ing forms by all learners, the effects of which may affect le.2 use of –ing. At le.3, 4 and 5, the past simple was selected as an alternative to the progressive, reflecting learners' tense considerations (see section on progressives). An example of where a clear time reference leads to an almost 100% accurate response is in the sentence *I ate very*

little yesterday so I am very hungry'. The inclusion of *'yesterday'* signalled the past, a lexical feature associated by the learners with past simple verb form. In EGI item 48, the time reference is much vaguer *'when I was in school I studied Spanish'*, and verb forms recorded include progressive and present.

In FCs, the –ing form predominates and a comparison between observed and expected clearly indicates the over-use of the –ing form. Proportions of 11, 13, 5, 3 and 4 to 1 occur at each of the five levels respectively. Such an imbalance suggests that the learners apply the –ing form freely in contexts where it is not grammatically appropriate. In most of the following examples, the –ing form is used to communicate habituality; *'was watching'* in 55 reflects duration while –ing verb forms in 57 are acceptable as they could refer to situations surrounding the arrival.

52. Last weekend, I *swimming and playing volleyball. (1e.1)

53. When I was young, I *was wearing a red dress. I *was eating rice. I played handball and watched TV. (1e.2)

54. People *were living in small houses and they *were travelling by camel. (1e.3)

55. Yesterday, I *was watching CNN to practice listening skills. (1e.4)

56. The highest numbers of students *are coming from remote areas in 1989.(1e.5)

57. We went to a hotel and the people were dancing and singing. I *enjoy my time and there is a famous band. (1e.5)

At 1e.4 and 5, learners are assigned topics that require opinions on current events. In many cases, the essay title provides the expected verb forms as in the following.

'Nowadays, parents indulge their children and do not control them properly. Children need discipline in their lives and cannot be allowed to do as they like and go where they please. Discuss.'

It could be argued that such a title allows for present simple or progressive forms, depending on the sense of overall permanency or temporariness one wishes to communicate. The following forms were noted, where the simple and progressive forms are used interchangeably, suggesting a lack of clarity of the difference between the two.

58. Many parents let their children do whatever they like and do not do anything for them. Many parents *are not saying anything to their children when they do something bad.

59. Freedom teaches the children many bad attitudes and behaviour because he* is going out and playing in the street and he may meet with many bad people and he could learn bad things such as smoking and stealing.

Robison (1995:354) pointed to the fact that *'the affiliation of progressive marking with activities strengthens with proficiency level.'* It can be argued, however, that the preponderance of -ing forms may also reflect learners' interpretation of the appropriate grammatical encoding of any durative situation. Duration resides in the activity verb. Duration, however, may also feature in the utterance as a whole in habituals, iteratives, and any event involving a time frame. Activity and accomplishment situations involve an extended time period that must be indicated contextually. If, for example, one says 'Ahmed runs and swims' or 'Ahmed runs a kilometre and swims 30 laps', it could be an answer to a question such as 'What does Ahmed do every day / after school?' implying the habitual. Without this contextualization the utterance is not complete. We expect phrases such as 'whenever he goes to the club' or 'every morning'. Similarly, the inclusion of a number or plural form can add a durative sense as in 'He ran twenty kilometres yesterday' (see transfer discussion).

Accomplishment verbs, like activities involve a number of temporal phases both inherent in the verb and present in the utterance as a whole. The accomplishment situation (located in the present, past or future) contains an endpoint, consequently being both aspectually durative and telic. The focus of the learner could be on either of these features. Verbs in accomplishment situations usually require a telic predicate to complete the utterances as in:

60. The women walk 5 km a day.

The verb '*walk*' is an activity verb while the end point is contained in the adverbial phrase '*5 km a day*'.

The first test on accomplishment verbs indicates the prevalence of past simple verb forms. However, though the chi test registers the difference between each form as significant, the residual is not high. Results from test 2 suggest that there is no clear-cut support for the hypothesis and that in some cases the form occurs less frequently than expected. The observed number of past simple forms is less than expected at all levels in the ATI though the difference is not statistically significant (Tables 5.21/ 5.22). Consider the following accomplishment situations from EGI: (35) 'walk about 5km' and (43) 'swims for an hour'.

Approximately 50% of respondents encoded both verbs correctly in the present simple form, the highest being at le.4 and 5. Almost 40% of progressive forms were recorded with less than 10% past simple forms. These results point to a variety of influences. Present simple reflects habitual indicated in 'every day'. Progressives reflect focus on the inherent semantics of the verb and/ alternatively focus on duration inherent in both situations 'swim' and 'an hour'. On the other hand, an accomplishment situation where the transitive verb contains the necessity of an object as in 'catch a cold' in winter (24) displays a different tendency. The correct verb form is present simple, selected by 58% (EGI) and 65% (ATI). However, 25% choose the past simple and only 8% the progressive.

The encoding of accomplishment situations in FC does not support the POA hypothesis and in most cases the observed number of past simple forms is far less than the expected (le.1, 2, 5 record half). The expected exceeds the observed only at le.4. The most striking feature is the abundance of verbs in the -ing (especially at upper levels) suggesting that learner focus may be on aspectual features other than the telicity of the accomplishment verb and predicate. The multiple temporal features in the following utterance can prove very confusing for learners.

61. He swam 40 laps every day last year.

Swimming is inherently durative, while the finite number of 40 laps introduces a boundary. 'Every day' describes habituality with completion in 'last year'. The grammatically challenged learner can focus on any of these temporal features and encode it according as s/he feels appropriate. Consider the following:

62. We climbed Al Quysoon Mountain and we *sitting under the moon. I enjoy myself in my holiday. (le.5)

63. I took the car to my friend who has a garage. Last night he *need someone to help him. (le.5)

In example 62, the accomplishment verb 'climbed' is past, the activity verb 'sit' is progressive while the stative verb 'enjoy' is non-past, appearing to give credence to the POA. Such observations are similar to those in 57 where the accomplishment situation '*went to a hotel*' is past; activity '*were dancing and singing*' progressive form and '*enjoy*' non-past. A partial explanation for the differing choices for all the past time situations in the examples above may be found in the encoding of bounded situations in the L1.

6.3.4 Conclusion

Given the observations and examples cited in the preceding discussion, it cannot be denied that the inherent semantics of verb types may affect morphological form, particularly in the less temporally complex types of statives and achievements. However, I believe that rather than arguing exclusively for the primacy of lexical aspect (POA) and its effect on choice of verb morphology, it would be more accurate to consider the complexity of the temporal notions being communicated through each verb type and the *distributional bias* of such verb types in learner input. To illustrate this we have seen that stative and achievement situations are less complex from a phasal perspective than activity and accomplishment situations and their collocation with adverbial temporal phrases is consequently restricted. The lexical aspect of both types, non-phasal in the case of statives and punctuality/telicity in the case of achievements restrict the occurrence of both types with the progressive form. Therefore, even in learner input, there is less frequent occurrence of both verb types with the -ing form though of course there are exceptions. Results indicate a learner tendency at all levels and in all three instruments to associate stative verbs with present simple form. Similarly, there is a clear association between achievement verbs and -ed forms across all levels and in all three instruments. It would appear that learner focus on lexical verb aspect allied to the simplex nature of the temporality inherent in such situations gives credence to the POA.

In the case of the other verb types i.e. activity and accomplishment, correlation between the lexical aspect and the verb and a particular morphological form is not so clear-cut. Test items provided in the EGI and ATI included context clues in the form of adverbial phrases to indicate the intended temporal nature and location of the utterance. Collocation with adverbial phrases is more inclusive than that with statives and achievements. This may have presented a challenge at the level of tense and grammatical aspect and in both instruments it cannot be concluded that an association was seen to exist between durativity (activity) and –ing forms or telicity (accomplishment) and –ed. However, in composition writing, the preponderance of the –ing form with activity verbs suggests an association between the lexical aspect of such verb types and the progressive form. Accomplishment verbs indicate a complex combination of verb type (activity generally and consequently unbounded) with an argument inherent to the whole situation that adds a telic element, classifying the whole situation as telic (see discussion in 2.1.4). Results in EGI and ATI suggest learner focus is distracted by the variety of temporal notions inherent in the situation with morphological choices distributed between the past simple form and the progressive. Verbs in composition writing suggest that learners fail to recognize the "*cardinality of the object in determining telicity*" (Slabakova 1999:292) and instead are distracted by the unlimited durative nature of the verb choosing the –ing form above all others. There is enough evidence to suggest that verb type may be a factor in morphological choice but more extensive focussed research needs to be undertaken for each type in the contexts in which they occur.

Part Three: Verb functions

6.4 Influence of Arabic on English verb forms

It is argued that the facet of temporality selected for encoding in Arabic affects how learners use English forms. Arabic is viewed as an aspect language (Ch. 3), the primary function of whose morphological forms is to articulate the completion or lack of completion of a situation. Tense, though communicated, is not the primary focus of the verb form. Each of the following sections deals with a morpho-semantic feature of Arabic that may affect learners' use of verbs.

6.4.1 Imperfective

The Arabic imperfective verb form functioning as the encoder of non-completed situations does not differentiate morphologically between English aspectually simple (present) and progressive situations. The temporal difference between the two is clarified in Arabic through adverbs or adverbial time phrases. Klein (1995:678) explains *'languages vary in the way in which they differentiate between these temporal relations, in particular in the way in which temporal relations are 'bundled' into different forms.'*

Imperfectivity is not restricted to the non-past. Situations located in the past (habituals, iteratives) but without a clear endpoint are encoded in the imperfective with the helping verb 'kaan' providing past tense focus. The semantic scope of the Arabic imperfective is inclusive incorporating all verb types and functions apart from clearly bounded situations. Syntactic features other than verb form establish facets of temporality focused on in the utterance.

64. huwa yaqraa'

can be translated as

He 3 masc imperf sing. reads.

He reads(present simple).

He is reading (progressive).

When adverbial phrases such as 'aalaan' 'now' or 'kul yawm' 'every day' are added, the intended temporal meaning is clear. It is hypothesized that learners do not differentiate between the functions of English simple and progressive forms frequently resulting in indiscriminate choice of either to encode Arabic imperfective. The hypothesized outcome is the presence of a higher than expected number of progressive forms. Of the imperfective situations included in the tests, 22 are present simple (6600 verbs), and 12 progressive (3600 verbs), giving a total of 10,200 verbs. Past progressives, past habituais, present perfect situations as well as conditionals were excluded from the test to limit variables. Of the 22 present simple forms, 10 are stative and the remainder describe habits, repeated situations and facts. All include signals, such as accompanying present simple verbs and/or adverbial phrases such as 'every day', 'every evening' and 'usually' to denote temporality. The expected percentage is 65% for present simple and 35% for progressive.

Responses in ATI point to greater accuracy in choice of present simple particularly at le.2, 4 and 5 where chi square tests indicate no significant differences between observed and expected forms (.112 at le.2, .428 at 3 and .001 at 5). In EGI, an increase in accuracy rates between le.1 and 2 is clear, an increase not consistent through le.3 but noticeable again at 4 to 5. The difference between the observed and expected is statistically significant at all levels particularly at 1 and 3 suggesting that learners are confused about the difference between the two forms.

Though consideration of the effect of verb type on form was concluded in the previous section, it is interesting to look at how present simple and progressive forms are distributed among verb types and functions. The following indicate specific responses on four of the test items. Figures are given for EGI and ATI.

Item	Requirement	PS	Prog	Verb type	Function
33	Present simple (PS) (changes her job)	57%/ 61%	19%/ 15%	Achievement	iterative
38	Present simple (sits outside the door)	43%/ 57%	38%/ 25%	Activity	habitual
54	Present simple (runs about 10 km.)	65%/ 68%	30%/ 21%	Accomplishment	habitual
99	Present prog. (Prog) (they are drinking cappuccino)	18%/ 25%	65%/ 57%	Activity	progressive

Table 6.3

Comparison of verb type, function and form

The -ing form occurs frequently in FCs. A corpus of 740 imperfective verbs was selected at each level to explore how well learners understand the difference between simple and progressive. Limited use of the true function of the progressive was noted at all levels. Results presented in Table 5.31 indicate a statistically significant difference between expected and observed forms, less simple and more progressives than expected.

The challenge of differentiating between functions of present simple and progressive forms is not restricted to Arabic speakers only. Research shows that learners from other language backgrounds encounter the same confusion. Brindley (1993: 181) explains that his research participants (immigrants to Australia from a variety of backgrounds) found the two forms confusing and explains that

although the form of the present simple (and often the progressive as well) may be evident, the amount of variability in tense marking indicates that the function has not been mastered. The semantic distinction between the present simple and progressive does not generally emerge with enough regularity to allow the researcher to conclude that the learners either know or can use the present simple or progressive.

Arguably, the challenges presented by both forms can be magnified by the nature of the L1. The fact that all present simple and progressive situations are grouped as imperfective in the L1 does not facilitate understanding of the differences. Though Arabic has a loose progressive form with translocative verbs, the semantic features differ considerably from those of the English progressive. A range of semantic

functions is performed through the English simple and progressive forms and Arabic imperfective. It is clear from the preceding discussion that understanding the difference between the two is a challenge. The following sections explore learners' association between the temporal functions and the two English present forms in more detail.

6.4.2 Present Habitual

Arabic habitual situations, whether present or past, are aspectually imperfective. Imperfectivity lies not in a single situation but in the whole series. Therefore, situations expressed through punctual verbs can be durative and imperfective when forming part of a series. English habituals are viewed from a non-phasal perspective (single situation seen in totality) and encoded as aspectually simple. In line with the proposed hypothesized association of Arabic imperfective forms with English simple and progressive forms, it is contended that learners may encode English habituals in both simple and progressive forms. The tendency is compounded by the apparent association of any durative event with the –ing form.

The encoding of habitual and routine situations was tested in twelve items in the EGI and ATI. Adverbial phrases such as 'every day', in nine of the utterances clarify the aspectual focus of the utterance with tense indicated on another verb in the context to clarify present and not past habitual as in '*Every evening before I go home from work, I turn off the computer*'.

Chi tests measure difference in frequency between present simple and progressive. All other forms (see Appendix C) are excluded from the test. Results indicate that at le.1 in both EGI (sig.206) and ATI (sig.109), no statistically significant difference is noted, a phenomenon observed also in FCs at le.3 (sig.136). Though a significant difference is clear at all other levels in both instruments, the difference alternates across levels with le.3 showing the lowest (after 1) and 5 the highest in EGI. Interestingly, ATI results do not display the same fluctuating patterns and performance improves across levels. Results for FCs register an uneven pattern.

Some verb types indicate a higher incidence of –ing forms than others. Consider four EGI/ ATI items, all of which describe habitual activities. Three items, (35)

'walk about 5 km', (43) 'swims for an hour', and (54) 'runs about 10 km' contain clear endpoints of distance and time. The verbs are activity with predicates that involve boundaries. All verbs are functionally habitual requiring the present simple form. A noticeably high percentage of responses, however, occur in the progressive form.

Verb form	Tense/ present Function/ habitual	
	EGI	ATI
Present simple	52%	59%
Progressive	39%	29%

Table 6.4

Encoding present habitual situations

Apart from the two above mentioned forms, an unexpected number of past simple forms were noted as alternatives to the present simple.

Levels	English	Arabic
1	180 (25%)	150 (21%)
2	135 (19%)	127 (18%)
3	155 (22%)	90 (13%)
4	85 (12%)	63 (9%)
5	73 (10%)	65 (9%)

Table 6.5

Present habitual situations and past simple form

Two possible explanations posited for this are adverb associations and verb type. Adverbial phrases denoting habituality collocate with present and past simple forms. Results suggest that up to 25 % of the learners at three lower levels chose indiscriminately between the two forms. Secondly, 50% of the verbs in the habitual sentences are achievement. According to the POA hypothesis, such verbs are likely to occur in past form. Outcomes suggest that the nature of the verb may be a factor as 25 - 30 % of achievement verbs are encoded in the past while only 4 - 16% of other verb types. Consider an utterance (Item 29) that contains an inherently punctual verb in a habitual present situation. 'I leave my books in the college every day'. The past form 'left' was chosen by 29% of the respondents indicating the possible influence of the lexical nature (achievement) of the verb 'to leave'.

Encoding of present habitual situations in FCs suggest that instruction patterns and learning styles are factors in performance. The highest accuracy rate was achieved at le.1 suggesting that task type (daily routines and habits), teaching patterns with overt practice of task type and learning styles of memorization affect subjects' performance. Relevant to these influencing factors is the observation that incorrect forms at le.1 were mainly past simple while at all other levels a higher incidence of –ing forms were noted. The former is considered to be the effect of instruction and the latter possible confusions from L1 associations.

65. We go on holidays every year. People *went to the beach every day and swim. (le.1)

66. My brothers always * watching TV and * studying for exams. (le.2)

67. My big brother works in the army. The others * are study. (le.3)

68. We go on holiday, we *are swimming and we *are visiting markets. (le.3)

69. When I was young in free time I *was like reading but now I * reading stories.

(4)

70. The government * offering everything to us like books and teachers. (le.5)

71. As I see it, sometimes we *are depending on the old people. (le.5)

6.4.3 Past Habitual

Arabic habitual situations in the past are aspectually imperfective. The helping verb 'kaan' 'to be', establishes past time location, differentiating past from present. The structure of the two-part Arabic verb phrase resembles that of English past progressive, consisting of the appropriate part of the verb 'to be' 'kaan', marked for gender and number with the imperfective form of the main verb. It is hypothesized that past habitual temporality, the serial nature of which is viewed as morphologically imperfective may affect how learners encode English past habitual verbs. The line graph (Figure 5.17) compares past simple occurrences with all other forms that could be construed as imperfective. Performance at le.4 in FCs registers a considerable drop in accuracy with an increase again at le.5.

Results (Table 5.33 / 5.34) suggest that verb forms are affected by the imperfectivity of Arabic habituals. Learners used present simple or progressive forms particularly at le.1 and 2. Learners claimed (informal discussion with researcher) that their

instinctive choice is the English past progressive form to illustrate the continuity inherent in habituality while showing time with 'was/ were'. The alternative choice is present simple with or without 'was/ were'. It could be argued that in each situation the impetus behind alternative choices was to somehow ensure the communication of the imperfective nature of the situations. Though the incidence of past simple forms is higher at le.3 – 5, over 30% of verb forms occur in the progressive form.

Analysis of past habituais in FCs is based on 300 verbs from each language level. Results show slightly under or over 50% of the verbs encoded correctly in the past form. Alternative choices fall primarily in the progressive though there are between 4% to 28% present simple forms, particularly noticeable at le.4. How learners interpret the facet of temporality to be encoded affects choice of form, differing possibly from one learner to another. Present simple forms for encoding habituais are more common at le.2, while both present and progressive are found at all other levels. Consideration of verbs in the following examples suggest a variety of influences, possibly verb type, L1 influence, confusion between function of simple and progressive forms and narrative conventions in L1 where the establishment of time occurs in the opening verb with a degree of flexibility in all following verb forms.

In 72, 73, and 74 'was' and 'were' establish time while present simple form provides for the continuity of the events. The use of 'was enjoy' in 74 may reflect habituality.

72. When I was young, I *do many things, playing tennis, writing stories. Now I *am reading and writing poetry. (le.2)

73. When we were young, we were always together. We *play together, *ride the motorbike *going to the ice rink and the garden and jet ski. (le.2)

74. In preparatory school, I *was enjoy to draw the palm and flower and I *was enjoy to enter the school and I *was taking music lessons every week. (le.2)

The function of past progressive as used in 75, 76 and 77 is to articulate the continuity of the past event (habitual) while the present progressive (75) describes a situation still in progress and shows grammatical accuracy.

75. In the past, women *were sitting in the house to take care of her children and husband. They *think only about the family. Nowadays women are changing. (3)
76. In the past people *were eating fresh fruit and vegetables and there was no restaurants or hospitals thirty years ago. (le.3)
77. In the past, most of the UAE *were working in a simple job like fishing and hunting whereas today there are a lot of jobs. The mutawa was the doctor who *treat his patients in the past but today there are many new modern hospitals. (4)

Verb forms in the following suggest two possible effects: verb type (accomplishment) and /or the presence of a clear boundary. Here are examples where two hypothesized influences work in tangent to influence choice of past simple verbs.

78. I tripped to Spain with my family. We *were enjoy there. We went to the zoo and I bought cloth for my family. We *were swimming and we rented one boat and went fishing one time. We eat Spanish food. My brothers *were renting some scooters. Then we returned to the hotel. (le.4)
79. The teacher *was teaching us the alphabet and give us examples with pictures and words. (le.4)
80. We *were taking different subjects in each class. We *were memorizing everything. I disagreed with that style because the teacher *are not giving enough time for the student to be creative. We *were spending almost all our hours in the same class and this was wrong in my view because the students were boring they can't understand the lecture. (le.5)

The occurrence of 'boring' in example 80 indicates a frequently observed error with words such as 'boring/ bored', 'interesting/ interested', reflecting the general confusion underlying the use of the -ing form. It is multi-functional. The form remains the same but fulfils many roles: a component of progressive verb phrase, adjective and verbal noun.

6.4.4 Translocative verbs

Arabic translocative verbs can occur in participle form (a verbal noun with adjectival characteristics) to describe progressive phases of a situation. Such verbs may occur in the English progressive form irrespective of the TA requirements of the utterance. Normally, progressive situations are encoded either in the imperfective form or a combination of 'qaa9aid' with the imperfective (colloquial Arabic). If in the latter form, the verb must be translated as progressive.

81. *huwa yjlis*.

He 3 masc sing imperf sits.

He sits. He is sitting.

81a. *huwa jaalis*

He 3 active participle sitting.

He is sitting.

The second example with the active participle can only be translated as 'he is sitting'. Choice of verb form for the encoding of translocative verbs in both aspectually simple (60%) and progressive (40%) was tested through five items in the grammar instruments. The –ing form occurs to a higher than expected level but it is not clear if these results are related to verb type or temporal feature (duration and atelicity) inherent in the utterances. The aspectually simple verbs in FCs describe routines and habits resulting in present and past simple forms at lower levels but frequent use of the –ing forms at upper levels.

82. I like to walk on the Corniche. I * am going skating and I listen to music. (L.3)

Translocative verbs in FCs (mostly 'to go') occur in the –ing form irrespective of grammatical requirements.

6.4.5 Progressive

The –ing form is more striking in its frequency than its accuracy of use. In his discussion of findings from research done on Arabs, Spanish and Portuguese, Kleinmann (1984:374) suggests that

The fact that the Arabic group used the present progressive so frequently (over 66% of the time) in apparent contradiction to the CA prediction might be explainable on the basis that this structure which is nonexistent in Arabic, differs so much from anything existing that it was consequently easier to learn.

Schramm (1996:564) refers to Olshtain's 1979 findings *'that even a speaker of a language without aspect acquired the present progressive earlier than other tenses'*, where Olshtain was of course referring to languages in which explicit morphological markers of aspect are present. If one considers the exceptionally high rates of accuracy in present progressive forms in composition writing, one might be tempted to agree with the above. However, on closer observation, it is obvious that the output does not reflect full understanding of the form. Learners often seem to perceive simple and progressive forms as interchangeable or to be unclear about the difference between the two, selecting one or other on the basis of a perceived function (see section 6.4.1). Brindley (1993:182) suggests that *'learners' use of the –ing marking serves first to establish prototype category of 'action word', thus establishing an invariant relationship between form and grammatical function while keeping the learning task as simple as possible'*, arguing thus for the influence of lexical aspect. Edstrom (1972:129) refers to Swedish learners who over-generalize on the use of –ing in English feeling that it communicates the durative element present in many utterances. In his view, the situation is complicated by the fact that Swedish does not have *'a corresponding feature'*, (similar to Arabic) removing a frame of reference *'which might facilitate comprehension and mastery of the functions of the progressive.'*

That learners understand the nature of the progressive function to form relationship and the difference between it and the simple form is doubtful. The label of the form as 'present continuous tense' in many grammar books may be confusing. Arguably, it can cause learners to assume that any situation continuing for a period of time should be encoded in the –ing form. The Arabic word used by learners 'musTammar' to refer to the form is a generic term to describe continuity in both continuous and

serialized durative situations. Apart from near future plans (not explored in the current research), the two most frequent uses of the progressive form are those of establishing the progressive phasal nature of an event and the temporariness of a situation. Neither notion has its own distinctive morphological form in Arabic though the former (phasal aspect) can be encoded syntactically with the active participle 'qaa9id' used to add the progressive sense as in:

83. *huwa qaa9aid yagraa.*

He 3 active participle sitting 3 imperf sing. reads.

He is reading.

When 'qaa9id' is included, the verb has to be translated as the progressive. In progressive phasal situations, the question of a terminal boundary is not an issue and the English progressive form must be used.

The second functional employment of the progressive form, to communicate temporariness includes a speaker assumed endpoint as in the following.

- I live in Abu Dhabi.
- I am living in Abu Dhabi.

As speaker choice of focus is involved this use of the progressive was not tested in the EGI and ATI items. The phasal nature of the progressive was tested in items in present and past progressive.

Both EGI and ATI progressive items evaluated learners' ability to encode progressive phasal situations, describing events in progress at the time of the utterance (present progressive) or surrounding a past event (past progressive). Though approximately 50% of verb forms occur in the progressive, a high incidence of present simple forms are also noted giving support to the thesis that learners' difficulties spring from an inability to separate the functions of present and progressive forms. Past simple forms were also observed.

On closer investigation, it appears that the verb type in four utterances in the tests accounted for most of the past forms. Examples below from the test instruments give % for different verb types. In the first two, activity type verbs, 'at the moment it is snowing' and 'at the moment Aisha is swimming' a low incidence of past forms was

noted (2% and 5%), whereas in 'the train is arriving at the platform' and 'they are building a new house' where verb types are achievement and accomplishment a much higher incidence was recorded (35% and 30%). This would appear to suggest that verb and situation type is a factor in learner morphological choice. About 5% and 6% of responses in the -ing form did not include the appropriate part of the verb 'to be' suggesting concern with the phasal nature of the situation than on the time location. Learner tendency to combine verb 'to be' with the base part of the verb has been commented upon already with about 4% of respondents in both instruments selecting such forms. Various explanations have already been posited for these observations.

Items testing use of past progressive forms also recorded responses in the three forms of present, past simple and progressive with or without the verb 'to be'. At le.1 and 2, a high % of present simple forms were noted, 15% at le.1 and as high as 26% in EGI at le.2. The fact that there is a noticeable incidence of present simple forms at le.2 has already been commented upon. What is more interesting is that learners selected the past simple form in 18% (EGI) and 21% (ATI) of cases suggesting that learner focus may have been on tense rather than aspect. The presence of 'kaan' in the ATI items may have encouraged learners to focus on past temporal location and thereby use the past simple verb form.

The real function of the progressive forms as pointed out above is rarely observed in the FCs. The progressive forms that occur are in the main present progressives. The form is used to describe what is happening at the time of speaking in informal tasks of picture description or letter writing at le.1 and 2. At upper levels, the present progressive form (sometimes without verb 'to be') is employed correctly but sporadically to describe ongoing trends.

84. Ali is talking to his friends and he is not swimming. (L.1 describing a picture)
85. At the moment we are sitting on the beach and talking. (le.2)
86. The world is experiencing a dramatic increase in population and the situation is causing big problems. (L. 3)
87. People talk on the phone while they are driving and this is dangerous.
88. Some people think the media trying to destroy their culture
89. Many things changed and most of the women are working in many fields

90. Many poor countries throughout the world facing poverty. (L.4)
91. Another group of people think that the media is lying and they do not trust it because they think the media is working for enemy benefits
92. People since 20 years lived in small houses made of mud and palm fronds but now they living in large villas.
93. Many people are using the mobile phone to show their importance and to talk all the time.
94. Nowadays women are sharing the world's vacancies with men. (L.5)

In the following examples, it could be argued that the present simple would be more appropriate in the context of both sentences.

95. Men are desperate for jobs and they can't have it unless women *are giving it up and go back to their traditional way of life. (le.5)
96. Some people *are adapting their ideas by what they hear or read because it is helpful for their life and they change their ideas for that. (le.5)

The following use of the progressive has been noted frequently in graph writing. The logic behind the choices is undoubtedly the association of the –ing with duration and though there is a right boundary in the second time period, it is not uncommon for learners to use –ing form as a possible indication of duration.

97. The number of women in education was increasing between the two time periods and the number of men was dropping. (le.4)

The fact that so few examples of the past progressive forms occur in composition writing is indicative of the type of tasks, mostly present trends and problems and when past involving straightforward past simple narrative style. It is also indicative of learner narrative style involving coordination rather than subordination, a feature characteristic of Arabic writing as pointed out by Obeidat (1998:3) '*at the syntactic level, English seems to use more complex T-units aiming at a higher level of complexity; whereas Arabic tends to rely on co-ordinated T-units as a stylistic characteristic of its prose writing style.*'

6.4.6 The Perfective

In Ch. 3, it was noted that the Arabic perfective form encodes situations that have an overtly stated boundary, or indicates the logical sequential relationship existing between two events. Five items from EGI and ATI provided data to test the encoding of clearly perfective situations. Past simple forms, where observed, were coded as correct while present simple or progressive (past or present) forms were coded as imperfective. In ATI, the verbs in the test items were all perfective but a higher incidence of non-past forms (around one third) occurred at le.1 and 2 here than in EGI. The tendency among le.2 learners to choose present simple form has been noted already. On closer analysis of the responses for EGI, though there is a high accuracy rate in the choice of the past simple form, alternatives indicate that learners may also have been distracted by the other temporal clues in the sentences. All verbs are punctual so verb type is not a distracter. There is a low incidence of the progressive 2 – 4% except item 95 where 10% of the responses were progressive. 'I start work at 10 o'clock every day ... but today I started at 9 a.m...'

The presence of the present simple form in the first verb to describe a present habitual situation may have affected learner choice of present simple.

Assessment of verb forms in FCs indicates that learners frequently use the simple past to encode a single completed event in the past. Consider the following examples.

98. I joined this college in 1998.

99. I went to Oman in Al Eid. I *going to visit my uncle and I *see the beautiful view.

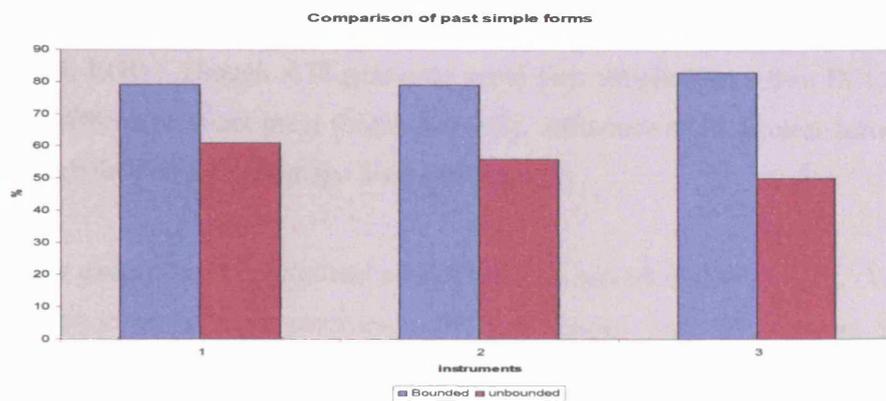
100. I stayed in my sister's house. I *going every day shopping and to the beach.

101. Before last summer, I *work in the airport. I saw one flight from Russia.

The additional test carried out to compare learner encoding of past situations with and without stated boundaries yielded some interesting results. The items in the test consisted of verbs from five utterances with clear boundaries and five without as in (a) 'played tennis from 2 – 4 yesterday' and (b) 'played tennis every night last week.

In (a) there are two boundaries, one deictic in 'yesterday' and one aspectual with in the time frame 2 – 4. It is hypothesized that this should prompt learners to encode

the situation correctly in the past simple form. In (b), the absence of a clear boundary may affect choice of verb form leading learners to encode the situation as imperfective. Results outlined in Table 5.39/40 highlight the difference in verb choice for bounded and non-bounded situations where there is twice the accuracy rate in past simple forms for bounded situations. 300 of each situation type were selected from the FCs and yielded results similar to those of the grammar instruments. The following bar chart compares accuracy rates for the two situation types across the three instruments. Results appear to indicate that the presence of a stated aspectual boundary affects choice of verb form.



1 = EGI 2 = ATI 3 = FC

Figure 6.5

Comparison of accuracy of past simple forms with bounded and unbounded situations

6.4.7 Secondary tense

Arabic perfective form as an indicator of secondary tense was introduced in Ch. 3.

A. Conditionals

The form is generally employed in the construction of Arabic conditionals of possibility with as Haywood & Nahmad (1965:290) explain '*no particular inherent temporal significance.*' I would like to suggest that perfective verbs in the conditional clause indicate a logical sequential relationship between the condition and the main situation and can consequently be classed as secondary tense. The perfective verb indicates the temporal nature of the relationship between the conditional and main situations. Realization of the main event depends on the completion of the condition, a fact encoded in the perfective form of the conditional

verb. The verb form does not indicate speaker location, nor is it an indicator of modality. The modal component of the Arabic conditional is communicated through the conditional particle 'idha', 'in', or 'law', each one providing a specific modal perspective. It is hypothesized that learners may be affected by Arabic encoding of conditionals to choose the English past simple form.

A total of 180 verb tokens, were analysed at each level. A tendency to encode the conditional verb in the past was noted, a trend more common in ATI than EGI. Past simple forms occur at all levels, with the highest noted at le.1 (57/ 59%) and lowest at le.5 (22% EGI). Though ATI generates more past simple forms than EGI at all levels, the difference is not great (highest at le.2). Influence of L1 is clear across all levels though dropping as language level improves.

In FCs, few examples of conditional sentences were recorded at le.1 and 2. Where conditionals occur, a high percentage of past simple verb forms were noted suggesting that transfer from L1 is a feature.

102. If you *decided to buy a new car, you will think about a new or used car.(le.3)

103 If you have any problems, they will fix it right away. (le.3)

104. If I *had the money I will spend it helping people.(le.4)

105. If I *had the weekend free, I gather my friends around for a camping trip. (le.4)

The previous sentence could indicate an improbable occurrence though the context from which it was taken classifies it as a condition of possibility.

106. I like reading and it doesn't matter if it *was in English or in Arabic. (le.4)

The use of the past in conditional sentences is far less common at level 5. The following is an example of a double conditional with the first verb correct and the second in the past form.

107. If a local woman decides to marry a foreigner, the government is going to withdraw her passport and if she *did so her family is going to forget her.'

It is obvious that learners alternate between the correct present simple target form and the past simple indicative of an L1 effect. The subjects are instructed learners. The correct articulation of conditionals is a component of the English syllabus albeit in a deductive rather than inductive sense. Whether or not a more direct overt teaching of the conditional verb forms would lead to a higher level of accuracy is part of the wider discussion of the value of incorporating some facets of L1 knowledge into classroom instruction (see Ch.7).

B. Time clauses

The logical temporal relationship between main and subsidiary events identified in Arabic conditional clauses occurs also in time clauses, primarily those introduced by 'when' 'before' and 'after' in reference to a single event. It was pointed out in Ch. 3 that the perfective verb in such clauses describes the necessity of completion of one situation before the realization of another. If 'when' in the time clause can be replaced by 'whenever', it is likely to be followed by an imperfective verb in Arabic. It is hypothesized that the L1 system may affect learner output in English leading to the choice of past simple forms in time clause verbs.

From the limited number of verb tokens (120) at each level, it is clear that most of the non-target like forms occur in the past simple form (from slightly under to slightly over two thirds of total). Similar patterns were noted in both instruments. Data from the FCs were not extensive but do indicate a high incidence of verbs in the past simple form in time clauses, as noted in the following examples. What is interesting is the fact that not all these references are to single situations. In the first three examples, 108 – 110, the time locator 'when' and 'after' clearly indicates the logical relationship that exists between situations that occur frequently. The latter three examples, 111 – 113, could be interpreted as referring to single situations. As the corpus of verbs from such examples is limited, it is clearly an area where more research could be done.

108. When a 60 year old teacher *retired, it is useless for him and the government will lose his knowledge.

109. It is important to keep people in their work even when they *reached 60 or 70 years old because they have much experience and knowledge.

110. After I *returned home, I do my homework. (L.2)

111. I am going to tell you about my life here before you *came here so you know something about the life.

112. When we *came to the women who want to work the average is 19%. (L.5)

113. If war *happened and when the war *finished poverty will spread throughout the country. (L. 4)

6.4.8 Present Perfect

According to Michaelis (1998) the present perfect (PP) is multi-functional, three of which functions, resultative, existential and continuative, were identified in Ch. 3. Arabic verb forms were identified for each of the PP functions. It is hypothesized that Arabic TA features of each PP function affects learners' verb choices. The PP resultative and existential functions are generally encoded in the perfective form of the verb in Arabic, though a participle form may be employed for the resultative PP. The utterance 'he has just eaten breakfast' is classed as resultative. The effect of a recent situation can be still felt. It is hypothesized that learners are likely to choose either participle or past simple forms for resultative PP.

A small minority of subjects chose the PP for the two resultative items tested in EGI and ATI with the highest rate at level 4. Choice of past simple form varied across levels from lowest at 1 (31%) to highest at 3 (50%). Other forms noted were present simple and progressive, suggesting there is no clear pattern in the encoding of resultative PP. Focus on recency and relevance may lead the learner to choose either the present simple or progressive. The situation is clearly completed, however, with awareness of this leading to the choice of perfective form, reflecting the system of some varieties of English where past simple form can substitute for such PP functions.

There are no examples of resultative PP in composition writing in le.1 – 3. Those observed at le.4 – 5 are generally encoded as past.

114. One of the most important changes in the last 30 years was the technology revolution which happened in all parts of the world.

One can argue that the use of the past simple here is not incorrect. However, the aspectual sense communicated is that of completion whereas it has to be pointed out that the revolution is still ongoing.

The English PP continuative is encoded in the imperfective form of the Arabic verb. One test item (61) in the EGI could be translated using either the present perfect simple or progressive. 'They have worked/ have been working in the same factory for 30 years and they are still working there.' Azar points out (1998:42) that *'with certain verbs (most notably live, work, teach) there is little or no difference in meaning between the two tenses when since or for is used'*. Though Azar refers to the present perfect and progressive as 'two tenses', the aspectual nature of both with perfectivity inherent in the past participle form 'lived' 'been', imperfectivity in the -ing form 'living' have to be considered along with the tense component in 'have' or 'had' in the case of the past perfect. In the test items for PP continuative, the present simple and progressive responses are categorized as imperfective. The continuative PP is the most common function of the form found in learners' composition writing. I would like to argue that it is the only PP function for which learners need to understand the form. For both resultative and existential, the past form as in American English is acceptable.

The following table shows the overall responses for the use of the continuative PP function.

	Present	Past	Pres Perf.
English	42%	23%	21%
Arabic	67%	21%	12%

Table 6.7

Verb forms & continuative PP

The accuracy level in EGI is higher than ATI, suggesting that the form has been learned in English and used without interference from the L1. Non TL forms occur more frequently in the present simple form in ATI than EGI. This is natural given that the verb in ATI is imperfective. Sentences 61 *'they have worked/ been working'* and 75 *'Mary has been a teacher since 1980'* have an 11% response rate in the progressive. In both present simple and progressive, the focus is clearly on the fact that the event /state being discussed is non-completed, indicated in the progressive

'they are still working there' in item 61 and the adverbial time phrase 'since 1980' in item 75.

In the equivalent Arabic examples, No 61 is clearly not completed because the main verb is in the imperfective form. The Arabic preposition '*mindhu*' translates both the English 'since' and 'for' with context clarifying intended meaning. Similar to the English prepositions, 'for' can be used both with the imperfective and perfective verb form indicating lower and upper time boundaries. The additional clause '*and they are still working there*' was added to item 61 to show that the situation is still true. No such ambiguity exists with the use of 'since' in English as 'since' specifies only the lower inceptive boundary of the state/ event as in '*since 1980*'. Therefore the moment of the utterance is seen as the current reference point. This of course is subject to change and the use of the present perfect in English and the imperfective in Arabic gives the freedom to extend the upper boundary beyond the present.

Examples from FCs show similar patterns in verbs in continuative utterances. The following examples reflect an imperfective interpretation and encoding that is quite acceptable in Arabic

- 115. Dubai *is the centre of trading for a long time. (le.1)
- 116. I *work in Tawaam Hospital now for three years as a receptionist. (le.2).
- 117. Now I *live in the hostel since one week. (L. 3)
- 118. In general there *are many significant changes. (le.4)
- 119. He is 65 years old. He *has asthma since 45 years and at the same time he is hypertension. (le.5)

Without the time phrase in 119 'since 45 years' the non past form would be quite adequate. Likewise in the following example, the time phrase '*for many years*' makes the present perfect essential but the time phrase '*in 6th May*' specifies the point in the past making the present perfect unnecessary.

- 120. R.M. is 26 years old. She is Indian. She *has been hospitalised in 6th May with jaundice. She *has sickle cell anaemia for many years ... since two weeks she *is following a diet because she is gaining weight.'
- 121. She *is a widow since ten years.

The existential function of the PP is clearly speaker choice whereby either past or PP can be used. The difference between the two is the speaker's desire to give a particular perspective on an event. The following example could also be correctly encoded in the past simple leaving, however, no scope for the possibility of repeating the event again.

122. She has visited Cairo several times.

This is one of the few situations where the speaker is free to choose between the two forms of PP and past. Of course if PP is chosen, there are syntactic implications. Collocation with certain adverbs or adverbial phrases is inadmissible. At all levels, the most popular verb form for the articulation of the existential PP is the past simple. This is clear also in the learners' infrequent use of the PP in FC. It is quite common for learners to confuse the use of the PP with the past and sometimes to replace the past with the PP.

123. The first person I *have seen when I was born are my father and my mother.'

6.4.9 Conclusion

Results suggest a number of possibilities in the question of transfer from the L1. There is clear evidence of transfer of temporal associations from the L1 directly affecting morphological choice in the area of aspectual perfectivity. This transfer can be seen in the encoding of single punctual situations, conditional verbs of possibility and temporal 'when' time clause verbs in the English past simple form. Situations classed as perfect in English also suggest a clear interference from L1 parameters. Other points of transfer suggest a confusion of relationship between temporal functions and available forms as suggested in subjects' confusion surrounding the accurate use of present simple and progressive forms.

It was established at the outset, that the goal was not to find a ready made explanation for the errors listed in Ch. 1, but instead to explore possible systematicity in learners' verb output. The preceding discussion identified areas where obvious developmental and transfer features are at play, features that help explain some of the

observed errors cited in Ch. 1. It is clear also that learners' interlanguage is a constantly shifting phenomenon, progressing and regressing in an unsteady pattern on which factors such as the linguistic task and amount of instruction are important considerations. Ch. 7 summarises overall observations and considers how the findings could be applied practically to improve the language learning process for learners.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

The preceding chapters considered the challenges facing Arabic L1 speakers in mastering the expression of temporality through English finite verbs. Chapter seven concludes with a final brief summary on accuracy rates and the relevance of the two hypothesized factors. Recommendations are proposed on how learners overall performance in the expression of temporality might be improved firstly from a practical and secondly a pedagogical perspective. Recommendations for some possible future studies in some of the areas covered in the current research are also considered.

7.1 Assessment of accuracy rates

Assessment of performance across language levels and over the three instruments indicates an overall lack of consistency. Unsteadiness of learners' performance over time has been commented on (Johnston 1987, Rutherford 1987) in addition to the effect of task type on learner accuracy (Nunan 1987, El Daly 1991). There is no clear consistent pattern of steady improvement in accuracy rates in all forms across language levels. The only two results that show a consistent increase across levels are the progressive in FCs and PP in EGI. In the main, there is a reduction in accuracy in most forms at le. 5. In general, EGI and ATI results reflect quite similar patterns with some variations noticeable, particularly in the use of the PP. Choices in ATI suggest a strong influence from L1 where there is no single corresponding form to the PP. Another difference between the two is the tendency to choose present simple form over the progressive in ATI though again this is not consistent across levels (see le.3 and 5).

In the main, accuracy rates were lower at le.5 than 3 and 4 (e.g. past simple). A drop in accuracy rates at le.4 and 5 is seen also in FCs and arguably can be partly explained by the greater complexity of the writing task and reduction in the number of contact hours at le.4 and to a greater extent at le.5. Other relevant observations

are the predominant choice of present simple verb forms at le.2 and progressive at le.3. It was argued that focused instruction at le.1 to control the use of the –ing form may account for the preponderance of the simple form at le.2 while carry over from early instruction in schools may account for the opposite in le.3. Le.2 learners may substitute the simple for the progressive as both forms translate the Arabic imperfective. A higher rate of accuracy in present simple forms at this level does not necessarily indicate control of the forms nor should it be interpreted as an adequate understanding of the differences between the simple and progressive. When one considers the low rate of accuracy on past simple forms, it could be argued that learners chose the present simple form almost indiscriminately.

Patterns in verb choice show clear similarities at le.1 and 3, in spite of differences in the total accuracy rates suggesting that some function to form associations may originate in features inherent to the early learning environment. Students at both le.1 and 3 are new entrants to the HCT college system. What differentiates the two is a higher overall academic achievement by le.3 learners placing them in the HD rather than CD program in HCT. The preponderance of the –ing forms in output at both levels leads one to conclude either that developmental patterns common to all learners in associating –ing with durative situations are at play and/or this tendency is possibly compounded by early teaching patterns suggesting that 'present continuous tense' covers all events that are durative. Learners improve through focused instruction with le.2 results and 4 in some cases showing definite improvement.

Le.5 performance in the use of past simple (lower in all instruments), progressive (the same) and present perfect (lower) could be a cause for concern. Reduction in the number of contact hours is a possible explanation along with a wider variety of task types with a more sophisticated demand in the handling of verb forms. If reduction of teaching time is the reason, it is of concern as it indicates that learner understanding of function to form relationships is tenuous and left without the guidance of instruction reversion to old habits may happen. This may suggest situations where learning but not complete acquisition and mastery of verb forms has occurred, a phenomenon observed by Lightbown (2000) among adult learners. Another possible explanation may be that of Gass and Selinker (1992:57) who point out that language may fossilize '*where communication generally works.*' At one level, the learners have proven their ability to achieve the required level of accuracy

as the writing descriptor band 6 is the exit level for learners classed as intermediate (level 4) and remains the same for the upper intermediate level.

One facet of the –ing form not studied in the present work is its role in two part verb constructions (see Ch.3). The multifunctionality of the form (Rohde 1996) makes it confusing for learners and I doubt that adequate teaching time has been devoted to exploring the confusions that can arise from the many roles of the –ing form. Outcomes at le.5 may of course support Rutherford's (1987) observation that regression to ungrammaticality may occur before the final stage of correct usage is established.

7.2 Validity of developmental and transfer features to LL

Three facets of verb use in the encoding of TA systems were considered i.e. form, type and function, the latter two hypothesized to affect how learners choose the former. Verb morphology is functional, describing either the location of an event in time or the temporal nature of that event. The number of morphological forms is limited and each verb inflection generally marks a variety of semantic functions. The learner cannot be said to have acquired mastery of a form until s/he has acquired the ability to use the form to articulate the different functions. The learner typically begins with a single form to function association and as learning advances, an expansion of this association should occur. El Daly (1991) suggests that incomplete knowledge may account for some general errors in composition writing. Knowledge of the grammar rules may exist but be fragmentary, resulting in an inability to transfer information successfully to a real task (James & Garrett 1992).

Learner errors and the analysis of these errors within the context of the POA developmental hypothesis and L1 transfer hypothesis were selected as a means to gaining insight into the learners' emerging control and manipulation of English verb inflections for the expression of temporality. Errors indicate language learning stages being as Corder (1974:93) suggests *'evidence that he (learner) is in the process of acquiring the language and indeed for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the 'errors' which provide the important evidence.'*

The first factor hypothesized to affect correct use of verb form is verb type. To conclude that the lexical aspect of verbs can fully account for morphological choices is, I believe, too simplistic an explanation for the forms found in the learner data. This does not eliminate the possibility that the POA hypothesis has some relevance. The semantics of verb types need to be considered in combination with transfer and instructional factors. Lexical aspect considers the nature of the verb and the verb and its argument in the case of accomplishment situations (where telicity is an inherent feature of the situation – see discussion in 2.1.4), while grammatical aspect articulates a particular perspective on the situation as a whole. There is interaction between the two levels (Smith 1983, Klein 1994) since the nature of the verb is reflected in some facets of the temporal semantics of the utterance as a whole affecting verb form and adverbial collocational patterns. Analysis of data suggests that the provision of adverb and adverbial phrase clues may have affected learner performance in verbs in EGI and ATI whereas no such clues were available in FCs. Where the temporal range of a verb type and situation is limited, POA predictions on morphological encoding are more likely to occur, suggesting that syntactic reflection of a lack of temporal complexity in the situation may be the main factor in verb choice, rather than any pre-programming of the learner. It may reflect a universal learning pattern i.e. progression from less to more complex.

Results suggest that the POA hypothesis may help explain why so many stative verbs occur in the present simple form irrespective of TA considerations. Similarly, achievement verbs are less complex from a temporal perspective than activity and accomplishment verbs. Their collocation with adverbs and adverbial phrases of duration is rare as they are essentially semantically punctual. This semantic essence affects their ability to occur in the progressive form. Such verbs occur infrequently in the –ing form. There were two examples of –ing achievement verbs in the test instruments, and in the main these occurred in the present or past simple forms.

It could be argued that the temporal features inherent in statives and achievements and the restrictions on adverbial collocations limit grammatical aspectual possibilities thereby simplifying learner inflectional choices. The semantic and resulting syntactic simplicity of statives and achievements removes the confusion that learners commented on in an utterance such as in 'He ran for five miles every day last year' where several aspectual notions are present (see Ch.1). Therefore, we

can tentatively conclude that a less complex verb type is less demanding for learners. The temporal focus is singular, facilitating to some extent association with a particular form. Results on both POA and grammatical tests suggest that the temporal range of statives and achievements affects learners' choice of verb inflection.

The temporal architecture of activity and accomplishment verbs and situations is complex. The ensuing morphological and syntactic range needed to articulate the various temporal dimensions to these situation types complicates learners' satisfactory acquisition. Both lexical and situation types are durative albeit with restrictions in the case of accomplishments. It has been argued (Rothstein 1985) that a universal feature of the encoding of durative verb types and situations in English is the employment of the progressive form. Edstrom (1972:130) suggests that *'a great many errors are explicable by the learner's feeling of a durative element being present, which leads them to believe that the -ing form should be used.'* Both activities and accomplishments in EGI and ATI were inconsistently encoded in the hypothesized POA morphological form (-ing and past simple respectively) suggesting other influences.

In addition to developmental features, the question of transfer from Arabic L1 TA system was posited as a possible explanation for observed morphological forms. Prior learning and knowledge are viewed as fundamental contributors to subsequent learning (Hunter 1988 and Haidar 1999), but how and to what extent particularly in the field of language learning is not clear. The research attempted to address the issue of the implications of the L1 TA system as a factor in learner verb use. It should be stressed that though it is suggested that there is L1 interference, it is not proposed that L1 can help explain all observed forms in output (Yuan 1998).

Influences from Arabic TA system on learner output in English are both indirect and direct. Indirect influence stems from the Arabic function to form relationship in the encoding of imperfective situations. The fact that one imperfective form in Arabic performs a variety of tense and aspectual functions appears to confuse learners. In the translation instrument (ATI), learners show a tendency (though not consistent across levels) to associate the imperfective form with the English present simple form. However, in EGI and composition writing, learners appear to associate the

-ing form with duration and use it indiscriminately particularly in FCs to articulate progressive, habitual and repeated situations. Such an association may be universal among early learners of English but arguably it is compounded here by the fact that the Arabic form can be translated as simple or progressive with adverbials used to disambiguate the two.

The direct and positive impact of the L1 system on the TL can be seen in the encoding of single punctual events in the perfective in Arabic and the past simple form in English. However, Arabic learners of English TA system indicate confusion in choice of temporal features to be encoded when no endpoints are clearly contained in past events. The tendency as results suggest is to use some form to indicate the possible ongoing nature of situations, either present simple or progressive. In English irrespective of duration or habit, the past simple form is used to indicate deictic location.

It was also clear that conventions associated with secondary tense articulation in the L1 affect verbs in conditionals and 'when' time clauses in the TL, though examples particularly for the latter clause type were not common in learner output. The present perfect presents a major challenge, with results indicating that the L1 system affects two types of PP functions i.e. continuative and existential. In the third type i.e. resultative, the learners could be distracted by the variety of temporal notions present in the utterances i.e. the completion of the event and yet the current relevance suggesting proximity and presence.

A final assessment would probably conclude that in the face of the confusion generated by the presence of a number of aspectual concepts and of course tense factors, learners fall back on the L1 system to help them make choices in selection of verb form. The verb form selected in the L2 reflects the closest approximation to the form that expresses that function in the L1 as Harley (1989:3) points out '*L2 learners may distribute semantic information across syntactic elements in their L2 production in ways that conform more to the conventions of a closely related L1 than those of the L2.*'

7.3 Recommendations

Of what value are the foregoing insights to the classroom situation and what recommendations can be made based on these insights to aid the learner in the mastery of the English TA system? The current research focused on what learners do when encoding temporal notions in the hope of gaining important insights into learners' IL TA system. In addition to written data, learners were frequently asked to introspect on verb form choices made. Though conducted informally, these discussions provided the researcher with valuable insight into how and why learners do what they do; helping to develop awareness of how the various temporal foci in an utterance distract learners forcing them to make unconventional function to form associations. A possible contribution of research such as the current one is to incorporate considerations other than accuracy of verb form into the discussion on the use of verbs to encode temporal notions. The following recommendations consider how this might be undertaken.

7.3.1 Practical and pedagogical recommendations

The first set of recommendations evolves from the question of the role of grammar instruction in the language syllabus and the shape that instruction should take.

a. Role of grammar

I would argue that grammar instruction has a role to play in the UAE classroom. In spite of the use of English in commercial and expatriate situations in the Gulf region, the environment of the learners is EFL and not ESL. Nickel (1989:298) suggests only a small number of experiments done '*take account of genuine FL conditions i.e. teaching under highly artificial and restricted conditions.*' Learners depend primarily on language input from classroom encounters with little input from social situations outside the classroom. Therefore, classroom input that facilitates development of competence is essential.

The problem yet to be adequately addressed is the teaching of English in the elementary and secondary schools where learners first encounter English and where some of the problem areas identified in the preceding chapters originate. The

approach to English language teaching prevalent in the UAE primary and secondary schools is through a communicative syllabus (Ch.4) placed in a traditional learning environment where learning styles are still those of rote memorization. Oral fluency may have benefited from this approach given also that this is a culture more comfortable in the spoken than the written medium even in L1. In both spoken and written output, however, there seems little or no understanding of how the language is structured leading to the errors discussed throughout the research. If it is ever hoped to develop learner competency in writing, more focused attention has to be given not just to the discourse features of texts but to language structure. If this means the direct teaching of grammar, so be it but it has to be done in a way that involves focussed awareness rather than parrot-like memorization. The learners will have no problem memorizing grammar rules, a useless undertaking unless the knowledge can be applied to a functional situation.

b. Shape of grammar instruction

Schmidt (1990) argues that for input to become intake, attention has to be given to what the learner consciously notices. He maintains that the role of unconscious SLL has been exaggerated and research should focus on what learners notice and what they think as they learn second languages. The importance of a more conscious, learner involved approach to function-form associations has frequently been suggested (Marton 1981, James 1992). Hinkel's (1992:568) investigation into a group of ESL students' interpretation of English tense meanings led him to conclude that there are substantial differences between native speakers and non-native speakers '*perceptions of tense meanings.*' The teacher cannot assume that learners draw the same associations between concepts and terminology as assumed by the TL. Consequently English time notions must be explained clearly to the learners. Hinkel (1997:311) also believes that learners should be made aware of how tense considerations work in discourse suggesting consciousness raising activities to promote learner awareness of tense use in English. Celce Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:164) suggest that the teaching of tenses should be approached from a meaning and not form perspective and that Bull's framework could be use to '*show students how tenses should relate to each other in discourse.*'

Fotos (1994:323 - 325) points out that there is an increasing *'body of evidence'* which supports the notion that formal instruction facilitates language learning (Ausubel 1968, White et al 1991, Spada 1997). She argues, however, that the inclusion of grammar instruction has been shown to be more productive if *'conducted through meaning-focused activities.'* She cites studies done by White, Spada, Lightbown and Ranta (1991) who focus as Fotos explains on the successful outcome of *'formal teacher-fronted grammar instruction and corrective feedback delivered within communicatively organized classrooms.'* She argues, however, that focused instruction taking the form of teacher feedback on errors such as translation and overgeneralization shows greater significant gains because learners are able to *'make immediate cognitive comparisons between their own interlanguage and the correct form.'*

Spada (1997) describes Schmidt's noticing hypothesis and suggests that getting learners to attend to forms in the input is the basic prerequisite for learning. A task based approach to grammar instruction where learners have to solve problems interactively was also recommended. Spada suggests that error correction is more effective than simply teaching the learners about potential problems. She claims (79) that *'research shows superior performance on the part of learners who receive metalinguistic information and corrective feedback after they are put into a situation where they are likely to make the error than learners who receive metalinguistic information before they are put in situations where they are required to use the target forms.'* Schramm (1996) suggests that verb morphology should be taught as an aspect and not tense as this approach will be more meaningful for learners. What is clear is that verb type, function and form are intertwined and teaching has to be approached from a much more meaningful functional perspective. Tense is relatively easy for the learner whereas aspect is more complex. In the *'domains of the learner'* as Schachter (1992:37) suggests new associations have to be formed between functions and forms and preconceived associations may interfere.

c. Value of insights into L1 in language classroom

Many of the English language teachers in primary and elementary schools come from an L1 Arabic background. Their knowledge of the L1 merged with that of the TL could facilitate a consciousness raising approach in the function to form

differences between the two languages. This would involve teacher training in the functional as well as the formal levels of verb use in both English and Arabic. If contrast happens in current teaching it is only at the level of form, and where no obvious correspondence appears the greatest degree of direct interference seems to occur. Learners suggest that the teaching of English in their early years is done as if the grammar of English was a content subject to be memorized and forms applied automatically to formulaic type situations. There is not an adequate understanding of the function to form association, leading to a dependence on the L1 and a tendency to look for equivalents in the TL. The early years of language learning lead learners to assume similarities where they do not exist. The Arabic verb system does not fit a model designed for English. Points of semantic overlap in the encoding of the temporality system in both languages must be identified and presented to the learners from a semantico- grammatical perspective.

Harley (1989:15) poses the question asking how best to treat *'the continued presence of systematic L1 transfer in the L2 production of immersion students after several years in the program'* and suggests that there are two aspects *'the L2 input to which the students have been exposed appears to have led them to a knowledge of the L2 that assumes greater congruence with the L1 than in fact exists and (2) that students may not have had an adequate opportunity to develop processing control in the production of the L2.'* James (1994) suggests that if learners become aware of the differences between the L1 and L2 in the early stages of learning and are forced to *'attend to the minutiae of form in order to understand'*, rapid learning may occur as learners *'are shocked out of their complacency'* in the face of *'high L1 - to L2 contrastivity.'* Maalej (1999) also points out that *'as part of a comparative endeavour ...students be taught, however informally it may be, that languages differ in packaging meanings and structuring information.'* Therefore, it is impossible to present form without considering the meanings involved. Weschler (1997) argues for the exploitation of L1 in the classroom. He says (2) *'so called 'interference' will always plague any learner who has ever learned one language before another. The term itself has a negative connotation but need not; better to think of the inevitable influence of the L1 on the L2 as a potential aid or tool.'*

Whatever overt teaching of structure is undertaken; it must be done from a meaning perspective. As the research shows, there appears to be an immediate and direct impact from classroom instruction delivered particularly prior to examinations. This impact, based as it is on imitation and memorization may not be long term or comprehensible, a fact obvious in the general pattern of accuracy rates. Where the learners have been exposed to a high number of contact hours at le.1, 2 and 3, accuracy rates increase as expected whereas at the two upper levels where the number of contact hours is reduced and the task requirement is more demanding, a failure to achieve the expected target is frequently observed. Nickel (1998:4) suggests that *'fossilization on a higher level very often happens also when a certain communicative level has been reached. Motivation begins to decrease and a certain plateau-effect starts to operate.'* It is important to address the issue before the learners reach this plateau where language fossilizes.

The obvious question must be the value of the construction of a pedagogical grammar or at least the availability of materials that are sensitive to the particular needs of the learners. Weschler (1997:12) argues that since the L1 as part of prior learning cannot be eliminated it should be used in a productive manner because eliminating it completely is a false remedy. He points out that whether the L1 is *'useful or detrimental depends entirely on the goal to which it is applied, the type of language being translated, the materials used to apply the method, and the procedures used in the classroom.'* Sharwood Smith (1981) and Marton (1981) suggest that the construction of a pedagogical contrastive grammar would be an important aid in teaching and learning though Marton admits that it would have limited use. It should help systematize and explain the L1 to the teacher not familiar with the learner's L1. It could also help explain the persistence of some errors even at upper levels in spite of a great deal of practice. An example of this is the use of was/were with progressive form for habituality in the past. From personal experience, it is difficult for L1 Arabic learners to change this habit and adopt the use of the past simple as they explain that their intuition about habitual situations leads them to feel that some morphological feature that suggests ongoing or continuous nature of habits must be present in the utterance. It was found productive to understand why the learners make this mistake. Learners are after all cognitively mature enough to deal with such an approach.

Svalberg (1998:56) points to the '*commercial aspect*' in the unavailability of materials that incorporate information on the typological distance between the L1 and the TL. She refers to the dearth of textbooks to cater for the "*linguistic learning situation*" on Malay and Chinese speaking students. This is true for Arabic learners also where the only teaching material available that pays attention to the linguistic differences between the two languages is Richard Harrison's *Keep Writing Books 1 & 2*. Though textbooks have been commissioned and are in use for the school system they do not deal with the problem areas as the drive behind the production of such books was cultural i.e. to include texts that presented situations that reflected the culture of the learners. Some materials need to be made available to teachers to familiarize them with the differences. This is easier said than done as the influence of the communicative approach (where the L1 is often viewed as irrelevant) is still prevalent. There are also developmental and status associations that are outside the scope of the research. Changing attitudes is a major challenge.

Another factor that should run hand in hand with a grammar consciousness-raising is the establishment of a clear purpose in the teaching and learning of English. The debate about the validity of ESP without general English has never been fully resolved but in the context of the learners with limited time, exposure and needs, some form of ESP should be accepted to provide the learners with the language they need for workplace tasks. This could facilitate the teaching of verb functions at the discourse level.

7.3.2 Recommendations for further research

The preceding recommendations have focused on practical considerations for improving language learning in the area of structure. From a research perspective, there are follow-up studies that could prove insightful. The current study has ranged over a wide area as the original goal was to consider general patterns of influence in the most common verb types, functions and forms in learner written output to help explain observed errors. The scope, therefore, was broad and inclusive rather than deep and probing in one particular area. It was considered important to begin from this broad perspective to give an overview of how the different facets of temporality are interpreted and grammatically encoded by a selected group of learners. More

detailed research on some of the specific areas touched on could be undertaken. At the grammatical level this could involve:

- more detailed investigation of learners' perception of the difference between the present simple and progressive forms. This could be done partly by tapping into learners' intuitive sense of the function of each form. Grammaticality judgement tests might be appropriate with a small group of learners if a follow-up discussion were possible.
- further insights into learners' use of the –ing form both in finite verb phrases and in non-finite constructions. This would demand collection of a corpus of data from learners' compositions that contained enough material reflecting the use of both finite and non-finite verb forms. Specific tasks might have to be assigned to ensure that an adequate number of the required forms were available. Learner functional association with each type could also be explored in introspective sessions. This would of course mean a much smaller catchment group.
- further studies into how learners interpret situations encoded in the present perfect in English and from a wider data corpus.
- learner associations between verb form, adverbs and adverbial phrases. It is speculated that learners may have single verb form to adverb associations and use this association to choose appropriate verb morphology as in the case of the –ing form with any phrase of duration.
- research that gives closer attention to the role of discourse structure on choice of verb form. This could involve translation tasks of, for example, past narratives. The temporal structure of such text types can be quite different to that of English especially if habituality and duration are involved.
- research into the value and appropriateness of a pedagogical grammar based on features that prove challenging for learners. Such a grammar could incorporate explanations, whether developmental or L1 where relevant and available.

In conclusion, the value of any research lies in the insights provided. The success of the research lies in the application of those insights in a productive and helpful way for the learners.

Appendices

Appendix A

HCT LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT: WRITING

1.6.2 Written Communication Descriptors - (Linguistic)

Band	Communicative quality and coherence x 2	Structural range and accuracy x 1	Lexical range and accuracy x 1	Mechanics x 1	Raw score
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely clear, well organised, and logical with plentiful ideas and support material from the writer. Text flows seamlessly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of structures used accurately and confidently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of vocabulary used accurately and confidently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare slips rather than errors may occur 	45
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well organised, clear and logical presentation and development of ideas with adequate and relevant support material. Text flows well causing no strain to the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good range of sentence structures are shown, with confident control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident choice and use of vocabulary with only rare 'off key' notes to indicate that this may be a non-native speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few minor errors occur and these are not significant 	40
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well organised with a clear and overall progression of ideas. Content is sufficient to the task but could be expanded more and may contain slight irrelevancies. Well controlled use of a range of cohesive devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adequate range of simple and complex sentences occur with adequate control shown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary generally appropriately used and adequate to the task Occasional awkwardness caused by word, idiom or register choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional non-intrusive spelling and punctuation errors 	35
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main and subsidiary points are clear and well organised, but may contain minor irrelevancies or inappropriacies. A range of cohesive devices used, though not always accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accurate use of sentence structure, though range of complex sentences is limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary choice generally adequate in general topics or own specialist area, but may be inadequate to express a wide range of ideas with precision. Most of the time, appropriate choice of words, idioms and register give the text a feeling of fluency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional errors in spelling may still occur. Uses capital letters, full stops, commas, apostrophes, brackets, and bullets, with only occasional unobtrusive errors. (Spelling fully accurate if using Spell Checker or copying from a text.) 	30
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall meaning of simple and more complex communications adequately conveyed though clarity will vary. Organisation of text contributes to overall clarity. Wider range of cohesive devices is attempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple sentences generally correct and some complex sentences can be used, but not often accurately. Errors in subject verb agreement may still occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary generally appropriate but limited to familiar contexts. Occasionally, appropriate choice of words, idioms and register gives glimpses of fluency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling errors still intrude, but do not impair meaning Uses capital letters, full stops, commas and apostrophes appropriately, with only occasional errors. (Almost fully accurate if using Spell Checker or copying from text). 	25
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning clear in straightforward communications; where the content is more complex meaning comes through only intermittently. Simple cohesive devices used appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can construct simple sentences but errors in subject verb agreement and word order are frequent. Appropriate choice of basic tenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Range of vocabulary becomes wider but may be inappropriate Text is stilted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling errors intrude though words are mainly recognisable with effort. Uses capital letters and full stops almost without error. Commas and apostrophes missing or misused. (Almost fully accurate when using Spell Checker or copying text). 	20
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning only clear in short, simple communications, and becomes unclear if content becomes more complex. Little or no evidence of cohesive devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts simple sentences with some awareness of, but limited control of, basic sentence structure and word order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary limited to simplest personal or work related topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts at spelling unfamiliar words may be unrecognisable Independent spelling of familiar words accurate on the whole Uses capital letters and full stops most of the time. 	15
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can convey only the simplest ideas. Can convey information by positioning words correctly in a form or diagram. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to produce a few short sentences and phrases independently, but with little or no control of sentence structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary limited to common words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can spell a few common words accurately. Some evidence of punctuation but usually inaccurate Can copy sentences accurately Can write legibly. 	10
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can convey information by positioning words correctly in a form or diagram, but may omit information occasionally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essentially unable to make sentences or multi word messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can write words from memory in a limited range e.g. name, address, job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can form letters independently & accurately, but confuses upper and lower case except when copying. Cannot spell words not given Can copy words accurately 	5

English Grammar Instrument

Name _____ Age _____
College _____ M/ F _____
Years of English _____ Course _____

Complete the following sentences with the correct part of the verb in brackets. Read the whole sentence first.

1. Fareded (want) _____ to buy a new car. He doesn't have enough money at the moment but he hopes to have enough by the end of the month.
2. The boys (play) _____ football and when they finish they are going to take a shower.
3. He (leave) _____ to meet his brother now. I hope he has a good time.
4. While I (speak) _____ my friend, I heard the phone ring.
5. My sister wrote letters this morning but I (not start) _____ yet.
6. I (notice) _____ that people were shouting and running and then I saw the fire.
7. It usually rains a lot in Ireland but at the moment it (snow) _____.
8. The thief broke into the house and (steal) _____ a lot of money.
9. It's 3 p.m. Noura never sleeps at this time of the day but she (sleep) _____ now. I can't believe it.
10. If Sara (find) _____ her cat, she will be very happy.
11. Yesterday, Jawaher (appear) _____ to be very tired but she didn't want to go home.
12. The sun was shining and the boys (ride) _____ their bicycles when it started to rain. The rain was so heavy that they went into the house.
13. Sheikha (lose) _____ her bag while we were in the market yesterday. She is very careless and doesn't look after things.
14. Fatima (watch) _____ a film when the video machine broke so she couldn't see the end of the film.
15. Mary works in an office downtown. She (finish) _____ work at 6 p.m. every evening. It's a long day as she starts work at 8 a.m.

16. Abdullah gave up smoking in 1996. He (not smoke) _____ for three years now.
17. While I was driving down the street, I (see) _____ a large black dog near the traffic lights.
18. Many people get malaria but doctors (not discover) _____ a cure for it yet.
19. Look at the children. They (walk) _____ on the wall and that is very dangerous.
20. First, I prepared all the ingredients and then I (cook) _____ the dinner.
21. Ali doesn't own a car but the motorbike (belong) _____ to him.
22. If you (drop) _____ that glass onto a hard floor, it will break.
23. Aisha likes to exercise. At the moment, she (swim) _____ and I know she is planning to play tennis later.
24. People usually (catch) _____ a cold in winter when the weather is wet and cold.
25. Jack still lives in Al Ain and works in HCT now. He is not there at present as he (visit) _____ his brother in China.
26. Tom is leaving to go home now. He (just finish) _____ work. It was a long day.
27. The strawberries I ate yesterday were very good. They (taste) _____ delicious with ice cream.
28. The secretary found some mistakes in the letter while she (type) _____ and she made some changes.
29. The Smiths (live) _____ here since January but they plan to move next year.
30. Farah wanted to visit her family so she (catch) _____ the train at 7 o'clock this morning.
31. The food we are eating is very good but it (taste) _____ a little sweet.
32. Ali (sleep) _____ until 11 a.m. this morning because he was very tired.

33. Anne doesn't like to stay in the same place for too long. She (change) _____ her job and apartment every two years.
34. The plane (not take off) _____ yet. It is already two hours late.
35. The two women (walk) _____ about 5 km. every day. They really want to keep fit.
36. Classes (start) _____ at 7.30 every morning but students are often late.
37. She (know) _____ her mother was coming but she couldn't leave work early.
38. The old man has nothing to do all day, so he (sit) _____ outside his front door watching people go by.
39. Fatima (not drink) _____ coffee since last year because the doctor told her it was not good for her.
40. Amira (need) _____ a panadol. She has a very bad headache.
41. The thief ran out of the house but while he (run) _____ down the street the police caught him.
42. What can I do? I (lose) _____ my key. I'm looking for it right now because I need to get into my house.
43. George likes sport a lot. Every day he (swim) _____ for an hour and at the moment he is playing tennis with his brother.
44. The sun was very hot so as I (walk) _____ to the beach I bought an ice cream.
45. Listen! Can you hear the train? It (arrive) _____ at Platform 3 and people are rushing to get through the gate even though the train has not stopped yet.
46. I (know) _____ that family well. They live very near me.
47. My sister (not phone) _____ since October. I can't understand why and I hope she is not ill.
48. I (study) _____ Spanish when I was in school but I have forgotten most of it.

49. John does not like the food in Cairo. He (not eat) _____ since he got there four days ago.
50. We are here in Ireland on holidays. The weather is terrible. It (not stop) _____ raining for three days.
51. They (buy) _____ their tickets for the trip last Friday and they plan to travel tomorrow.
52. The train usually (arrive) _____ at 5 p.m. but it was late yesterday and got into the station at 5.21.
53. Fareed (learn) _____ to play tennis last month and now he plays every day.
54. Haza'a likes to keep fit. He usually (run) _____ about 10 km. every day.
55. The manager (feel) _____ that the employees were unhappy with his decision so he decided to talk with them.
56. The students go to the LRC and (watch) _____ English films to help improve their English.
57. I (discover) _____ that I had lost my bag while I was on the way home.
58. While the driver (look) _____ at the girl, he crashed his car.
59. The students (seem) _____ to enjoy hearing English stories. They usually ask me to read to them.
60. What's happened? Fatima (just fall) _____ off her bicycle and she is crying.
61. They (work) _____ in the same factory for 30 years and they are still working there.
62. Jeahan (hear) _____ a strange noise in her bedroom but she couldn't tell what it was.
63. Nasra borrowed Hamda's video about three months ago and she (not give) _____ it back yet.
64. While Hamdan (stand) _____ at his window, he saw a cat run up the tree and catch a little bird.
65. Can't you see that I am very busy? I (clean) _____ the house. I'll come as soon as I have finished.

66. Every evening before I go home from work, I (turn) _____ off the computer.
67. I see my friends regularly. I (see) _____ them twice already this week and I hope to see them again before the end of the week.
68. Ahmed is working in an office downtown at the moment and every day he (meet) _____ his friends for lunch.
69. I am eating breakfast though the food (taste) _____ awful.
70. Maria doesn't know how to swim but she (learn) _____ at the moment.
71. While the woman (carry) _____ a lot of bags, one fell and everything spilled out on the street.
72. My family (own) _____ a house in Istanbul for 15 years but they would like to sell it now.
73. Some people spend all day on the phone. Yesterday, Aisha (talk) _____ on the phone for two hours.
74. If the driver (brake) _____, his car will crash into that lorry.
75. Mary (be) _____ a teacher since 1980.
76. I (eat) _____ very little yesterday so I am hungry today.
77. Jamila was not at home when her father died. She (visit) _____ her friend and she had to return home.
78. I'm standing outside the restaurant. The food (smell) _____ great. Why don't you come in and eat with us.
79. The accident (happen) _____ while I was driving down the street.
80. Some people (walk) _____ near the Embassy when the bomb exploded.
81. When I passed that restaurant yesterday, I was not hungry but the food (smell) _____ delicious so I went inside and ate.
82. Mohammed (break) _____ his leg while he was playing football.
83. Michael is lazy. He eats in restaurants all the time and he never (cook) _____ anything.
84. My sister (move) _____ last month and she likes her new house very much.

85. Look at Jim. He (know) _____ the answer but he doesn't want to tell us.
86. While I (buy) _____ a ticket for the train, my friend came so I bought two tickets and we travelled together.
87. I think Anita is ill. She (seem) _____ very tired yesterday.
88. Have you heard? They (build) _____ a new house near the city centre and they hope it will be finished by March.
89. The young man was driving very carelessly and he (crash) _____ into a tree.
90. Since I started going to the gym, I (never feel) _____ better.
91. We (already eat) _____ breakfast. We ate it about an hour ago.
92. I (hear) _____ the children playing downstairs. They sound very happy.
93. Mubarak was too busy to drive to the airport so his son (drive) _____ instead.
94. That artist draws a lot of interesting designs and he also (paint) _____ pictures.
95. I start work at 10 o'clock every day and work until 5 p.m. but today I (start) _____ at 9 a.m. and finished at 6 o'clock because there was a lot of work.
96. He (have) _____ a house in London but he sold it last year.
97. I (not play) _____ tennis for three weeks but I hope to play on Friday.
98. When Aisha came to work here six months ago I (think) _____ that she would not be comfortable working with men but she seems fine now.
99. Moza is sitting in the coffee shop talking to her friend. She usually drinks tea but at the moment, Moza and her friend (drink) _____ cappuccino.
100. Ahmed (just leave) _____ the house. He is going to his mother's house.

Number Two

1. Mariam was very hungry at 10 o'clock and she (eat) _____ a sandwich.
2. Aisha was very hungry yesterday and she (eat) _____ sandwiches all day.
3. Mona (work) _____ from 9 – 3 last Wednesday.
4. Ali (work) _____ very hard all last month.
5. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Sultan felt very thirsty and he (drink) _____ two glasses of water.
6. Saeed was very thirsty and he (drink) _____ a lot of water.
7. Ali (play) _____ football very well all last season.
8. Sultan (play) _____ tennis from 2 – 4 yesterday.
9. John (sneeze) _____ once before he closed the window.
10. Jim has a bad cold. He went to the cinema last night and he (sneeze) _____ all through the film.
11. Fahad (work) _____ from 9 -5 every day last year.
12. Jamal (play) _____ football every night last week.
13. He (write) _____ stories for the magazine every month last year.
14. Ahmed (arrive) _____ at the office early every day last year.
15. He was ill last month and he did not go to school. He (sit) _____ in the sitting room and watched TV every day.
16. Sultan will get up at 7 o'clock in the morning when his alarm clock (ring) _____.
17. Ahmed will run out the door when he (hear) _____ the bus coming.
18. When he (finish) _____ work, Ali will go out with his friends.

Appendix B

Operational tests for lexical aspect (Robison 1995: 369 – 370)

A. Tests for Stative /Dynamic

Non-states = progressive

states = normally not

non-states = do-cleft

states –no

Predicate with stative has non-habitual meaning

B. Test for Telic / atelic

Verb in the progressive/ subject in the process. If subject stops in the middle, can it be assumed that s/he has SUBJECT PREDICATE. If the answer is YES, the verb is atelic. If no, the verb is telic

Atelic – for ten minutes

Telic – in ten minutes

C. Tests for Punctual/ durative

Verb in simple past or past progressive, predicate + 'unitary non-anticipatory' meaning with adverbial of duration.

Verb in participle form – predicate = 'non-iterative, non-anticipatory meaning'

Modified by an at phrase – predicate = perfective meaning = punctual

Appendix C

Part Two: Verb types

Stative (POA/ EGI, ATI)

Levels		1		2		3		4		5	
Verb form	Exp	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	500	807	712	909	974	671	669	736	708	763	856
Past	500	495	553	437	354	667	597	531	566	564	492
Prog	500	184	127	92	74	109	110	79	100	59	91
Total	1500	1486	1392	1438	1402	1447	1376	1346	1474	1386	1439

Stative (Grammatical/ EGI, ATI)

Form	EXP	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	600	807	712	909	974	671	669	736	708	763	856
Past	660	495	553	437	354	667	597	531	566	564	492
Prog	0	184	127	92	74	109	110	79	100	59	91
PP	240	8	8	12	10	45	40	150	124	105	51
Other	0	6	100	50	88	8	84	4	2	9	10
Total	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500

Stative (POA/ FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	250	630	250	465	250	476	250	578	250	622
Past	250	60	250	196	250	205	250	155	250	66
Prog	250	8	250	15	250	45	250	2	250	52
Total	750	698	750	676	750	726	750	735	750	740

Stative (Grammatical/ FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	249	630	293	465	398	476	493	578	585	622
Past	497	60	446	196	330	205	214	155	156	66
Prog.	0	8	3	15	0	45	21	2	2	52
PP	4	0	8	7	22	20	22	8	7	3
Other	0	52	0	67	0	4	0	7	0	7
Total	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750	750

Activity POA

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	560	436	634	648	717	318	172	279	350	331	483
Past	560	472	407	440	289	475	268	340	154	326	143
Prog	560	726	586	551	572	831	1124	945	977	886	944

Total	1680	1634	1627	1639	1578	1624	1564	1564	1481	1543	1570
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Activity verbs (grammatical EGI/ATI)

Form	EXP	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	300	436	634	648	717	318	172	279	350	331	483
Past	120	472	407	440	289	475	268	340	154	326	143
Prog	900	726	586	551	572	831	1124	945	977	886	944
P.P.	360	2	1	4	2	40	35	110	40	60	45
Other	0	44	52	37	100	16	81	6	159	77	65
Total	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680	1680

FC /Activity (POA)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	280	168	280	273	280	190	280	176	280	279
Past	280	142	280	195	280	193	280	151	280	28
Prog	280	463	280	337	280	402	280	471	280	517
Total	840	773	840	805	840	785	840	798	840	824

Activity (Grammatical)

Form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	329	168	378	273	495	190	470	176	714	279
Past	472	142	436	195	311	193	286	151	87	28
Prog	39	463	26	337	17	402	51	471	17	517
P P	0	0	0	2	17	8	33	17	22	8
Other	0	67	0	33	0	47	0	25	0	8
Total	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840

Activity (Grammatical)

Form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	329	168	378	273	495	190	450	176	611	279
Past	472	142	436	195	241	193	206	151	57	28
Prog	39	463	26	337	87	402	151	471	150	517
P P	0	0	0	2	17	8	33	17	22	8
Other	0	67	0	33	0	47	0	25	0	8
Total	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840	840

Accomplishment (POA in EGI & ATI)

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	420	322	443	436	546	217	378	306	352	342	428
Past	420	507	427	472	360	582	423	491	405	499	369
Prog	420	409	346	295	302	398	371	411	447	363	418
Total	1260	1238	1218	1203	1208	1197	1172	1208	1204	1204	1212

Accomplishment (Grammatical in EGI & ATI)

Verb form	EXP	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	300	322	443	436	546	217	378	306	352	342	428
Past	480	507	427	472	360	582	423	491	405	499	369
Prog	360	409	346	295	302	398	371	411	447	363	418
P P	120	1	1	8	5	20	15	50	42	53	35
Other	0	21	43	55	47	63	73	2	14	3	10
Total	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260	1260

b. FC

Accomplishment (POA in FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	210	291	210	132	210	159	210	231	210	284
Past	210	242	210	403	210	271	210	253	210	69
Prog	210	32	210	95	210	134	210	89	210	239
Total	630	565	630	630	630	564	630	573	630	592

Accomplishment (Grammatical in FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	189	291	138	132	131	159	359	231	428	284
Past	423	242	479	403	466	271	221	253	152	69
Prog	12	32	13	95	11	134	24	89	13	239
P P.	6	25	0	0	19	13	26	7	37	25
Other	0	50	0	0	3	53	0	50	0	13
Total	630	630	630	630	630	630	630	630	361	630

Achievement (POA in EGI/ ATI)

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	520	468	627	746	719	374	416	514	459	520	486
Past	520	863	793	649	761	893	951	688	905	713	932
Prog	520	180	116	112	70	191	43	157	27	113	15
Total	1560	1511	1536	1507	1550	1458	1410	1359	1391	1346	1433

Achievement (Grammatical in EGI/ ATI)

Verb form	EXP	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	480	468	627	746	719	374	416	514	459	520	486
Past	420	863	793	649	761	893	951	688	905	713	932
Prog	120	180	116	112	70	191	43	157	27	113	15
P P	540	12	1	17	12	68	34	193	80	197	94
Other		49	24	53	10	34	116	8	89	17	33
Total	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560	1560

Achievement (POA)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	260	223	260	288	260	79	260	137	260	242
Past	260	523	260	476	260	671	260	554	260	460
Prog	260	11	260	8	260	15	260	54	260	54
Total	780	767	780	772	780	765	780	745	780	756

Achievement (Grammatical in FCs)

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob	Ex	Ob
Present	199	223	499	288	327	79	320	137	499	242
Past	546	523	259	476	382	671	413	554	211	460
Prog	11	11	0	8	8	15	8	54	31	54
P P	24	8	22	8	63	11	39	31	39	23
Other	0	15	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	1
Total	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780	780

Part Three: L1 Transfer

Imperfective EGI/ ATI

Verb Form	Expected	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present											
Simple	1320/ .65	766	787	866	1084	633	883	802	1185	983	1190
Progressive	720 / .35	929	835	739	626	1002	734	832	622	713	682
Total	2040	1695	1622	1605	1710	1745	1617	1644	1817	1706	1872

FC Imperfective

Verb Form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs
Present										
Simple	658	503	704	511	712	481	682	518	721	533
progressive	82	237	36	229	100	259	100	222	100	207
Total	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740	740

EGI /ATI Present habitual

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	231	285	407	404	340	440	469	501	489	539
Past	180	150	135	127	105	90	63	85	73	65
progressive	259	248	149	170	248	174	163	113	139	103
other	50	37	29	19	27	16	25	21	19	13
Total	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720

FC Present Habitual

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present	427	499	340	406	401
Past	208	62	14	77	43
progressive	57	130	346	216	247
other	28	29	20	21	29
Total	720	720	720	720	720

EGI/ ATI Past Habitual

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	90	71	50	59	57	39	30	30	34	30
Past	121	113	167	120	189	182	196	185	203	195
progressive	65	102	59	103	32	64	55	59	45	66
other	24	14	24	18	22	15	19	26	18	9
Total	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300

FC Past Habitual

Verb form	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Present	46	87	34	52	30
Past	124	126	168	126	171
progressive	115	69	92	114	90
other	15	18	6	8	18
Total	300	300	300	300	300

Translocative verbs EGI/ ATI

Verb form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Simple	180	96	120	111	139	126	146	104	130	129	153
progressive	120	155	142	137	137	143	141	164	158	143	126

EGI/ATI present progressive

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	194	309	245	308	169	187	59	131	122	151
Past	150	52	130	66	66	25	86	14	43	12
Prog + be	312	272	301	255	440	462	525	527	489	503
Prog - be	44	62	29	71	40	24	35	25	45	35
other	20	25	15	20	5	22	15	23	21	19
Total	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720

EGI/ ATI past progressive

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	108	116	187	151	29	22	19	36	29	43
Past	252	256	209	213	158	157	123	50	101	79
Prog + be	307	271	269	287	497	495	520	573	543	549
Prog - be	29	50	30	28	22	54	33	39	47	33
other	24	22	19	32	15	24	33	30	20	22
Total	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720	720

Perfective situations

Verb Form	Exp	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
		EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	300	223	195	199	193	263	271	259	257	274	247
nonpast	0	77	105	94	107	30	21	21	26	25	42

Bounded situations

Form	EXP	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5		
		EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC
Past	300	201	220	219	226	237	255	241	231	282	235	254	248	254	241	243
Non Past	0	99	80	81	74	63	45	59	69	18	65	46	52	46	59	57

Unbounded situations

Form	EXP	Level 1			Level 2			Level 3			Level 4			Level 5		
		EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC	EGI	ATI	FC
Past	300	79	57	31	86	63	63	115	97	97	108	98	84	128	92	76
Non Past	0	219	240	269	209	236	237	183	201	203	183	198	216	169	206	224

Conditionals

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	33	9	77	76	76	64	108	93	128	104
Past	103	113	66	83	88	90	64	72	40	51
progressive	34	51	21	12	25	4	7	12	9	3
other	10	7	16	9	3	10	1	3	3	22
Total	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180

EGI & ATI when clauses

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Past	123	128	108	119	99	107	117	119	105	107
Non-past	53	47	66	64	75	66	54	48	71	68
other	4	5	6	7	6	7	9	13	4	5
Total	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180	180

Resultative PP

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	39	62	53	46	22	29	18	46	23	27
Past	53	37	40	44	58	62	55	35	44	50
progressive	14	9	12	17	7	19	9	12	7	8
pp	3	2	3	2	26	2	36	17	45	24
other	11	10	2	11	7	8	2	10	11	11
Total	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

Resultative PP in FC

Verb form	Level 4	Level 5
Present	4	7
Past	33	21
progressive	1	4
pp	0	0

Continuative PP

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	63	57	53	64	24	52	37	59	21	53
Past	64	38	38	38	64	34	48	22	41	26
progressive	102	140	131	133	109	103	85	108	80	118
pp	4	0	11	0	40	46	65	47	94	39
other	7	5	18	5	3	5	10	6	4	6
Total	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240

Existential PP EGI/ATI

Verb form	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
Present	40	47	39	45	51	43	19	52	31	25
Past	159	167	158	155	148	145	189	165	171	162
progressive	31	21	28	23	18	23	5	16	9	6
pp	0	0	0	0	22	12	25	21	12	32
other	1	17	15	17	23	29	27	17	29	47
Total	240	240								

Chapter Six

1.

	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
	Stative/3000		Habitual/iterative/general facts 4200		Conditional/900	
Correct	2250 75%	2490 83%	2394/ 57%	3108/ 74%	423/ 47%	346/ 38%

Figures for bar chart in figure 6.1 (Ch 6)

2.

Level	Stative	General habits & trends
1	83%	78%
2	80%	70%
3	68%	39%
4	83%	71%
5	75%	55%

% for line graph figure 6.2 (Ch.6)

Present simple verb forms and function in FCs.

Comparison of use of past simple form in different situations

Level	Stative		Durative		Punctual	
	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI	EGI	ATI
1	41%	47%	49%	51%	68%	65%
2	43%	48%	45%	63%	61%	66%
3	61%	69%	71%	73%	82%	86%
4	66%	69%	74%	71%	86%	85%
5	71%	58%	79%	61%	85%	84%

% for line graphs 6.3

Past simple forms with verb type and function

Habitual	
EGI	ATI
40%	38%
56%	40%
63%	61%
65%	62%
64%	65%

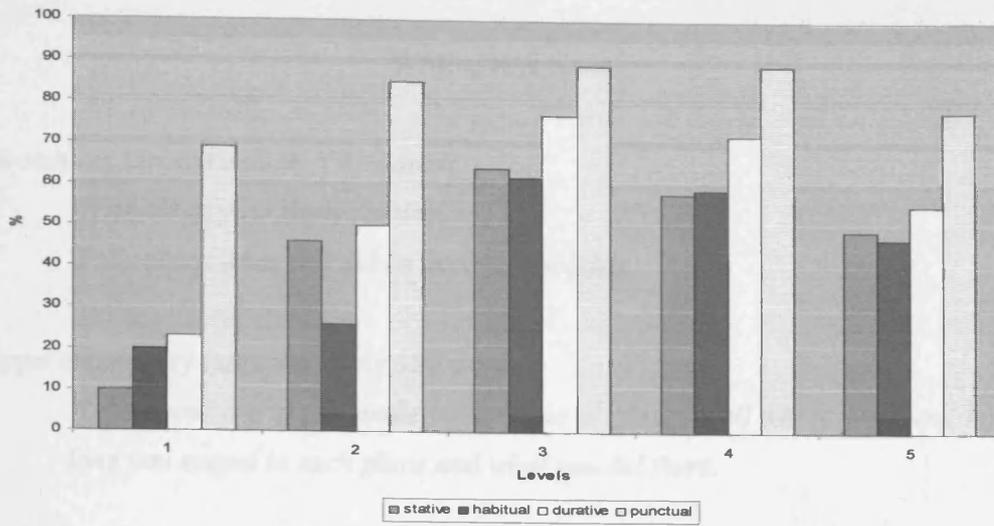
Line graph 6.3

Past simple accuracy with habituals

FC Past simple forms

Levels	Stative	Habitual	Durative	Punctual
	correct	correct	correct	correct
1	10%	20%	23%	69%
2	46%	26%	50%	85%
3	64%	62%	77%	89%
4	58%	59%	72%	89%
5	49%	47%	55%	78%

Past simple form



% and bar chart for figure 6.4

Past simple form/ verb types and functions

Appendix D

Writing task types

Elementary (approximately 120 words):

Write about your daily routine.

Write about what you did on your last holiday.

Upper elementary (approximately 150 words):

Write about a trip you made by car, bus or plane. Tell where you went, how long you stayed in each place and what you did there.

Lower intermediate (200 words):

Compare the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi as places to live and work.

Intermediate (250 words):

Poverty is a major world problem. Write about some of the causes and effects of poverty.

Upper intermediate (250 words):

Women should give up their jobs and go back to their traditional role of homemaker in order to reduce world poverty.

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